

Wallace Fountain Award



***Recognizing and Honoring Philanthropy
in the Spirit of Sir Richard Wallace***

Presented by



LA SOCIÉTÉ DES FONTAINES WALLACE
SOCIETY OF THE WALLACE FOUNTAINS



SIR RICHARD WALLACE

Wallace Fountains: Monuments to the Kindness and Generosity of Sir Richard Wallace

For more than 150 years Wallace Fountains of Paris have been dispensing clean drinking water to everyone with a thirst. Installed in 1872, they were an instant success and soon became beloved fixtures of the Paris streetscape. With time, the remarkable story of their origin and the man who donated them to the people of Paris has faded.

Wallace was born in London, but he lived most of his life in Paris. He was believed to be the illegitimate son of Richard Seymour-Conway, who became the 4th Marquess of Hertford. In August 1870, Lord Hertford died at Chateau Bagatelle and left his enormous wealth to Richard Wallace. This surprise event proved fateful for the residents of Paris. Within days Paris was under siege during the Franco-Prussian War. Thousands would have died if not for the generosity of Richard Wallace who stayed in Paris to donate 2.5 million francs and organize aid for food, clothing, shelter, fuel and medical care for the suffering. The press called him the “Benefactor of the Poor”.

Before moving briefly to England in 1872, Wallace gave an additional 1 million francs to help reestablish the poor of Paris following the traumatic Siege and Commune eras. But his lasting gift to the city was the Wallace Fountains, which he created, financed and donated in a cooperative effort to give everyone equal access to clean drinking water.

Until he died, Richard Wallace lead a life of quiet, hands-on philanthropy in Paris, London and Lisburn, Northern Ireland, using his sudden wealth for the common good of humanity. His impact is still felt today. Lisburn has parks and schools, London the Wallace Collection of fine art and Paris its beloved Wallace Fountains still dispensing refreshing drinks of water.



Wallace Fountain Award Criteria

Recognizing Kindness, Generosity and Cooperation for the Human Good

Inaugurated in 2022 for the 150th Anniversary of the first Wallace Fountains, the Wallace Fountain Award is an international honor presented to an individual with a proven record of exceptional generosity who, in the spirit of Sir Richard Wallace, uses personal wealth and resources in partnership with public or non-profit organizations to benefit the common good of humanity. The recipient must be actively involved in an effort to alleviate human suffering and/or inequity caused by a lack of access to essential human needs, education, cultural enrichment or opportunity, and whose generosity encourages others of means to make philanthropy a significant part of their life's work.



The award is presented at a gala charity dinner honoring the recipient and benefitting Wallace related charities. The next award will be presented in Paris in the fall of 2024.

The award recipient will be chosen by a panel of distinguished judges.

Criteria for nomination and selection include the following:

1. Nominees must use their personal wealth to support their philanthropy.
2. Nominees must be personally involved in their giving projects.
3. Charitable projects of the nominees must be cooperative activities that meet an essential human need, provide access to cultural enrichment or address the causes of inequity and lack of opportunity.
4. The philanthropist receives no commercial benefit or enrichment from the charitable project.
5. The nominee must be available to attend the award ceremony.

Closing date for letters of nomination is June 1, 2024.

Letters of nomination and inquiries can be emailed to award@wallacefountains.org.