

The Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, Incorporated



A Society for Extension of Public Knowledge about John Dickinson and his Mansion

February 11, 2023

Dear Friends,

Thank you for supporting the Friends of John Dickinson Mansion. As we welcome the coming year, we remain committed to keeping the legacy of John Dickinson and his under-recognized contributions to the founding of this nation alive.

Last year we lost a great friend with the passing of Justice Randy Holland. Justice Holland was known for his love of history and especially his knowledge of John Dickinson and Dickinson's role as a founding father. The Board of Directors plans to commemorate Justice Holland's longtime support by placing a bench in his honor near the Mansion.

Last year things seemed to be getting back to normal. After two years of the COVID interruption, we held our Annual Meeting in the barn. Michael Dudich, the new Director of the Biggs Museum of American Art in Dover, was our guest speaker. He shared his thoughts on how communities can be brought together by using valuable links to the past. Governor Carney also attended and thanked our organization for its dedication to Delaware's history. Our Holiday Party in December was a success and it was great to gather with so many of you again.

This year the Friends will conduct a membership survey. Our goal is to gather data that will help us grow our membership and reach a broader audience. You may complete the survey by following this link (bit.ly/3Xv0sqD), or scanning the QR code on the back of this letter. We welcome your thoughts.

The State Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (HCA) is in high gear as it prepares to build a new visitor center on the plantation grounds. Architectural plans are being completed and archaeologists are investigating the proposed site. This exciting new facility is a major undertaking and will offer meeting spaces, an archaeological research lab, and museum exhibits. The exhibits will focus on John Dickinson and what life was

like on an 18th century plantation as inhabited not only by the Dickinson family, but also by a diverse community of free and enslaved laborers. The Friends organization looks forward to working with HCA and its interpretive designers as the new exhibits are planned.

HCA is moving forward with the installation of a trail system that will connect the Mansion with several locations on the old plantation and eventually the St. Jones Reserve. The State sponsors many activities at the Mansion. Last year, they included the 18th century Trade Fair on the grounds of the plantation, Lantern Tours, participation in the 18th century Market Fair on the Green, among many other events. The staff was awarded the American Association of State and Local History's award of excellence for the *Search, Discovery, and Initial Programming of the African Burial Ground*. The Friends have also sponsored Gloria Henry, Annie Fennimore and Vertie Lee to present their program "Ending Erasure" at the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museum annual conference in Tacoma Washington.

Please take a look at the attached membership material and consider giving the Friends of John Dickinson Mansion your continued support. On behalf of the Board, we wish you happiness and good health in the coming year.

Sincerely,



Rodney Robinson
Board Chair

PS – Please continue as a member in 2023...and provide your feedback on how we can improve! You can either follow this link (bit.ly/3Xv0sqD) or scan the QR code to fill out the survey. It should only take 5 to 10 minutes of your time!

