

N E W H A M P S H I R E BOAT MUSEUM

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For Immediate Release

Douglas Smith and Michael Geljookian receive 2021 Hank Why Award

Wolfeboro, NH—December 3, 2021—Douglas Smith and Mike Geljookian have received the 2021 Hank Why Volunteer Award for their respective service to the New Hampshire Boat Museum (NHBM).

“I was very surprised and extremely honored to have received this annual award,” said Smith, who serves on several NHBM working committees. “I know that this award has been given to volunteers in the past who have really worked long and hard for the museum, so I am surprised that the Board of Directors felt that I, too, was at that level.”

Martha Cummings, NHBM executive director, credited Smith with helping care for the museum's existing facility over the course of the past 2 and a half years, while also advancing their Capital Campaign.

“This year, Doug also helped transport the boats given to the museum's collection from Dr. Stowell from Lake Sunapee up to Meredith and Wolfeboro, which entailed several trips,” she said.

Geljookian said his award selection is the result of a team effort.

“I’m grateful for all of the volunteers that took time away from their families and businesses to keep an historically important part of the Boat Museum’s DNA going,” he said.

According to Cummings, Geljookian has been instrumental in the past three biennial Wolfeboro Vintage Race Boat Regattas.

“Mike spent many hours putting together all the logistics and volunteers necessary for the racecourse, which required a very early morning start,” she said. “He and his crew also oversaw the safe maneuvering of the hydroplanes with the crane...With Mike in charge of the ‘hot pits,’ we knew safety was a top priority and that he had it under control.”

Serving as Launch Director for the Regatta for the first time in 2021, Geljookian assembled a wide range of local marine business owners, employees and close friends who all share the same passion for boating.

“In the end, they all not only wanted to personally let me know that they were in for the 2023 event, but some of them were even motivated to purchase their own piece of Regatta history -- specifically a Jersey Skiff,” he said. “It was great to see the group's reinforced commitment to future events and equally important to see the interest in keeping the boats alive that make the Regatta possible.”

This year's Hank Why Award took on special significance this year, as its namesake, longtime volunteer Hank Why, passed away in July. Why was a longtime supporter and advocate for NHBM and was still involved with the museum via Zoom up until his passing.

“Hank was a wonderful ambassador to the museum,” said Cummings. “He attended every event and program at NHBM, because the museum was his passion, particularly our educational programs and getting youth involved. His support and dedication are what I will always remember about Hank.”

As for what motivates him to volunteer at NHBM, Smith said the museum is much more than boats and related artifacts.

“There are many educational programs for both children and adults,” he said. “There are fun things to do for children, too...The New Hampshire Boat Museum is really a unique destination for anyone with an interest in boating, especially in the Lakes Region.”

Geljookian agreed and added, “One visit [here] will immerse you into a world that should not be forgotten, but integrated into our current lives.”

Founded in 1992 by vintage boating enthusiasts, NHBM is sponsored this year in part by Goodhue Boat Company, Eastern Propane & Oil, Meredith Village Savings Bank, FL Putnam, Stark Creative, Bank of New Hampshire, and NH Humanities.

To learn more about NHBM, or its Capital Campaign, visit nhbm.org. To learn more about volunteering, email programs@nhbm.org.

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