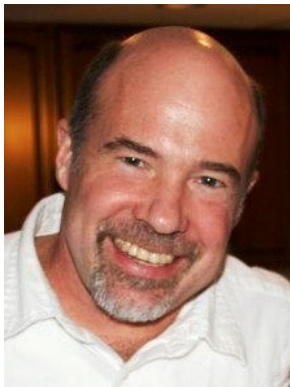


Jaros' 30 years at Historical Society honored

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John Jaros

AURORA — He may be marking his 30 years with the Aurora Historical Society, but local historian John Jaros isn't planning to retire anytime soon.

In celebration of three decades at the helm of the Historical Society, Executive Director Jaros was honored by city leaders and history buffs with the 2014 Heart for Aurora award at the David L. Pierce Art and History Center Friday night.

The Historical Society gig was Jaros' first "real" job after completing his master's degree at DePaul University. After internships at Garfield Farm and Chicago Historical Society, Jaros arrived in Aurora from Chicago in February 1984. He was 24.

"I'd like to think that after 30 years, I've earned the right to call myself an Auroran," Jaros, a Chicago native, told the crowd Friday night.

Jaros was the first employee to be hired by the Aurora Historical Society Board, according to Historical Society Board President Mary Clark Ormond. When he started the job, the Historical Society wasn't much more than a pantry in the Tanner House Museum. Today, Jaros oversees the Tanner House Museum on Cedar Street, the Aurora History Center next to the museum, and exhibits and programs at the Pierce Art and History Center.

Jaros' fantastic memory makes him a huge asset to the community, she said.

"He knows so much and he has such good common sense," Ormond said. "He's egoless."

She said Friday night that she wants to make sure Jaros finds time in the next few years to work on a special project for the Historical Society, a book.

Ormond said that the pictorial history of the city would take readers from the journey of the McCarty brothers to the rise of manufacturing that built the city through the city's effort to remake Aurora today.

"I think Aurora is, in many respects, the all-American town," she said. "It's a kind of America in microcosm."

Jaros said the biggest change the city has faced in the past 30 years is a dramatic expansion in size, both in population and area.

"When I came to Aurora, it was a large-sized small town, and today, it's a city, the second largest city in the state," he said.

A John R. Jaros Fund for the Aurora Historical Society has been established within the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley. To donate online, visit www.communityfoundationfrv.org/jaros.asp. Donations can also be mailed to the Community Foundation at 111 W. Downer Place, Suite 312, Aurora, IL 60506.