

## **MVM 2019 Annual Meeting – Chairman’s Remarks**

2019 was the year in which a long-held dream came true. We finished restoring the majestic 1895 Marine Hospital, moved our main campus to Vineyard Haven and opened the doors of the new Martha’s Vineyard Museum on March 13, 2019.

In June, during our Grand Opening weekend, 2,200 people flocked to the new Museum during a non-stop three days of events that included the opening of the Benton exhibit and a grand gala with spectacular fireworks over the Lagoon. And concluded with a Free Family Festival that drew over 1,400 people.

Over 25,000 visitors came to our new campus in those first nine months and we gained 1,000 new members.

Over 1,000 students were educated through our programs and inquiries to our research library more than quadrupled.

New collaborations with organizations and individuals around the island helped us enrich and diversify our offerings of every kind. We opened an expanded Museum Shop featuring local artisans. And worked with the ArtCliff renown Gina Stanley to open our First Light Café.

Stone artist Lew French created the unique Rose Styron Garden behind the Linnemann Pavilion. And we began the creation of the new Cooke House Gardens in Edgartown through generous donors so that we could hold on to a treasured house and property that represents our roots.

You are going to hear more detail on things throughout the course of this meeting and Heather will bring you up to speed on some of our more recent initiatives during this unusual time.

We continue to need to raise money to cover the funds that were required to finish our building project and support operations. Like all museums, we are dependent on contributions. Dale will provide more detail on this when he reviews our finances.

In short, 2019 was a historic year for our nearly century old institution. We are forever grateful to those who have supported us, had faith in us, and stayed with us throughout.

I’d like to say a special thanks to Phil Wallis, who was our Executive Director during the past four years. Phil’s community outreach and abundance of energy and enthusiasm definitely helped us to get to where we are today. We have an amazing staff and Heather Seger, our interim Executive Director who you’ll hear from in a minute is a very experienced and capable leader of our organization. And to our dedicated board who has had the courage to see this project through. Just a side note that when this pandemic hit this year, our board raised over 250 thousand dollars among themselves to help sustain us during this period. One other big thanks I’d like to make is to a friend who is partly responsible for getting me involved in this venture, Dale Garth. As treasurer, Dale has been an amazing partner shepherding us through this historical journey.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have served as Chairman of the Board over the past four years during the creation and opening of our extraordinary new Museum. I am so proud of our accomplishments and want to thank everyone for their support and confidence in my leadership. Thank you! I’m now going to turn it over to Heather, our interim Executive Director who has a few remarks.