



LOCAL MISSION DIRECTOR MECHELLE LAWRENCE-ADAMS RECEIVES CALIFORNIA MISSION FOUNDATION CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

Mission San Juan Capistrano's Executive Director Honored for Leadership in Sustainability Planning, Fundraising and Preservation Efforts



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (February 20, 2018)---At its annual conference last weekend, the California Mission Foundation (CMF) presented its prestigious Chairman's Award to Mechelle Lawrence Adams for her outstanding efforts in the area of missions preservation over 15 years as the executive director of Mission San Juan Capistrano.

“On behalf of my team at Mission San Juan Capistrano, I’m honored to accept this award from our peers at the California Mission Foundation,” says Lawrence-Adams. “Our collective efforts throughout the state have helped preserve the Missions as a way to tangibly experience the history of the West and engage in dialogue about how this history has shaped who and what we are as a community today.”

Lawrence Adams received the Chairman's Award in recognition of the hundreds of programs, campaigns and endeavors she and her team of 65 staff and 305 volunteers have undertaken in support of a long-term sustainability plan for this critically important California and Orange County landmark. CMF particularly noted the Mission San Juan Capistrano team's success in:

- Implementing programming and policies ensuring the rich history that comprises the 240-year span of Mission San Juan Capistrano is inclusive and represents a wider array of perspectives, including those of family, female, Native American, padre, and soldiers
- Fundraising efforts netting more than \$10 million over 15 years
- The hiring and development of a museum and preservation team to ensure the conservation of over 40 historically paintings, including specifically finding a long lost, forgotten c. 1801 painting hidden for over 40 years
- Upgrades to the Museum rooms and exhibits
- Development of innovative and sustainable education programming

Prior to taking the helm at Mission San Juan Capistrano, Lawrence-Adams was a city planner and economic development manager for several Orange County cities. As a city staffer, she learned firsthand about historic preservation, community traditions, and revitalization of historic districts and downtowns, and about the critical need to develop community support so that progress, preservation and development could occur in a manner that was sensitive and appreciative to the historic identity around it.

During her tenure, Mission San Juan Capistrano has also been recognized with the following awards: National Preservation Award by the DAR, the National Association of Interpretation Media Award, Arts Orange County's Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy award, San Juan Capistrano's Mayor's Business of the Year (2013), Orange County's Top Work Place Award (2014), Tabasco Company's top community cookbook award (2008) and most recently Mayor's City of San Juan Capistrano Business Organization of the Year for Heritage Tourism Association and marketing co-op efforts supporting the innovative promotion of the historic downtown's business community (2017).

ABOUT MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

Located in San Juan Capistrano's Historic Downtown just four miles from the stunning coastal cliffs of Dana Point, Mission San Juan Capistrano is a remarkable historic landmark and museum that is unique both in its picturesque beauty and its role in connecting visitors with California's cultural past, present and future. The Mission's stunning grounds and impressive architecture are a compelling setting in which visitors can learn about the region's cultural roots, take inspiration from its spiritual significance, engage with local traditions, or explore both permanent and traveling exhibits of original artifacts that bring its history into the present.

Founded on November 1, 1776 by Padre Junípero Serra, who was canonized as a saint in 2015, Mission San Juan Capistrano is known as the "Jewel of the Missions" because of its Great Stone Church, which was completed in 1806 after nine years of construction and was considered an architectural gem that no other church compared with in size or beauty on the West Coast of California. The seventh of nine missions founded by Serra (of a total 21 California missions established by Spain), it is Orange County's only mission and is considered the birthplace of the region.

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