

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Washington Heritage Museums Receives Transformative Gift from National Society Daughters of the American Revolution**

### ***A Historic Partnership Continues to Shape the Future of the Mary Washington Monument***

*Fredericksburg, VA — September 3, 2025* — Washington Heritage Museums (WHM) is honored to announce a generous \$100,000 gift from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), a contribution that will significantly advance WHM’s vision of creating an accessible and welcoming landscape at the Mary Washington Monument.

This most recent gift is part of a remarkable \$255,000 in total support from DAR toward WHM’s \$1.6 million capital campaign to preserve and enhance the monument site and honor the enduring legacy of Mary Ball Washington, mother of George Washington. The campaign, led by co-chairs Kelly Johnson and Rennie McDaniel and honorary chair Gail Braxton, has been fueled by renewed and longstanding partnerships—none more longstanding than the one with DAR.

The gift was recently presented to the organization by Ginnie Sebastian Storage, an area native who recently was elevated to President General of the DAR. Previously, Mrs. Storage represented the DAR as First Vice President General by delivering the organization’s greetings to a crowd gathered for “A Monumental Celebration: honoring America’s First Mother” an event hosted by WHM on May 4 at the Mary Washington Monument.

“We are deeply grateful to the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution for their steadfast support and shared commitment to preserving the legacy of Mary Washington,” said Anne Darron, executive director of Washington Heritage Museums. “This gift is not only transformative—it is a continuation of a relationship that spans more than a century and reflects the enduring values of patriotism, remembrance, and civic stewardship.”

The bond between DAR and the Mary Washington Monument is historic and profound. At its very first meeting on October 11, 1890, DAR pledged to “make it our first work to aid in the completion of the monument to the mother of Washington.” That promise was fulfilled with extraordinary generosity, as DAR members raised nearly three-fourths of the \$11,500 needed to complete the monument, which was dedicated in 1894 with President Grover Cleveland in attendance.

Today, WHM is proud to carry forward that legacy with the support of DAR and other partners. The organization is now entering the action phase of its site revitalization,

partnering with FIELD Design, led by landscape designer Sally Harman, to create a plan that includes ADA-accessible pathways, slope stabilization and improved security, enhanced historical interpretation, and hardscaped areas for small events in a park-like setting. Interior design improvements to the Caretaker's Lodge have been selected by Andrea Hickman Meleski of A.HICKMAN Design.

WHM assumed ownership of the Mary Washington Monument and adjoined Caretaker's Lodge in 2023, when the City of Fredericksburg transferred stewardship to the nonprofit. The site, where Mary Ball Washington was buried in 1789 near "Meditation Rock," remains a sacred place of reflection and remembrance. WHM also manages four historic house museums in Fredericksburg, including Mary Washington's final home.

In recent months, WHM responded swiftly to vandalism at the monument, working with local experts to restore the site. As part of its long-term vision, WHM is also enhancing security to protect this national treasure.

"The Daughters of the American Revolution have been—and continue to be—essential partners in our mission," said Darron. "Their generosity and dedication inspire us, and we look forward to continuing this collaboration as we steward the legacy of Mary Washington for generations to come."

### **About Washington Heritage Museums**

Washington Heritage Museums (WHM) owns and manages four 18th-century house museums in downtown Fredericksburg, Va.: Mary Washington House, Hugh Mercer Apothecary Shop, Rising Sun Tavern, and St. James' House. In 2023, WHM assumed ownership of the Mary Washington Monument and Caretaker's Lodge, expanding its ability to tell the story of America's Revolutionary history and its remembrance. WHM is supported by hundreds of members across Virginia and the nation, united in preserving these legacies for future generations. Learn more at [washingtonheritagemuseums.org](https://www.washingtonheritagemuseums.org).

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