



Southern Maryland National Heritage Area

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Executive Director of Southern Maryland National Heritage Area Receives 2023 Best of Maryland Leadership Award

Hughesville, MD – Lucille W. Walker, the executive director of the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, was presented with the 2023 Best of Maryland Leadership Award (The Gearheart Professional Award) by Preservation Maryland during the November 2nd award ceremony. The Best of Maryland awards shine a spotlight on individuals and organizations who are doing the essential work of protecting the places that make Maryland a special place to live, work, explore, and celebrate.

The Gearheart Professional Award is presented to “an individual who has demonstrated extraordinary leadership, knowledge, and creativity” according to Preservation Maryland in its award announcement, further noting that “Lucille Walker led the charge to make Southern Maryland a National Heritage Area by speaking on the power of place in heritage tourism and why Southern Maryland informs the nation’s story.”

Nicholas Redding, Preservation Maryland’s President, stated in the video accompanying the presentation of the award that Walker “demonstrated extraordinary leadership” and that “her passion, dedication, and commitment to inclusion made this Herculean effort to establish a national heritage area a major success.” Mr. Redding further noted that Governor Wes Moore “praised both Walker’s work and tenacity” and the “power of history to inform our future” during the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area launch in May of this year. Mr. Redding concluded that “for this work, and the increased resources it will attract to preserve some of our state’s oldest and richest heritage, we are proud to present this award to Lucille Walker.”

Senator Ben Cardin(D-MD) was presented with the Best of Maryland President’s Award for lifetime achievement during the same ceremony. Ms. Walker states that “Senator Cardin was the lead sponsor on the legislation that established the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, and that without his leadership, this newly designated national heritage area would not have happened.” Ms. Walker also says that she is “particularly grateful to receive this acknowledgement from Preservation Maryland because it is an organization willing to take the lead in many important projects for the good of the community and for Maryland.”

Authorized by the U.S. Congress in 2022, the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area includes Calvert, Charles, St. Mary’s, and southern Prince George’s County. The Southern Maryland National Heritage Area operates under the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. For more information, [visit our website here.](#)

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