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Contact: Tia Brown, Community Engagement Coordinator
Phone: (716) 852-3300
Email: tbrown@pbnsaves.org

**Preservation Buffalo Niagara and the Michigan Street Preservation Corporation
Receive Advocacy Award of Excellence**

Buffalo, N.Y., September 17, 2020

Docomomo US, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of modern architecture, landscape and design, will present Preservation Buffalo Niagara and the Michigan Street Preservation Corporation with the Advocacy Award of Excellence during its annual Modernism in America Awards Ceremony for their advocacy of Willert Park Courts/AD Price Courts.

As one of the earliest public housing projects under Roosevelt's newly created US Housing Authority, Willert Park Courts/AD Price Courts is particularly notable for being one of the first public housing developments in New York State developed for African American residents. At the time that Willert Park was being planned and built, Federal policy mandated segregated public housing, and all of Buffalo's proposed housing projects were White-Only. Prominent members of Buffalo's African American community, including the leadership of the Buffalo Urban League, whose members faced some of the most over-crowded conditions in the City, fought hard to bring in this new, modern, affordable housing. By 1940, the Buffalo Housing Authority had built 1,700 units of Whites-Only housing, and the advocates for Willert Park were successful in creating 170 units of housing for Buffalo's Black Community.

Willert Park is also considered noteworthy as an outstanding example of early Modern design in the United States, by noted Buffalo architect Frederick C. Backus. Upon its completion, it was recognized by the Museum of Modern Art as one of Buffalo's eight most noteworthy Modern designs, alongside the Darwin D. Martin House, the Larkin Administration Building, Kleinhan's Music Hall, and the Guaranty Building. It also received rave reviews from New York Times architecture critic Ada Huxtable. The National Register nomination notes that Buffalo's Willert Park Courts were groundbreaking achievements in architecture, urban planning, and landscape architecture. The distinctive bas-relief sculptures depicting scenes of African American life and achievement were purportedly developed in cooperation with the first residents of the complex by sculptors Robert Cronbach and Herbert Ambellen.

Preservation Buffalo Niagara and the Michigan Street Preservation Corporation have taken many necessary steps to save Willert Park Courts/AD Price Courts including participating in the Section 106 process and raising the visibility and importance of this site as it was named one of the "11 Most Endangered Historic Places" in the country as listed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Modernism in America Awards is the only national program that celebrates the people and projects working to preserve, restore and rehabilitate our modern heritage sensitively and productively. The program seeks to advance those preservation efforts; to increase appreciation for the period and to raise awareness of the ongoing threats to modern architecture and design.

The Modernism in America Awards Ceremony, to be held virtually on *Thursday November 12, 2020*. Will also announce 17 more Modernism Award winners during the live event, which will be free and open to the public. Individual registration is available at www.docomomo-us.org/events/modernism-in-america-awards.

For more information, please contact Tia Brown at 852-3300 or tbrown@pbnsaves.org.