

Jamestown Rediscovery

HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE

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The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation establishes The Dr. William M. and Ellen B. Kelso Fund for Archaeology



Emeritus Director of Archaeology Dr. William “Bill” Kelso and his wife Ellen at Jamestown Island. Photograph by Katherine Sparks

JAMESTOWN, Va. (February 10, 2022) – The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation board of trustees has established the **Dr. William M. and Ellen B. Kelso Fund for Archaeology** in recognition of Dr. and Mrs. William Kelso’s years of dedication to Jamestown over the past quarter-century. Long-thought lost to the James River due to erosion, Dr. William “Bill” Kelso led an extraordinary team of archaeologists to locate the original site of James Fort in 1994 and millions of artifacts since. “The discovery of the fort and subsequent excavations have forever changed what we know about our nation’s founding, and Jamestown has many more secrets yet to be revealed,” said James Horn, President and Chief Officer of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation.

As a graduate student at the College of William and Mary in nearby Williamsburg, Kelso was well aware of the story of the lost fort at Jamestown; but he was skeptical. Colony secretary William Strachey wrote that “a pretty chapel” stood “in the midst” of the fort. Based on the rationale “once sacred ground, always sacred ground,” Kelso theorized that a later church would have been built in the same place—near the center of the fort—and the ruinous, 17th-century brick church tower on Jamestown Island was his primary evidence.

On April 4, 1994, Kelso began the Jamestown Rediscovery Project. Within just three archaeology seasons, he uncovered enough evidence to prove the remains of James Fort did indeed survive on dry land near the church tower. In the incredible years of discovery that followed, he built a talented team of archaeologists, curators, historians, and support staff who have recovered and conserved more than three million artifacts and features. “Many of the team members today had the privilege of training under Dr. Kelso, myself included,” shared Director of Archaeology David Givens. “For me personally, it was the opportunity of a lifetime when I was asked to join the group in 2001. It’s

an even greater honor, now, to lead the archaeology staff as we continue to excavate and study the birthplace of our nation.”



Left: Dr. Kelso opening his first excavation unit at Jamestown in 1994.



Right: Director of Archaeology David Givens and Dr. Kelso examine an artifact recovered during the 2012 excavations of a 1608 kitchen and cellar.

While Dr. Kelso has spent innumerable hours in the field, always seeking to unearth more of Jamestown’s hidden secrets, his wife Ellen, affectionately referred to by staff and friends as the “Mayor of Jamestown,” has been equally committed to this special place. Her knowledge of Jamestown and its early settlers is as extensive as Bill’s, traveling alongside him and assisting on countless research trips both in the U.S. and abroad. For almost three decades, Ellen and Bill have devoted their life together to Jamestown.

“We are overwhelmed and humbled by the incredible outpouring of support for this special fund honoring Ellen and Bill,” shared Elaine and Don Bogus, Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation trustees and supporters. “The generosity from friends all across the nation ensures the extraordinary team at Jamestown will be able to continue their ongoing archaeological investigations, related scholarly research, and the critical preservation of fort structures for years to come.” In addition, the new fund will enable Dr. Kelso to complete and publish his latest book, *Jamestown: Remains to be Seen*. If you, too, would like to make a contribution to the **Dr. William M. and Ellen B. Kelso Fund for Archaeology**, please visit our website at <https://historicjamestowne.org/support/>. If you have any questions or would like assistance, please contact us at hjadmin@preservationvirginia.org or (757) 220-4997 ext. 100.

The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation preserves the original site of the first permanent English settlement in America. Entrance tickets are available at the Visitor Center from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., and the grounds remain open until dusk. General admission is \$25.00 per adult for both Historic Jamestowne and Yorktown Battlefield for seven consecutive days. Children 15 & under are free. National Park Passes and Preservation Virginia Memberships are accepted; however a \$10 per person fee may apply. For additional information or if you have any questions, please visit our website www.historicjamestowne.org or call the Visitor Center at (757) 856-1250.