



## Nominees for 2026-2027 Officers and Board of Directors

### **PETER VASELOPULOS, PRESIDENT**

Peter is currently the AHS President. Last year, he served as Vice President. He retired from the federal government as Deputy Chief Information Officer at the US Agency for Global Media where he worked for 35 years as a broadcast journalist, international television producer, and digital media and information technology specialist. Peter has a master's certificate in Digital Public Humanities from George Mason University. He is a graduate of George Washington University and American University, with master's degrees in Managing Information Systems and International Communications. He teaches history and digital storytelling courses for Arlington's Encore adult education program. He is an Arlington County Historic Preservation grantee and launched a digital media project called "Arlington Historical," which includes a website and mobile app. He is a board member of the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington, D.C. Peter and his wife are 45-year residents of Arlington County.

### **SEAN DENNISTON, VICE PRESIDENT**

Sean has been researching 1920s Arlington and wrote the definitive analysis of the impact of the legal case where Clarendon sought to secede from Arlington in 1920 which was published in the Arlington Historical Magazine. He is expanding his research to include Jefferson District and the Town of Potomac annexed by Alexandria. He is co-chair of the Preservation and Research Committee (with a particular interest in the former Crystal City Underground) and is on AHS's new Oral

History Project. Sean has been a Crystal City resident since 2007. He has a bachelor's degree from Williams College, a master's degree from Oxford University (both in history), and a law degree from Boston College.

### **RICHARD "RICH" SAMP, TREASURER**

Rich has served as the AHS Treasurer since 2023. An Arlington resident since 1986, Rich has a long-time interest in local history. He has authored articles for the Arlington Historical Magazine, including an article that eulogized local historian Charlie Clark and another on a legal challenge to a racially segregated Arlington pre-school which led to a 1976 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in private schools. Rich is a semi-retired attorney who specializes in appellate litigation. He is a former member of Arlington's Electoral Board. His many community activities in Arlington have included service on the Community Services Board and the School Board's Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee and he was Chair of the County's Substance Abuse Committee.

### **HAROLD "HARRY" EVANS, SECRETARY**

Harry was born in Ashburn but raised in Pennsylvania. Moving back to Virginia in 2020, he pursued an education in aviation. He now resides in Springfield where he works as a Production Supervisor at Closet America. Harry has always had an interest history, particularly American history and aviation history. He is a Senior Member of the Civil Air Patrol, and he helps host a book club at Arlington's Courthouse Library.

## Members of the Board of Directors

### **GEORGE AXIOTIS**

George has been a member of AHS for 10 years and has been a Member of the Board, on and off during that decade. He currently performs maintenance and construction tasks at the Arlington Historical Museum and the Ball-Sellers House. George is an amateur historian and has written two books on Arlington history. He has lectured at several county venues on key historical events and has been on the County Advisory Board for creating its Capital Improvement Plan. George has lived in Arlington for over 40 years. After a 34-year career as an engineer for the Department of Defense, he now consults part-time.

### **BETHANY BAKER, MUSEUM DIRECTOR**

With over two years serving as Museum Director at AHS, Bethany Baker has led a major transformation of the Arlington Historical Museum. She oversaw the complete redesign and reinterpretation of the museum's permanent exhibits, creating new immersive and community-centered experiences that connect Arlington's local history to broader national themes. Under her leadership, the museum also expanded its focus on rotating temporary exhibitions, highlighting topics such as voting rights, public education, women's civic activism, and Arlington's role in America's 250th commemoration. Bethany has worked to significantly increase the visibility and public engagement of the museum through expanded programming, partnerships, and outreach. She launched the popular "15 Minute History" series, a recurring public program designed to make local history accessible, conversational, and engaging for broad audiences. In addition to exhibit development and public programming, she has led efforts in collections stewardship, educational initiatives, grant writing, and community collaboration. In addition to two decades of museum experience, Bethany holds

an undergraduate degree in Art History as well as a Master's Certificate in Museum Studies, and is committed to using museums as spaces for dialogue, civic engagement, and inclusive storytelling.

### **ANNETTE BENBOW**

Annette has served as the Chair of the Ball-Sellers House Committee since 2012, she also heads the AHS Events Committee and the AHS social media team. She serves on the Museum Committee and the Collections Committee. She has given talks on Arlington historical topics to a wide variety of Arlington audiences. She retired in 2020 after 35 years of service in the Central Intelligence Agency where she was a political and counterintelligence analyst and then managed inspections in the Office of the Inspector General. She has a bachelor's degree in history from the University of New Hampshire and a master's certificate in public policy from the University of Maryland.

### **RENEE BRADEN**

Renee has lived for 40 years in the DC region and moved to Arlington in 2014. She recently retired from the National Geographic Society after 35 years of service where she oversaw the institution's vast archival and special collections holdings. This included all aspects of collections management and governance, including access and outreach for all materials. She helped create, wrote, and edited a "Geopedia" database containing almost 3,000 historical lists, milestones, and essays for researchers. She co-founded the AHS oral history program and helped craft a process to bring outside scholars into the collections for deeper interpretation and evaluation of the materials. Renee has a BA in European history from Mary Washington University and an MA in European History and Applied History from George Mason University. She has served on the boards of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region and the Capitol Hill

Restoration Society. In 1997 she served as the Chair for the Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour, one of the largest fundraising events in the historic district on the Hill. She currently serves on the board of the Leeway Overlee Civic Association and is its representative to Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee. This will be her first term on the Arlington Historical Society Board.

### **JESSICA KAPLAN**

Jessica is a retired archivist and has been a freelance historical researcher for more than 20 years. She serves as editor of the AHS publication, Arlington Historical Magazine and is co-director of the joint AHS and Black Heritage Museum of Arlington project, "Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington." She is also a Master Gardener and headed up research on methods used by colonial Virginians in their kitchen gardens. This research is being applied to the Ball-Sellers House's Plot Against Hunger in partnership with the Friends of Urban Agriculture. A longtime resident of Arlington, Jessica has researched and written about Arlington history for the Arlington Historical Magazine, including "The Bottom: An African-American Enclave Rediscovered," "'I Was a Union Man:' James and Lewis Marcey's Civil War Experience," and "People of the Book: Jewish Arlington, 1900-1940."

### **ANDREW "ANDY" MCLEOD**

Andy is a 16-year resident of Arlington, longtime Washingtonian, and Connecticut native. He joined AHS to advance public and nonprofit enterprises and causes in democracy defense and civics education, public history and preservation, conservation and the environment, and independent nonprofit journalism. He is a former board member of the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, Heurich House Museum, Friends of the Museums of Florida History, and Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation. He is a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, American Friends of Lafayette, and

Sons of Union Veterans. He currently volunteers with the National Park Service at Arlington House and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. He has been Press Secretary to two US Senators; Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management; and Deputy Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency. Andy has a masters degree in public administration from the Harvard Kennedy School and in government from Georgetown's National Security Program. He also has a bachelor's degree in history from George Washington University.

### **ANNETTE SCHERBER**

Annette is a historian and archivist and has a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from the University of Northern Iowa and a Master of Arts in public history from Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, where she specialized in environmental and women's history. She has worked for a variety of federal, state, and local government, non-profit, and corporate libraries, archives, museums, and historical institutions. She is a docent at both the Arlington Historical Museum and the Ball-Sellers House, conducted research for the Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington project, and chairs the Membership Committee does donation data entry, and serves on the Museum and Collections Committees. In 2021, she wrote an article about the desegregation of Arlington's parks for the Arlington Historical Magazine. An Iowa native, Annette moved to Arlington from the Midwest in 2019.