

Endnotes...

Western New York Heritage Publication Receives Award



Author John Thomas Slater (left) and Western New York Heritage executive director Doug DeCroix (right) join New York Wine and Grape Foundation executive director Sam Filler for a photo at the 2024 Unity Awards ceremony. Jennifer DeCroix photograph

Executive Director Doug DeCroix and frequent *Western New York Heritage* author, John Thomas Slater, were among those recognized at the New York Wine and Grape Foundation's 2024 Unity Awards presentation, held at the B.E.V. NY annual conference in Canandaigua on March 6-7. The two were recipients of the Jim Finkle Industry Award for their efforts to create Western New York Heritage's most recent special publication, *Legends of the Chautauqua-Erie Grape Belt*. Named for the late Jim Finkle, former president of the International Federation of Wines and Spirits, the award recognizes outstanding achievements and contributions to the New York wine industry.

Jennifer Johnson, of Johnson Estate Winery in Westfield, nominated

Doug and John for this year's award. "In creating *Legends of the Chautauqua-Erie Grape Belt*," she wrote, "Western New York Heritage and author/researcher John Thomas Slater have reunited and preserved the once-fractured stories of the world's oldest and largest Concord grape growing region—and now one of the nation's premier wine-producing regions—so that present and future generations may better understand, appreciate—and celebrate—the colorful history of this unique viticultural area. In so doing, they have made a significant contribution to the wine and grape industry, not only of the Chautauqua-Erie Grape Belt, but of New York State as well."

In reflecting on the honor, John Thomas Slater observed, "Doug and I,

and dozens of other people worked together for more than a decade on *Legends of the Chautauqua-Erie Grape Belt*, and getting this prize validates the hard work. I also hope that it helps shed light on the story that we tried to tell in the book." DeCroix concurred, saying the award, in addition to reflecting the importance of the Chautauqua-Erie Grape Belt's history, also represented a validation of the efforts made by Western New York Heritage over its 26-year history to preserve the diverse heritage of our region and to share that heritage in ways that are engaging and accessible to the widest possible audience.



Copies of *Legends of the Chautauqua-Erie Grape Belt* are still available and may be obtained by visiting wnyheritage.org or calling the Western New York Heritage office at (716) 893-4011.