

HSM Legacy Circle: Deborah “Debbie” Remer of Shelby Township, MI (north of Detroit)



Having a love for history does not mean you can't be actually ahead of your time.

That's what Deborah Remer, now a retired middle school science teacher living in Shelby Township north of Detroit, was when she decided while in her 30s to remember the Historical Society of Michigan in her estate planning.

She made a myth of the idea that prioritizing where you want your money to go after death is a task only for older people. For Debbie, there was no doubt one of those priorities would be to continue to support an organization that reflects her passion for history in Michigan.

“I always have been interested in history,” she says. “There's always been a lot of historical stuff around.”

Her family, whose Michigan farm was purchased at auction by her great-grandfather in 1895, has donated several family items to local museums. One of their homes is now museum in New York state, where her mother's family lived, Remer says. On top of that, she has volunteered for the past three decades at the Rochester Hills Museum.

Her connection to the programs and services provided by the Historical Society of Michigan is strong.

Remer, a longtime Society member, has attended history conferences regularly since retiring in 2010. She enjoys reading Michigan History magazine and Chronicle, the HSM-member magazine, as well as the Society's other publications. She even joined a recent “Michiganders on the Road” motor coach trip to New Orleans.

Still, why did she decide to leave a bequest to support the Historical Society of Michigan?

“It is important that history keep going,” she says. “Knowing our roots is important to knowing who you are today, and providing a key to the past for future generations.”

And working through the legal mechanisms of a bequest is not difficult, Remer says. “You have some idea of where things have to go. I did percentages and not amounts. It is perfectly harmless.”

She even finds the history of the Historical Society of Michigan itself noteworthy.

“I find it intriguing that there was a Historical Society of Michigan before there was a state of Michigan,” she laughs. HSM was founded in 1828 and Michigan achieved statehood in 1837.

Thanks to the foresight and generosity of Debbie Remer, and people like her, HSM will have support to advance its mission of promoting our state’s history for future generations.