



# *Magnolia Messenger*

Inaugural Edition, January 2019\ Carla Whitehurst Odom, Editor

Dear Members...

As 2018 has passed with the new year ahead many of us will take time over the next few days to reflect personally upon the past year... what was done and perhaps on what was left undone. Thoughts centered on what was accomplished will lead to thoughts about what we want to achieve in the upcoming year. From there, many of us will set goals regarding what we want to do as the year unfolds and we continue filling out the pages of our own life story.

Your Board has done the same for this organization. For the Order of the Steel Magnolias, 2018 was an excellent year. We launched on June 28, 2018 to an overwhelming response. So many people from all over the country expressed an interest in honoring their female ancestors who do not qualify for recognition by other lineage organizations. Over the Independence Day holiday time, email after email of those requesting an application hit the inbox, many also sharing the incredible story of their particular ancestor. These women, who through their uncommon fortitude, laid the solid foundation for those of us living today. Many of these women still serve as our role models in how to live life to the fullest, no matter the challenges we might face. So we breathe life back into them and give them a long overdue voice where we can share their stories.... their life lessons... and perhaps their dreams.

It was truly exhilarating to share in the positive energy emanating from the multitude of applicants and the pace has not slowed down! At the time of this writing, we are 6 months old. We have assigned charter membership numbers past the 200 mark and while the charter period closed on December 31, 2018, our genealogist still has many papers to review and approve before we can say we are completely done with the chartering phase.

The officers of the Order have been very busy the last six months defining the bylaws, establishing the goals for the organization, and creating the framework in which they will be accomplished. However, it has not been all work and no play.

On Sunday, November 18, 2018, we held a tea in Montgomery, Alabama. A beautiful tribute to the Steel Magnolias in none other than the Cradle of the Confederacy. Leslie Kirk and her committee did a wonderful job in creating an atmosphere of elegance and charm, fitting for the women we were there to honor. The turnout far exceeded expectations and we filled the room to its limit. After the officer installations, attendees enjoyed some fun and fellowship and each left with a special keepsake to commemorate the event.

When the Order was founded, one of its purposes was to assist in the preservation of our southern history and heritage. At the tea, we received our first request to provide such assistance. The Historical Preservation committee reviewed the request and finding everything in order, made the recommendation to provide support. I am pleased to say the Order provided \$750 to help preserve and maintain a

Confederate monument in south central Alabama. Our first of what we hope will be many opportunities to provide assistance.

As we look towards activities for the Order in 2019, we are pleased to announce that we will also meet in Washington DC during their heritage week in April. Mark your calendars for **Monday, April 8, 2019** and plan on joining us at the Army Navy Club for lunch, some Order business and what looks to be an engaging program to be given by Teresa Roane. Space will be limited so when the call goes out in mid January, be sure to respond quickly to secure your spot.

One of the projects that we will start in 2019 is a compilation of the stories of our Magnolias for future publication. If you are interested in working on this endeavor, please send me an email at [leaveyourlegacy@att.net](mailto:leaveyourlegacy@att.net).

In closing, I want to encourage you to order your insignia if you have not had the chance yet to do so. Pamela Wright designed it with our Steel Magnolia ancestors fully in mind. The Magnolia blossom on the insignia is based on an actual magnolia bloom from Georgia that Pamela found while on a family trip. The end result truly is a stunning dedication to our ancestors and I look forward to receiving mine. I will wear it with pride.

On behalf of the Board, I want to wish each of you a Happy New Year! I want to encourage you to do your own goal setting and give some thought to what will fill the pages of your life story in 2019.

I look forward to seeing you in April!

Suzanna Rawlins, Founder President

Order of the Steel Magnolias

## Memories of the Inaugural Tea



