

PRESS RELEASE

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**NJCH Awards Stanley N. Katz Prize for Excellence in Public Humanities to
Bergen Community College**

(Camden, NJ) – The New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH) has announced the recipient of the 2023 Stanley N. Katz Prize for Excellence in Public Humanities, as well as two honorable mentions. Bergen Community College was awarded the top prize in recognition of a series of projects revolving around its hosting of the art exhibit *Faith Ringgold: Coming to Jones Road*.

In addition to the exhibition that ran in-person and in VR format at Gallery Bergen, the institution supported several humanities initiatives that explored the life and impact of renowned artist Faith Ringgold, African American heritage in Bergen County, and the county's complex history in regard to slavery, discrimination, and art.

“This project truly exemplified the humanities in a community-based context. Bringing together partners from the Bergen faculty, local public libraries, and governmental and nonprofit organizations, it used a combination of both creative and established public humanities practices to tell stories, preserve history, and encourage community dialogue,” said Carin Berkowitz, Ph.D., executive director of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.

Among the extended projects were the organization of a Children's Makerspace for daycare and K-12 students in partnership with the Black Child Development Initiative and the Bergen County Office for Children; the “Ancestor Journeys” project, which collected more than 200 oral history testimonies from students and county residents; the development of a theatrical piece that incorporated these testimonies with text from Ringgold's storyquilts; and the commission of “Coming to Jones Road Suite,” a jazz suite by the composer Rufus Reid which premiered at BCC's Ciccone Theatre.

The Katz Prize is named in honor of Stanley N. Katz, a longtime faculty member at Princeton University and former NJCH Board Chair. The prize carries with it a cash award of \$5,000.

In addition to the top prize, two projects were recognized as honorable mentions: the reinstallation of the permanent history galleries at the Morven Museum in Princeton, and the

Harrison Township Historical Society's oral history project documenting residents' experiences of the September 1, 2021 tornado that left an unprecedented trail of destruction in the area.

The awarded projects were judged by a panel of peer reviewers and selected from among approximately 20 nominated projects from throughout the state.

The prize is awarded annually and is supported by private donations. To learn more about the 2023 awardees, the namesake of the prize, and how to support future efforts, visit <https://njhumanities.org/katz-prize>.