



Brief Biographies of AHS Officers for 2024-2025

OFFICERS

President: David Pearson

David is returning to the Board for another term, his second as President. He is a lifelong Arlingtonian and fondly remembers visiting the Arlington Historical Museum growing up. He attended the University of William and Mary, then worked as an accountant before attending the University of Virginia School of Law. He is a retired Partner and Managing Director from the legal department of The Carlyle Group. David is an Eagle Scout and his past volunteer activities include serving as the Cubmaster for Cub Scout Pack 149, volunteering on the troop committee of Boy Scout Troop 149, coaching soccer and T-ball teams, and serving as a director of America Scores, a national organization providing after school activities in inner-city middle schools. David also serves as the Docent Coordinator for the Arlington Historical Museum, where he is also a docent.

Vice President: Peter Vaselopoulos

Peter is returning to the Board for another term, his first as Vice-President. He retired from the federal government as Deputy Chief Information Officer at the United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM). He served 35 years at USAGM where he worked as a broadcast journalist, international television producer, and new media and information technology specialist. He is currently a board member of the Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington, D.C., and was a member of Arlington County's Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee. Peter has a master's certificate in Digital Public Humanities from George Mason University. He is also 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. Peter is an Arlington County Historic Preservation grant awardee and is working on a multiyear digital media project called "Arlington Historical" including a website and mobile application: Arlington History. Peter and his wife, Virginie, are 44-year residents of Arlington County.

Treasurer: Richard Samp

Rich is returning to the Board for another term, his second as Treasurer. He has lived in Arlington for 38 years and has had a long-time interest in local history. In 2020, he authored an article titled: "[Arlington's Battle to Integrate Private Schools](#)" for the *Arlington Historical Magazine* that focused on a legal challenge to a racially segregated Arlington pre-school and that led to a 1976 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in private schools. [He later presented this case at an AHS free monthly lecture.](#) Rich is a semi-retired attorney who

specializes in appellate litigation. He serves on 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.

Secretary: Sandy Newton

Sandy is returning to the Board for another term, her second as Secretary. As a military wife Sandy has lived in many places and history has been part of that journey. While in Minnesota she worked as a guide in the State Capitol and at the James J. Hill House for the Minnesota Historical Society. She has been in Arlington since 1982. She has worked at Mount Vernon for 32 years as a guide, farm supervisor, and character interpreter. As Secretary to the Director and Board she was fortunate to touch all areas of Mount Vernon and she continues to volunteer at events. Sandy has a degree in textiles and was a curator at the Hillwood Museum where she catalogued and identified the lace collection. Sandy was President of the Arlington Civic Federation where she worked with the many associations that make up the county. She is also on the Foundation Board at Arlington House. She is a spinner and weaver and volunteers at both AHS museums. If you come to Arlington House at Arlington National Cemetery, you might find her in the vegetable garden fending off the deer where she volunteers as a gardener at the site's Friends of Urban Agriculture vegetable garden.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Catherine Aselford

Catherine is returning to the Board for another term. A D.C. native who moved to Arlington in 1998, Catherine Aselford began her theatre career performing in *Bus Stop* at the Source, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Catholic University two years later. She has directed or produced at least one Capital Fringe Festival show each year from 2006-2018. As an arts administrator, Catherine has served as Executive Director, Development Manager, and Education Manager at several arts and education non-profits in the Washington, D.C. area. Her community service includes recruiting, training, and coordinating dozens of volunteers to raise money for the homeless through Taste of Georgetown; serving on the Arlington Public Schools Advisory Committee on Curriculum; serving on the Board of The Actors' Center and managing their Saturday Morning Workshop Series; serving on the Board of Artomatic; serving on the Arlington Commission for the Arts; and volunteering with school and youth groups in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Catherine has served as the Chair of the AHS Fundraising Committee.

Duke Banks

Duke is a municipal management consultant and trainer with over 40 years of experience in the U.S. and numerous developing countries. With an eye towards promoting economic development, he specializes in strengthening the administrative and financial capacity of local governments, the financing of major public sector projects, and training in several areas of public administration. He has worked on assignments ranging from defining the role of the state and the development of strategies for government reorganization, decentralization, and privatization in

several Latin American, Caribbean, and Eastern Europe countries to serving as Assistant Budget Director for the City of Fort Worth, Texas. His civic involvement in Arlington includes service on the Board of the Waverly Hills Civic Association. He is a past Vice President and President of the Arlington County Civic Federation, a former member of the County's Parks and Recreation Commission, and he is a Board member of the Arlington Committee of 100. He is presently President of the Friends of Gulf Branch Nature Center. He is a native of Venezuela, as is his wife, Elvira. They have three children and three grandchildren. This is his first year on the Board.

Annette Benbow

Annette is returning to the Board for another term. She has served as the Chair of AHS's Ball-Sellers House Committee since 2012, currently heads the AHS Events Committee and the AHS social media team, she is on the Museum Committee, and she is a docent at the Ball-Sellers House. She also is the driver behind AHS's leadership of the county's commemoration effort of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. In 2014, she wrote an article for the *Arlington Historical Magazine* on the military men [who were then listed on Clarendon's World War I commemorative plaque](#) and later presented it at an AHS monthly event. 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 lived in Arlington briefly but has worshiped in the county for more than 35 years. She has a bachelor's degree in history from the University of New Hampshire and a master's certificate from the University of Maryland in public policy.

Sean Denniston

Sean is returning to the Board for another term and last year served as 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 County in 1920 which was published in the *Arlington Historical Magazine*. He is expanding his 1920s research to include the old Jefferson District and Town of Potomac, both annexed by Alexandria. He enjoys speaking to local organizations and community groups and anyone with pictures, memories, or artifacts. He is co-chair of the Preservation and Research Committee and co-coordinator of AHS USA 250 celebrations. He also serves on AHS's Events Committee and helps lead AHS's role in the Arlington VA250 commemorations. 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.

Sue Eisenfeld

Sue is a Philadelphia native who has lived in Arlington for more than 30 years. She worked as an environmental policy and communications consultant for 17+ years and then became a freelance writer, editor, and writing instructor. Her writing about history, nature, travel/adventure, health, culture, and other topics has been published in *Washingtonian*, *Smithsonian*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Forward*, *Civil War Times*, *Arlington* and *Bethesda* magazines, among many other magazines and literary journals. She is the author of two books, *Shenandoah*:

A Story of Conservation and Betrayal, and *Wandering Dixie: Dispatches from the Lost Jewish South* and is a contributing author in *The New York Times' Disunion: A History of the Civil War*. She has served as a faculty lecturer in the M.A. in Science Writing Program at Johns Hopkins University for more than a decade, and she also works as a business development consultant for ICF. She holds a B.S. in natural resources from Cornell University and an M.A. in writing from Johns Hopkins. Her [article about AHS's Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington project](#) appeared in *Arlington Magazine*, and she has provided research and writing support to the [Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington](#) project over the past year. This is her first year on the Board.

Dawn “Sunny” Evans

Sunny has a degree from the University of Maryland and has professionally been in logistics and office management for the last seven years. Currently, Sunny is pursuing her interest in Library Sciences as a student at the University of Maine as well as Museum Management training with the Virginia Association of Museums. In her spare time, she actively contributes to the Arlington community by leading the Arlington Courthouse Library book club and volunteering with the Collection Management team at the Arlington Historical Museum. Sunny has been a resident in the Arlington area since 2020. She is originally from Atlanta, Georgia, and has lived in northern Virginia for the last 10 years. This is her first year on the Board.

Cathy Bonneville Hix

Cathy joined the Board in 2016 and served as President from 2018-2023. In her tenure as president, Cathy frequently spoke to the community about Arlington's history and the need to preserve and share our diverse history with all. She was asked to represent AHS in the community, including serving on Arlington County's World War I Commemorative Task Force and the Centennial of Arlington's Naming. Cathy currently serves on the AHS membership and education committees. Cathy retired in 2018 after 39 years as an educator in Arlington's public schools, first as a social studies teacher, then a social studies specialist, and finally as the K-12 Supervisor of Social Studies. Cathy has done extensive work in curriculum development and has worked as an educational consultant for the Virginia Department of Education. She is an Arlington native who was raised and educated in the county.

Del. Patrick Hope

Patrick is returning to the Board for another term. He is a member of the Virginia General Assembly as the Delegate from the 1st District in Arlington and was re-elected for his eighth term in 2023. He has served on the AHS Events Committee. A 26-year Arlington resident, Patrick is a health care attorney who works in the medical device industry. He has been involved in numerous community activities and was the founding president of the Buckingham Community Civic Association. He is also active in several Arlington organizations and has been a member of the Arlington Historical Society since 2015.

Jessica Kaplan

Jessica is returning to the Board for another term. She 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 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."

Michael Schaffner

Michael is returning to the Board for another term. He is a long-time resident of Arlington, a retired federal employee, an avid amateur historian, and a reenactor in Company B, 54th Massachusetts (the "Glory" regiment). He was the keynote speaker at the rededication of Arlington's Fort Ethan Allen in 2014, has given presentations to Civil War Round Tables, the Museum of Civil War Medicine, and the Arlington Sesquicentennial Committee commemorating the Civil War and he has conducted battlefield tours for military personnel from the Embassy of Canada. In 2020, he participated in a [panel discussion](#) at an AHS monthly free lecture with fellow reenactors in the 54th Massachusetts, Edward W. Gantt and Ben Hawley. He has also spoken to an AHS audience about the rigors of Civil War red tape and the [Civil War Convalescent Camp](#) in what is now Arlington. Michael is also an author and his publications include the novel "War Boys," a poetry collection titled "The Good Opinion of Squirrels," and articles in several journals including *ArLiJo*, *Poetry Wales*, *Poetry Ireland*, *The Tulane Review*, and *Boston Poetry*. He is currently spending a lot of time in the regimental books of the Second United States Colored Infantry, organized in Arlington over the summer and fall of 1863 and hopes to publish a history of the regiment.

Annette Scherber

Annette is returning to the Board for another term. She 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, serves on the Membership, Museum, and Collections committees, conducted research for the [Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington](#) project, and catalogues the historical society's artifacts. She also recently 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.

Dale Smith

Dale is returning to the Board for another term. He is a veteran of the US Fire Service, serving more than 31 years with the Arlington County Fire Department (ACFD). He is a second-generation fire fighter who followed in his father's footsteps, and he started his career assigned to the historic Fire Station 8 in Halls Hill/High View Park. He presented a history of [firefighting in Station 8](#) at an AHS monthly event interviewing his father and a fellow firefighter. Like the men before him Dale broke barriers. He rose through the ranks to become the first African American in the ACFD to be promoted to the Chief Officer ranks. Dale received numerous awards over his career including the Valor Award. On September 11, 2001, Dale served as the Interior Incident Commander in the "Inner Core" during the Pentagon Terror Attacks. Dale is featured in two books written about the Pentagon Terror Attacks, "Pentagon 911" and "Firefight: Inside the Battle to Save the Pentagon on 911." He serves on the Museum Committee and has been instrumental in helping AHS re-envision the exhibits at the Arlington Historical Museum. Dale is a long time Arlingtonian. He attended Glebe Elementary School when it first opened. Now retired, Dale has stayed actively involved in the fire service by mentoring and counseling other firefighters throughout the United States.

Martin "Marty" Suydam

Marty is returning to the Board for another term. He is a long-time resident of Arlington. Now retired, he has had careers in government (Army, Defense, and Navy), industry (General Dynamics, ALCOA, JJMA, BMY, and Burke Industries), consulting (FOCUS Consulting and FOCUS Marketing), and teaching (Colorado School of Mines, George Mason University, Washington College, and Marymount University). He teaches several courses for the Arlington County Encore Learning including "Writing a Memoir," "Walk Four Mile Run," and "Walks with Charley." His published books on Arlington history are: "[Walks with Charley](#)," and "[Walk Four Mile Run](#)," In 2016, he penned an article for the *Arlington Historical Magazine* titled "[From Trolley Park to Sewage Treatment: Luna Park](#)." He spoke to an AHS public event in 2021 about [The Frazer family of Green Valley](#) and [The Rambler](#) in 2024.