

NEWS RELEASE



MARYLAND
PUBLIC
TELEVISION

ANNAPOLIS
HAGERSTOWN
SALISBURY

FREDERICK
OAKLAND
OWINGS MILLS

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For immediate release

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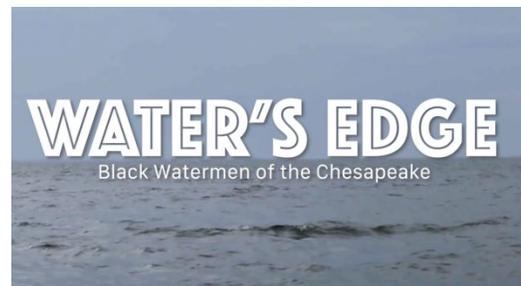
NOTE: Interviews are available upon request. A complete program schedule can be found at mpt.org/bayweek and additional Chesapeake Bay Week® resources are available [HERE](#).

MPT documentary *Water's Edge: Black Watermen of the Chesapeake* premieres April 17

Chesapeake Bay Week special shares stories of unsung African Americans who have revolutionized the region's aquaculture industry

OWINGS MILLS, MD – Maryland Public Television (MPT) will premiere its original documentary *Water's Edge: Black Watermen of the Chesapeake* on Monday, April 17 at 8 p.m. during its 19th annual Chesapeake Bay Week®. The one-hour film will debut on MPT-HD and will be available to view live and on-demand using MPT's [livestream](#), [online video player](#), and the [PBS App](#).

Water's Edge: Black Watermen of the Chesapeake chronicles unsung Marylanders who revolutionized an industry, dreamed beyond their circumstances, and continue to keep their traditions alive today. The film explores several stories of bravery and resilience that exemplify the unique relationship between African Americans and the Chesapeake Bay, both past and present.



The film features interviews with experts and profiles of prominent figures including:

- **Clara L. Small, Ph.D.**, emerita professor, **Salisbury University**, and author of *Compass Points: Profiles and Biographies of African Americans from the Delmarva Peninsula*.
- **Vincent Leggett**, founder and president of the [Blacks of the Chesapeake Foundation](#).
- **Imani Black**, the 28-year-old founder and CEO of nonprofit [Minorities in Aquaculture](#), whose family lineage in Maryland aquaculture dates back to the 1800s.
- **Pete Leshner**, chief historian at the [Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum](#) in **St. Michaels**.
- **Tarence Bailey, Sr.**, a descendent of Frederick Douglass. Born and raised on the banks of Tuckahoe Creek in Talbot County, Douglass worked as a ship caulker in **Fells Point** before escaping slavery by traveling to Philadelphia disguised as a sailor.

- **George W. Brown**, an ambitious steamboat captain whose service to “Brown’s Grove” in **Rock Creek** revolutionized recreation for Black Marylanders in the early 20th century.
- **Frederick Jewett** and **William H.T. Coulbourne**, whose crabmeat packing business grew to become **St. Michaels’** largest employer in the first half of the 20th century.
- Several members of the [Bellevue](#) community, which has had a thriving independent economy thanks in part to the successes of multiple businesses owned by the **Turner family**.
- Brothers **Downes and Albert Curtis**, renowned sailmakers who operated out of their **Oxford** loft.
- Captain Tyrone Meredith and his family, who have operated seafood and [charter fishing](#) businesses in **Kent Island** for generations.
- Artist [Marc Castelli](#), whose depictions of watermen on the Chesapeake have been displayed around the world.

An encore presentation of *Water’s Edge: Black Watermen of the Chesapeake* will air on MPT-HD at 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 22, the final day of MPT’s 2023 Chesapeake Bay Week observance. For more information, visit mpt.org/bayweek.

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates and distributes local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT’s commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and Thinkport.org. MPT’s year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit mpt.org.

About Chesapeake Bay Week®

Maryland Public Television (MPT) celebrates the Chesapeake Bay region once again in April with its 19th annual Chesapeake Bay Week®, a slate of more than 30 documentaries and public affairs programs highlighting the beauty, importance, and fragility of the nation’s largest estuary. During the week of April 16-22, MPT will offer more than 22 hours of content celebrating the Chesapeake Bay’s history, heritage, and resources as well as efforts to protect its diverse ecosystem. Chesapeake Bay Week is a unique programming initiative and part of the statewide public TV network’s ongoing commitment to celebrating the bay and examining critical issues faced by communities throughout the Chesapeake region. Content will be available to view live and on-demand on MPT-HD, the station’s livestream at mpt.org/livestream, MPT’s [online video player](#), and the [PBS App](#). More information is available at mpt.org/bayweek.