

# Colonial Williamsburg

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

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## **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Receives The Williamsburg Award, Colonial Williamsburg's Highest Honor**

**Justice Kennedy is Only the Second Recipient of this Prestigious  
Award Since its Establishment in 1955 to Honor Sir Winston S.  
Churchill**



Retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy received The Williamsburg Award on Nov. 19, 2021 to honor his lifelong commitment to advancing the cause of liberty, advocating for civic education, and furthering the never-ending quest for freedom for all those who would seek it. (Visual Resources, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)

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WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Nov. 20, 2021) – Sixty-six years after The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation bestowed The Williamsburg Award, its highest honor, on Sir Winston S. Churchill on Dec. 7, 1955, the foundation's Board of Trustees honored a second recipient on Nov. 19, 2021. Retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy received the distinguished award during a special ceremony held at the Williamsburg Inn to honor his lifelong commitment to advancing the cause of liberty, advocating for civic education, and furthering the never-ending quest for freedom for all those who would seek it.

Kennedy, who retired from the foundation's board at its November 2021 meeting, received The Williamsburg Award at a formal dinner to honor his 20 years of service as a Colonial

Williamsburg trustee – the longest in foundation history – for which he also received Colonial Williamsburg’s prestigious Churchill Bell award. (Click to read the text of [The Williamsburg Award](#) and [Churchill Bell](#) resolutions bestowing the awards on Kennedy.)

“Justice Kennedy exemplifies the spirit of The Williamsburg Award, just as Sir Winston Churchill did in 1955 as the first and only other recipient of Colonial Williamsburg’s highest honor,” said Carly Fiorina, chairman of the Colonial Williamsburg Board of Trustees. “For his unwavering commitment to America’s founding ideals that were tested throughout his 43-year legal career, we honor him with The Williamsburg Award to express our appreciation for his work with the foundation and for his contribution to America’s judicial system to champion the cause of freedom.”

The Williamsburg Award was conceived to recognize “a person who in the course of contemporary events had made an outstanding contribution to the historic struggle of men and women to live free and self-respecting in a just society,” according to archived documents housed in the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library.

Since bestowing the honor on Churchill in 1955, and despite discussions spanning six decades to find another recipient of Churchill’s caliber, the Board of Trustees had never identified someone whose work was so extraordinary as to attain unanimous consent necessary to present The Williamsburg Award to anyone else, until now.

A champion of liberty and individual rights, Kennedy served on the Supreme Court from 1988-2018 and authored majority opinions in landmark cases ranging from protecting the habeas corpus rights of prisoners and shielding juveniles and the intellectually disabled from the death penalty to securing the right to marriage for same-sex couples. Widely admired for his civility, integrity and judicial independence, Kennedy eschewed dogmatism and traditional divides, approaching cases with an even-handed application of constitutional principles.

As the longest-serving trustee in The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation’s history, Kennedy also assumed a leadership role in many of the foundation’s most important projects during his two decades serving on the board. For his unwavering support for Colonial Williamsburg’s educational mission, fellow trustees awarded Kennedy the Churchill Bell, which was established in 1992 to “recognize the institution’s most distinguished stewards and friends,” according to archived documents. Kennedy is the 13th recipient of the Churchill Bell, which was last awarded on Nov. 22, 2014, to former Colonial Williamsburg President and CEO Colin Campbell and his wife Nancy Campbell.

“Justice Anthony Kennedy served on The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation’s Board of Trustees during a time of great change, both at the foundation and within society” said Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. “His steadfast commitment to civic education and its importance in a democratic republic has led to a renaissance that is reflective of Colonial Williamsburg’s founding mission, ‘That the future may learn from the past.’ We can’t thank Justice Kennedy enough for his dedicated service to our educational mission, and it is our honor to bestow upon him the Churchill Bell along with The Williamsburg Award.”

Kennedy’s keen interest in architecture and design guided the redesign of the iconic Williamsburg Inn, the renovation and expansion of the world-class Art Museums of Colonial

Williamsburg, and the design of the forthcoming Colin G. and Nancy N. Campbell Archaeology Center.

Among Kennedy's most recent and enduring contributions is his introduction to the foundation's Strategic Plan, which he authored in 2019. There, he gave voice to the ideals underlying not only the foundation and its mission, but also the founding ideals and continuing challenges of the American experiment:

*The struggle for freedom is never-ending. In America, that struggle began here. Williamsburg was a place where people worked to secure freedom through rational, principled, and exciting discussion, and eventually revolution. Many ideas and events that still shape our nation had their genesis here. Williamsburg was a place where imperfect people sought meaningful lives in uncertain times, as the politics of the day swirled around them.*

*Today, we still strive to form a more perfect union, committed always to freedom. The people of the 1700s took great risks to create the structure that allows us to shape our own destiny as we continue our efforts to build a more just society.*

....

*The heritage of freedom is not preserved automatically. The heritage of freedom must be taught. Colonial Williamsburg is an ideal setting to become more committed to the American heritage and to the timeless idea of freedom.*

Kennedy was elected to the Colonial Williamsburg Board of Trustees in April 2001, retiring his service at the board's November 2021 meeting. His election continued a tradition of U.S. Supreme Court justices serving on the board that began with Lewis Powell, who was succeeded by Sandra Day O'Connor. Justice Neil M. Gorsuch was elected to the board in January 2019.

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*The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent*

*Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.*

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