

U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY COMPLETES \$2 MILLION RENOVATION TO HISTORIC HALL

Dedication set for July 11 to commemorate enhancements to Alumni House

ANNAPOLIS, MD -- The U.S. Naval Academy recently completed a \$2 million renovation to its nearly 270-year-old Ogle Hall, a historical landmark situated in the heart of downtown Annapolis not far from the Maryland State Capital.

The building is the oldest continuously occupied home in the region, perhaps the country. Constructed in 1739, the building has been home to three Maryland State governors, survived two fires and was purchased by the U.S. Naval Academy's Alumni Association and Foundation in 1944. Located at 247 King George St., the home is also the oldest Georgian mansion in town, was guest quarters for George Washington and Marquis de Lafayette, and features the first cantilevered staircase built in the United States.

With the completion of recent improvements to the historic structure now almost three centuries of age, Ogle Hall is now also ADA compliant – featuring restrooms that are wheelchair accessible and an elevator that takes guests to its multiple floors.

Accessibility had increasingly become an issue and the association about five years ago began planning enhancements to address the needs of its aging and disabled. Because Ogle Hall predates the Americans with Disabilities Act, the improvements were not required by law.

“It was just the right thing to do,” says George P. Watt, Jr., president and CEO of the USNA Alumni Association and Foundation.

The Alumni Association currently numbers some 52,000 graduates and Ogle Hall, also known as Alumni House, serves as both headquarters to the association and as a central meeting place for Academy graduates. The building is the venue for about 100 special events hosted on campus each year.

“It didn't have to be done,” Allan Davey, chair of the alumni association's House Committee, says of the overhaul. “But it exemplifies the Naval Academy and the Alumni Association. After recognizing the needs of our various constituencies, we felt a very huge obligation to get the job done and they've done their job extremely well.”

The historic overhaul took more than a year to complete and includes easier access into the structure, enhanced safety features, modernized facilities, upgraded electrical wiring and plumbing, and an industrial grade heating ventilation and air conditioning system – all taking into account the visual appeal and ambiance of the office building/special events site.

-- MORE --

Watt, a historian by avocation, hopes the renovation will inspire greater interest and appreciation in the historic homes of America.

Ogle Hall dates back to four distinct eras and has a colorful history. The building was constructed as a residence in 1739 with a ballroom added in 1776, a reception area in 1921 and the basement's tap room in 1945.

"There were many needed changes to the building," says Project Manager Tim Kobosko, who calls the overhaul a project of discovery. "But I'll bet there are two things that people will remember. The patio and the conference room."

An expanded and freshly landscaped brick patio makes outdoor events more spacious and inviting. And underutilized space was converted into the alumni association's first-ever conference room equipped with wireless internet access and flat screen monitors. "There's really no place for alumni currently to come back, visit and use our resources."

The improvements win rave reviews.

"We'd made repairs and routine improvements over the years," says Davey, a 1967 graduate. "But wear and tear was taking its toll and some very significant improvements were necessary in order to protect the home. I'm real proud of what we've accomplished."

A dedication is scheduled for 10 a.m. on July 11 to celebrate the completion of the project.

###