



Stewards of the River Awards

LEADERSHIP—*The Leadership Award is presented to individuals who have served in leadership roles in the James River Advisory Council and whose tenure has ended or is ending. This award is presented in appreciation for years of service to the organization through guidance and direction.*

- 2006 Jack McHale •** He was instrumental in the creation of the James River Advisory Council, co-chairman of the council (and the former James River Task Force), lead James River Week to become the six-month-long James River Days, served on the JRAC Strategic Planning Committee and the Administration and Finance committee, instrumental in the creation of the James River Regional Cleanup being sponsored by JRAC, served the Council on the James River Regional Cleanup and Parade of Lights committees
- Peter B. Cleal •** He was co-chairman of the James River Advisory Council (and the former James River Task Force), served on the JRAC Strategic Planning Committee and the Administration and Finance committee, served the Council on the Parade of Lights and James River Regional Cleanup committees
- Michaele Upshur •** She was co-chairman of the James River Advisory Council in 2004, served on the JRAC Strategic Planning Committee and the Administration and Finance committee, worked with and sponsored the James River Regional Cleanup, participated, promoted and supported her favorite event, the James River Parade of Lights
- 2007 Pauline Mitchell •** Founding member of the James River Task Force to study development of the James River as a regional tourist attraction, former executive director of James River Task Force (now James River Advisory Council), driving force behind the creation of James River Days, instrumental in promoting and advocating regional partnerships and relationships, founding member of The Henricus Foundation.
- 2010 James Donati, Jr. •** Supporter and member of the James River Advisory Council since 1993, co-chair of the JRAC 2004-2009, served as a key player in initiating regional financial support for JRAC from four major localities in the region, supports regional partnerships through JRAC efforts
- 2011 Ralph Hambrick •** Supporter and member of the James River Advisory Council since 2000, co-chair of JRAC since 2006, supporter of regional partnerships through JRAC's efforts, sought regional river issues for discussion, enjoys serving his community and the region and loves paddling the James River
- 2015 George Bruner •** Bruner has served as co-chair of the James River Advisory Council since 2011. During his tenure, he has been actively involved with the leadership, planning and organization of annual signature events, including the Parade of Lights and Regional Cleanup. He leads by example as an avid boater and promotes river safety to boaters and citizens. Bruner has used his leadership capacity to foster partnerships with other organizations, such as the Capital Region Collaborative.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP—*The Community Partnership Award is presented to individuals who work actively to promote partnerships within the James River Watershed community. This person communicates, provides support and collaborates with colleagues in partnering organizations that advance the needs of the James River and the James River Advisory Council.*

- 2006 Janit Llewellyn Potter •** Her work at the VA Department of Conservation and Recreation included contributions to Chesapeake Bay Public Access Plan and the Virginia Outdoor Plan, served as the first executive director of Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront, a non-profit organization formed to carryout the Chesterfield County Riverfront Plan, partnered and assisted with activities of many environmental organizations including the Friends of the Lower Appomattox, the Chesterfield Water Quality Council, James River Association and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, served on the JRAC Strategic Planning committee, served as co-chair of the James River Reach Newsletter Committee, served the Council on the Issues, Regional Cleanup, Parade of Lights, and James River Days committees and helped initiate the Diversity on the River series, directed environmental awareness and protection through classes in area schools and throughout the community including promotion of the Bayscapes concept in Chesterfield County, wrote proposals and received funding for a variety of environmental projects undertaken in collaboration with other organizations including the James River Advisory Council.
- 2007 Greg Velzy •** Past president of James River Outdoor Coalition, serves on JRAC Regional River Cleanup, Issues and James River Days committees, director of Outdoor Adventure Programs for Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation, past-chairman, Falls of the Scenic James Advisory Board and member of Friends of The James River Park, works with local governments to gain access points to the James River, works to promote recreational usage of the James River.
- 2008 Marty Moynihan •** Promoted the James River as an economic treasure, instrumental in transforming the Port of Richmond from a "niche port" on the James River to "Central Virginia's Mid-Atlantic Multi-Modal Freight Gateway," member of the James River Advisory Council for over 15 years, helped form the vision of the James River Advisory Council serving on the strategic planning subcommittee, served as co-chairman of the Issues committee, communicated and coordinated with river and community organizations, commercial and industrial organizations, and businesses.
- 2009 Robert Dunn •** Served as chairman of the Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront, an avid supporter of the James River Advisory Council, organized over 400 volunteers, planted over 5,000 trees and shrubs in the riparian areas and supported a citizen's water monitoring program, developed strong partnerships with Friends of the Lower Appomattox, Dominion Virginia Power, DuPont, Philip Morris, Allied Chemical, Chesterfield County, JRAC and many others, supported regional partnerships through JRAC's efforts.
- 2011 Dominion •** Strong community partner in the Richmond region, committed corporate sponsor of the James River Regional Cleanup since 2002, serves on the James River Advisory Council, for past 2 years has sponsored recycling education calendar that is distributed to over 250,000 households throughout the region, leadership is dedicated to being engaged in the community on a local level
- 2012 Robert C. Steidel •** Steidel, who is the director of the Richmond Department of Public Utilities, serves on several state and regional boards, has worked hard to clean the James River, and keeps an eye out for the needs of those who use the river for recreation. He was instrumental in the development of the 14th Street take-out facility for whitewater paddlers.

- 2013 Lorne Field •** Field, the environmental outreach coordinator for the Chesterfield County Environmental Engineering Department, leads the county's Rain Garden Installation and Design Project and is a significant voice for outreach and public awareness programs related to the river and water quality, including the "Stop the Drop" campaign that encourages pet owners to pick up after their pets. Field also publishes JRAC's e-newsletter and uses social media to reach out to new audiences.
- 2014 Suzette Lyon •** Through her work with the Reedy Creek Coalition has influenced residents throughout the area to become knowledgeable and make differences by installing rain gardens, rain barrels and conservation landscaping, all of which help to manage stormwater runoff. Suzette has produced several very popular Native Plant Workshops in addition to the recent 20/20 Watershed Vision, which empowers people to make better choices and protect the environment with their voices and hands. Through her "Get the Ivy Out of Richmond" movement, Suzette led an effort to remove invasive species and protect our river and park habitat, and trainings she has since coordinated in cooperation with regional partners have been overbooked. Suzette also stands tall as a tireless Richmond Tree Steward who works with the community to organize events such as Arbor Day and 10-week educational courses.
- 2015 Central Virginia Waste Management Authority •** For more than a decade, CVWMA has reported a 50 percent recycling rate in the Central Virginia region. In 2013, more than 500,000 tons of material was recycled rather than reach local landfills. CVWMA works not only with local governments but also with businesses, nonprofit organizations and collaborative groups to promote the importance and benefits of recycling. The authority reaches an estimated 30,000 people annually with its educational efforts.
- 2016 Friends of the Lower Appomattox River •** FOLAR is a regional nonprofit organization that does an amazing amount of work for the Appomattox River, a tributary of the James. FOLAR's partnerships and efforts provide for cleanups, stream restoration, water-quality monitoring, environmental education, litter prevention and the development of the Appomattox River Heritage Trail, all of which contribute to people's enjoyment of the Appomattox. FOLAR's positive influence can be seen throughout the Tri-Cities and Richmond.
- 2017 Victor Weitsao Liu and Reiko Liu •** The Lius have established a college scholarship fund for qualifying students in the Appomattox River watershed, which feeds the James River. The Friends of the Lower Appomattox River Scholarship, administered by the John Randolph Foundation, was established in 2016 through a generous contribution from the Lius. The driving vision behind the scholarship includes recognition for student service and commitment to natural resources conservation. The Lius believe environmental education, outreach and community engagement are vital to the complete education of future leaders.

GUARDIAN (formerly Protector / Promoter of the River)—*The Guardian Award is presented to individuals who strive to protect the James River and its resources for all citizens living within the James River watershed. This person promotes the care and respect of the river through actions and leadership and is a great influence on other citizens to do the same.*

- 2006 Ralph White •** Manager and naturalist in James River Park System since mid 1980s, instrumental in ‘bringing back the river’, passionate environmentalist and inspiring educator, received the 2004 Spirit of the Sojourn award for restoration and protection of the James River, author of numerous brochures and guides to enjoying the James River, served on the JRAC Strategic Planning Committee, co-chaired the issues committee, serves the council on the James River Regional Cleanup, the Parade of Lights and the James River Days committees, partners and assists with activities of many recreational and environmental organizations.
- 2007 Sue Cecil •** Past chairman of the Issues committee, past chairman and editor of the JRAC Newsletter committee, past chairperson and continuing member, Falls of the Scenic James Advisory Board, works with state and local governments to protect the environment of the James River, works with state and local agencies to restore historic structures and promote the history of the James River, works tirelessly to protect and to promote safe recreational usage of the James River, her efforts have addressed kepone contaminations, scenic corridor, preservation, and more, instrumental in prohibiting the highway proposal that would have marred the James River landscape forever.
- 2008 Henrico County Marine Patrol Unit •** Ensures the safety of citizens and visitors on the James River, provides safety throughout boating season making sure marine laws are followed and the water crafts are used properly and safely, members of the Marine Patrol Unit have been dedicated participants of the James River Regional Cleanup and James River Parade of Lights planning committees, promotes the care and respect of the river.
- 2009 Kathy Graziano •** Supporter of environmental initiatives, leading elected official in support for the protection and appropriate use of the James River, successfully spearheaded efforts, as council representative for the 4th district and council president of the City of Richmond, over several years to place the James River Park System in a conservation easement, commended for advocating partnerships to enhance the James River as a common resource and its surroundings, initiated Riverside Drive (Richmond) being listed as a Scenic By-Way.
- 2010 Warren Foster •** Supporter of environmental initiatives, strong dedication to the river, avid James River paddler, committed to maintaining Pony Pasture by picking up trash every morning during the summer, driving force behind the new “James River Park” license plate, an initiative that potentially will donate \$15,000 a year to the James River Park Fund
- 2011 Chris Messenger •** Served as the James River Parade of Light Committee Chairman for the past three years and currently chairs the committee, recruits boater participants in the region, organizes the Parade of Lights Awards Ceremony, is a licensed captain and is an active member of the US Coast Guard..
- 2012 Julian C. Roden •** Roden is a boating instructor who teaches how to safely navigate the river and promotes recreational boating that incorporates good environmental behavior. He has participated in JRAC’s annual James River Regional Cleanup for 10 years and is known for bringing in the most debris. He also has launched his boat for JRAC’s James River Parade of Lights and media tours, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration surveys, and is active in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Waterway Watch program.
- 2015 Dick Gibbons •** Gibbons has been a guardian of the James River for years, starting with his work in the 1960s as a landscape architect with the Virginia Department of

Conservation and Recreation. Gibbons coordinated the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program, which recognizes the most outstanding rivers in Virginia. His contributions include a community-based watershed analysis of the James River in Richmond as a basis for planning. His work with a variety of stakeholders ensures the river's scenic qualities remain intact and will be preserved for years to come.

2016 Nathan Burrell •

Burrell, Manager, James River Park System, commits his professional and personal time to enhancing Richmond's crown jewel, James River Park. He knows a healthy river is essential to providing outdoor recreation opportunities for all. He started his career as an intern working on park trails and has developed several trails in the city, including those at Larus Park and the 14th Street whitewater takeout. As a member of several boards and commissions, he is devoted to bringing the region together to support the James.

2017 Amber Ellis •

As a landscape architect, Ellis enriches the environment by creating spaces that are natural and enjoyable for people. Through JRA's River Hero Homes program, she encourages citizens to beautify their yards while protecting local streams and the James River. She has been an advocate in her own neighborhood, in Richmond's Bellemeade community and at the historic Belmead Plantation in Powhatan. Ellis also has been an active member of the James River Advisory Council and managed sites for the annual James River Regional Cleanup.

COMMUNICATION—*The Communication Award is presented to individuals who are effective in their communication on behalf of the James River and the James River Advisory Council. They are known to speak to citizens of the community, legislators, businesses, localities, and/or media outlets in an effort to increase the public awareness of the James River and the James River Advisory Council.*

- 2007 Kimberly Conley •** Executive Director of the James River Advisory Council since 1997, chairman of the Regional River Cleanup committee, serves on Parade of Lights, Issues, newsletter and James River Days committees, driving force behind the creation of the Diversity on the River subcommittee and activities, communicates internally with JRAC members, organizations, county officials and staff, communicates externally with the media, political jurisdictions, elected officials, state and local government agencies and corporations.
- 2008 George Bruner •** He is an active member of the community and an avid boater, member of Richmond Sail and Power Squadron, promotes river safety in the community for boaters and citizens, serves on James River Parade of Lights, James River Regional Cleanup, and James River Days committees, represents JRAC in fostering partnerships with other organizations.
- 2009 Mike Ostrander •** Advocate of the river as a boater and fisherman, increases the awareness of the James River through education and recreation, provided leadership for redesign and use of the James River Reach newsletter, served as a team leader for the James River Regional Cleanup.
- 2011 Dave Goode •** Avid boater and fisherman, Vice Chairman of Friends of the Lower Appomattox River, strong communicator for the James River Advisory Council for last 10 years, serves as Public Relations Chair for JRAC with responsibility for composing press releases, scheduling interviews, working with media, editing annual reports/newsletters and coordinating marketing materials for all JRAC activities.
- 2012 Jack Berry •** As president and CEO of the Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau, Berry is perhaps the Richmond region's best promoter. He is an active member of JRAC, the Historic Richmond Region Community, the Board of Directors for the Retail Merchants Association and several other organizations. He does an excellent job engaging and informing organizations and localities about tourism and partnership opportunities and is an ardent and vocal supporter of the river as a focal point in the region.
- 2013 Jessica Noll and Matt McClain •** This husband-and-wife team is well-known for their work at WTVR-TV CBS 6. Noll, executive producer, and McClain, creative services director, for years have shown outstanding dedication to promoting JRAC's hallmark events, the James River Regional Cleanup and the James River Parade of Lights. In addition to the considerable airtime they devote to JRAC, which helps to attract thousands to the river, they roll up their sleeves for the annual cleanup and get dirty as part of a boat crew that visits out-of-the-way places to pull bulky trash from the muddy shorelines.
- 2014 Gay Stokes •** Through her work in Community Outreach for the Stormwater Utility Division, Richmond Department of Public Utilities, Gay communicates with citizens about stormwater runoff and how it influences water quality. She has been instrumental in the development of a series of public service announcements addressing illicit discharges and their impact on the James River. She has promoted the use of rain barrels to reduce runoff in the city. Gay's efforts have been essential in the pet waste campaign, "Pick up the poop, don't pollute!" which educates citizens about the harmful bacteria in pet waste, its impact on water quality, and the city ordinance requirements and fines.

- 2015 Mark Battista •** Battista passionately and tirelessly promotes the diverse natural resources and cultural history of the James River. He develops, schedules and leads public programs to connect youths and adults with the river. Battista's efforts have helped build an entire generation of residents that appreciate and protect the watershed. In addition to his work with Chesterfield County, Battista mentors scouts and participates in outreach with the Richmond Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 2016 Heather Myers •** Myers, Volunteer, HandsOn Greater Richmond, is an asset to the James River through her role as volunteer leader for the James River Park System. She recruits volunteers for monthly park cleanups and instills in them the importance of serving their community. Her efforts have helped the park reach a larger volunteer base, making it one of the region's top places to volunteer.
- 2017 Mark Olinger •** Olinger, Director, City of Richmond Department of Planning and Development Review, strives to communicate the importance of preserving, promoting and enjoying the James River. He led much of the strategy for the Richmond Riverfront Plan, which aims to revitalize a 2.25-mile stretch of the James. He was also instrumental in the implementation of the T. Tyler Potterfield Memorial Bridge. Olinger emphasizes the value of water quality, air quality, environmentally sensitive lands and urban open space in the community and with stakeholders and businesses. He believes the riverfront provides not just one experience but many experiences

HISTORICAL VALUES (formerly Stewardship)—*The Historical Values Award is presented to individuals who celebrate the unique history of the James River. This person researches, discovers, and shares the stories of the lives and time line surrounding the James River to promote its distinction.*

- 2006 Louise Burke •** Widely known conservationist and writer, active in civic and governmental affairs in the Richmond region, former chairman of the Richmond City Planning Commission and representative on the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, served JRAC on the newsletter and issues committees, served on the board of directors of Maymont Foundation, served on the Falls of the Scenic James Advisory Council.
- 2007 William and Nancy Trout •** He is a co-founder of the national, international, and Virginia canal historic societies, past president and current member of the American Canal Society, published over two hundred articles and notes documenting river and canal archaeology, history, preservation, and parks. She is a descendant of early settlers who navigated some of these rivers long ago. They work with historical groups and agencies to rediscover, evaluate, and interpret historic canal and river foci as potential canal and river sites, serve as a tag team at public events and festivals to bring history alive through recreational and exhibits.
- 2009 William Poole •** Member of JRAC since its founding, active in the environmental, development, preservation, and public awareness of the upper James River for over 55 years, supported Ancarrow's 1950s environmental efforts, development of recreational boating at Richmond Docks and rebuilding of the Great Ship Lock, assisted with the coordination of bringing tall ships to the Richmond community, provides leadership in bringing boaters to participate in the James River Regional Cleanup, founding member and active participant of the James River Parade of Lights, maintains the partnership with JRAC and the Richmond Yacht Club, continues to seek support from community representatives and residents to enhance the beauty and use of the James River.
- 2011 Black History Museum Cultural Center of VA •** Member of JRAC since 1998, partners with JRAC on the Diversity on the River series each year sponsoring a lecture series held at the museum, a key why the museum is an important player on the advisory council is the role the James River played in Black History and role blacks played in life along the river.
- 2012 The Sisters of Blessed Sacrament, Francis Emma Inc •** Catering to the specific needs of their nearly 2,000 acres along in Powhatan County, The Sisters of Blessed Sacrament are committed to education and research within a framework that is holistic, ecological and practical. A major focus of the education delivered at their schools is on the ongoing efforts to protect and showcase the land and biology of the James River.
- 2017 Bryan Walker •** Walker, a volunteer with the Falling Creek Ironworks Foundation, was instrumental in preserving the site of the Falling Creek Ironworks, where the nation's first iron furnace was built in 1619. He began raising awareness about the site in the 1980s, when it was still privately owned. Today, it is owned by Chesterfield County and is being developed into a park. Walker cares for this historic waterfront property, ensuring it is protected, accessible, clean and interpreted for future generations. In the last 30 years, he also has served with other organizations and committees, such as the Chesterfield Historical Society.

EDUCATION—*The Education Award is presented to individuals who work to spread the appreciation of the James River through the children of the watershed. This person uses the James River to teach local ecology, history, water quality, teambuilding, self-awareness, confidence, and community involvement.*

- 2007 Anne Wright •** Coordinator of Life Science Outreach Education at Virginia Commonwealth University, partners with organizations teaching others, leads students and campers on tours of the James River, works to utilize resources of Virginia Commonwealth University with community partners for outreach opportunities, programs focuses on integrating outreach programming with research, locally in Charles City County, regionally within the James River watershed, and internationally in Baja, CA
- 2008 Kathy Mortimer •** Dedicated employee of Maymont Nature Center, willingness to partner with organizations teaching others, taught over 400,000 students about the James River through environmental education programs, instructed programs that include SOL- based classes, summer camps, scout badges, college and high school internships, lecture series, teacher workshops, volunteer training, and numerous public programs
- 2010 Greg Velzy •** Educator of outdoor activities to residents throughout the region, serves on JRAC Regional River Cleanup, Diversity on the River and Issues committees, always willing to make a difference in the environmental community, advocate for educating the community on water safety and recreational opportunities on the James
- 2011 Kevin Tobin •** Educates more than 1000 campers each summer (11,000 kids to date) about the river (Director of Passages Adventure Camp on Belle Isle for 11 yrs.), strives to strong sense of responsibility and care for the James River, always willing to make a difference in the environmental community
- 2012 Cyrus Brame •** A dedicated professional with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and an active JRAC member for many years, Brame is committed to public service. He educates hunters about the need to control deer numbers and works with school groups and tourists visiting Presquile National Wildlife Refuge. He also is helping to develop an ecology school on Presquile to further research efforts.
- 2013 Gabe Silver •** During his time working for the James River Association, the former education and outreach manager inspired thousands of youths through hands-on programs on the river. In addition to spearheading the development of a number of programs and events, Silver also worked to help establish and increase awareness of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and James River Ecology School at Presquile National Wildlife Refuge.
- 2014 Jessica Templeton •** As Education Manager for the James River Association, Jessica leads the multiday residential and one-day programs at James River Association's education center, the James River Ecology School on Presquile National Wildlife Refuge, which connects youths with meaningful, SOL-correlated, hands-on lessons about river ecology and conservation. She works with numerous teachers, JRA staff educators and others every season to ensure that the James River Ecology School is offering safe, high-quality educational programming while consistently filling each seasonal calendar with school kids from the 6th through 12th grades.
- 2015 Bob Argabright •** Argabright has worked within the Richmond community, specifically the Oak Grove-Bellemeade area, for over a decade. He volunteers with the Green Team, a group of approximately 20 youths, focusing on expanding outdoor education and the connectivity of waterways to communities downstream. Argabright assists with after-school programs, devotes weekends to working with youths

and has collaborated with partner organizations to develop a scholarship program for Green Team members.

2016 Sister Jean Ryan •

Ryan, SBS, FrancisEmma Inc., manages the gardens and grounds of the 2,200-acre St. Francis de Sales and St. Emma properties on the James River in Powhatan County. She works with more than 100 volunteers to develop recreational trails, identify flora and fauna and provide environmental educational opportunities at the site. Ryan is known for engaging as many people and organizations as possible in the many projects she manages. She is ensuring future generations will continue to admire, respect and care for the James.

2017 Meredith Dash•

Dash, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, is active in educating people of all ages about water-quality issues. A former elementary school teacher, she works as the RiverWise Schools coordinator for the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay in Richmond. She also volunteers with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Grasses for the Masses program, where she trains other volunteers to grow underwater grasses for transplantation. Dash is a Clean Water Captain with the foundation, serving as a clean-water ambassador in her community. A resident of Hanover County, she speaks often about water issues at public meetings, churches and schools.

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP—*The Business Partnership Award is presented to an organization that has actively worked with the James River Advisory Council. This organization has partnered with JRAC to provide resources and coordination that make projects and activities possible.*

2006 Luck Stone Corporation • Recognized leader within their industry for environmental stewardship, annually provides and prepares lunch for volunteers during the James River Regional Cleanup, partnered and assisted with the creation of outdoor classroom BayScape gardens.

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD— *The Exceptional Service Award is presented to a long time JRAC member who exemplifies outstanding service and dedication to the James River Advisory Council as well as providing a voice for the river.*

2013 Ralph White • From his active membership on several JRAC committees to his unwavering dedication to be a voice for the river and the community through which it flows, White, the recently retired manager of Richmond's James River Park System, has for years placed the river's importance as a natural and recreational resource at the forefront of regional discussions. Never afraid to voice concerns or throw kudos to where they are truly deserved, White continues to harness the potential of an entire metropolitan region to adopt the James River Park System as an invaluable urban wilderness.

2016 Mike Golden • During his 24-year tenure as the county's parks and recreation director, Golden was instrumental in acquiring new parks and protecting land along the James and Appomattox rivers. These lands total more than 2,300 acres and stretch along nine miles of river. He promoted community engagement through programs such as Outdoor Adventures, which introduced the public to summer camps, hiking, sailing and kayaking. He has been a steadfast supporter of JRAC since its inception and is truly an advocate for the James River.

2017 Nancy Drumheller • Drumheller, Public Relations Manager, Central Virginia Waste Management Authority, has been a hardworking and dedicated member of JRAC for more than 20 years. During that time, she has served as a site leader for the annual James River Regional Cleanup and chair of the Stewards of the River awards. She currently chairs the Membership Committee. She continues to be supportive by taking the initiative to ensure JRAC follows its mission and vision. Drumheller consistently strives to bring various parties together to protect and promote the James River to ensure it remains a valuable resource.