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## Eastern National Book Wins Kentucky History Award

Fort Washington, PA—The Historic Confederation of Kentucky and the Kentucky Historical Society have awarded their 2006 Award of Merit to the new Eastern National release *Making Their Mark: The Signature of Slavery at Mammoth Cave*. The book and its author, Joy Medley Lyons, Chief of Program Services at Mammoth Cave National Park, were honored at the Kentucky History Awards Banquet on March 3, 2007. This is the highest award the organizations bestow.

The Kentucky History Awards celebrate outstanding programs, publications and people who have excelled in the field or have made lifetime contributions to the preservation, awareness, and appreciation of Kentucky's history. "The Awards are one of our most important annual programs, as it is our chance to recognize the great work being done in the field of history throughout the state," said Chris Goodlett, administrator of the Historical Confederation of Kentucky.

*Making Their Mark* describes the lives and loves of slaves who served the Mammoth Cave Estate during more than 125 years of private ownership. By 1840, the most affluent of travelers ventured into the cave's darkness, following young men who were themselves bound by slavery, a conflicted institution struggling to continue in Kentucky and Southern states.

The era left a legacy forged by men like Stephen Bishop, Mat and Nick Bransford, Ed Bishop, Bob Lively and Ed Hawkins—the children of slavery who grew up to lead men and women of all nations. They led them into the majestic, mysterious and sometimes frightening labyrinth called Mammoth Cave. These black guides provided comfort, humor, safety and intellect. In return, visitors gave them news of places far removed from the cave-riddled realm of Edmonson County, Kentucky.

"The untold story and little-known facts about the slaves of Mammoth Cave has intrigued me since the early 1980s," said author Medley Lyons. "I began my own independent research, then joined with researcher Jeanne C. Schmitzer in the mid-1990s as we corroborated our findings. Between the two of us, we have helped bring these important Mammoth Cave pioneers to the forefront."

"Joy has made exceptional efforts to research the lost history of early black explorers and guides at Mammoth Cave," said Jerry Bransford, great-great-grandson of cave guide Mat Bransford. "I am truly honored that she's highlighted the accomplishments and cave-guiding skill of four generations of my slave ancestors in Mammoth Cave in a captivating, factual and educational way."

Eastern National is a non-profit organization that provides quality educational products and services to the visitors to America's national parks and other public trusts. Eastern National operates educational outlets in 170 national parks and public lands in 30 states. Since 1947, Eastern National has donated over \$89 million to the National Park Service. For more information visit [www.easternnational.org](http://www.easternnational.org) or [www.eParks.com](http://www.eParks.com).

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