



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN TO PRESENT 2008 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
THE ELDER JAMES BLAKE HOUSE, BOSTON (DORCHESTER)**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Elder James Blake House in Dorchester to receive a 2008 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. I commend the Dorchester Historical Society for their commitment to preserving this important landmark.”

Built in 1661, the Elder James Blake house is the oldest surviving house in Boston and the second oldest documented in Massachusetts. The Blake House is located in Dorchester’s Edward Everett Square, and its history is intertwined with two of Dorchester’s most prominent families: the Blakes and the Claps. The house was originally situated on what is now Massachusetts Avenue, but was moved to Columbia Road in 1896 by the Dorchester Historical Society (DHS) to prevent its demolition. The recent preservation project by the DHS restored and stabilized the exterior of the Blake House, preserving its rare and very early timber-frame construction. Dendrochronology (tree ring dating) confirmed the house’s 1661 construction date. This project was remarkably inclusive of the surrounding community; as new discoveries were made during the construction process, the DHS invited schools and other community organizations to visit to educate the Dorchester community about the importance of this significant historic building. The Blake House is a Local Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Secretary Galvin will present the awards at an early evening ceremony on Thursday, May 29, 2008 at the Massachusetts Archives Building at 220 Morrissey Blvd., Dorchester. The Blake House restoration project is one of 11 projects and individuals to be honored.

This is the 30th year of MHC’s Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission’s programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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