



Press Release

National Museum of the Surface Navy Names Fiona Ma Recipient of 2023 Freedom of the Seas Humanitarian Service Award

SAN PEDRO, Calif. – October 2, 2023 – The [National Museum of the Surface Navy](#), founded aboard [Battleship USS IOWA](#) and scheduled to open in 2025, today named California State Treasurer [Fiona Ma](#) the recipient of the 2023 [Freedom of the Seas](#) Humanitarian Service Award. The award recognizes those that exemplify the fearless bravery and tenacity necessary to sail through troubled waters to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as a core principle of America’s Surface Navy.

Elected in 2018 as California’s 34th State Treasurer, Treasurer Ma is the first woman of color and the first woman Certified Public Accountant (CPA) elected to the position. The Humanitarian Service Award recognizes Treasurer Ma for her commitment to addressing the homeless and housing crises, expanding access to healthcare facilities, supporting small businesses, and leading initiatives to create a stronger California for future generations.

As the primary banker for the State of California, Treasurer Ma’s office acted quickly to provide resources to small businesses and expand access to healthcare facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to growing and revamping California’s affordable housing and homeless housing programs, Treasurer Ma has funded clean energy projects, which resulted in the creation of new jobs, and dramatically increased the ability of Californians to save for college and retirement, live with a disability, and achieve a better quality of life.

“Throughout her career, Fiona Ma has proven her dedication to protecting and improving the lives of the citizens of California, and in her current role as State Treasurer, she has been instrumental in helping individuals and businesses navigate through, survive, and recover from an extraordinarily challenging time in our state’s history,” stated retired Navy Rear Admiral Mike Shatynski, Chairman of the Board of the National Museum of the Surface Navy. “We are honored to be able to present Treasurer Ma with this award in recognition of her invaluable contributions and efforts to provide relief and assistance to the citizens of the state of California.”

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. 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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