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INDEPENDENCE SEAPORT MUSEUM EARNS INSTITUTIONAL AWARD OF MERIT FROM PA MUSEUMS

Philadelphia, PA (April 4, 2024)—Independence Seaport Museum (ISM) is pleased to announce that it is the recent recipient of an Institutional Award of Merit from PA Museums for its exhibit *At the Water's Edge: Working and living along the Delaware River (At the Water's Edge)*. Since the 1980s, PA Museums has invited nominations from its membership and chosen institutions, projects, and individuals to be recognized. This year, twelve organizations from nearly every region in Pennsylvania have won Institutional Awards of Merits. In addition, one organization is receiving PA Museum's prestigious S.K. Stevens Award, and two individuals will be honored for their contributions to the field with Individual Awards.

"PA Museums' annual awards are meant to inspire the museum field and impress museum visitors," said Rusty Baker, Executive Director of PA Museums. "Pennsylvania's museums and historical organizations have so much to offer, and we are proud to recognize the great work being done throughout the Commonwealth."

Adds Peter S. Seibert, President and CEO of Independence Seaport Museum, "This award is such a tribute to the efforts of our creative, dedicated and hard-working team at the museum. Their work over more than a year resulted in this award-winning exhibition. We also are deeply appreciative of The Richard C. von Hess Foundation for their support of this exhibit."

Opened to the public on April 14, 2023, *At the Water's Edge* explores the history of the Delaware River, considered the most significant geographic feature along the eastern seaboard. With particular emphasis on the period from European settlement through the 19th century, visitors of all ages can learn about the people who lived and worked along the banks, from sailors to ironworkers, to canal boatmen to newly arrived immigrants seeking economic and religious freedom.

"Exhibits like this one provide the community with genuine examples of the city's shared history and build an understanding not only of our predecessors but also of ourselves as we create our future," says Craig Bruns, the museum's Chief Curator.

Curated with a majority of artifacts and artwork that have not been seen before by the public, exhibit highlights include a portrait of “Alice,” an enslaved woman who lived her entire life along the Philadelphia Waterfront and who managed and operated Dunk’s Ferry (going from present-day Neshaminy State Park, PA to Edgewater Park, NJ) for some 40 years; a surveyor’s drawing of Smith and Windmill Islands, which were removed during 1893-1897 to make room for larger ship navigation; and a chart made for William Penn in 1681 of the Philadelphia region depicting how the Lenape lands were first divided into parcels – with the owners names included.

At the Water’s Edge is on display until May 2025 and is accessible seven days a week in The Richard C. von Hess Foundation Gallery. We thank The Richard C. von Hess Foundation for their generous support.

About PA Museums

PA Museums is Pennsylvania’s statewide museum association with 370 members across the Commonwealth. PA Museums’ membership includes museums and historical organizations of many types and sizes, and in addition to providing professional development opportunities for museum professionals, the organization also leads advocacy campaigns on behalf of the museum community.

About Independence Seaport Museum

The Independence Seaport Museum (ISM), founded in 1960 as the Philadelphia Maritime Museum, encourages visitors to discover Philadelphia’s river of history and world of connections. Stewards of the *Olympia*, a nineteenth-century cruiser, and the *Becuna*, a World War II-era submarine, ISM is home to interactive and award-winning exhibitions, one of the largest collections of historic maritime artifacts in the world and a boatbuilding workshop. Accredited by the American Association of Museums since the 1970s, it is a premier, year-round destination adjacent to Spruce Street Harbor Park on Penn’s Landing. Visit daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and see our full schedule of programs and events at phillyseaport.org. Visit <https://www.phillyseaport.org/admissions-hours-of-operation/> to learn about ticket packages and guided tour options.

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