



HJ002- Delegate Heather A. Bagnall
Favorable Testimony for the Resolution- HJ2 Criminal Law- Witchcraft Exoneration

March 6, 2025

The Maryland Women's Heritage Center (MWHC) is pleased to support Delegate Bagnell's resolution to exonerate Maryland's 17th and 18th – century accused witches. It is our mission to “add **HERstory** to history to tell OUR story”. More now than ever, the voices and stories of women appear under threat of having their struggles and successes erased from history. We understand that there are currently huge legislative issues to be addressed, but that has long been an explanation why diverse women's lives and contributions are often overlooked or denied.

The Maryland Witches Exoneration Project has collected their names and researched their lives.

Let us say their names, learn their stories and remember what their lives were like:

Mary Lee- Hanged at sea
Rebecca Fowler- hanged
Moll Dyer- Driven from her burning home, found later frozen to death
Virtue Violl- Acquitted and seeking to clear her name
Elizabeth Bennett- Later cleared
Hannah Edwards- Not guilty
John Cowman- Decision to hang was reversed
John Cowman – Was not hanged

To learn more about their stories, read the article and the related sources:
<https://mdwomensheritagecenter.org/del-heather-a-bagnall-moves-to-exonerate-marylands-17th-and-18th-century-accused-witches/>

(Written and researched by Kathi Santora, President of the Board, MD Women's Heritage Center)

Thank you for your consideration in this request to support this resolution to exonerate the names of the women and man who were falsely charged of witchcraft in Maryland. By sharing these stories and others, we can better fight bigotry, misogyny, fear and ignorance of facts. We are seeking a favorable resolution in this also important issue for Maryland citizens in the past, present and future.

Respectfully submitted,

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