
National History Day Announces Historian Renee Romano as New President of Board of Trustees

COLLEGE PARK, MD – September 1, 2026 – National History Day® (NHD) is proud to announce the election of **Renee Romano** as the President of its Board of Trustees starting September 1, 2026. A member of NHD's Board of Trustees since 2024 and Chair of the Governance Committee since 2025, Romano was elected during National History Day's Board of Trustees meeting in June.

Romano is a Professor of History Emeritus at Oberlin College, an Adjunct Professor in the Museum Studies Program at City University of New York, and co-founder of Romano & Min Projects, a consulting firm that helps cultural organizations craft compelling, community-centered historical narratives. She is the author or editor of five books exploring race, historical memory, and public history, including *Racial Reckoning: Reopening America's Civil Rights Trials* (Harvard University Press, 2014); *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America* (Harvard University Press, 2003); and *Historians on Hamilton: How a Blockbuster Musical Is Restaging America's Past* (Rutgers University Press, 2018).

"I am deeply honored and humbled to serve as the next chair of the Board of Trustees for National History Day," said Romano. "Thanks to the extraordinary leadership of outgoing chair Celie Niehaus and Executive Director Cathy Gorn, National History Day is poised for an exciting new era of growth. Our mission—to improve the teaching and learning of history—has never been more important, and I am excited to be part of the organization's next chapter."

A participant of National History Day herself, Romano is the first NHD alumna to chair the Board of Trustees. Romano will work in partnership with the Board of Trustees and Executive Director Dr. Cathy Gorn to guide the organization's direction and support fundraising initiatives.

"Renee has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to NHD's mission of improving the teaching and learning of history, and we are excited to have her lead National History Day into its next chapter," said National History Day Executive Director, Dr. Cathy Gorn. "Her own participation in NHD as a student will be a great asset to guide the organization, and she will be an example to current NHD students of what they can accomplish."

Romano will take over as chair of NHD's Board of Trustees from Celie Niehaus, who is retiring from the Board at the end of the fiscal year. As President of the Board of Trustees from 2016 to 2026, Niehaus led the organization through a global pandemic, attacks on funding for history education, and NHD's continued expansion into 56 U.S. states, territories, and country affiliate programs.

To support the next generation of students, Niehaus and their wife, Tabitha Niehaus, have made a significant planned giving pledge to National History Day. They are fulfilling their 50 for 50 financial commitment and currently sponsor the Equality in History special prize at the NHD National Contest, which awards outstanding entries that illuminate the history and struggle for human equality.

“It has been an honor to serve National History for over 13 years. The students and teachers are truly inspirational, and being a small part of their journey has been a privilege,” said Niehaus. “While I may not be involved on a regular basis, my wife, Tabitha, and I believe in NHD’s mission and its critical role in history education. We encourage others to make National History Day part of their planned giving to sustain the next 50 years (and more) of students and teachers.”

“We are so grateful for Celie’s leadership over the past decade, which has made NHD the esteemed organization it is today,” said Dr. Gorn. “Their continued support will have a profound impact on NHD’s ability to increase access to quality history education across the country, and we are thankful for their dedication to NHD’s mission.”

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About National History Day (NHD)

NHD is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. Established in 1974, NHD currently engages more than half a million students each year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest and supports teachers through professional development opportunities. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the annual National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by the Joyful Noise Charitable Foundation, The Better Angels Society, Bezos Family Foundation, Library of Congress, Dr. Scholl Foundation, Behring Global Educational Foundation, and the National Park Service. For more information, visit nhd.org.

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