A MONUMENTAL VISION

The Mary Washington Monument is the product of years of diligent efforts by American women, men and statesmen to honor the mother of the first US president, George Washington. Shortly after Mary Ball Washington’s death in 1789, Congress declared that a monument be erected in her honor. For decades, multiple groups worked through starts and stops to bring this vision to life. More than a century later, today’s monument was dedicated in 1894.

Washington Heritage Museums has taken on the stewardship of this important national symbol. We invite you to become part of the next chapter of Mary Washington’s legacy as WHM strives to preserve and improve the Mary Washington Monument site so that more people can learn the story of America’s First Mother. It is truly A Monumental Vision: a campaign for the future.

WHM is funded by museum admissions, grants, memberships, sponsorships and donations. WHM does not receive ongoing city, state or federal funding. Your partnership is critical to the success of this campaign, and ultimately to the preservation of the Mary Washington Monument site and its educational programs.
Mary Washington was a remarkable woman. Not only the mother who shaped the man that became the first president of the United States, George Washington, she was an independent-thinking trailblazer. Mary became an entrepreneur at 35 when her husband Augustine died. To protect her children’s inheritance, she took over the sole management of the family farm with the help of their enslaved people.

Facing significant losses, Mary Washington was herself orphaned as a child and then became a young single mother upon the early death of her husband, Augustine. Though customary at the time, she did not remarry even though she had five young children and two step-children from Augustine. George, her eldest born, was just 11 years old at the time.

Mary Ball Washington instilled strong morals and values in each of her children. It is believed that she read and taught her children from Matthew Hale’s Contemplations: Moral & Divine. George Washington often credited his mother for his uncompromising character. It was the same character that helped him rise as our first Commander-in-Chief.

Mary Washington died August 25, 1789, at the age of 80 after a lengthy battle with breast cancer.

George Washington had ordered a small memorial stone for his mother’s grave near Meditation Rock, but relic hunters had caused such significant damage to warrant its replacement. After much work to raise money for the monument, the cornerstone of a monument, the precursor to today’s monument, was laid in 1833.

The first monument to Mary Washington was never finished. Years of damage inflicted by the Civil War and relic hunters made salvage impossible. The monument concept was resurrected in February of 1890 when two women’s groups, Mary Washington Monument Association and the National Mary Washington Memorial Association, worked together to honor Mary Washington with a newly designed monument. In October of the same year, the Daughters of the American Revolution joined the effort making the monument project their first fundraising endeavor. In 1893, the new cornerstone was laid.
In January 2023, Washington Heritage Museums engaged with the City of Fredericksburg to write a new chapter for the Mary Washington Monument. The City transferred the property, by deed of gift, to Washington Heritage Museums. Since 1900, guests from across the nation and around the world have visited the Mary Washington House, and later, additional 18th-century Washington Heritage Museum properties. The interpretations presented at these museums convey the role that Fredericksburg and its people played in the life of George Washington, his family, and his contemporaries.

In May of 1894, amid great fanfare including US President Grover Cleveland and Virginia Governor Charles O’Ferral, the monument that can be seen today was dedicated. It is widely considered the first monument funded and erected by women, for a woman.

On Mother’s Day 1954, America’s First Mother was celebrated for the 60th anniversary of the Mary Washington Monument dedication. US President Dwight Eisenhower attended the grand event and laid a wreath in Mary’s honor.

Nor will she be forgotten; she who bent the twig to incline the tree to glory.
—George W. Parke Custis, 1826

Washington Heritage Museums’ vision for the Mary Washington Monument, Gravesite, Meditation Rock, the Eskridge Oak, Gordon Cemetery and the Caretaker’s Lodge includes a thorough interpretation of the sites through both interior and exterior improvements and preservation. WHM proposes to interpret Mary Washington’s life and death and the remarkable history of the Monument’s creation.

Whether through more accessible pathways, or the introduction of a small museum and visitor’s center, audiences will have an opportunity to learn about the life of the mother who raised our first president, and the tremendous efforts that were brought forth by many people throughout history to honor her.
OPPORTUNITIES for SUPPORT

- Obelisk Society – *gifts of $130,000 or greater*
- Cornerstone Steward – *gifts from $100,000 to $129,999*
- Mary Ball Washington Circle – *gifts from $50,000 to $99,999*
- Preservation Pioneers – *gifts from $25,000 to $49,999*
- Revolutionary Partners – *gifts from $10,000 to $24,999*
- Meditation Rock Guardians – *gifts from $5,000 to $9,999*
- Patriot Club – *gifts from $1,000 to $4,999*
- Supporter – *gifts of all levels are needed and appreciated*

We need to ensure this site and its place in the history of Fredericksburg and our nation are preserved for generations to come. Mary Ball Washington’s story is invaluable to our nation’s history and the formative role that women played in the creation of our nation. We endeavor for all who visit the Mary Washington Monument site to leave with a clear appreciation and understanding of America’s First Mother.

*Chuck Fennell*
Chairman, Board of Directors

How to Donate

**Mail**: please return the Commitment form in the enclosed envelope or mail your gift to:
Washington Heritage Museums
1300 Charles Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

**Online**: please scan the QR Code with your smart phone or use this link:
www.bit.ly/marywashingtonmonument to go to our secure donation site

**Telephone**: please call Anne Darron 540-373-5630

**Stock, Wire or Electronic Funds Transfer**: please call Anne Darron 540-373-5630

*Washington Heritage Museums is a 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.*
### COMMITMENT LEVEL

- **Obelisk Society** – gifts of $130,000 or greater
- **Cornerstone Steward** – gifts from $100,000 to $129,999
- **Mary Ball Washington Circle** – gifts from $50,000 to $99,999
- **Preservation Pioneers** – gifts from $25,000 to $49,999
- **Revolutionary Partners** – gifts from $10,000 to $24,999
- **Meditation Rock Guardians** – gifts from $5,000 to $9,999
- **Patriot Club** – gifts from $1,000 to $4,999
- **Supporter** – my personal gift of ____________

**Yes**, please accept my gift to Washington Heritage Museums to further the preservation and interpretation of the Mary Washington Monument grounds and associated sites.

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Please consider paying the credit card transaction fees to provide the greatest benefit to WHM.

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