

A Note from Campaign Chair Chris Spurry



Tilghman Island is a magical place, rich with natural beauty and colorful heritage- one of the best-kept secrets on the Chesapeake. I fell under its spell when I was twelve years old, working on a charter boat fishing out of Knapp's Narrows. There I experienced firsthand the personalities of the watermen, competing charter boat captains, storekeepers, and the community in general. I learned to respect and appreciate the people and the culture of Tilghman Island. Now, fifty years later, my appreciation for this unique place remains undiminished; I consider it a special privilege to chair the *Homecoming Campaign*.

The Tilghman Watermen's Museum celebrates culture and community, adding credibility, memorializing local traditions and values, and sharing unique stories and creativity with the rest of the world. The Museum will keep Tilghman's heritage alive and endure as a source of pride for a community often challenged by external forces that tend to erode the Island's traditional way of life.

Since it opened its doors in borrowed space in the island's barber shop, the Museum has shown that it can make a difference to the Tilghman community. It has spread Tilghman's story through its films, (people all over the country viewed *Growing up on Tilghman*); showcased local art and artists and supported artists capturing Tilghman's landscapes during the *Plein Air-Easton!*; and shared its collections and stories with local schoolchildren. Importantly, it serves as a magnet for attracting heritage tourists to the island. As my friend Robbie Wilson said in the Museum's second movie, *Another Dawn- Tilghman in Transition*, "This is the onliest place I really know and everybody else wants to come here so I figure this must be the best place on earth."

The Tilghman Watermen's Museum has proven that it can be an economic engine for the island as well as build communal pride. Now they need a home of their own to advance their efforts, and the Lee House is a perfect venue. The last unmodified "W" house on the island, it is an ideal place to tell Tilghman's story, showcase its art and artists, display its unique collections, and create a net-based outreach to share this heritage with the world. To achieve this goal, the museum has launched a five year, \$500,000 campaign, the *Homecoming Campaign*, and I ask you to consider participating.

I am proud that I began my young working life on Tilghman Island and I am grateful for that formative experience. Let's act to preserve Tilghman's worthy heritage and to showcase the community's enduring value. Please join me in supporting the Tilghman Watermen's Museum's efforts to build a home, a museum in a museum, that will over time continue to honor the value and dignity of Tilghman's rich and lively history.