



## **Tourism Professional of the Year and Tourism Scholarship Recipient Named at 2017 Newport News Tourism Appreciation Luncheon**

**Newport News, VA, May 11, 2017** – The Newport News Tourism Professional of the Year and a scholarship recipient were announced at the annual Newport News Tourism Appreciation Luncheon May 10 at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center.

Sandy Bridgman, CEO and Partner of Waters & Bridgman Marketing Solutions, was named the “*Gregory Cherry Tourism Professional of the Year*,” while Julie Stephens was awarded a Newport News Hospitality Association scholarship of \$500.

Newport News Mayor McKinley Price presented Bridgman with the award and Stephens with the scholarship during the luncheon, hosted by the Newport News Tourism Development Office in celebration of National Travel & Tourism Week.

Bridgman’s nomination for Tourism Professional of the Year called her “one of the most talented marketing professionals in Coastal Virginia.” The nomination also stated that Bridgman “has consistently gone above and beyond supporting the efforts of the Newport News Hospitality Association and our city – and is a big part of the fabric of tourism.”

The “*Gregory Cherry Tourism Professional of the Year Award*” is given annually to a hospitality industry employee who demonstrates superior customer service while also promoting travel and tourism in the city. It was named in memory of Gregory Cherry, a former travel counselor at the Newport News Visitor Center and owner of the James A. Fields House, who died in 2007.

Since 2008, the Newport News Hospitality Association has awarded college scholarships annually to students interested in careers in travel & tourism or hospitality management. The students can either be high school seniors living and going to school in Newport News or they can be adults already working in the Newport News hospitality industry who are enrolled in or plan to take classes in travel & tourism.

Stephens is currently a student at Christopher Newport University. Her major is Business Management with a minor in Leadership Studies. While in high school, Stephens interned at a hotel and fell in love with the fast-paced environment. Her goal is to one day manage a large, corporate hotel.

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**Two photos:** Newport News Mayor McKinley Price with Sandy Bridgman (Tourism Professional of the Year). Also, Mayor Price with Julie Stephens (NNHA scholarship recipient).

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