

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Match for Mary! Donors can have double the impact on efforts to preserve the Mary Washington Monument**  
*Washington Heritage Museums announces matching gift available through Dec. 31.*

Fredericksburg, VA—Oct. 2, 2024— Washington Heritage Museums is more than halfway toward its goal of raising \$1.6 million to preserve the Mary Washington Monument site in historic Downtown Fredericksburg. The organization announced today that three generous donors will match all gifts made through Dec. 31, 2024, up to a combined total of \$75,000.

“Now is the perfect time to join our generous community of donors, as this match will help keep up the strong momentum we’ve seen for preserving this iconic Fredericksburg site, home to the first American monument commissioned by women to honor a woman,” said Anne Darron, executive director of Washington Heritage Museums.

Washington Heritage Museums is raising money to improve the grounds around the 130-year-old monument, which honors the mother of George Washington. The site is part of Fredericksburg’s historic Washington Avenue corridor, just a short walk from the home where Mary Washington lived out her final years, and Kenmore, the mansion where daughter Betty Washington Lewis lived.

The monument property will be enhanced to create a park-like atmosphere, where visitors can come to reflect, to visit Meditation Rock, where Mary once prayed for her son and his troops during the American Revolution, and to see the adjoining Caretaker’s Lodge, which will be renovated to welcome visitors and preserve Mary’s story.

The entire site will be made more accessible to visitors, with pathways that can be traversed by individuals with varying abilities, and interpretive signage to educate visitors about the site from sunrise to sunset.

To date, the capital campaign, chaired by Kelly Johnson and Rennie McDaniel, has raised more than \$800,000 toward its goal. Johnson and McDaniel, together with honorary chair Gail Braxton, have contributed the \$75,000 matching gift as a challenge, in the hopes that the campaign can reach the \$1 million mark by the end of 2024.

“We’ve had so many conversations over the course of this campaign with area residents who feel strongly about the importance of preserving this monument to Mary so that future generations can know her story,” said Johnson. “It truly is an honor to be able to steward this remarkable woman’s legacy in this way, and we welcome those who haven’t joined us yet to take advantage of the match and help us toward our goal.”

“Mary Washington’s life is a story of perseverance, as she lost her husband and soldiered on to raise five young children in a world where women had almost no voice,” said McDaniel. “The work we are funding at the monument will ensure future generations have a place to come learn about the woman who raised the Father of our Country.”

*To learn more or to donate, visit <https://bit.ly/marywashingtonmonument>*

### **About Washington Heritage Museums**

Washington Heritage Museums (WHM) owns and manages four 18<sup>th</sup>-century house museums in downtown Fredericksburg, Va.: Mary Washington House, Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop, Rising Sun Tavern and St. James’ House. In 2023, the organization assumed ownership of the Mary Washington Monument and adjoining Caretaker’s Lodge, allowing it to tell a unique story about America’s Revolutionary history and how it has been remembered. WHM is an active organization of several hundred members located in Virginia and throughout the nation, dedicated to growing the support that will ensure the relevance of these legacies for generations to come. To learn more visit [washingtonheritagemuseums.org](http://washingtonheritagemuseums.org).

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Anne Darron

Executive Director, Mary Washington Heritage Museums

[adarron@washingtonheritagemuseums.org](mailto:adarron@washingtonheritagemuseums.org)

540-373-5630