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**A Record-Breaking Year for Stratford Hall's Annual Oyster Roast & Auction**

Stratford, Virginia (May 15, 2026) – It was an incredible year for the Northern Neck Friends of Stratford's Oyster Roast & Auction, with record-breaking attendance and funds raised. This year, 230 people helped raise more than \$170,000 on Sunday, April 26 to support educational programming, historic preservation, and interpretation at Stratford Hall, the historic home of the Lee family in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

The Northern Neck Friends of Stratford and Auction Committee, co-chaired by Sue Farmar and Linda Gilchrist, plan this annual event that includes local oysters, cocktails, a springtime luncheon catered by Bryan Oliff and the team at Angelo's Restaurant, and a silent and live auction. Many community members contributed to this year's auction, which featured one-week stays in luxurious accommodations, artisan-made items, jewelry, items unique to the Northern Neck from local shops, and more.

"What an incredible day for Stratford! A heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported this event, contributing to our most successful Oyster Roast & Auction," remarked Sue Farmar. "This year's Oyster Roast & Auction was a huge success! Many thanks to the donors, Directors, staff, and Friends of Stratford who supported this event," added Linda Gilchrist.

This year's event included a "Raise the Paddle" to fund educational experiences, supporting free school field trips with hands-on activities for students in addition to Stratford Hall's internship program. Included in the \$170,000 raised was more than \$40,000 in gifts to fund these educational experiences. "Stratford Hall is a vibrant

learning center that provides students and visitors with immersive experiences as they learn about life in America's formative years and the vital roles the Lee family had in the establishment of our nation," shared President Karen L. Daly. "Stratford's stories are Virginia's stories – they are America's stories. Many thanks to our committee members, sponsors, guests, and all who contributed to the success of this year's event, helping us to elevate these significant stories as we commemorate the 250th anniversary of our nation."

Sponsors and in-kind supporters of this year's event included Karin Andrews with Shaheen, Ruth, Martin and Fonville Real Estate, Clements Tent Rentals, Mrs. Robert Sibley Cooper, Jr., H. Douglas Cunningham and Lee Carrigan, Roberta Garnett, Glavé and Holmes Architecture, Ingleside Vineyards, Vicki and Cary Levering, MRDG Consulting, LLC., Ginny and Jack Ritter, Richard H. Stuart, P.C., Attorney at Law, Towne Insurance Agency, and Emily and Colin Wilkinson.

The Oyster Roast & Auction is held annually during the last weekend of April. For more information on how to support Stratford Hall and upcoming events, contact Christina O'Neill at (804) 493-1946, email coneill@stratfordhall, or visit www.StratfordHall.org.

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About Stratford Hall Historic Preserve

Stratford Hall Historic Preserve, a National Historic Landmark in Westmoreland County, Virginia, brings together people from around the world to experience 1,800 acres of natural and human history, preserved and presented so that they can all learn from the courageous struggles of their ancestors, taking inspiration both from what they endured and what they accomplished. With the approach of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, now is a significant time to elevate the stories of the people who lived and labored here, including two signers of the Declaration of Independence, revolutionaries, and the Africans and African Americans who shaped the history of Stratford Hall. Learn more at www.StratfordHall.org.

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