



## SOMERSET COUNTY HISTORICAL TRUST

### *Tributes*



#### Carolyn Fitzgerald

This year we mourn the loss of Carolyn Fitzgerald, who served on the Trust board for the past 20 years, first as corresponding secretary and later as membership director. Carolyn had been gamely attending board meetings for the past few years while fighting cancer; a sudden deadly brain tumor took her life in days, giving no one a chance to say goodbye.

Carolyn was the last surviving member of Gale Yerges' special posse; these ladies could plan and execute the annual meeting over a few iced teas without ruffling a feather, and that was back in the days before we engaged caterers and bartenders, and volunteers made all the food. Carolyn didn't say much at meetings, but she was the one Gale relied upon to step into her presidential shoes when Gale left for summer camp. A professional nurse for 40 years, she did not have much use for the computer, but somehow managed to keep track of the Trust's membership for years using sheets of Avery address labels that were periodically printed out for her.

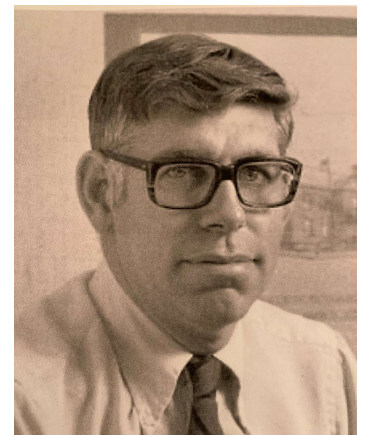
Carolyn was active in her community, but not many knew her as a quiet preservationist. For nearly 40 years, she and her husband Bob, together with a few other members of the Fitzgerald and Wilson families, have taken care of the cemetery at All Saints Church at Monie, in Venton, where many of Bob and Carolyn's ancestors are buried. Years ago, when church and diocese support for the cemetery ended, Bob and Carolyn cleared the graves and the surrounding fields. Bob continued to do heavy mowing for many years. Carolyn funded grass cutting around the graves, while she cleared debris -- dead flower arrangements, trash, windfall sticks and leaves. Even when ill, she continued her work until a week or so before her death. If you drive by the cemetery on Venton Road one day soon, take in its beauty and think of Carolyn.



#### Jack Graham

This year also saw the passing of one of our most ardent preservationists, historians, and community activists - Jack Graham, who numbered among our most knowledgeable resources and valued friends, left us an example of dedication, determination and integrity.

Born in Philadelphia 88 years ago, Jack dedicated his life to his large family and his professional passion for architecture. At age 23 he designed the last working American lighthouse at Charleston Harbor. As a partner in the large Eastern Shore firm of George, Miles and Buhr, he designed over 600 projects, many of them historic, including the Inn at



Perry Cabin, Delmarva Discovery Center, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, Pemberton Hall, Poplar Hill Mansion, and Nassawango Iron Furnace, where he was ‘Mayor of Furnace Town.’ He received the President’s Award from Preservation Maryland in 2010 and served on many historic and community boards. Some of his fondest days were spent at his Cellar House Farm on the Pocomoke River.

In 2000 he took on the years-long design of the addition to Williams Conquest, a 1730s plantation house in Somerset County. With his decades of focus on historical architectural detail, he blended old and new, and gave us a lasting physical connection with our county’s past. Though we will miss Jack, his presence remains in every corner of the historic old home.



Ian & Elinor Fleming

Thank you Ian and Elinor Fleming for your vision, courage and tenacity in revitalizing the Washington Inn & Tavern (previously the Washington Hotel).

Your work over the last 12 years has made Princess Anne a destination and brought much joy to us all.






## 2022 Preservation Awards

Each year the Somerset County Historical Trust recognizes outstanding preservation projects and the stories behind them. Private and/or public funding supported the projects being recognized, and the Somerset County Historical Trust is dedicated to helping preserve those properties.

### Outstanding Restoration of an Historic Property

This award honors excellence in the restoration or rehabilitation of a dilapidated, neglected, or damaged historic property while preserving the essential features significant to its architectural and cultural integrity.

-  Woody Howard – Master Craftsman
-  Dr. Candice Ridlon – The William T. Tull House
-  Jack Donohue and Dixie Sterling – Watkins Point Farm

### Community Stewardship

This award honors individuals for their extraordinary leadership and dedication to the preservation, restoration and enhancement of structures, streetscapes, character and culture of historic districts in Somerset County.

-  Warner Sumpter – Princess Anne, MD

# OUTSTANDING RESTORATION



Woody Howard  
Master Craftsman

Woody Howard is one of the most loved and respected fine craftsmen on the Eastern Shore. According to Woody's journal, he has worked on 16 "place-named" homes in Maryland and Virginia and countless other historic properties.



He has been instrumental in the renovation and upkeep of our own Teackle Mansion in Princess Anne.

A native of Westover, Maryland, Woody is the fourth-generation cabinetmaker in his family, starting with his great grandfather Weldon Nelson. Woody's father Elwood Howard taught him the

fundamentals of carpentry, but when Woody was 19, he visited Colonial Williamsburg and became totally obsessed with historic design, technique and craftsmanship.

Since then, he and his wife Joyce have returned to Williamsburg countless times to refine his skills and knowledge. He is ever-famous for crawling under porches and eaves with tape measure, folding rule on his hip, camera and notepad to jot down anything that interests him ... then regaling dear friends with pictures of unique cornices, stairways and trim.

He has worked beside some of the great Colonial Williamsburg scholars and craftsmen such as historic architect Mark Wender, Ed Chappel, the former director of architectural research, Susan Buck, historic paint analyst, Stephen Marder, conservator, Jesse O'Brien, historical roofer, and of course, his good friend, architectural historian Paul Touart.

We thank Woody for his years of work, for his talent, and we are especially fortunate that he has passed on his passion and skills to his son Chase. As Chase puts it, "We both feel a strong need for all of these places to last long into the future."

# OUTSTANDING RESTORATION



## Dr. Candice Ridlon The William T. Tull House

Dr. Ridlon is a full professor of mathematics at UMES, with a lifelong passion for old houses. Before coming to Somerset County, she preserved four historical properties in Utah, Georgia and Maine. One of her two homes in Maine was built in 1683. When she moved to Maryland for a university position in 2008, she found an array of antique homes from which to choose and in 2009 settled on the William T. Tull House in Westover. This National Register property was in serious need of repair but had one overriding defect – it sat 12 feet from the Crisfield Highway.

The Tull House was built in 1860 by a local merchant on the corner of two small roads. It faced Wedda Scott Road which at the time crossed the Crisfield Road east-to-west. Over time, the Crisfield Road was widened into a highway and the house's frontage road was removed and replaced by a post office.

Dr. Ridlon had already dealt this type of problem with one of her previous homes. Her two-story house in Westover came with 5 acres of land, and its reasonable purchase price presented what was, to her, an obvious opportunity. She simply had the building lifted, rotated 90 degrees to face the road, and moved back 200 feet!



But her work had just begun. Significant termite damage and rot required removal and replacement of the entire kitchen floor. Then the two large chimney stacks, which had crumbled, needed to be removed and rebuilt.

Owing to the help of her 6 children and tireless labor on her own part, Dr. Ridlon now owns one of the largest, most architecturally significant structure in Westover and is to be commended for preserving another of the gems of Somerset County.

# OUTSTANDING RESTORATION



## Jack Donohue and Dixie Sterling Watkins Point Farm

Jack Donohue and Dixie Sterling are being recognized for their renovation of the historic Watkins Point Farm in Marion Station.



When this three-part house on the edge of a marsh overlooking the Pocomoke Sound was nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Properties in 2002, the photographs accompanying the application showed neglect and desolation. A stove pipe bit into late 18th century paneling and a huge wood stove

blocked the fireplace in the original c1790 sawn-log one-room house. In the main house, a handsome gable-entry Greek Revival, the ceilings and plaster had sagged and crumbled.

Jack Donohue likes to hunt and had been coming to the area for years. He'd had his eye on the Watkins Point property and tried to buy it, but with no luck. When the owner was ready to sell at last, she asked that her family home be saved. Jack promised, and late in 2001, the property was his.

Neither Jack nor Dixie Sterling, his companion, knew much about old houses. Dixie is a Crisfield native who can trace her roots to Crisfield's original settlers and -- a recent discovery -- to the John Horsey who built the original log house. They learned in time that despite its bedraggled state, the house was remarkably well-preserved. The Greek Revival molding in the main house was virtually intact, and under a single coat of paint discovered the parlor mantle had been marbled. When a ceiling was removed in the log house, dentil molding was found above the 18th century paneling, and beaded rafters were revealed.

They learned all they could about restoration and sought out experts to help them fill in the gaps. Jack often said that it would have been easier to burn the house down and start over, but he persevered. Dixie's major contribution was in her choice of colors, fabrics, and furnishings. She educated herself about period details, and has created interiors that look lived-in, as if they evolved over generations. Grace notes appear everywhere. From a preservation point of view, the most remarkable is a small bath installed in what was once a porch attached to the sawn-log house. The bath is elegantly appointed, but the wall beside the commode is simply the sawn logs -- probably first growth cypress, chinked with clay and horsehair, built by Dixie's sixth great-grandfather in 1790.

# COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP



## Warner Sumpter Princess Anne, Maryland

Warner Sumpter is being recognized for the stewardship he provides in preserving the physical fabric of some of our County's historic buildings, for the tireless service he offers to organizations that tell the story of the County's past, and for his unfailing energy on behalf of the County's future -- its students.

In 2003, in anticipation of retirement, Warner chose the Teackle Gate House in Princess Anne after looking at nearly 100 historic houses all over the state. It took him ten years and three more retirement ceremonies before he drew his last paycheck. Now, he works harder than ever.



Warner is a natural leader, and since moving to Somerset County he's continued to fill leadership roles. Appointed and later elected to the Somerset County Board of Education, he served as President until Governor Hogan appointed him to the State Board of Education, where he is still active as past President. He chaired the Maryland Association of Boards of Education; he continues to lead the Maryland Veterans Home Commission. Within the County, he's active with the American Legion as Treasurer, Vice President of the Historical Society, with the Tourism Commission, with the ECI Advisory Board ... the list goes on.

But when Warner signs on to an organization, it is not for a title. Warner is a foot soldier. The Teackle Mansion is in his back yard, and he's on the board of both the Historical Society and Friends of Teackle Mansion. That means he's endlessly moving tables and chairs, cutting grass, killing mosquitos before outdoor events, hauling furniture for Somerset Choice, and setting up his legendary bar. His understanding of construction processes was valuable to the Friends board when he encouraged tackling multiple projects simultaneously rather than in sequence to speed the renovation process, and he was the Friends' eyes on the job during the recent roof repairs. He's first on the scene when a tree falls; the tree is gone, and repairs are arranged within hours. Thirty years' growth of choking vines behind the Mansion were recently removed thanks to his generous gift.

Active with the Burgess Rural Living Foundation since its formation, Warner's version of ACTIVE involved power washing and moving heavy rusty objects. As vestryman at St. Andrews, he's provided wise counsel to three rectors, but his greatest gift to the church has been the time he has spent overseeing the physical well-being of the church, parish house and cemetery. And Warner's support of the veterans' community at American Legion Post 94 doesn't stop at being treasurer; he's on shrimp duty most Friday nights.

Warner's passion is history, and his adopted community gives him scope. He chaired the War of 1812 Commemoration and has organized occasional exhibits of historic weapons from his collection at the Mansion. He brought reenactors from Ft. McHenry to enhance events at the Mansion, and he shares his extensive military library with anyone who's interested. He'll jump on any opportunity to interest young people in the history of their county and state and sees the preservation of our historic structures as a means toward that end.