

Ann Brownson Award for Outstanding Service to the Museum Field

The Ann Brownson Award for Outstanding Service to the Museum Field is given annually to recognize individuals who have provided outstanding service to the Virginia museum community and especially to the Virginia Association of Museums. The VAM Council first established the award in 1999 to honor the service and accomplishments of Ann Brownson, who continues to serve as the model and inspiration for the award which honors other non-museum individuals who have helped VAM as a way of helping all museums and cultural institutions in the Commonwealth.

A native of Indiana, Anna Louise Harshman received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Butler University, before becoming administrative assistant to Charles Brownson, a Congressman from Indiana and later her husband. After Brownson served four terms in the House of Representatives from 1951 to 1958, he founded the *Congressional Staff Directory* in 1959, and later the *Federal Staff Directory* and the *Judicial Staff Directory*, serving as publisher. Ann worked with as associate editor and treasurer before becoming president of the *Congressional Staff Directory* and succeeding her husband as publisher and editor after his death in 1988. Ann was a consummate and dedicated professional, a leader in her field who was also busy many significant roles in volunteer activities, serving on the boards of many museums and cultural organizations throughout the state and beyond.

Among her many cultural associations, Ann was a trustee of the George C. Marshall Foundation, and a member of the board of the James Madison Council of the Library of Congress, a group of private-sector individuals who are the Library's lead donor group, and of the Accokeek Foundation, one of the nation's first land trusts, founded to protect the view from Mount Vernon across the Potomac River. She was an active member of the Mount Vernon Life Guard Society, a group dedicated to generously supporting the mission of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association with time, talent and resources; a member of the Potomac River Basin Consortium; the Association of the United States Army; the Military Officers Association; the American Council on America's Military Past; and the Capitol Hill Club.

Ann's leadership reached internationally. She served as a member of the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute, as well as the World Affairs Council of Washington, DC, which aims to inform and educate the public about contemporary international affairs. She was also a fellow of the Wilton Park International Association, an international forum for strategic discussion, bringing together leading representatives from the worlds of politics, diplomacy, academia, business, civil society, the military, and the media.

Although Ann was widely committed, former VAM director Margo Carlock recalls that her real passions were VAM and the Boy Scouts of America. She was a devoted supporter of museums in Virginia. She served on the VAM board for 8 years, 1991 to 1999, including a term as secretary. She was a true supporter and cheerleader for VAM, and generously supported the organization financially. Ann also served as Vice president of planned giving for the National Capitol area Boy Scouts of America, receiving its prestigious Silver Beaver award, the council-level distinguished service award given to those who implement the scouting program and perform community service through hard work, self-sacrifice, dedication, and many years of service.