Virginia Conference Lay Organization Wins Three Honors in Phase 2 of SEDLO History Initiative

BY Bro. Xavier Douglas, SEDLO Historiographer

The Virginia Conference Lay Organization was named the winner of Phase 2 of the Second Episcopal District Lay Organization's (SEDLO) History Initiative during the 2026 SEDLO Convention, held October 21–23 in Wilmington, North Carolina. Virginia earned recognition in three categories: **Best Overall Display, Most Creative Display, and Best Content.**

Phase 2 invited conference lay organizations to bring their histories to life through displays highlighting the people, activities, and accomplishments that have shaped their service. Exhibits were required to include current and former presidents, leadership dates, members who served beyond the conference level, significant events, and best practices. Clergy and lay component leaders served as judges.

Virginia's recognition reflects its contribution to an important districtwide effort to preserve the legacy of lay leadership and ensure that the stories of those who built and strengthened the organization remain available to future generations. The Virginia Conference Lay Organization is led by President Valerie Gowens Terry, with Donna Gowens-Parker serving as historiographer.

The yearlong history initiative was announced by Sister D. Faye Conley, the immediate past SEDLO Director of Lay Activities, during the 2026 Mid-Winter SEDLO Breakfast. The initiative seeks to preserve an accurate record of lay organization history at the local church, conference, and Episcopal District levels by documenting SEDLO's activities and accomplishments from 1956 through 2026.

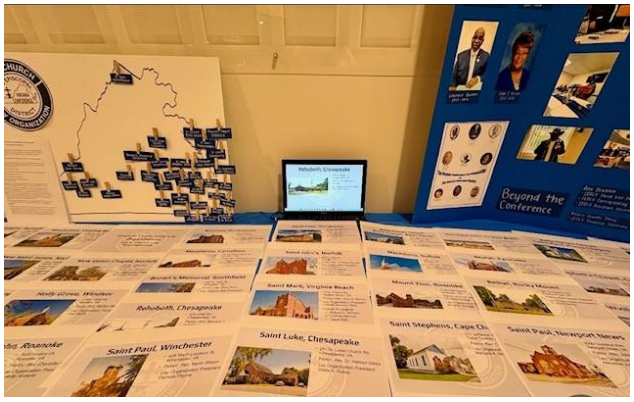
The initiative also addresses an urgent concern: As founding members and subsequent leaders pass away, their knowledge and experiences may be lost unless they are intentionally recorded and preserved.

Phase 1 began on February 13, 2026, with a celebration honoring the 10 SEDLO presidents during the annual breakfast. Phase 2 built on that tribute by focusing on the histories and contributions of the conference lay organizations.

All conference lay organizations are encouraged to begin collecting and preserving historical information and records for future projects. Photographs, meeting minutes, programs, reports, leadership rosters, and personal reflections from past and present members can help tell each conference's story. By gathering these materials now, we can preserve our shared legacy, fill gaps in our history, and ensure that the contributions of our lay members are remembered for generations to come.

Congratulations to President Valerie Gowens Terry, Historiographer Donna Gowens-Parker, and the Virginia Conference Lay Organization on these three honors! Appreciation is also extended to every participating conference for helping preserve the record of faithful service, leadership, and commitment throughout the Second Episcopal District. Together, these efforts honor those who paved the way and provide a foundation for those who will carry the work forward.

Submitted by:
Xavier Douglas
SEDLO Historiographer


Beyond the Conference
Rehoboth, Chesapeake
Saint Luke, Chesapeake
Saint Paul, Winchester




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