

Carroll Yesteryears  
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Historical Society's New Head Signals Bold Initiatives  
By Jason Illari

During this season of goodwill, I want to take some time and greet you as the next Executive Director of the Historical Society of Carroll County. Although new to the job, I can already tell there is a great deal of enthusiasm for history in our county. Looking back to 1939, this same enthusiasm led to the formation of the Society by a handful of dedicated folks committed to preserving the past for the benefit of their community.

It is hard to believe that I am now in this leadership role after a relatively long career in museums and having been born on West Main Street in Westminster in 1978! Shortly before my family moved from Carroll County to Catonsville, MD, in the early 1980s, HSCC celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary; Joe Getty was hired as the Society's first paid Executive Director; Jay Graybeal joined the staff as Curator; and plans were underway for the extensive Sherman-Fisher-Shellman House renovation. Think about all that has been accomplished since those formative years leading up to our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014!

Following in the footsteps of so many who have stewarded the Society and its mission, I pledge to promote the mission of HSCC for the benefit of our community without exception. My hope is that you will share with me your dreams and aspirations for the Society. From my perspective, the way forward is to rally together around some bold initiative that galvanizes our mission and propels us forward. Figuring out what this initiative is will take some time, but more importantly, it requires your candid input to me and the board as we move forward.

I would like to thank Interim Director Kristen McMasters along with the board of trustees, staff, donors, members, and volunteers who have shouldered tremendous responsibility in recent months leading up to my hire. The stewardship of our history and HSCC will no doubt continue and I am excited to play my part in advancing our mission.

Trained as a historian in my undergraduate years, I wrote two books related to local history in Maryland, and have a great appreciation for the craft of history. Yet my plan is to focus on strategic direction, community outreach, development, and the evolution and growth of our cherished organization as we set our sights on future milestones and anniversaries. Let us imagine together what HSCC might look like at its 100-year mark. . .which will come upon us faster than we think. How do we envision our campus? Our impact on the community or region? The evolution of our board and volunteer core and staffing structure? What will our members be most proud of as we approach our centennial celebration? Share your thoughts with me. Email me anytime at [execdirector@hsccmd.org](mailto:execdirector@hsccmd.org) and your input will inform our next set of plans and endeavors.

On behalf of HSCC, thank you for all the efforts you make to promote Carroll County history and the Society. I look forward to championing both of them with you in 2022!

Jason Illari

*Guest columnist Jason Illari is the new Executive Director of the Historical Society of Carroll County*



*Image – Credit Dylan Slagle (CCTimes)*

*Caption: Jason Illari, new Executive Director of the Historical Society of Carroll County, stands outside one of the buildings on its East Main Street campus in Westminster.*