



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Adams Memorial Foundation Announces Inaugural Leadership Award Recipients

Honorees to be Recognized at July 1, 2026, Celebration in Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C. The Adams Memorial Foundation is proud to announce the recipients of its inaugural Leadership Award, a national honor recognizing individuals whose lives and leadership reflect the enduring principles embodied by the Adams family: faith, moral courage, civic responsibility, intellectual integrity, and a steadfast commitment to the service of nation and community.

The awards will be presented during a special celebration on July 1, 2026, marking the first presentation of this distinguished national award program. Each year, the Adams Memorial Foundation will honor a select group of individuals from across the nation whose actions, leadership, and service embody the timeless values championed by the Adams family. Recipients represent the very best of American leadership: individuals who lead with conviction, humility, vision, and an unwavering dedication to strengthening our nation for future generations.

The inspiration for this award is rooted in the remarkable partnership and sacrifice of John and Abigail Adams, whose shared commitment to liberty, service, and nation-building helped shape our constitutional republic. Their enduring correspondence, mutual respect, and unwavering devotion to principle serve as a timeless reminder that great leadership is grounded not only in achievement, but in character, courage, and a willingness to place the common good above personal interest. The award seeks to honor those leaders of today who carry forward these same ideals in service to their communities and country.

This year's awardees are Reps. Morgan Griffith, R-VA; Bill Keating, D-MA; Stephen Lynch, D-MA; and John Moolenaar, R-MI. We will also honor the late Rep. Gerald Connolly, D-MA, in memoriam.

Each award is accompanied by a commemorative sculpture created by renowned American sculptor Kevin Christman. With more than three decades of experience creating bronze monuments and public

works of art, Christman is recognized for his extraordinary attention to historical accuracy, narrative

storytelling, and craftsmanship. His acclaimed portrayals of John and Abigail Adams were created after extensive research into their lives, writings, and legacy, resulting in works that capture both the strength of their convictions and the unique partnership that helped shape the nation. The sculpture serves as a lasting symbol of the values celebrated by this award and the enduring legacy of the Adams family.

Through this award, the Foundation seeks not only to recognize exceptional leadership, but also to inspire renewed civic engagement, moral leadership, and national unity rooted in the ideals that helped define our nation's founding and continue to guide its future. The July 1, 2026, celebration underscores the Foundation's ongoing efforts to honor the Adams legacy as the nation prepares to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence.

"Our mission is to bring proper recognition to a family whose sacrifices and achievements continue to influence our everyday freedoms. We are grateful for our recipients' hard work and dedication to make the Adams Memorial a reality. They represent the ideals of the Adams through their dedication and service to our nation; we are so grateful for their determination and public service. This memorial is about honoring their dedication and helping future generations connect with a story of service, humanity, and liberty."

Jackie Gingrich Cushman, Chair, Adams Memorial Commission & President, Adams Memorial Foundation

"I am humbled to receive this Leadership Award from the Adams Memorial Foundation. It is an honor to be a part of a class of dedicated lawmakers working with the Foundation to memorialize the pivotal contributions of the historic Adams family. As we near celebration of our country's 250th anniversary, we hold dear their contributions to our republic's foundational principles."

Morgan Griffith

"I am truly honored that the Adams Memorial Foundation has chosen me for one of its inaugural leadership awards. All who have called Southeastern Massachusetts home have lived in the shadow of the Adams Family legacy and influence on our country. Those of us from Massachusetts are proud of our connection to these Founding Fathers and Mother. They have long embodied not only the notion of civic duty but the responsibility we all have to pass that duty down to our children. As Abigail Adams once famously said: 'To be good, and do good, is the whole duty of man comprised in a few words.' As we approach the 250th anniversary of this great nation, I encourage us all to take those words to heart and live them each day. And I, along with my fellow honorees, will continue the fight to ensure this quintessentially American family gets the recognition it deserves with a memorial in Washington, D.C."

Bill Keating

"For over 10 years, I have been proud to support the effort to establish the Adams Memorial. The Adams family's commitment to country, public service, and democratic ideals helped define our nation's character. I am honored by this recognition and grateful to all those who have worked tirelessly to make this memorial a reality."

Stephen F. Lynch

"President John Adams, Abigail Adams, and their children were dedicated public servants who guided the United States of America through its infancy. Two hundred fifty years ago, John Adams pledged his life, fortune, and sacred honor in support of the ideals outlined in the Declaration of Independence. This year, as we celebrate Independence Day, I encourage all Americans to reflect on the courage of our

founders and the sacrifices they made to secure our freedom. It is a tremendous honor to be named an inaugural recipient of the Adams Memorial Foundation Leadership Award, and I will continue my work to ensure that John and Abigail Adams are given the recognition they deserve for their instrumental leadership in our founding.”

John Moolenaar

“Gerry was a great admirer of John Adams. Among other traits, he particularly respected Adams’ indefatigable focus on growing and nurturing our fledgling republic. Gerry admired his willingness to serve in several capacities regardless of ego (which was not insignificant). Gerry himself consistently displayed the other-centeredness that made him a great public servant and would be truly touched to receive this award. [Our daughter] Caitlin and I are honored to receive it on his behalf.”

"Smitty" Smith, widow of the late Gerald Connolly

About the Adams Memorial Foundation

The Adams Memorial Foundation is dedicated to establishing a national memorial in Washington, D.C., honoring President John Adams, First Lady Abigail Adams, President John Quincy Adams, First Lady Louisa Catherine Adams, Congressman and Ambassador Charles Francis Adams, and historian Henry Adams, whose contributions helped shape our constitutional republic. The Foundation works to educate the public on the Adams family’s legacy of patriotism, civic duty, faith, and public service through advocacy, programming, and private philanthropy. For more information, visit TheAdamsMemorial.org

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