



Press Release

National Museum of the Surface Navy Names Dr. Gladys West Recipient of Inaugural Freedom of the Seas Exploration and Innovation Award

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – August 7, 2023 – The [National Museum of the Surface Navy](#), founded aboard [Battleship USS Iowa](#) and scheduled to open in 2025, today named Dr. Gladys West the recipient of the first annual Freedom of the Seas Exploration and Innovation Award. The award is presented to an individual who embodies the spirit to propel society beyond its limits, pioneering research and developing technologies that impact the knowledge and capabilities of people around the world.

Dr. West began her career in 1956 as the second African American woman hired and one of only four African American employees in total at the Naval Proving Ground. During her 42 years of service at what became Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren, Dr. West played an integral role in the development of the Global Positioning System (GPS). Her work on satellite geodesy and other satellite measurements contributed to the accuracy of GPS. Prior to retiring in 1998, Dr. West served as project manager and received a commendation for her work on the radar altimetry data processing project of Seasat, the first satellite designed for the remote sensing of the Earth's oceans.

“Dr. Gladys West is the ideal recipient of the first Freedom of the Seas Exploration and Innovation Award, and we look forward to recognizing her and her accomplishments at this year’s annual gala,” explained retired Navy Rear Admiral Mike Shatynski, Chairman of the Board of the National Museum of the Surface Navy. “Dr. West’s accomplishments over her long and distinguished career certainly exemplify the spirit of this prestigious award.”

Dr. West holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in mathematics from Virginia State University, a Master of Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma, and a Ph.D. in Public Administration from Virginia Tech.

The annual Freedom of the Seas Awards event is held in honor of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, considered to be the largest naval battle of World War II. Attendance at the award event, which is by invitation only,

includes top leaders from the education, veteran, community, industry, government, and military sectors. [Freedom of the Seas 2023](#) will be held on October 21, 2023, aboard Battleship USS IOWA Museum. For information on sponsorship opportunities, contact Kyle Aube, Director of Development at kaube@labattleship.com.

About the Freedom of the Seas Awards

The Freedom of the Seas Awards is the premiere annual event of the National Museum of the Surface Navy at the Battleship IOWA. The event is held in honor of the anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval battle in the history of the world, which occurred during World War II. The Awards honors those that embody the core principles of the American Surface Navy's mission to protect and defend our oceans for the benefit of the free world.

About the National Museum of the Surface Navy

Scheduled to open in 2025 aboard the historic Battleship USS Iowa Museum, the National Museum of the Surface Navy is the museum for America's Surface Navy. The museum's mission is to raise America's awareness of the importance of the United States Surface Naval Forces' role in international relations, free trade, humanitarian assistance, and technological innovation, not just in the past but today and into the future.

Located in the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro, Calif., Battleship USS Iowa Museum is one of the top five museums and attractions in Los Angeles, bringing the ship's history to life through in-person and virtual tours and educational programs for youth. In addition to providing a natural platform for veterans and patriotic civilians to come together as a community, Battleship USS Iowa Museum provides a wide array of impactful programs and resources that support the critical needs of our military and veterans.

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