

CWC Press Release:

Cincinnati Woman's Club Hosts John Hancock, UC Architecture Professor Emeritus, and Chair of Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks.

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The Cincinnati Women's Club (cincinnatiwomensclub.com) hosted an informative lecture on November 8th featuring the newest highlights from the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, Ohio's only UNESCO World Heritage Site. Professor John Hancock shared his work as Chair of World Heritage Ohio, a group that works to inscribe ancient American Indian earthworks in Ohio on the UNESCO World Heritage List. He is a renowned architect professor, known for interpreting and creatively sharing these 2000 year old Hopewell Indian civilizations through electronic reconstruction of burial and earthwork sites across Ohio.

The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (www.hopewellearthworks.org) was awarded the coveted UNESCO World Heritage site in 2023, and is Ohio's only such designation. UNESCO site designations are awarded based on three criteria – universal outstanding value, exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition, and a masterpiece of Human creative genius. The sites, spanning Chillicothe, Newark, and Ft. Ancient, met these criteria to receive the UNESCO World Heritage Site accreditation.

The sites offer glimpses into the significant complexity used to construct and maintain ceremonial earthworks by the Hopewell people, an ancient culture living in what is now southern Ohio. The massive earthworks are considered unique landscape architecture - constructed with no modern tools - using precise geometry in squares, circles, and octagons. The presence of tools, pottery, and jewelry made from unique materials suggests a large civilization with the ability to travel and communicate across tribes. Most impressive, the Hopewell's use of astronomy at a very early time, aligned the earthworks with various phases of the moon and sun, giving us an understanding of the tribal ability to use complex thought and design a connection with the celestial world.

"I found Professor Hancock's lecture to be enlightening," said CWC member Mary Kuramoto. "Understanding how ancient people created these structures gives us clues into the past. There was purpose and planning within the Hopewell community. It is encouraging that the UNESCO site designation will continue to spur education for future generations."

The Cincinnati Woman's Club is dedicated to bringing significant and unique lectures to CWC members and their guests, encouraging lifelong learning and enrichment. Understanding these ancient cultures across Ohio - especially as a new UNESCO World Heritage site – is one way to appreciate the complexity of civilization from earliest history to current time.

Established in 1894, the Cincinnati Woman's Club is a welcoming place for women. Our members enjoy opportunities that enrich lives through service to our community, educational programs, and lasting friendships.

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