

Wednesday, April 19

# Carolina Digital Daily

Charleston Mercury Newsletter

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## Alexander Salley award given to George McDaniel

By CDD Staff

The Confederation of South Carolina Local Historical Societies presented the Alexander S. Salley Professional Service Award to George McDaniel for giving distinguished lifetime service to the preservation and promotion of history in South Carolina during his 25 years as executive director of Drayton Hall and for his book, *Drayton Hall Stories: A Place and Its People*, published in 2022 by Charleston's Evening Post Books. Bestowed for exemplary work, this award is not presented annually nor to more than one person each year, prompting the state Awards Committee Chair, J.R. Fennell of the Lexington County Museum, to declare, "George McDaniel is indeed a worthy recipient of the A.S. Salley Award."



George McDaniel holding his recent Alexander Salley Award. PHOTO PROVIDED.

The award is given at the Confederation's annual Landmark Conference and is named after Alexander Salley, the first staff person of what is now the S.C. Department of Archives and History (visit <https://scdah.sc.gov/news/2018-12/meet-former-staff-alexander-samuel-salley>). Established in 1964, the Confederation encourages and strengthens organizations involved in the preservation and study of historical documents, sites, buildings and artifacts through the exchange of information and cooperative activities.

A native of Atlanta, McDaniel graduated from Sewanee in 1966, earned an M.A.T (history) from Brown University, and a Ph. D. (American history) from Duke. He was a Smithsonian Institution Fellow and became executive director of Drayton Hall in 1989, where he led programs in historic preservation, history education, and environmental conservation, ending his career there with a \$20 million endowment.

The first of its kind in the nation, his *Drayton Hall Stories* is devoted both to the site's recent history and the future of historic preservation and sites. It stands as a credit to the range of people who have lived, worked, and supported Drayton Hall throughout the years. Using interviews with those individuals, the book reveals never-before-shared family moments, major decisions in preservation and site stewardship, and pioneering efforts to transform a former plantation into a site for understanding and racial conciliation. Though centered on Drayton Hall, McDaniel's approach is universal to any place. The product of McDaniel's career in South Carolina, *Drayton Hall Stories* stands as a principal reason why the Confederation bestowed upon McDaniel the Alexander S. Salley Professional Service Award.

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