



National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal
National Historical Park

1850 Dual Highway
Suite 100
Hagerstown, MD 21740
301.739.4200 phone
301.739.5275 fax

C&O Canal National Historical Park News Release

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Contact: Blyth McManus, blyth_mcmanus@nps.gov, 301-745-5803

Longtime Park Volunteer Historian Receives Maryland Preservation Award

Hagerstown, MD - Dr. Karen Gray was the recipient of the "Outstanding Individual Leadership" award at the 2017 Maryland Preservation Awards. The Maryland Preservation Awards, presented annually by the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Historical Trust, are the highest level of recognition for historic preservation, heritage education and community development projects in the state.



Gray began volunteering for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (C&O Canal) in 1977. For the past 40 years, she has devoted her talents as an historian and scholar to the park. She is one of the longest serving members of the C&O Canal Association Level Walkers, a volunteer group committed to stewardship of the C&O Canal towpath. Throughout her service she has provided consistent leadership and advice on historical content and context for the park. Gray works as volunteer park historian and librarian managing the photographic collection and archives, reviewing documents, and addressing canal history queries from staff, researchers, and the visiting public. She provides a variety of educational presentations including the "Trails & Rails" program for passengers riding the Capitol Limited train, an innovative partnership between the National Park Service and Amtrak.

Gray's contributions to the C&O Canal include substantial original research that has improved the accuracy and understanding of canal histories and provide current scholarship for interpretive programs at the park. She currently manages the work of two additional volunteers who assist with transcriptions to improve research and archival records. The park's oral history transcriptions are ongoing with over 738 pages and 1,262 footnotes compiled for a manuscript for public distribution.

Gray holds a Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh in theology and religious philosophy, and retired as the developer of Smithsonian Institution educational study tours for adults. In addition

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to her substantial work at C&O Canal, Karen teaches at both Frederick Community College and Hagerstown Community College.

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ABOUT THE C&O Canal: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park preserves and interprets the historical, natural and recreational resources of the C&O Canal. Over 5,000,000 visitors a year enjoy the opportunities for recreation and understanding that the Park has to offer. For more information, visit the Park's website at www.nps.gov/choh.