

## THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA HONORARY AWARDS

### *The Massie Medal For Distinguished Achievement*

The prestigious Massie Medal for Distinguished Achievement was presented by Shirley Cooper (Mrs. Clarke T., Jr.), GCV Massie Medal Chairman, to Katherine (Katty) Turner Mears at the May Annual Meeting in Norfolk.

In presenting the award, Mrs. Cooper said, "Katty has the skills and stamina that have enabled her to work throughout the Commonwealth in leadership positions that reflect her love of gardening and her dedication to our natural and historic resources."

Katty's many contributions to her own garden club, the Garden Club of the Eastern Shore, have included a term as president, and she has been honored with her club's award for dedicated service. Her flower arrangements display an eloquent use of design and color and have brought her countless cups and ribbons.

The Garden Club of Virginia took note of this energy and talent and soon put Katty to work. She has served on the Restoration Committee for many years, both as a committee member, and as chairman, supporting the Committee's projects with

her typical energy and organizational skills. She has also been an active member of The Garden Club of Virginia Speaker's Bureau, and a District Chairman of Historic Garden

Week. After serving as Director-at-Large, Second Vice President, and Parliamentarian for The GCV, Katty was elected President of The Garden Club of Virginia in 1984. At the end of her term of office, she was elected to the presidency of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

She quickly found common

ground between the two organizations, as demonstrated by their cooperative efforts at Bacon's Castle. Using these experiences, she has continued to expand the circle of organizations whose efforts can affect our region's natural assets. Known for her loyalty to The Garden Club of Virginia, Katty has been its ambassador as she worked with kindred groups, advocating complimentary goals and "cross-pollinating" ideas to the benefit of all.

Her Massie Medal is inscribed: "For her loyalty, talent, dedication, and style." Indeed, a fitting tribute to one of The GCV's finest!



*Katherine Turner Mears*  
The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore

# 2009 deLacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation

*By Anne Doyle, GCV Conservation and Beautification Chairman  
The Garden Club of Norfolk*



*Suzanne Wescoat shares her joy after receiving the deLacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation. Photograph by Lea Shuba*

Suzanne Wescoat, a member of The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore since 1974, was awarded the deLacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation at The Garden Club of Virginia's Annual Meeting in Virginia Beach. Attending the award ceremony were her family members and loyal friends from her club.

Suzanne has dedicated her life to preserving and protecting the Eastern Shore's natural resources, including its beautiful coastlines, fragile ecosystem and traditional, rural economy. Her involvement began in 1988 in response to real estate developers from outside the region buying up waterfront farms. Suzanne led residents of Northampton County, the southern half of Virginia's Eastern Shore, to address concerns about their community's future. Her campaign led to the formation of a non-profit organization entitled Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore (CBES), and Suzanne served tirelessly as its first president.

With her inspiration, CBES currently represents Virginia's entire Eastern Shore with over 800 members and manages working partnerships with organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, The Working Waterman's Association and the NAACP. The work of two of its committees became so significant that they were spun-off in the 1990s to become separate organizations, each receiving national recognition and funding through grants for community and sustainable development.

Her leadership continued through her election and twelve-year service to the Northampton County Board of Supervisors, where fellow Supervisors appointed her as their Chairman. In this position, she served as an advocate for responsible residential and commercial development. According to her colleague, Supervisor Richard B. Tankard, "She began her tenure as the lone voice for conservation. Her consensus building talents changed how Northampton County viewed conservation." To the Board of Supervisors' long-range plan, Suzanne included conservation easements to support marine habitat and agriculture, as well as adopting the Chesapeake Bay Act for both bay and ocean sides of the Eastern Shore's narrow peninsula. Suzanne was instrumental in the Board of Supervisors' adoption of Land Use Taxation and Agricultural/Forrestal Districts. These districts help preserve farms and forests by giving property owners a tax incentive if their land does not change its usage for ten years. Finally, she secured a grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation to establish the Eastern Shore Heritage Trail.

Suzanne received national recognition in 1996 when The Nature Conservancy presented her with its highest conservation honor, the Oak Leaf Award. Suzanne's inspired leadership truly exemplifies the spirit of the deLacy Gray Memorial Medal. Her dedication to conservation offers GCV members throughout Virginia a most valuable role model as they pursue the GCV's vision of *celebrating the beauty of the land, conserving the gifts of nature and challenging future generations to build on this heritage.*