



ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mike Bento, AWS Communications
(202) 320-3174

Mike@EngageStrategies.us

Anacostia Watershed Society Announces 2017 Anacostia River Heroes

*Heroes will be honored Monday, October 2nd at
Annual Countdown to 2025 Reception*

(Washington, DC – September 26, 2017) – On Monday October 2nd, the Anacostia Watershed Society will recognize five extraordinary individuals who have led efforts to restore the Anacostia River. The 2017 Heroes will be honored at the Norfolk Southern Club at Nationals Park overlooking the Anacostia River, with a gala reception that will raise funds for our 2017 Countdown to 2025 Campaign.

Supporters of the Countdown to 2025 Campaign will reestablish 10 acres of riverside meadows, tree canopies, and native plant gardens to support the wildlife, plants, pollinators, and human communities that depend on these natural spaces.

To purchase tickets to the Reception or to contribute to the Campaign, visit <https://anacostiaws.salsalabs.org/2017countdownto2025reception/index.html>

Anacostia River Heroes recognizes individuals whose work protects and restores the water and the shores, advocates for the health of the river, or connects our watershed communities to the Anacostia River. Heroes receive a modest cash award, supported by funding from the Nelson S. Talbott Family Foundation.

The 2017 Anacostia River Heroes are:

- **Shaniequa Berry**, *Anacostia River Next Generation Hero*, is a 10th grader at Benjamin Banneker Academic High School who participated in AWS' Saturday Environmental Academy as both a student and a Student Leader, and was chosen to be a Fellow with the Student Conservation Corps and Congress, an international gathering of student conservation leaders.

- **Akiima Price**, *Anacostia River Educator of the Year*, has been a leading environmental educator on the Anacostia River for more than two decades working with youth from across the District and Maryland. Akiima has a deep history, connection and passion for the Anacostia River and focuses on connecting children and adults to their neighborhood river.
- **Mary Ross**, recognized as the *Anacostia River Civic Spirit Hero*, chairs the Hillcrest Community Civic Association's Environment and Beautification Committee. Over many years she has led community efforts to improve the environmental health of the Hillcrest neighborhood. Starting in 2010, she began urging the District Government to fix Alger Park Stream, resulting in a multi-million dollar restoration effort that will be completed this month.
- **Bob Day**, who will be recognized posthumously, helped establish rowing on the Anacostia River, and helped organize what is now the Anacostia Community Boathouse Association. The Silver Spring resident passed away in June 2017.
- And **Neil Gehrels**, also recognized posthumously, was a NASA scientist whose extensive community service include working with economically disadvantaged kids living in the port towns of Bladensburg, Colman Manor, Cottage City and Edmonston, Maryland. Neil passed away in February 2017.

The Countdown to 2025 Reception is sponsored by Norfolk Southern, along with CH2M, the JBG Companies, and the Nelson S. Talbot Family Foundation as well as dozens of other corporations, foundations and individual supporters of the Anacostia Watershed Society.

About the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS)

The mission of the Anacostia Watershed Society is to protect and restore the Anacostia River and its watershed communities by cleaning the water, recovering the shores, and honoring the heritage. The vision is to make the Anacostia River and its tributaries swimmable and fishable by 2025, in keeping with the Clean Water Act, for the health and enjoyment of everyone in the community. Community involvement is critical to achieving this vision and AWS seeks strong partnerships and coalitions with all parts of the community, government, and other stakeholders. Anacostia Watershed Society's programs include environmental education, stewardship, recreation, and engaging the community through advocacy and volunteer opportunities. www.anacostiaws.org

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