

FINLANDIA

UNIVERSITY

March 6, 2023

HANCOCK, MI - Finlandia University in Hancock, Michigan and Finlandia Foundation National, Inc. (FFN), based in Pasadena, California, announce intentions that aim to ensure the preservation of Finlandia University's Finnish-American heritage and history.

The non-profit Finlandia Foundation, founded in 1953 to connect, inspire and strengthen the Finnish-American community in the United States, has commissioned a task force with the intent and mission to preserve Finlandia University's Finnish American Heritage Center, its archives, folk school, art gallery, North Wind Books store and the monthly publication, the Finnish American Reporter.

The announcement between the two parties follows the unhappy news of March 2, that the University will not enroll students for the 2023-2024 academic year. Established in 1896 as Suomi College, Finlandia University is the only remaining institution of higher learning in North America founded by Finns.

"Finlandia University is incredibly pleased that we have been able to partner with Finlandia Foundation National in order to move toward preservation of the entities at Finlandia University that are the most unique part of our history — our Finnish heritage," Finlandia University President Timothy Pinnow said.

"Knowing that the Finnish American Heritage Center and Archives, the Art Gallery, North Wind Books, the Folk School and the Finnish American Reporter have a chance to continue the legacy of Finlandia University and Suomi College gives us all a significant ray of light in the midst of the darkness of losing our beloved University. We cannot express our gratitude to Finlandia Foundation National enough for their generous support."

Since its grand opening in 1990, Finlandia University's Finnish American Heritage Center has become a community focal point and a national center, offering a folk school, art exhibits, lectures, plays, musical programs and community events each year. The Archive at Finlandia's Finnish American Heritage Center is home to the most extensive collection of Finnish North American materials in the world.

"The Finlandia cultural campus described by President Pinnow is the Smithsonian of Finnish America," said FFN President Anne-Mari Paster. "This is the essence of why Finlandia Foundation was founded 70 years ago---to preserve the culture and history of our roots in Finland, while making the connection with the current and future generations.

"Our board of directors has unanimously agreed that Finlandia Foundation must make the preservation of these assets a priority, on several levels. The irreplaceable archives must be maintained at the Heritage Center, which donors entrusted with their treasures," said Paster. "The living culture of the folk school offers unique experiences and the very fine monthly Finnish American Reporter links our community across the country, and even internationally.

"And," adds Paster, "the heritage of Finnish America is integral to the identity, livelihood and lifeblood of our community. It is too precious, and too important, and keeping it alive is aligned with the mission of Finlandia Foundation to keep Finland in America."

About Finlandia Foundation National, Inc.

Fiercely Finnish since 1953, we champion our culture and heritage across the United States by supporting educational opportunities and promoting diverse, relevant, and enriching programs.

Finlandia Foundation National, Inc. aims to connect, inspire and strengthen the Finnish-American community in the United States through a network of chapters. The Foundation raises funds to strengthen its endowment and ensure the continuation of its programs, which highlight outstanding contributions and achievements from Finnish-American artists and academics.

Finlandia Foundation National awards dozens of grants each year, providing critical funding to maintain cultural traditions that represent the heritage of Finlandia and the diverse interests of Finnish America.

For more: FinlandiaFoundation.org