



## *6th Annual Preservation Awards Ceremony*



**HISTORIC SEATTLE**  
*Educate. Advocate. Preserve.*

## ➤Historic Vessel Preservation Award◀

### *Lightship No. 83, “The Swiftsure”* *South Lake Union Pier*



The *Historic Vessel Preservation Award* goes to Northwest Seaport Maritime Heritage Center and its supporting partner for blending maritime history, education and public outreach through the restoration of the heritage vessel and museum, Lightship No. 83.

*Supporting Partners: Northwest Seaport Maritime Heritage Center (owner); Lake Union Drydock Co. (restoration support).*

Lightship No. 83 was one of four original lightships to serve along the Pacific Coast with primary assignments at Blunts Reef, San Francisco and Coast Guard District 13. The vessel relies on a two-boiler steam engine with an indicated horsepower of 325 for propulsion. Originally, the vessel had a centralized stack between two masts with a concentration of oil lamps in each head to serve as lanterns.

Lightship No. 83 was constructed in 1904 by the New York Shipbuilding Company in Camden, NJ and delivered to Cape Mendocino, CA, to serve as the first floating lighthouse at the Blunts Reef lightship station, the ship's namesake from 1905-1930. The primary function of the vessel was to occupy a station a few miles from a point of access to a port center and serve as a floating beacon to incoming and outgoing ships. In 1930 Lightship No. 83 was transferred to and renamed *San Francisco*. It occupied a lightship station beyond the Golden Gate Bridge until 1942 when it was withdrawn and reclassified as a WWII examination vessel after the installation of a coastal defense gun. Following WWII, Lightship No. 83 returned to the San Francisco lightship station. From 1951-1960 Lightship No. 83 was stationed in Coast Guard District 13 and renamed *Relief*. The ship served Umatilla Reef, Swiftsure Banks, and Columbia River lightship stations.

Lightship No. 83 was decommissioned by the Coast Guard in 1961. In 1968, it was purchased by Northwest Seaport (then known as Save Our Ships). It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1989 and in 1996, the vessel was given the name of the most proximate lightship station, *Swiftsure*.

After three months of extensive restoration in drydock, the *Swiftsure* was re-launched in August of 2013 in South Lake Union, where it currently serves as a floating museum showcasing the oldest surviving lightship on the West Coast. Restoration efforts included replacing the wooden deck; restoring the electrical system; rigging; removal of hazardous materials; and removal of the deteriorated wheelhouse, radio house and wood weather deck. The hull was cleaned, reinforced, and painted with the distinctive Coast Guard Red color. The restoration provided a unique opportunity for distinguished shipwrights, Nautical Archaeologists and volunteers to work hand-in-hand to maintain the ship in a manner that preserves its historic functionality while ensuring its preservation for future generations. Volunteers are afforded the opportunity to learn and continue the practice of the maritime trade that is so pertinent to coastal areas of the Pacific Northwest. The restoration of the *Swiftsure* is a valuable model for linking the past, present and future in a manner that is both active and educational.