



The
**Mariners'
Museum
and Park**®

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**The Mariners' Museum and Park Unveils "Martha's Way": A New Waterfront Amenity
Along the James River**



Royden Goodson cuts the ribbon to officially open Martha's Way alongside family, Mariners' and community leaders, and project partners. *(Photo courtesy of The Mariners' Museum and Park)*

NEWPORT NEWS, VA — [The Mariners' Museum and Park](#) recently celebrated the grand opening of Martha's Way, a new pedestrian trail and boardwalk along the James River shoreline. Local leaders, the surrounding community, and project partners gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 29 to mark the project's completion.

Martha's Way incorporates a walking path, a boardwalk, and two scenic overlooks into the Mariners' Park waterfront. In a region where much of the shoreline is privately owned, this project delivers a rare and deeply meaningful gift to Newport News: a safe, sustainable, and publicly accessible space to connect with the water and experience one of the area's greatest natural treasures.

Councilman Rob Coleman, Mariners' President and CEO Howard H. Hoege III, Senior Director of Advancement Sabrina Jones, and project visionary Royden Goodson shared remarks during the ceremony to help mark this meaningful milestone.

"This entire project began with an idea that Royden had," said Hoege. "And his vision for this project has manifested itself more beautifully than any of us could have imagined."

A Vision Born from Love and Community Safety

The inspiration behind Martha's Way is rooted in the Newport News community. Goodson, a Newport News native and longtime resident, championed and funded the project to honor his wife, Martha, who was diagnosed with early-onset dementia in 2015. Martha loved walking to Mariners' Park from the neighboring Riverside community, but the route lacked a designated walkway, forcing pedestrians to walk dangerously close to traffic with limited visibility.

Remembering how Martha always spoke of how wonderful a dedicated community path would be, Goodson set out to turn that dream into a reality. "Martha and I were fortunate to be able to experience the beauty of the river many times in our lives together," said Goodson. "And she would be pleased to know that the way she used to walk is safer."

Goodson also emphasized the wellness and communal benefits that Martha's Way provides: "This is a place for solitude, reflection, and meditation. It's a place to sit with friends and watch the river go by, follow the birds, marvel at the sunsets — to appreciate the beauty of nature, which gives us a sense that there is something more to life."

Enhancing Accessibility and Stewardship

Martha's Way was designed with public safety, accessibility, and environmental care at its core. The first two phases of the project, completed just over a year ago, established a four-foot-wide walking path along Museum Parkway between Kettle Pond and the Riverside neighborhood, alongside a short gravel path to improve pedestrian access.

The newly completed phase III adds the boardwalk and scenic overlooks. Crucially, these additions advance The Mariners' environmental stewardship efforts by designating a space to experience the waterfront without parking and standing on the riprap.

A True Collaborative Effort

The completion of Martha's Way was made possible through extraordinary community collaboration. The Mariners' is grateful to local construction leaders Crofton Industries and The Blair Brothers, Inc., who helped bring the project to completion.

The Mariners' also extends its sincere gratitude to all the partners who contributed to the success of Martha's Way, including Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc, the WPL architect team, and the City of Newport News Planning and Engineering Department.

The community is warmly invited to visit Martha's Way and enjoy this new resource that will foster connection with the James River for years to come.

For interview requests or more information about The Mariners' Museum and Park, media should contact Senior Director of Advancement Sabrina Jones at sjones@MarinersMuseum.org or (757) 591-7708.

The Mariners' Museum and Park connects people to the world's waters because through the water – through our shared maritime heritage – we are connected to one another. The organization is an educational, private 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and preserves and interprets maritime history through an international collection of ship models, figureheads, paintings, and other maritime artifacts. The Mariners' Museum® is home to the USS *Monitor* Center, and is surrounded by the 550-acre Mariners' Park, the largest privately owned and maintained park that is free and open to the public in North America. The Mariners' Museum Library is the largest maritime library in the Western hemisphere. Because of the Museum's world-class collection and its reputation for high-level exhibits and programs, in 1998, the U.S. Congress designated The Mariners' Museum as one of only two maritime museums that comprise America's National Maritime Museum. The Museum galleries are open to the general public with \$1 admission, and the Mariners' team will continue to offer FREE virtual programs for those who prefer to engage online with us or through our social media platforms and blog posts. The Mariners' Park and Noland Trail is open for daily use. For additional information, visit MarinersMuseum.org, call (757) 596-2222 or write to The Mariners' Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA 23606.

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