

# Government Appointed Historians of Western New York

## Code of Ethics

For the purpose of this code:

*"Government Historian"* shall mean a County, Municipal or Nation Historian as described below.

*"County Historian"* shall mean the person appointed per New York State Consolidated Laws - *County Law §400 (4-a)* by the County Legislature or Board of Supervisors for each county in Western New York to serve as their county's Historian.

*"Municipal Historian"* shall mean the person appointed per New York State Consolidated Law - *New York State Arts and Cultural Affairs Law §57.07(1)* by the town/village Supervisor or city Mayor for each town, village and city in Western New York to serve as their municipality's Historian.

*"Nation Historian"* shall mean the person chosen by the Seneca, Tonawanda or Tuscarora Nation, or other Indian Nation in the Niagara, Southern Tier and Finger Lakes Regions of New York State, to act as their representative Historian.

This Code of Ethics sets forth guidelines of professional conduct for all members of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York. Recognizing that Government Historians serve a variety of government entities including county, town, village, city, or Indian Nation in Western New York. This code is to serve as a guide of professional conduct in the field of history as it applies to Government Historians.

### **The Government Historians' Obligation to their Appointing Government**

1. Government Historians shall follow the code of ethics as set forth by their appointing government including those laid out in their government's code of conduct as it applies to sexual harassment.
2. Government Historians are to perform their duties on behalf of their appointing government and the community served, including but not limited to:
  - (A) For County and Municipal Historians: according to §57.07 & §57.09 of New York State Arts and Cultural Affairs Law which can be found at <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/services/artslaw.html>
  - (B) For Nation Historians: according to the duties as set forth by their Nation.
3. Government Historians should not intentionally engage in conduct of an unethical or illegal nature which could adversely affect their professional fitness to serve the government by which they are appointed.

### **The Government Historians' Obligation to the Public and the Municipality they serve**

1. Government Historians serve at the pleasure of their appointing Supervisor, Mayor, Legislature, or Board and may be asked from time to time to do certain projects of their appointing officers choosing.
2. Government Historians shall not discriminate against others based on their race, creed, color, religion, ethnic background or gender; but rather strive to learn from the diversity of others in order to present a more inclusive view of history to the public.

3. Government Historians may do genealogy upon request if they so choose, however it is not among the required duties of an Appointed Historian as laid out in §57.07 & §57.09 of New York State Arts and Cultural Affairs Law.

### **The Government Historians' Obligation to their Colleagues and others in the Field of History**

1. It is to be remembered that Government Historians come from a variety of levels of education. It is only through continual research and documentation of one's own community, and continuing education (be it college or other means), that Government Historians becomes proficient in their community's history and their ability to document it accurately. Government Historians shall respect their colleagues' knowledge of their community regardless of their level of education or whether they are a County, Municipal, Nation Historian or other colleague in the field of history.

2. Government Historians shall respect the professional views of their colleagues and be open to a productive and educated debate if their theories are of opposing views.

3. Government Historians should share their knowledge, research methods, and technical skills with their fellow Historians in order to contribute to each others advancement and education in the field of history.

4. Review by one Government Historian of another colleague's work should be given in a fair, respectful, and professional manner with the goal being to assist each other to present factual, well-researched and well-written works of history to the public.

### **The Government Historians' Obligation Towards Their Work**

1. Government Historians should perform their duties in an unbiased manner without regard for any one political affiliation.

2. Government Historians should not commit plagiarism.

3. Government Historians should strive for integrity in their work by using primary documents whenever possible, cite their sources, compile their findings as accurately as possible, and not omit facts uncovered in their research even when the outcome reveals a position different from their own personal views.

**Adopted 10/14/2008**