

Virginia House Speaker Howell Receives SVBF Preservation Award

October 9, 2009 | Posted by javal

As the northernmost state in the Confederacy, the host of its capital, and a neighbor to the Union capital, Virginia was hotly contested throughout the American Civil War and saw almost one-third of the war's most significant battles, by far the most of any other state, according to the National Park Service.

Today, Virginia's effort to commemorate the 150th anniversary of this dramatic era in the history of the Commonwealth and the nation is being coordinated by the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission. Its chairman, Virginia House Speaker William J. Howell, is leading the commission's work.

At its annual meeting on Saturday, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation presented its 2009 Carrington Williams Preservation Award to Howell in recognition of his work with the Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission and his ongoing commitment to preserving Virginia's Civil War battlefields.

In presenting the award, named in honor of her late husband, Doreen S. Williams said, "Today we are honoring a gentleman who lives up to the ideals of my husband. Speaker Howell has stood firmly with battlefield preservationists in many of our efforts, including those at Slaughter Pen Farm in Fredericksburg, as well as more recently at the Wilderness. And his leadership enabled the General Assembly to appropriate \$5 million in state matching funds for Civil War battlefield preservation."

Carrington Williams was the chairman of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Commission, which wrote the District's management plan. And he was the founding chairman of the Commission's successor, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, which is implementing the plan. Mr. Williams passed away in 2002.

Volunteer of the Year Award Presented to the Captain Jack Adams SCV Camp

The Battlefields Foundation also presented its Volunteer of the Year award to the Captain Jack Adams SCV Camp of Shenandoah County for its work to clean and restore the Summers-Koontz monument on the New Market battlefield. In 2004, the Foundation acquired the land

on which the monument sits but the monument area was in significant disrepair and had been all but forgotten. In the last few years, the Captain Jack Adams Camp raised substantial funds and contributed countless hours of volunteer labor to clean and restore the monument and the surrounding iron fence to make the area accessible from the roadway. The monument area was rededicated in June and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation can now allow public access to the monument, which previously was not possible.

"This sort of volunteer and partner effort exemplifies the vision of the National Historic District's legislation and its management plan," said W. Denman Zirkle, executive director of the Battlefields Foundation.

New SVBF Awards Presented: Chairman's Award, Friend of the Foundation

This year the Battlefields Foundation created and presented two new awards. The Chairman's Award recognizes service by a Foundation trustee that is far above and beyond the call of duty. Foundation Chairman Irvin E. Hess, M.D. commended the more than 700 hours that W.C. Bedall – a trustee since 2007 – has devoted to the clearing and restoration of property owned by the Battlefields Foundation.

"Mr. Bedall has personally participated in and led specific projects undertaken by the committee at Star Fort, Indian Hollow in New Market, Rude's Hill, Ramseur's Hill, VIII Corps, and Huntsberry," said Hess.

"Mr. Bedall's work at Artillery Ridge at Cross Keys is especially remarkable. He led and performed an immense effort to convert this 12-acre property—which had been in disrepair and was degrading due to years of cattle grazing—into a completely fenced, gated, and selectively cleared property available for leasing."

In addition to his own hours, Mr. Bedall enlisted the volunteer support of James Madison University's ROTC Cadets and others, bringing in more than 1,000 volunteer hours for the cutting, piling, and burning of overgrown cedar brush on more than four acres at Artillery Ridge.

Finally, with its new "Friend of the Foundation" commendations, the organization recognized the service of Carl Rinker, a surveyor in Strasburg, and Morgan McDaniel, an Eagle scout in Winchester, for their in-kind and volunteer work at Fisher's Hill and Star Fort.

New Trustees and Officers Announced

In an earlier business meeting, the Foundation elected new trustees and officers. New trustees include Beverley H. Fleming, a former member of the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors; Clay Hamilton from Highland County; and the Hon. Joe T. May, who represents part of the National Historic District in the Virginia House of Delegates. Their three-year terms begin on January 1, 2009.

"We are honored that these individuals agreed to join our board," said Hess. "The Foundation and the District will benefit from their leadership."

The Foundation's officers in 2009 will be Nicholas P. Picerno, Chairman; Larry Bowers, Vice Chairman; Beverley Fleming, Treasurer; and Claude P. Foster, Secretary.

Transitioning off the board at the end of December will be John P. Ackerly III, John C. Crim, Donovan E. Hower, and Doreen S. Williams.

"We will miss these exceptional individuals," said Hess. "They contributed enormous amounts of energy and expertise to the Foundation's work. We are grateful for their service."

As authorized by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the **Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation** serves as the non-profit manager of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District, partnering with local, regional, and national organizations and governments to preserve the Valley's battlefields and interpret and promote the region's Civil War story.

Created by Congress in 1996, the **Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District** encompasses Augusta, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren counties in Virginia and the cities of Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Winchester. The legislation authorizes federal funding for the protection of ten battlefields in the District: Second Winchester, Third Winchester, Second Kernstown, Cedar Creek, Fisher's Hill, Tom's Brook, New Market, Cross Keys, Port Republic, and McDowell.