

Honoring Our History: College Dedicates Land Acknowledgment Plaque in Recognition of Campus' Monacan Roots

College honors its campus history by unveiling a land acknowledgment plaque recognizing the Monacan Indian Nation's ancestral lands.

AMHERST, VA, UNITED STATES, October 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following the creation of a [land acknowledgment statement](#) in 2024, Sweet Briar College officially dedicated a plaque honoring its campus as a part of the ancestral lands of the [Monacan Indian Nation](#).

On Sept. 26, during the College's annual Founders' Day celebration, members of the campus community and Monacan leadership gathered on the Quad, where a commemorative rock and plaque are now displayed. During the ceremony, President Mary Pope M. Hutson '83, Monacan Tribal Chief Diane Shields, and Assistant Tribal Chief Edith Lou Branham

Parrish each gave remarks to signify the importance of the occasion.

“

We want to say ‘thank you’ for honoring us and our people, and for the fact that the campus sits on Monacan land...It’s an honor to be standing here.”

Assistant Chief Parrish

“Today is Founders’ Day, a very special day when we honor all of Sweet Briar’s founders. These founders include the Monacan Indian Nation, part of whose ancestral range of lands is home to the College,” President Hutson said. “Now, we are gathered on the Quad, surrounded by Sweet Briar’s historic architecture and with stunning views of the Blue Ridge Mountains beyond, to specifically honor one of these

founders, the Monacan Indian Nation.”

Now read at the start of all major campus events, the land acknowledgment states: Sweet Briar



Sweet Briar's honors its campus as a part of the ancestral lands of the Monacan Indian Nation.

College acknowledges the many benefits, responsibilities, and relationships of being in this place. We respectfully acknowledge the Monacan Indians, upon whose historical homeland our College is located, and who have lived on this land for generations.

"We want to say 'thank you' for honoring us and our people, and the fact that the campus does sit on Monacan land...It's an honor to be standing here," Assistant Chief Parrish said, who often speaks of the nation's history and culture.

The Monacan leadership also spoke during the subsequent Founders' Day Convocation, sharing their experiences growing up in Virginia, the importance of documenting Monacan history, and the struggles the nation went through to gain federal recognition, which was not granted until 2018.

"I want all of you to think, in your heart, who you are. You know yourself, and don't ever, ever let somebody else tell you you're not who you are because you are the best you can be, and that's what you were born to be," Chief Shields said to Convocation attendees about the importance of identity.

In addition to the dedication, Sweet Briar has partnered with the Monacan Indian Nation to create a scholarship to welcome Monacan students to the College. If you would like to [contribute to the scholarship](#), please reach out to alumnae@sbc.edu.

Visit monacannation.gov to learn more about the Monacan Indian Nation and read more about the land acknowledgment ceremony [here](#). Located in Amherst County, the Monacan Ancestral Museum is open Thursday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

At Sweet Briar, our history and mission are deeply rooted in respect, leadership, and purpose.



Chief Shields, President Hutson, and Assistant Chief Parrish gather around the land acknowledgment plaque.



Aerial Shot of Sweet Briar College

We are proud to honor the past while preparing bold women to lead in the future. If you're a prospective student drawn to a college that values community, history, and social responsibility, we invite you to learn more about Sweet Briar College. Visit sbc.edu/admissions or contact admissions at admissions@sb.edu.

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