



VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Story of Virginia

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Virginia Historical Society Honors Nine with Special Awards Winners from Across the State Include Students, Educators, Authors, Historians, and Volunteers

Richmond, VA —At a luncheon on July 13, the Virginia Historical Society (VHS) presented awards to nine individuals who have made significant contributions to research, education, and the mission of the Society.

“History has always been one of mankind’s greatest tools,” said board chairman and interim President and CEO of the VHS John R. Nelson. “It humbles us, inspires us, helps us understand the present, and provides the key to the future. Above all, history is meant to be shared. The individuals here today understand that. Whether through research, writing, teaching, or volunteering, they have helped bring history to others in new and exciting ways.”

Samuel Lichtman, a student at George H. Moody Middle School in Henrico County, was presented the Anne R. Worrell Middle School Student Award. This award is given to a student who exemplifies distinction in historical research and scholarship in middle school. The award is named in honor of Charlottesville resident Anne Worrell, a former member of the board of trustees, current honorary vice chairman, and long-time VHS supporter. For his project, Sam researched and developed a website on the cultural exchange between Virginia Indians and the English settlers at Jamestown and other early seventeenth-century Virginia settlements. In the process, he interviewed historians and museum professionals. His bibliography lists a number of primary sources, including early accounts by John Smith, Gabriel Archer, and William Strachey.

The Bobby Chandler High School Student Award was presented to Kelsey Vita, a student at Rockbridge County High School. Made possible by the Kip Kephart Foundation, this award is given to a secondary school student who demonstrates intelligence, creativity, and research skills using primary source materials. Kelsey received the award for her AP Government class paper, “The Marshall Court’s Establishment of a Strong Central Government.” In her paper, Kelsey analyzed a number of cases, including *Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, *Cohens v. Virginia*, and *Martin v. Hunter’s Lessee*, to explore the establishment and expansion of the Supreme Court’s power of judicial review.

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Kathryn K. M. Hershberger, a sixth-grade teacher at George H. Moody Middle School, was presented with the Brenton S. Halsey Teaching Excellence Award. This award alternates annually between elementary and secondary school teachers. Ms. Hershberger is a mentor, trainer, and leader at her school. This year, she started a National History Day club at Moody, and two of her students participated at the state finals. She loves history and in her spare time works as a historical interpreter at Henricus Historical Park. According to Ms. Hershberger's supervisor, "her passion for history and for teaching is reflected in everything she does." The social studies specialist for Henrico County adds that she turns "sixth-grade students into historians."

The William M. E. Rachal Award was presented to Dr. Jeff Broadwater, a professor of history in the School of Humanities at Barton College. Honoring the long-time editor of the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, the Rachal Award was established in 1985 to recognize the overall best article to appear in the journal. This year, the committee gave the award to Dr. Broadwater for his article entitled "James Madison and the Constitution: Reassessing the 'Madison Problem,'" which appeared in volume 123, number 3, of the *Virginia Magazine*. The prize committee commented, "we thought [the article] was beautifully written, persuasively argued, and significantly added to our understanding of that complex political thinker."

The Richard Slatten Award for Excellence in Virginia Biography was presented to Diane Kiesel for her book, *She Will Bring Us Home: Dr. Dorothy Boulding Ferebee, Civil Rights Pioneer*. In 1998, the estate of Kathleen Littlejohn Slatten made a generous bequest, in memory of her son, to The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia. In 2012, family friend Edgar MacDonald established the Slatten-MacDonald Fund at the Community Foundation to complement the support the Society receives from the Richard Slatten Endowment for Virginia History. In partnership with the careful stewardship of The Community Foundation, the award encourages and recognizes distinguished contributions to Virginia biography. Ms. Kiesel is an acting New York State Supreme Court Justice, presiding over domestic violence cases in the Bronx County criminal term. In *She Can Bring Us Home*, she examines the life and accomplishments of an under-appreciated champion for women's advocacy and racial justice. Often poignant, the book chronicles the life of a woman who made choices that sacrificed personal happiness for her profession and life's passion: civil rights.

The Patricia Rodman and Martin Kirwan King Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Maryan Smith. Named in honor of Tish and Martin King, the volunteer of the year award was established in 1994. Ms. Smith has been a VHS volunteer since 2007, when she and her mother donated the business collection of her father, Verlin W. Smith Sr., to the newly opened Reynolds Center for Virginia Business History. As a lifelong resident of Fairfax County, she has utilized her personal and professional connections to help the VHS fulfill its mission in northern Virginia. In 2015 she established the VHS/George Mason University History Department NoVA Banner Lecture Series. Ms. Smith is also facilitating the identification and capture of oral histories and private collections in the northern counties.

Three VHS employees were presented the 2015 President’s Award for Excellence: Caroline Legros, School Program Coordinator; Elaine McFadden, Senior Grants Officer; and Laura Stoner, Associate Archivist for Business Collections. The President’s Award for Excellence is given for outstanding performance and special achievement. The recipients were nominated by their VHS peers.

John R. Nelson concluded the luncheon by remarking: “These individuals have produced outstanding work that reflects the mission of the VHS. The VHS could not accomplish its goal of linking past with present and inspiring future generations without the passion and dedication of the people we recognized today.”

The Virginia Historical Society (VHS)—a privately funded nonprofit organization—collects, preserves, and interprets the Commonwealth’s history, linking past with present to inspire future generations. The VHS is located at 428 North Boulevard in Richmond’s Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. for the library. For more information about the VHS call (804) 358-4901, visit vahistorical.org, or connect with the VHS on Facebook and Twitter.

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