

**CONNECTICUT CONSERVATION ADVOCATE
MARTHA H. PHILLIPS
RECEIVES MAJOR AWARD FROM GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA**



Rochester, New York (May 19, 2015) – Martha H. Phillips has received one of the highest honors bestowed annually by The Garden Club of America (GCA), the Margaret Douglas Medal. The award, presented to Phillips at the GCA’s annual meeting here this evening, is given for notable service to the cause of conservation education.

In honoring Phillips, the GCA hailed her “brilliant and distinguished service” as 10-year editor of the organization’s National Affairs and Legislation (NAL) Update and its associated Current Status Chart and for preparing delegates to participate in the GCA’s annual NAL meeting in Washington, D.C.

Phillips worked on Capitol Hill for many years, serving first as a staff member in the House of Representatives and later as Deputy Minority Counsel to the House Ways and Means Committee and Minority Staff Director to the House Budget Committee. “Her extensive knowledge of the U.S. legislative process allows her to clearly, correctly and impartially present issues of relevance to the GCA’s commitment to restoring, improving and protecting the quality of the environment,” said the GCA. “Further, she effectively connects NAL delegates to the federal legislative process and motivates them to be involved citizens.”

The Update alerts GCA clubs and their members to committee hearings, bills actively before the U.S. Congress and administrative rulemaking by agencies requesting comments. The annual four-day NAL meeting gathers 300 delegates from the GCA’s 201 clubs to be briefed by members of the Congress and administration on key national legislative and environmental issues and to visit congressional representatives to advocate for the GCA’s positions.

Phillips has “tirelessly dedicated her professional and volunteer life to preserving the health of our planet with her highly articulate written words and her generous gift of time and energy,” said the GCA. Phillips, who is a member of Litchfield Garden Club, Litchfield, Connecticut, was nominated for the award by Nancy McKlveen of Des Moines Founders Garden Club, Des Moines, Iowa.

Deeming Phillips’ passion to protect the natural world as “paramount in her life,” the GCA observed that “her ability to communicate this passion and the means to make a difference, is unparalleled.”

The Margaret Douglas Medal originally was presented and endowed by Mrs. Robert D. Sterling, Garden Club of Dublin and Monadnock Garden Club (both in New Hampshire), to venerate Mrs. Walter Douglas, an honorary GCA member. Art deco sculptor Rene P. Chambellan designed the medal in 1952. Previous winners include author and environmentalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas (1990), documentary filmmaker Bill Kurtis (1997) and entomologist, researcher and educator Douglas W. Tallamy (2013).

The GCA is a nonprofit national organization composed of 201 clubs with some 18,000 members who devote their energy and expertise to projects in their communities and across the United States. Founded in 1913, the GCA is a leader in horticulture, conservation and civic improvement. (www.gcamerica.org)