\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 12/16/2024\*\*

**Michigan Maritime Museum Kicks Off 2025 Lecture Series with Coast Guard SPARS**

**South Haven, MI –** On Wednesday, January 15, 2025, the Michigan Maritime Museum will kick off their new Lecture Series with Tri-Cities Historical Museum Assistant Curator Joshua Simon presenting *Best Dressed Women in the World Today: A Style Examination of the United States Coast Guard’s SPARS*. Simon will examine how consumerism, especially associated with dress, and gender were integral components of the SPARS’ experience as enlisted service members, sometimes in contradictory ways. The United States Coast Guard initiated the SPARS program during World War II putting women recruits under military direction in this reserve corp. More than 10,000 women volunteered for service between 1942 and 1946. “The SPARS are an integral part of United States maritime history. Their groundbreaking service significantly expanded women's roles in the Coast Guard. By studying the function of gender and dress, we can better understand the experiences of women enlisted in the SPARS,” says Simon. The presentation will also showcase Tri-Cities Historical Museum's newest exhibit, *Ship Shape Sisters: The Women of the Coast Guard SPARS*. The stories of some specific SPARS from Michigan and beyond will be highlighted as well in this engaging lecture.

Joshua D. Simon is the Assistant Curator of Exhibits at the Tri-Cities Historical Museum in Grand Haven, Michigan. He also manages the Museum's collection and is an independent researcher. His research has examined a variety of subjects related to fashion history, including a revival of the Gibson Girl aesthetic in the mid-twentieth century, the style of former First Lady Betty Ford, and sartorial aspects of depictions of Saint Sebastian.

This lecture is the first of the newest lecture series and programs in the Museum’s 2025 theme *Whispers Across the Water* that will showcase minority contributions to Great Lakes maritime history and heritage.

This lecture series is made possible thanks to the Nielsen-Wells Grant Fund and Mike & Susan Smith. Part I of this Lectures Series will occur once a month through April and begin at 6:30 PM in the Museum’s R.B. Annis Gallery & Exhibit Hall. Tickets are free for Museum members and $10 for non-members. For more information about the Museum’s events, please visit: <https://www.michiganmaritimemuseum.org/events/>.

**Event Details
Lecture Series- Best Dressed Women in the World Today: A Style Examination of the United States Coast Guard’s SPARS
Date:** Wednesday, January 15, 2025 **Time:** 6:30 – 7:30 pm **Location:** 260 Dyckman Avenue, South Haven, MI 49090 **Cost:** Free to members/$10 non-members

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