

**THE BUFFALO AND ERIE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEW EXHIBIT: “BUFFALO’S BETHUNE: AMERICA’S FIRST PROFESSIONAL WOMAN ARCHITECT,” FOCUSING ON THE LIFE OF LOUISE BLANCHARD BETHUNE**

*Exhibit will coincide with National Trust for Historic Preservation visit to Buffalo in October, 2011*

*Buffalo, NY -- September 2011 --* The Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society is pleased to announce that, in October 2011, when Buffalo hosts the annual meeting of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Historical Society will present an in-depth exhibit on the life and times of America’s first professional female architect, Louise Blanchard Bethune (1856-1913). The exhibit, located in our grand, iconic State Court, opens on October 12, 2011. It will be on display through March, 2012.

Several consultants from the community have joined the Historical Society staff to bring this exhibit to fruition:

- The husband-and-wife team of guest curator Kelly Hayes McAlonie, American Institute of Architects (AIA), LEED® AP, interim assistant vice president of the Capital Planning Group at UB, and president-elect of AIANYS and Brian McAlonie, vice president of account services at Thinking Outside The Square, a design firm
- Illustrator/designer, Michael Gelen, Inkwell Studios

Together with the museum’s staff, the team has written and created a series of wall-mounted panels, including ephemera and artifacts.

*“Bethune to Barbie”! This is an especially auspicious time to honor Bethune, the country’s first professional female architect: Mattel has recently announced the creation of Architect Barbie, a project with which guest curator Hayes McAlonie was involved. During the exhibit, the Historical Society will be raffling off several Architect Barbies.*

The exhibit addresses major themes from Bethune’s life and career: apprenticeship, design work, professional recognition, masterpiece, hobbies, and legacy. A special feature of this exhibit will be the inclusion of a newly discovered photograph of Bethune. Up until this point, only one photograph of her was known to exist. *We are asking press to help keep this discovery confidential until the exhibit opening.*

In support of the exhibit, the Historical Society will present educational programming. Hayes McAlonie will join a panel on the role of women in contemporary Buffalo architecture and give a lecture in conjunction with the exhibit. Additional programming includes tours for school audiences, and outreach to women's organizations.

Major support for this exhibit is generously provided by AIA Buffalo/WNY, Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation and Signature Development (Rocco Termini and Earl Ketry).

**FACTS ABOUT LOUISE BLANCHARD BETHUNE: HER LIFE AND THE EXHIBIT**

In 1881, Bethune, 25, a drafting apprentice for Buffalo architect Richard Waite, opened her own office; the first woman in the United States to do so. Shortly thereafter, she married fellow architect Robert Bethune, who joined the firm. Two years later, the Bethunes added William Fuchs (rhymes with “books”) to the practice; it became known as Bethune, Bethune & Fuchs.

Bethune’s additional distinctions include:

- First woman to be admitted to the American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- First woman to be named a Fellow of the AIA, its highest honor
- She founded the Buffalo Society of Architects, which eventually became the AIA Buffalo/WNY chapter

Bethune is best known for designing the Lafayette Hotel (1904), which has been added to the National Register of Historic Places by the . Recently acquired by Buffalo developer Rocco Termini, it is undergoing a multi-million dollar restoration, to reopen in fall of 2011 as a hotel and mixed-use facility.

A strong advocate of equal pay for equal work, Bethune opposed the design process for the Women's Building at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Other exhibition buildings were awarded to leading male architects based on their abilities and reputations and they were paid \$10,000. The Women's Building was to be awarded via a design competition and the fee was only \$1,000.

Bethune completed few residential commissions. She warned against them, as they paid poorly and confined women architects to a stereotypically domestic sphere. Bethune, Bethune & Fuchs designed a variety of educational, industrial, commercial, and cultural buildings.

Artifacts planned for the exhibit include:

- Facsimiles of the plans for Buffalo Police Station #2 by Bethune, Bethune & Fuchs
- Facsimiles of drawings for the Girvin house on 17th St. by Bethune, Bethune & Fuchs
- Facsimile of Bethune letter of acceptance into the AIA
- Blanchard family genealogy ledger in Bethune's own hand
- Example of letterhead from Bethune, Bethune & Fuchs
- Logo of the Women's Wheel & Athletic Club, of which Bethune was an active member

Curatorial assistance and design consultation for this exhibit have been generously contributed by:

- Kelly Hayes McAlonie, interim assistant vice president of Capital Planning Group, University at Buffalo, President Elect for American Institute of Architects New York State
- Brian McAlonie, Vice President, Thinking Outside the Square
- Michael Gelen, Inkwell Studios

This exhibit is made possible with the generous support of:

AIA (American Institute of Architects - Buffalo/WNY)

Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation

Signature Development (Rocco Termini and Earl Ketry)