



CONTACT: Michelle Walk
walkm1@michigan.gov
Mackinac Associates
Phone: (231) 436-4100
www.mackinacassociates.com

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Steve Murray, Sheldon Smith Added to Mackinac Associates Board of Trustees

MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH. — Steve Murray, of Mackinac Island and Petoskey, and Sheldon Smith, of Gaylord, were unanimously voted to the Mackinac Associates Board of Trustees at its annual meeting August 18.

Murray is a fifth generation Mackinac Islander. His great grandfather built the Murray Hotel in 1859 and served as a sheriff of the northwest territory. His grandfather was a probate judge for Mackinac County for 40 years, and his father was a lawyer in Detroit who brought his family to the island every summer. Murray settled in Petoskey in 1988 and founded Michigan Outdoor Advertising. Along with his wife Anne and four children they built a home at British Landing, on the island's northwest shore, in 1995.

"I feel it's important to give back to the Mackinac community as my family did before me. I am not old enough to remember when the fort was abandoned but I know the story and am very impressed by the continuous improvements made by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission and more recently Mackinac Associates," Murray said. "I'm excited to be part of such a proactive group. (Current board member) Todd Petersen encouraged me to join Mackinac Associates, along with Fr. Jim Williams. Both encouraged me to believe in the fort's rich history and to play a role in its forward progress."

Sheldon Smith is an award-winning actor and narrator based for most of his career in Washington, D.C. Perhaps the nation's preeminent voice for Republican media campaigns, he has been heard in thousands of campaign commercials over the past forty-four years in all fifty states. His voice

has also been heard on PBS, Detroit Public Television, Maryland Public Television, Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel, National Geographic Channel and other broadcast and cable outlets. He is the narrator of interpretive orientation films in several National Parks and the Eisenhower Museum and Library in Abilene, Kansas, countless corporate and institutional films. His work has won nineteen Telly Awards, two CINE Golden Eagles and numerous AAPC Pollie Awards and Politics magazine Reed Awards. He is a seven-time winner of the prestigious Peer Award for Narration. A former member of the National Board of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Smith has been a member of AFTRA and the Screen Actors Guild, now SAG-AFTRA, for more than fifty years. In 2010, Smith was presented the Howard Keel Award by Screen Actors Guild, only the third person so honored. He also narrated the 2019 documentary *Mackinac: Our Famous Island*, which Mackinac Associates helped to fund.

Smith was appointed to the Mackinac Island State Park Commission in 1974 and served until 1983. He was the youngest person ever elected its Chairman. Smith and his wife Sue reside in Gaylord.

“I first came to Mackinac during my childhood with my grandparents, frequently returned while growing up and came to Mackinac on the S.S. South American for my high school senior trip,” Smith said. “During the years I lived in Michigan, I frequently visited the island and mainland park sites and was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Park Commission in 1974, was elected Chairman in 1976 and served until 1983.”

During his time as chairman of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, he supported the formation of Mackinac Associates, and is looking forward to continuing to support the organization as a board member.

Additionally, at Mackinac Associates’ regular meeting August 30, the board of trustees re-elected Peter Pellerito, of Mackinac Island and Pinehurst, NC, president, Harriet McGraw of Petoskey vice president, and Tom Lockwood of Mackinac Island secretary/treasurer. Other members of the Board of Trustees include Jack Barnwell, Jeb Burns, Kathy Lieder, Wes Maurer, Ann Parish, Todd Petersen, Nancy Porter, and Skip Young.

More information on Mackinac Associates can be found on its website, mackinacassociates.com, or at (231) 436-4100. Additional pictures are available upon request.

Mackinac Associates, founded as a 501(c)(3) in 1982, was created to support the mission of Mackinac State Historic Parks by providing funding to do projects and implement programs the park would otherwise not be able to afford. Mackinac Associates has supported needed projects in every area of museum operation and make possible interpretive programs, publications, exhibits, natural history education, park improvements and more. Since its inception, Mackinac Associates has provided \$1,590,470.00 in funding for projects throughout Mackinac State Historic Parks sites. Mackinac Associates has provided support to the education outreach program since its inception in 1987 providing over \$700,000 in funding to support staff and interpreters to visit area schools throughout the region during the winter months with the Historic Mackinac on Tour and Water, Woods, and Wildlife programs. Included in these funds are scholarships given to local schools to help defray the cost of visits to Mackinac State Historic Parks sites. More information is available at (231) 436-4100 or online at mackinacassociates.com.

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