



2019-2020 HISTORY AWARDS

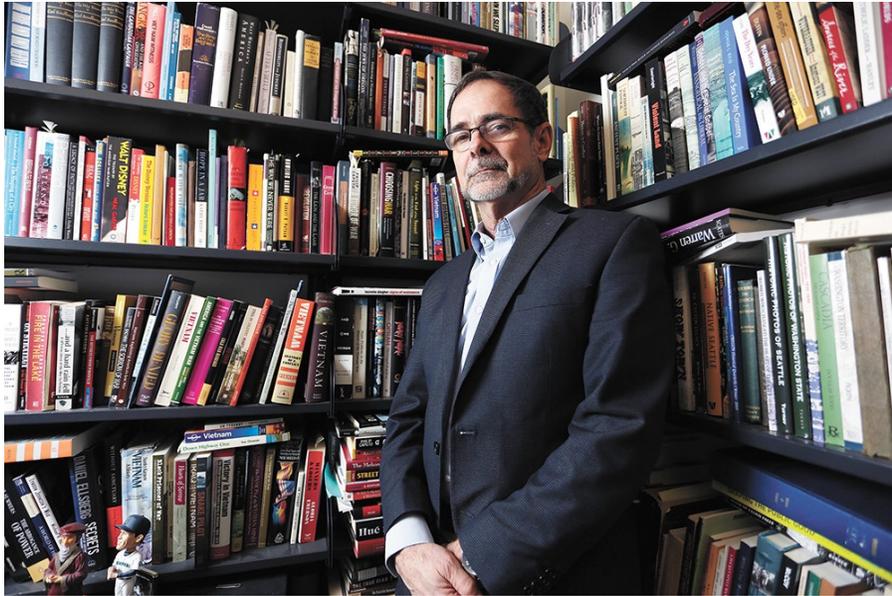
ROBERT GRAY MEDAL

DR. DALE SODEN



The **Robert Gray Medal** is the highest award bestowed by the Washington State Historical Society. It recognizes distinguished and long-term contributions to Pacific Northwest history.

Robert Gray Medal



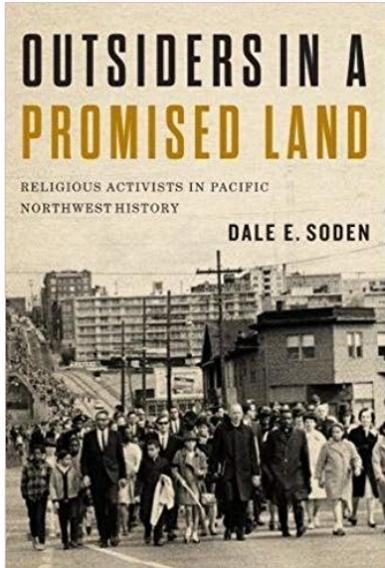
The 2019-2020 Robert Gray Medal is presented to Dr. Dale Soden.

Dr. Dale Soden's research and frequent publications have focused on the ways in which the Pacific Northwest has been significantly influenced politically and socially by individuals who were highly motivated by religious convictions, including the role that African American pastors and churches played in civil rights struggles on the West Coast.

Professor Soden earned a Ph.D. in 1980 from the University of Washington under the supervision of Lewis Saum and Robert Burke. Dr. Soden has taught history at Whitworth University in Spokane for the past thirty years.

Dr. Soden's scholarly research has focused on the role of religion in public life in the Pacific Northwest, beginning in graduate school with a biography of one of Seattle's most significant Protestant ministers; *The Reverend Mark Matthews: An Activist in the Progressive Era* was published in 2000 (University of Washington Press).

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In 2015, Oregon State University published *Outsiders in a Promised Land: Religious Activists in Pacific Northwest History*. This work attempted to make the case that even though religious activists here are undersized in comparison to other parts of the country, they have exercised a significant influence on political, social and cultural issues in the Northwest

Dr. Soden helped establish a special collection for Protestant studies in the Pacific Northwest at the Whitworth library. The collection includes a wealth of material, such as the oral histories and personal papers of pastors, and collections from African American churches, immigrant churches, and Japanese American churches. These collections have provided numerous opportunities for undergraduate students to work with primary sources as they develop their research papers.

Dr. Soden has served as the campus historian for Whitworth University since 1980 and has published two editions of *A Venture of Mind and Heart: An Illustrated History of Whitworth University*. In 2004, he served as advisor for an oral history documentary on the Civilian Conservation Corps in Spokane, and as executive consultant for a film documentary entitled: "In Time of War: The Japanese American Experience of WWII."

When asked what lessons he hopes people learn through observation and the study of history, Dr. Soden replied, "The most important lesson is that history is a complex phenomenon; history should help us nurture our sense of humility by requiring us to see the world through the eyes of people other than ourselves."

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Dr. Soden served three terms on the editorial advisory board of the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*. He has reviews in *PNQ*, *Western Historical Quarterly*, *Journal of American History* and many other journals and publications. He has published numerous articles focusing on prohibition, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, urban revivals in the early 20th century, and the civil rights era in Seattle. He was selected in 2008 by Turner Publishing to provide text and captions for *Historic Photos of Washington State*. Dr. Soden was also invited to contribute to the publication of *None Zone: Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest* as part of a national series.

Outside of his busy schedule as an educator and public historian, he has been a volunteer basketball coach for grade 4-8 students (for more than 30 years!), and likes playing basketball in senior games competitions. He enjoys teaching folk-protest songs, civil rights songs, and labor union songs to his students and getting them to sing. Most notable is Dr. Soden's appreciation for *Roll on Columbia*, a song he's invited his students to sing to him on the phone as they cross the Columbia River!

