



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
10 June 2015

CONTACT: Jane Ballentine
O: 443/552-5275
C: 301/332-1742

**LAURIE SCHWARTZ, WATERFRONT PARTNERSHIP
HONORED AS THE 2015 WINNER OF
THE MARYLAND ZOO IN BALTIMORE'S
MICHAEL D. HANKIN AWARD FOR CONSERVATION**

BALTIMORE, MD – The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is pleased to announce the The Michael D. Hankin Award for Conservation has been awarded to Laurie Schwartz, president of The Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore. The Michael D. Hankin Award for Conservation, named for former Chairman of the Zoo's Board of Trustees Mike Hankin, was created by The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore in 2005 to recognize individuals who epitomize the legacy of conservation, volunteerism, and philanthropy.

The Hankin Award was presented to Schwartz yesterday afternoon at The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore in front of the Maryland Zoo Board of Trustees, Waterfront Partnership colleagues, Maryland Zoo staff and volunteers.

"We are so honored to present this award to Laurie," stated Don Hutchinson, president and CEO of The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. "She has dedicated her career to making Baltimore a wonderful place to live and work, devoting significant time and energy to developing and running first the Downtown Partnership, and now the Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore. For over three decades her commitment to Baltimore has never wavered, and we see the effects of her work along the promenade, in the waterfront parks and around the Harbor every day."

Under Laurie's leadership the Waterfront Partnership has made vast improvements to the waterfront parks including building the award-winning Pierce's Park featuring original sculptures for play, a musical fence, native plantings, four rain gardens, and a living willow tunnel; adding tables, shade trees, granite stone seating as well as raising funds toward construction of the interactive Walter Sondheim Fountain at West Shore Park; raising funds for and launching the Waterfront Partnership Ice Rink, and creating hundreds of free and affordable events such as Waterfront Wellness, Summer Socials, Harbor Harvest Children's Festival, and Shamrock Shindig that have drawn thousands of locals to Waterfront parks.

"Laurie has always advocated for a high quality of life for the citizens of Baltimore, knowing that people want to be a part of a vibrant, live-able and workable city," said Michael Hankin. "Her knowledge and entrepreneurial leadership not only brought us The Waterfront Partnership which she now leads, but also the Downtown Partnership, where she served as President for fifteen years."

-- more --

Other important aspects of The Waterfront Partnership are the Clean, Green, Hospitality and Safety teams that work tirelessly to provide a welcoming hand to visitors, to ensure the Promenade is clean and safe and make sure that landscape is always lush and colorful. To that end, the Clean Team has removed nearly 1,070 tons of trash, spent 14,000 hours vacuuming litter and power washing and emptied more than 32,650 trashcans. The Green Team has planted more than 100,000 flowers and almost 100 trees and the Hospitality and Safety teams have assisted over a million Waterfront visitors.

“Of course, now Laurie and The Waterfront Partnership can lay claim to one of the most famous trash collection apparatus now in existence, the Inner Harbor Water Wheel Trash Interceptor,” continued Hutchinson. “This remarkable invention harnesses the power of water and sunlight to pick up litter and debris flowing down the Jones Falls River. I’ve been told that the wheel has removed more than 160 tons of trash and debris in the last 10 months, while at the same time inspiring others to do their part by keeping litter *out* of the waterways to begin with. Laurie’s legacy will hopefully always make such a splash in Baltimore.”

The first Michael D. Hankin Award for Conservation was awarded in 2005 to Michael Hankin. It has since been awarded to:

- H. Turney McKnight, 2006
- Dr. Torrey C. Brown, 2007
- D. Keith Campbell, 2010
- Tom Lewis, 2011, and
- Dr. Mike Cranfield, 2012.

About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo’s varied natural habitat exhibits such as the brand new Penguin Coast, Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the award-winning Children’s Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit www.marylandzoo.org.

###