

# News Release



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## **CBMM announces major restoration project for the skipjack *Rosie Parks***

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, MD has announced a three-year major skipjack restoration project which will be done in public view at the Museum's boat yard. Funded through philanthropic support, the restoration process will provide hands-on shipwright experience and serve as a prime attraction for the Museum visitor as a dynamic and interactive exhibit.

The *Rosie Parks*, built in 1955 by legendary boat builder Bronza Parks for his brother, Captain Orville Parks, was named for their mother. The Museum purchased *Rosie Parks* in 1975 from Captain Orville. Only 20 years old at the time, *Rosie* had a reputation as both the best maintained skipjack in the oyster dredging fleet and as a champion sailor at the annual skipjack races at Deal Island and Chesapeake Appreciation Days at Sandy Point.

*Rosie Parks* was the first of her kind to be preserved afloat by a museum and quickly became the most widely recognized Chesapeake Bay skipjack of the late twentieth century, as well as a symbol of the preservation prospect for the dwindling fleet of surviving skipjacks. Recently surpassing her fifty-year mark, *Rosie Parks* is in need of substantial rebuilding. Repairs were made to the boat as needed until 1994, but *Rosie* remains one of the least altered historic skipjacks in existence. When restored in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Vessel Preservation Projects, *Rosie* could be the best example of her type for interpretation of the work of this fleet.

The skipjack contains her original winders (power winches) and other dredging gear, which will allow her to be fully outfitted when refloated. Original fabric retained includes a majority of the structural components of the hull, including a major portion of the keel. *Rosie's* suit of Dacron sails is still usable, although she will most likely need a new engine for her push boat, and the push boat itself must be assessed for repair or replacement.

The anticipated three-year restoration process will afford the chance for daily public interpretation, ranging from interactions between Museum artisans on the project and Museum visitors to more intense half-day or day-long experiences modeled on the existing *Apprentice For a Day* program. The Museum hopes to incorporate a large pool of community volunteers as well as school and youth programs in the restoration process. Visitors will learn about the cultural aspects of this vanishing community—how the boats were designed and built, who were the designers and builders, how were workers treated and paid, what was life like in these communities, what did the men do in the off-season, and how were the boats used when not dredging for oysters, in addition to the basics of boat design for the Chesapeake Bay.

The restoration project has already received a generous bequest from the family of Richard Grant III, who fondly recall their father's stories of sailing on *Rosie Parks*. While the Grant family gift is enough to get started on the \$500,000 restoration, additional philanthropic support is needed to fund the project and to cover long-term maintenance. The Museum has the largest collection of indigenous Chesapeake Bay watercraft in existence. Restoring and preserving these historic Chesapeake vessels is an important part of the Museum's mission.

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**Photos:**

**NOTE: High Resolution, historical photos can be downloaded at [www.mediafire.com](http://www.mediafire.com) . USER NAME: [rosieparks@cbmm.org](mailto:rosieparks@cbmm.org); PASSWORD: maritime**

"RosieParksAnnouncement\_110610.jpg"

The *Rosie Parks* restoration project was announced from the deck of the 1879 Hooper Strait Lighthouse at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels during the Museum's November 6 OysterFest event. More than 30 Parks' family members, spanning three generations, joined Museum President Langley Shook on the deck of the lighthouse, while Museum Board of Governor's members stood below.