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For additional information, contact Ken Cummins, [KennethvCummins@aol.com](mailto:KennethvCummins@aol.com)

# \$1 Million Gift from Marriott Family Foundation Stuns Scotland Congregation

## David Marriott Announces Pledge to Historic Black Church



Members of the Scotland AME Zion church in Potomac and the construction team of Whiting-Turner gather around Carrie and David Marriott on Wednesday, May 29, 2024. Above, Mr. Marriott discusses his family foundation's \$1 million gift.

POTOMAC, MD. — On a rainy Wednesday afternoon, May 29, a few members of the Scotland AME Zion Church accepted a special invitation to stop by their busy construction site on Seven Locks Road for a visit.

Wearing a hard hat and bright orange construction vest as he addressed the gathering — some of whom are descendants of the first people of color to own land in Potomac — David Marriott offered a stunning surprise on behalf of the family foundation established by his grandparents.

“I’m here today with the great news that The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation will be giving a \$1 million gift to the Scotland community,” said Marriott, instantly eliciting a festive mixture of cheers, clapping, and tears of joy. “The other trustees and I are thrilled to support this effort and to be a small part of your rebuilding effort.”

Opened in 1924 and expanded in 1963, the small white church has suffered chronic water drainage issues ever since Montgomery County re-routed Seven Locks Road to the downhill side of the building and filled in the abutting wetland in 1960. In 2019, a regionwide flood collapsed a basement wall and has left the congregation without a worship space of its own for nearly five years. In the summer of 2022, Scotland teamed with local leaders in faith, business, government, and philanthropy to announce the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Project, backed by a \$3 million matching challenge pledge from the Glenstone Foundation.

In the past two years, Bethesda resident David and his wife, Carrie, learned that David's grandparents' landscaper had been James Dove, a Scotland resident, and that J. Willard Marriott had advocated for housing support for the Scotland community in Congress in the 1960s. After attending a worship service for Scotland in a borrowed sanctuary last fall, David brought the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Project to the attention of the foundation created in 1966 by the founders of the world's largest travel company, Marriott International Inc.

The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation gift brings the current total of cash and pledges to \$8.2 million toward the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Project's \$11 million goal. If the remaining fundraising and construction milestones are met by year end, the expanded church is expected to hold its first faith services in December and the oldest section of the church will be converted to use as a center for community needs including education, counseling, and health care services.

"This is a major investment in community, not just for Scotland AME Zion Church, but for Montgomery County and this country," said the church's pastor, Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins. She also serves as Presiding Elder for the Mid-Atlantic region of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion conference of churches. "As the pastor of this historic church, I want to express our thanks to the Marriott family and Foundation on behalf of the local congregation and the AME Zion Church worldwide."

## ABOUT THE SCOTLAND AME ZION CHURCH

The Scotland African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was built by hand and opened in 1924 by Black congregants in Potomac. Registered as a State Historic Site by the Maryland Historical Trust, the church is the only historic building to survive in the Scotland community. The original wood-frame structure, one of the last of its kind in the region, was nearly destroyed by a flood in the summer of 2019. In 2022, members of the Scotland AME Zion Church and its allies in Montgomery County and the DMV launched the 2nd Century Project, a three-phase plan: 1) to reshape the landscape to mitigate flood risk; 2) repair the

historic structure; and 3) expand space for worship and community service. Visit: [www.scotlandamezion.org](http://www.scotlandamezion.org)

#### ABOUT THE J. WILLARD AND ALICE S. MARRIOTT FOUNDATION

The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation works to create access and expand opportunities for all by partnering with non-profit organizations committed to solving today's challenges and improving the lives of others in service of sustaining vibrant and thriving communities. Founded in 1966, the Foundation invests to strengthen the vitality of the Washington, D.C. community and surrounding region, advance health equity and mental health initiatives, and promote career preparedness, with a focus on the hospitality industry. The Foundation embraces collaborative relationships with its partners across industries and sectors to drive the greatest impact. Active engagement as a leader and collaborator in the community, both listening to the community's voice and promoting their interests, is a long-held, valued practice of the Marriott family and the Foundation.