



MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, TEXAS

October 20, 2019

To: MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S COURT

Re: SELECTION OF JEAN HUOT SMOORENBURG AND JANE SANFORD KEPPLER FOR "WILLIAM HARLEY GANDY DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD"

I am pleased to announce that both **Jean Huot Smoorenburg** and **Jane Sanford Keppler** have been selected by the Montgomery County Historical Commission for the WILLIAM HARLEY GANDY DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD. By way of review, this Distinguished Service Award is presented at the discretion of the Montgomery County Historical Commission to individuals, corporations or organizations who exhibit distinguished leadership, initiative and dedication in the preservation of the History of Montgomery County. The winner of the award must have shown significant accomplishments in the field of historical preservation and research. Such achievements must be notable and have made an important contribution to the preservation and/or advancement of the History of Montgomery County.

For over 20 years, these remarkable women — **Jean Huot Smoorenburg** and **Jane Sanford Keppler** — have volunteered their time to archive and preserve much of the history of Montgomery County, Texas as volunteers with the "**TexGenWeb Project.**" The TexGenWeb Project is an important grassroots all-volunteer genealogical/historical effort to research, archive and preserve the history of each Texas county. Each county webpage is commercially-free and contains useful tips, online data bases particular to that area, volunteer lookups, surname queries, descriptions of local libraries, historical background information, contact information, and much more. Its website is <http://www.txgenweb.org/>

Since 2004, Jane Keppler and Jean Smoorenburg have methodically focused their collaborative efforts with the TexGenWeb Project on the genealogy and history of Montgomery County, Texas.

Montgomery County Historical Commission, ATTN: Larry L. Foerster, Chair
414 West Phillips, Suite 100, Conroe, Texas 77301

Their detailed website can be found and used commercially-free at <http://www.countygenweb.com/txmontgomery/us.htm>. The Montgomery County TexGenWeb Project has served as an important online resource and clearing house for our county's history. These two ladies have compiled important historical information on Montgomery County families, Federal census data, miscellaneous articles on our county's history, historical landmarks, cemeteries and so much more. With the online resources and web links they have generously made available to genealogists and historians, Jane Sanford Keppler and Jean Huot Smoorenburg have provided and will continue to provide a remarkable resource that will be available to Montgomery County's individuals and families for generations to come.

I am attaching additional biographical information about each of these ladies who, as you will see, have also been active members of the Montgomery County Genealogical and Historical Society and other organizations which support the history of Texas and of Montgomery County.

Our County Historical Commission believes **Jean Huot Smoorenburg** and **Jane Sanford Keppler** have contributed significantly to the preservation and advancement of the History of Montgomery County. It is for these reasons that we have enthusiastically selected them both for the William Harley Gandy Distinguished Service Award.

Respectfully,



Larry L. Foerster, Chairman
Montgomery County Historical Commission

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD NOMINATIONS

For over 20 years, two remarkable women—**Jane Sanford Keppler and Jean Huot Smoorenburg** — have volunteered their time to archive and preserve much of the history of Montgomery County, Texas as volunteers with the “**TXGenWeb Project.**” The TXGenWeb Project is an important grassroots all volunteer geological/historical effort to research, archive and preserve the history of each Texas county. Each county webpage is commercially-free and contains useful tips, online data bases particular to that area, volunteer lookups, surname queries, descriptions of local libraries, historical background information, contact information, and much more. Its website is <http://www.txgenweb.org/>

Since 2004, Jane Keppler and Jean Smoorenburg have methodically focused their joint efforts with the TXGenWeb Project on the genealogy and history of Montgomery County, Texas. Their detailed website can be found and used commercially-free at <http://www.countygenweb.com/txmontgomery/us.htm>. The Montgomery County TXGenWeb Project has served as an important online resource and clearing house for our county's history. These two ladies have compiled important historical information on Montgomery County families, Federal census data, miscellaneous articles on our county's history, historical landmarks, cemeteries and so much more. With the online resources and web links they have generously made available to genealogists and historians, Jane Keppler and Jean Smoorenburg have provided and will continue to provide a remarkable resource that will be available to Montgomery County's individuals and families for generations to come.

Jane Sanford Keppler.

Jane Sanford Keppler was born in 1952 in Logansport, Louisiana but moved with her family to Conroe, Montgomery County, Texas when she was five years old. She presently lives in Bastrop, Texas with her husband, Rev. Mike Keppler. Jane Keppler has been engaged in extensive genealogical research for years. Mrs. Keppler has been a member of the TXGenWeb for 22 years and Montgomery County was her first county. She began as a local volunteer for the TXGenWeb Project in 1996 as the Montgomery County coordinator, and in 2004 Jean Smoorenburg began to partner with her for the Montgomery County TXGenWeb Project. Today Jane is one of the Assistant TXGenWeb Project State Coordinators and maintains 13 counties in three states. She is also surfing chairman for the TXGenWeb, meaning her committee picks a “County of the Month.” Mrs. Keppler has been recognized by the TXGenWeb Project with an award for 20 years of service as the Montgomery County Coordinator. She has also served as an active

member of the Montgomery County Genealogical and Historical Society (MCG&HS) and received the MCG&HS's Hall of Fame Award in 2004.

Jean Huot Smoorenburg

Jean Huot Smoorenburg has lived in Montgomery County since she married her husband Anthony Smoorenburg in 1977. Jean is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts and a retired teacher. Her accomplishments as a genealogist are extensive and she is recognized nationally for her work in this field.

She was the former genealogy HAL-PC SIG (Special Interest Group) Leader at Houston Area League of PC Users in Houston Texas and was the Deputy Editor of *HAL-PC Magazine* from 1991– 2008. She has been a member of Clayton Library Friends and the Montgomery County Genealogical and Historical Society (MCG&HS); former editor of their publication, *The Herald*; and served as Vice President of membership and publicity. She received MCG&HS' Hall of Fame Award in 2005. She is also a member of the Heritage Museum of Montgomery County and the Margaret Montgomery Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR.) More recently, she has served on the board of the Conroe Community Cemetery Restoration Project, a non-profit organization formed to preserve the historic African American Community Cemetery in east Conroe.

In 2000 Jean Smoorenburg began teaching genealogy classes at Lone Star College-Montgomery for ALL (Academy for Lifelong Learning): *Beginning Genealogy*, *Genealogy in the 21st Century*, *Intro to Researching Across the Pond after 1850*, and *Genealogy Software*. She was recognized by ALL as one of its Teachers of the Year in 2010. After 15 years, she retired from teaching in the ALL Program at the end of 2015.

In October 2007, Phyllis Stehm and Mrs. Smoorenburg began MCG-IRG (Montgomery County Genealogists'-Internet Research Group) to help others learn to effectively search on the Internet. In 2013, she began teaching a class in DNA in the ALL Program and as an outgrowth have begun a DNA Discussion Group that meets regularly.

She joined TXGenWeb on October 2, 2004. She has served as Jane Keppler's Assistant Coordinator on the Montgomery County website since then and has helped others with their genealogy research. Jane has allowed Jean free reign to do the maintenance and updates on the Montgomery County website. Jean Smoorenburg declares that she has learned so much about Montgomery County, Texas forefathers and records of our county along the way. Jean frequently coordinates with County Historical Commission chairman Larry Foerster and

others on new articles of historical interest that can be added to the archives of the Montgomery County TXGenWeb Project website.

Larry L. Foerster, Chairman
Montgomery County Historical Commission