



THE OLD BALDY FOUNDATION, INC. And Smith Island Museum of History

KEEPING THE LIGHT SHINING FOR RALPH AND RICHARD DONNELL

The Old Baldy Foundation received a generous donation of a Sedgwick Tower Exhibit Case by Gaylord Archival to be the home to a new exhibit in the Smith Island Museum of History from Leslie and Brian Black. The Blacks reached out to The Old Baldy Foundation in hopes of finding the perfect donation to make, that would honor Leslie's brothers, Ralph and Richard Donnell, with their love of Bald Head Island and lighthouses.

After conversations about the best way to honor these two men, The Old Baldy Foundation and the Black's decided on creating a new exhibit featuring Fresnel Lens models. The models feature different Fresnel Lens from various lighthouses. This is an important part of Bald Head Island history as the Cape Fear Lighthouse (1903-1958) had a first order Fresnel Lens. The First Order Fresnel Lens was sold after the lighthouse was torn down in 1958 and was bought again by The Old Baldy Foundation in 2009. With the lens in storage, we aim to build a museum large enough to house and honor this important piece.

Leslie took the time to explain the significance this donation has to her family and what it will mean to them. Her family has always enjoyed taking trips in the summer all along the East Coast from Maine down to North Carolina. Around twenty years ago a close friend of the family's mentioned Bald Head Island as a possible destination for one of their coastal trips. After researching and learning about this quaint community, the family booked their trip! This trip began a love of Bald Head Island and a tradition of coming here to enjoy the beauty and history of the area.

Bald Head Island was a natural fit for the family as both brothers, but especially Richard, had developed a love for lighthouses. Their appreciation of lighthouses developed over many years enjoying trips along the coast. Lighthouses truly encompasses the beauty of the coastline and honors the rich history the surrounding area has. Old Baldy captured the many reasons these brothers were drawn to Lighthouses.

Leslie and Brian Black made this donation to exhibit the part of a lighthouse keeps the light shining. Their hope is that this exhibit will keep the light shining for her two brothers, Richard and Ralph Donnell. The Old Baldy Foundation is honored to receive this donation and feature this important part of Maritime History in our museum. Please join us in extending our sincere thank you to the Black family for helping us tell this important story.