Montgomery Bar Association to be recognized by The Speaker's House

By The Montgomery Bar Association, For The Times Herald

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NORRISTOWN — The Montgomery Bar Association will be recognized by The Speaker’s House for their efforts to restore a large mural of Frederick Muhlenberg as first president judge of Montgomery County. The Speaker’s House is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the Trappe home of Frederick Muhlenberg, first Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and first Signer of the Bill of Rights.

Former Montgomery Bar Association president Keith B. McLennan will receive the 2013 “Speaker’s Choice” award at The Speaker’s House annual meeting on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Augustus Lutheran Church, located at 717 West Main Street in Trappe. An attorney with Miller Turetsky Rule & McLennan, P.C. in Collegeville, McLennan spearheaded the restoration of the mural, which depicts Frederick Muhlenberg presiding over the first day of court in Montgomery County history. The painting was originally installed in Courtroom A of the Montgomery County Court House but was removed during renovations in the mid-1950s and languished for years in storage. Under McLennan’s leadership, the Montgomery Bar Association funded the mural’s restoration and gained permission to have it reinstalled in 2002. Commenting on the award, McLennan noted, “I am honored to receive this award. Muhlenberg has a special place with me, and the effort to restore his house in Trappe is a noble one. I encourage all Montgomery County residents to help The Speaker’s House preserve this historic landmark for generations to come.”

Born in Trappe in 1750, Frederick Muhlenberg is best known as first Speaker of the U.S. House and first Signer of the Bill of Rights. He was also a pivotal figure in local history, serving as the first president judge, recorder of deeds, and register of wills when Montgomery County was established in 1784. For several years his home in Trappe was a de facto center of government, until Norristown became the official county seat. In the early 2000s, his house was nearly torn down, but a grassroots effort by local citizens saved the building and its 1.9–acre property with funding from the Lilliput Foundation and Montgomery County’s Green Fields/Green Towns open space program. A nonprofit organization was then formed to manage its restoration and development into a historic site. Now known as The Speaker’s House, the organization is a leader in Trappe’s community revitalization and historic preservation efforts. Its educational programs include a popular archaeology field school, now in its sixth year, and an ongoing lecture series based on the book Pastors & Patriots: The Muhlenberg Family of Pennsylvania. The organization is also raising funds to restore the exterior of the house by 2017—Trappe’s 300th anniversary. A major fundraiser dinner is being planned for spring 2014.
The Speaker's House is located at 151 W. Main Street in Trappe and is open for tours by appointment. For more information, visit www.speakershouse.org or www.facebook.com/speakershouse.

Click here to download high-resolution photos of the painting or copy and paste the following URL into your web browser: http://www.donnaarcherphotography.com/p486640869

For more information about the Montgomery Bar Association, call 610.994.3660 or visit www.montgomerybar.org.