

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Gardiner Foundation Supports Bayman Statue in Babylon**

The Babylon Beautification Society, through the leadership of its Bayman Statue Steering Committee, has been awarded a grant by the Robert David Lion Gardner Foundation in the amount of \$50,000. The funds were used for the design, sculpting, casting, delivery and installation of the historic rendition of the period correct Bayman. The sculpture along with educational signage and native plantings is located along the Carll's River in Babylon Village. The site along Montauk Highway (Route 27A) is passed daily by over 20,000 cars.

The Bayman – a person working to harvest food from the Great South Bay – is an important part of Long Island history. The Babylon community is physically contiguous with the bay and generations of families were able to sustain themselves by working in South Shore maritime industries. However, the relationship has changed, as fewer people work on the bay for their livelihood.

The Bayman Statue, dedicated July 1, 2018, honors the history and traditions of the Long Island baymen. Sculpted in bronze by Jose Fernandez, the statue depicts a 1970s clammer, wearing a watch cap and waders, standing at the edge of a clam boat. The Bayman Statue Steering Committee also raised \$155,000 for the project.

“The seas that surround Long Island are an integral part of all our regional history. This statue is a reminder of the reliance Long Island still has on that heritage, and will hopefully make us see value of understanding, appreciating conserving those great resources,” said Kathryn Curran, Executive Director of the Robert David Lion Gardner Foundation.

“The Bayman Statue project touched on something that everyone can relate to,” said Scott Lockwood, who spearheaded the statue committee with Dr. Christopher Proto. “I remember when everyone clammed or knew a clammer. That is why I believe we had such widespread support. The memories of local clamming touched a lot of people.”

Wayne Horsley, who envisioned the statue project for many years, said, “The Bayman reminds me of the vulnerability of the Great South Bay and how we must look to the future to take care of our great natural resources.”

Babylon village Mayor Ralph Scordino said that the village “appreciates the generosity of the Robert David Lion Gardner Foundation in supporting of the statue project. Just a few weeks old, the statue has already become a familiar landmark for visitors and residents alike.”

Frank Petruzzo, president of the Babylon Beautification Society, said “The Bayman recognizes the importance of the once thriving clamming industry and its deep connection to our community. We are so proud to be part of this project which involved so many local groups and residents who came together to bring the project to fruition.”

By the same token, Town of Babylon Historian Mary Cascone said she was pleased that the Gardiner Foundation award has brought regional attention to the Bayman Statue. “The Gardiner Foundation is renowned for their support of Long Island history. Their support of the Bayman Statue is a great honor to the greater Babylon community.”

The Bayman Statue is prominently situated on the south side of Main Street, across from Argyle Park, on the east side of the Carll River. The statue site is an equally close distance to the lively business district of this walkable village.

The Robert David Lion Gardner Foundation, established in 1937, primarily supports the study of New York State history, with an emphasis on Suffolk County. Robert David Lion Gardner was, until his death in August 2004, the 16<sup>th</sup> Lord of the Manor of Gardiner’s Island. The Gardiner family and their descendants have owned Gardiner’s Island since 1639, obtained as part of a royal grant from King Charles I of England. The Foundation is inspired by Robert David Lion Gardner’s personal passion for New York history.

The Babylon Beautification Society, established in 1971, is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support projects and initiatives that contribute to the beauty and history of Babylon Village. The organization works closely with local government and community leaders as well as hundreds of volunteers to complete its mission.