

# Perspectives

## *We Owe It to You*

by W. Todd Groce, Ph.D.

THIS PAST AUGUST THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY was thrilled to receive word that we had been awarded not one but three major federal grants, two from the National Endowment for the Humanities and one from the Institute for Museum and Library Services. These grants are for projects exceeding a total in federal and private matching funds of \$500,000.

This support could not have come at a more propitious time. With continued cuts in state funding and many consistent sponsors unable to contribute as previously (especially in the corporate world), we needed this additional revenue.

But these grants represent more than just financial support. They are also recognition on the national level of the extraordinary quality of the programming, services, staff, and archival collections of the Georgia Historical Society. The process for receiving these prestigious awards is highly competitive. Applications for funding are peer reviewed and awarded to only a small number of institutions.

For example, of the 433 applications received nationwide this year for an IMLS "Museums of America" grant, less than two in five received funding, and GHS was one of only a handful whose request was fully funded. Indeed, one reviewer commented that the GHS application was one of the strongest they had seen.

The NEH grants—one for training university and college faculty in Civil War history, the other a seminar for community college teachers in the history and culture of African Americans in the lowcountry—were equally competitive. And while it's difficult enough to receive one NEH award in either of these categories, it is quite rare for an institution to receive two in one cycle. GHS was the only institution in the nation to do so.

Equally significant, GHS was the only historical society to receive an NEH grant for training college teachers. The other awardees were all colleges and universities, such as Princeton and Colgate. It speaks well of the quality of our visiting scholars, our own faculty/staff, and of the academic excellence of the Georgia Historical Society that we stack up so well against such prestigious institutions.

But it takes more than scholarly credentials to receive this level of funding. It also takes demonstrated commitment from our members and supporters.

Over the past eight years GHS has been awarded over \$2.2 million in federal support for training teachers, making our collections more accessible, and building our endowment. Most of these grants came with a stiff challenge to raise private matching dollars. In fact, we were required to raise over \$3.3 million from individuals and foundations to release these federal funds. And each time we asked, you responded to the challenge.

These grants reflect the relevance of GHS, not just to the people of Georgia but to the United States. When you contribute to the Georgia Historical Society you can feel confident you are giving to one of the finest institutions in the nation. That is something we can be proud of. And we owe that to you. *G*

*W. Todd Groce is President and CEO of the Georgia Historical Society. He can be reached at [wtgroce@georgiahistory.com](mailto:wtgroce@georgiahistory.com)*

