



Organization History

Founded in 1931 as the Society for the Preservation of Maryland Antiquities, Preservation Maryland was the first statewide nonprofit organization in Maryland and one of the first statewide organizations in the country. The goals and objectives in 1931 reflected the period's strong interest in colonial and revolutionary history. Over the years Preservation Maryland has expanded its mission.

In 1948 Preservation Maryland began its three-decade-long management of Historic Hampton on behalf of the National Park Service. In addition, Preservation Maryland also acquired and/or managed several other endangered historic properties, restoring them and opening them to the public: Rodgers Tavern, Wye Mill, Sotterly, and Waverly. It was during this period of stewardship that Robert G. Merrick joined the board of directors, later becoming president. Through work with Historic Hampton, Preservation Maryland leaders played a role in the formation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and later with the creation of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Gradually, beginning in the late 1970s, Preservation Maryland divested itself of historic properties and their direct management, concentrating instead on larger outreach, funding, and advocacy efforts. In this way, the history of the organization mirrors the history of the preservation movement nationwide. Of statewide organizations, Preservation Maryland is now one of the largest grant makers, leveraging state and foundation support for programs such as Save Maryland's Treasures and the Historic Communities Investment Fund. It has also become best known for its advocacy, in both public policy and direct action to save threatened historic resources. The creation and expansion of these programs is a direct result of Preservation Maryland working closely with state agencies and elected officials. Maryland has one of the nation's best state preservation programs including the Heritage Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit, the heritage area program, and the preservation grant fund.

In 2001, the National Trust for Historic Preservation presented Preservation Maryland with the Trustees Award for Organizational Excellence. One of the preservation field's highest honors, the award recognized Preservation Maryland nationally as a leading preservation organization in the areas of funding, outreach and advocacy. In the same year, a major advocacy effort by Preservation Maryland in the west side of downtown Baltimore culminated in the execution of an agreement between the State and the City of Baltimore that saved hundreds of buildings and made preservation a cornerstone of the \$1 billion redevelopment effort. This initiative was lauded by Richard Moe, president of the National Trust, as "America's largest preservation-based revitalization effort".

Preservation Maryland received the Seal of Excellence for successfully completing the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organization's Standards for Excellence certification program. Certification in the Standards for Excellence program is bestowed only to the most well-managed and responsibly governed nonprofit organizations that have demonstrated compliance with 55 specific Standards for Excellence based on honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, responsibility, and accountability. Preservation Maryland is one of only 64 organizations that has met, complied with, and integrated the Standards for Excellence into all its activities to successfully complete this voluntary certification program.