



ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY
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2026 Historic Preservation Commission Award Winners Honored

LEONARDTOWN, MD – In celebration of Historic Preservation Month, the Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) presented the annual Historic Preservation Awards. Established in 1999, these awards recognize outstanding achievement and excellence in the field of historic preservation in St. Mary's County.

The CSMC and Historic Preservation Commission are pleased to announce the 2026 recipients:

Preservation Service Award – Awarded to Karen Stone, Museum Division Manager for the St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks, who researched and authored the first-ever book on the Black Diamond Disaster, *Shipwreck on the Potomac: Disaster in Pursuit of Lincoln's Killer*. Ms. Stone's book brings this story to light, exploring a long-overlooked chapter of St. Mary's County history.

Preservation Project Award – Awarded to Historic Sotterley, which shares the history and stories of the site from the early 1700s through the 1950s through its extant structures. The organization recently relocated and restored a small tenant farmhouse from a previously owned adjacent property onto its current grounds. The farmhouse helps interpret the post-slavery transition period, when hired tenant labor was prevalent on farms throughout the region.

Preservation Project Award – Awarded to Jocelyn Copeland, who spearheaded the production of an educational pop-up museum experience for the 59th Annual U.S. Oyster Festival. The exhibit highlighted the rich history and vibrant community of the region's oyster industry and watermen culture. Artifacts were secured on loan through collaboration with the Calvert Marine Museum, the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab, and generous local watermen.

Preservation Project Award – Awarded to KT Harris, who produced an immersive video experience highlighting the history of "The Dancing Molly" and the "Oyster Wars" in Maryland and Virginia. The exhibit quickly became one of the most talked-about additions to the festival, engaging more than 8,000 visitors and offering a meaningful, hands-on connection to the area's maritime heritage.

Awards were presented during the CSMC business meeting on May 12, 2026. A recording of the awards presentation is available online at www.stmaryscountymd.gov/HPC and on the SMCG YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/@StMarysCoGov.

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