

The Weston Historical Society

104 Weston Road

Weston, CT 06883

www.westonhistoricalsociety.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Weston Historical Society receives \$1.5 million
from the Daniel E. Offutt, III Charitable Trust**

WESTON, CT.—The Weston Historical Society is excited to announce that it is the recipient of two major gifts from the Daniel E. Offutt, III Charitable Trust totaling \$1.5 million.

The gifts include a grant of \$500,000 and a grant of \$1 million to the endowment fund. Both gifts will enable the historical society to continue its major restoration of the Coley Homestead, located at 104 Weston Road, and to plan for the future. “We are grateful to the Daniel E. Offutt, III Charitable Trust for their consideration and generosity,” said Leigh Meccay, president of the Weston Historical Society.

“The grant of \$500,000 will specifically and exclusively be used to repair and renovate the Coley barn, carriage house, archives/museum building, and bunkhouse,” said Mrs. Meccay. “Additionally, the grant will be used to assist us with our long-range

plan of providing educational programs, exhibit space, and workshops in these buildings.”

“The Daniel E. Offutt, III Endowment Fund of \$1 million was granted to assist the Society with its operating expenses,” she said. “The challenges of 2020 highlighted the difficulties non-profits face when annual fundraisers could not be held. The Daniel E. Offutt, III Endowment Fund ensures the longevity of this important organization.”

The Weston Historical Society, founded in 1961, is a non-profit that depends on contributions and membership support for its operations and educational programs. The Society is not connected with the Town of Weston and, therefore, does not receive funding from taxpayer dollars.

“We survived 2020, while weathering a year of restrictions that prevented us from holding our on-premises exhibitions, events and fundraisers,” said Mrs. Meccay. “Fundraising remains an important aspect to our functioning, as raised funds support our exhibits, educational programs, events, and the maintenance of the property and buildings.”

Restoration on the Coley House continues, thanks to a prior grant from the Offutt Trust, and a reopening will be announced when the work is complete. The 1841 farmhouse, known as the David Dimon Coley house, is an architecturally significant historic structure that plays a key role in telling the story of Weston’s history. A classical Greek-revival house, the Coley House is unique in comparison to other Greek-revival homes due to its five-bay gable front and is the only example of a Greek-revival five-bay gable front facade in the region. The Coley House was the home of five generations of the Coley family over 130 years.

“We are indebted to Daniel E. Offutt, who loved Weston and its history,” said Mrs. Meccay. Mr. Offutt was born in Oakland, Maryland on August 4, 1931, and made his home on Kettle Creek Road in Weston for more than 30 years in a house he built himself. Mr. Offutt has been described as “metal sculptor, wood worker, farmer, fixer of anything, collector of everything and a good friend.” His interests were many, and one resulted in his moving a Connecticut tobacco barn to his property. To the delight of the community, he displayed his whimsical sculptures on his front lawn. Mr. Offutt served in the U.S. Army and graduated from the University of Maryland and then Columbia University, where he received his MBA. He made his career in New York City as a stock trader and then retired to Weston. Mr. Offutt died on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 2016.

The Society is optimistic about reopening this year, when it plans to present an exhibit on the Roaring Twenties, “Weston Slept While the Nation Roared: Life in the Twenties.” While the buildings remain closed, the outdoors have been enhanced by the placement of new, interpretative signage that enables visitors to take a self-guided tour, revisiting Weston’s agricultural past and learning about one of Weston’s earliest settlers, the Coley family. For more information and to learn about the virtual lectures being offered, please visit the Society’s website at www.westonhistoricalsociety.org.

Image: Coley Homestead.jpg

Image Credit: Weston Historical Society

Image Caption: The Weston Historical Society in Weston, CT is excited to announce that it is the recipient of two major gifts from the Daniel E. Offutt, III Charitable Trust totaling \$1.5 million. The gifts include a grant of \$500,000 and a grant

of \$1 million to the endowment fund. Both gifts will enable the historical society to continue its major restoration of the Coley Homestead, located at 104 Weston Road, and to plan for the future. Learn more about the Weston Historical Society at:
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