

[Click Here for a List of Black History Month Events](#)



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF CONSTITUENT SERVICES
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Governor Northam Recognizes February as Black History Month in Virginia

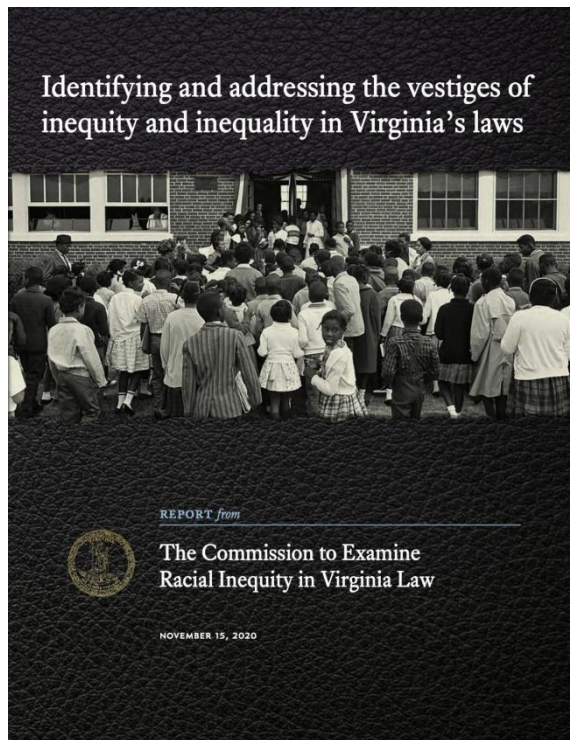
**Invites Virginians to reflect upon contributions of African Americans,
participate safely in events throughout the Commonwealth**



Virginia Black History Month Proclamation

Governor Northam Announces Second Report on Systemic Bias in Virginia Law

**Commission to Examine Racial Inequity in Virginia Law presents new
policy recommendations to address vestiges of inequity**



On Wednesday, February 10, 2021, Governor Ralph Northam recommitted to addressing the legacy of structural racism in Virginia's laws, as his Commission to Examine Racial Inequity in the Law issued its second report outlining policy recommendations to confront the impacts of discriminatory laws. Many of these recommendations are reflected in Governor Northam's current legislative priorities, including measures to restore voting rights, invest in education, and expand expungements of prior convictions.

"Our Commonwealth remains focused on acknowledging and righting the wrongs of our past," said Governor Northam. "This latest report makes clear that there is still work to do to shed the ugly remnants of Virginia's

history. The Commission is already having a significant impact on our shared legislative priorities and I look forward to continuing our partnership to build a more honest, equitable, and inclusive future for all."

The Commission's recommendations played a key role in the formation of Governor Northam's current legislative agenda, which includes proposals to automatically restore the voting rights of people with felony convictions, legalize adult-use marijuana, abolish the death penalty, invest in education infrastructure and early childhood education, expand expungement of previous convictions, and protect the ownership rights of "heirs property." The Commission's work also informed many of Governor Northam's legislative proposals for the August 2020 special session that centered on meaningful police reform and COVID-19 relief.

[Read the Report](#)

[View the Full Press Release](#)

A Conversation: Advancing Historic Justice and Equity in Preservation of Virginia's Black History

Wednesday, February 17, 2021 | 6:00 PM-7:30 PM



Hosted by the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth

A Conversation:

ADVANCING HISTORIC JUSTICE AND EQUITY IN
PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA'S BLACK HISTORY

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021 | 6:00 P.M.-7:30 P.M.



Are you interested in learning more about Virginia's historic justice and equity efforts? If so, join us for an engaging conversation with several Virginia leaders who have been instrumental in efforts to preserve Virginia's Black history and right Virginia's historical wrongs. The event, which is free and open to the public, will take place on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 from 6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m. During the event, you will hear from administration representatives and leaders advancing historic justice and equity in the Commonwealth.

[Register Here](#)

**Governor Northam Announces Second Annual
'Black History Month Historical Marker Contest'**

Submission Period Opens Monday, February 15, 2021

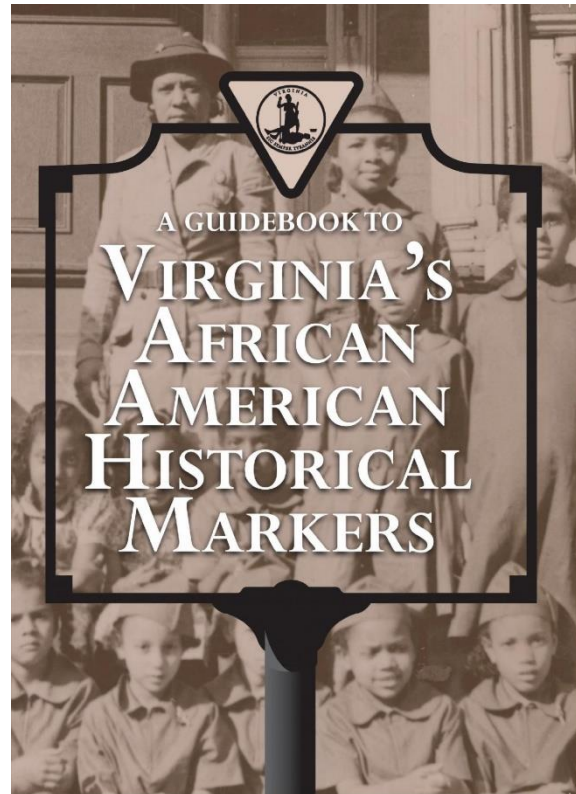
On Friday, February 12, 2021, Governor Ralph Northam invited Virginia students, educators, and families to participate in the second annual Black History Month Historical Marker Contest.

This initiative offers opportunities to learn about African Americans who have made important contributions to Virginia history, provides teachers with resources to guide history discussions, and includes a contest where students can submit ideas for new historical markers to the Department of Historical Resources.

Virginia's Historical Highway Marker Program began in 1927 with installation of the first markers along U.S. Route 1, and is considered the oldest such program in the nation. Managed by the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Department of Historic Resources, the program is an effort to recognize and chronicle events, accomplishments, sacrifices, and personalities of historic importance to Virginia's story. The signs are known for their black lettering against a silver background and their distinctive shape.

Virginia has erected more than 2,600 markers along its roadways, but as of January 2020, only 350 markers honored African Americans. Last year on Juneteenth, Governor Northam announced 20 newly approved state historical highway markers addressing topics of national, state, and regional significance to African American history in the Commonwealth. Ten of the markers were submitted by Virginia students through Governor Northam's inaugural Black History Month Historical Marker Contest and included civil rights pioneer Barbara Rose Johns, entrepreneur Maggie Lena Walker, Sergeant William H. Carney, and NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson. Learn more about the winning markers submitted by students in the inaugural Black History Month Historical Marker Contest [here](#).

The contest web page includes a [lesson plan](#) and classroom activity guide developed by Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Janice Underwood, which is designed to help teachers and administrators navigate these discussions thoughtfully and inclusively and can be used for in-person or virtual classroom settings.



"As an educator, I believe deeply in the power of learning through the exploration of local history," said Dr. Underwood. "Since 1619, stories of incredible African American Virginians have frequently been ignored. This contest allows for students to discover local heroes and provides students an opportunity for civic engagement inviting them to suggest new historical markers."

Governor Northam's Black History Month Historical Marker Contest begins on Monday, February 15, and suggested historical markers must be submitted by Monday, March 15. The Department of Historical Resources will review all submissions and will select the top five, in consultation with Governor Northam and members of his Cabinet.

[Contest Details Here](#)

Governor's Summit on Equitable Collaboration

Shaping a More Inclusive Commonwealth

Wednesday, February 17, 2021-Thursday, February 25, 2021



About the Summit: The Summit is hosted by the UVA Institute for Engagement & Negotiation in partnership with Governor Ralph Northam and his administration. This event is for all those who might be involved or interested in community engagement, collaboration, and equity – whether in health, education, natural resources, or community development. We hope you all will attend this virtual event where people from across the Commonwealth will have an opportunity to learn about Equitable Collaboration, to share their own tools, and to discuss Virginia policy needs to advance Equitable Collaboration.

Summit Goals:

1. Introduce and showcase the six principles for Equitable Collaboration.
2. Review the growth and trajectory of collaboration in Virginia, and its future needs to ensure equity.

3. Illustrate the six principles for Equitable Collaboration through case studies in Health, Education, Natural Resources, and Community Development.
4. Enable participants to share resources around equitable collaboration approaches, tools, resources.
5. Enable participant discussion and input for policy needs in Virginia to advance equitable collaboration.

[Register Here](#)

Gubernatorial Appointments Spotlight:

Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination



The Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans (the Commission) is established as an advisory commission in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Commission is to study the current impact and long-term inequities of slavery and subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African Americans.



- Jody Lynn Allen, PhD of Ashland, Assistant Professor of History and Robert Francis Engs Director of The Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation, William & Mary
- Edward L. Ayers, PhD of Richmond and Charlottesville, Professor and President Emeritus, University of Richmond
- Andrea Douglas, PhD of Charlottesville, Executive Director, Jefferson School African American Heritage Center
- John W. Kinney, PhD of Ashland, Distinguished Professor, Virginia Union University
- Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander, PhD of Chesapeake, Professor of History and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Norfolk State University
- Xavier Richardson of Fredericksburg, Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer, Mary Washington Healthcare
- Karen Sherry, PhD of Richmond, Curator, Virginia Museum of History and Culture
- Daniel P. Watkins, Esq. of Alexandria, Partner, Clare Locke LLP

[Learn More About the Commission Here](#)

**Virginia Humanities Presents:
Rosenwald Schools in Virginia: Updates and
Preservation Tools Webinar
Thursday, February 18, 2021 | 10:00 AM**



Join Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the AMMD Pine Grove School Community, the Campbell County Training School Complex, the Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools National Historic Park Campaign, the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Virginia Humanities, and the Woodville Rosenwald School Foundation for a free webinar to provide updates on activities, initiatives and threats related to Rosenwald Schools in Virginia, as well as information on grants and other funding sources.

Created by Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute, the Rosenwald rural school building program was an initiative intended to narrow racial schooling gaps in the South by constructing better, more-accessible schools for African Americans. Between 1912 and 1932, the program helped produce 5,357 new educational facilities for African Americans across fifteen southern states, providing almost 700,000 African American children in rural, isolated communities with state-of-the-art facilities at a time when little to no public money was put toward black education. In Virginia, the initiative helped fund 382 schools and support buildings in seventy-nine counties. According to a 2019 survey conducted by Preservation Virginia, out of the 382 Rosenwald Schools built in Virginia, 126 are still standing and 256 have been demolished. In 2002, the National Trust for Historic Preservation placed all Rosenwald schools in the United States on its list of most endangered historic buildings.

[Register Here](#)

**The Library of Virginia Presents:
The Other Madisons:
The Lost History of a President's Black Family**

Thursday, February 18, 2021 | 6:00 PM



Join the Library of Virginia for a virtual genealogical book lecture by retired physician and geneticist Bettye Kearse, author of *The Other Madisons: The Lost History of a President's Black Family*. Kearse—a descendant of an enslaved cook and, according to oral tradition, President James Madison—shares her family story and explores the issues of legacy, race, and the powerful consequences of telling the whole truth. Part personal quest, part testimony, part historical correction, the book is the saga of an extraordinary American family told by a griotte in search of the whole story.

[Register Here](#)

**The Robert Russa Moton Museum Presents:
Moton Mondays: Elvatrice Parker Belsches**

Monday, February 22, 2021 | 12:00 PM



The Robert Russa Moton Museum will be joined by Elvatrice Parker Belsches, a public historian, researcher and filmmaker who specializes in chronicling the Black experience in history. She is the author of the pictorial publication, *Black America Series: Richmond, Virginia* (Arcadia Publishing) and she has several documentaries in development. Belsches will take the audience on a journey into civil rights in education through the memories of her late parents who were gifted educators. Belsches' father, the late Ernest Parker Sr. taught mathematics at Robert R. Moton High School from 1951-1955, where he also served as an assistant football coach and athletic director. While serving as Barbara Johns' homeroom and algebra teacher, he discovered the students making placards in the back of the class in preparation for the student walkout in 1951. The walkout launched a series of events that laid the groundwork for the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling deeming segregation unconstitutional, and prompted Prince Edward County schools to close rather than integrate for five years. The students' signs, with messages like "We want a new school" are printed indelibly in the nation's collective memory of the civil rights movement, and are treasured pieces of her family's legacy.

[Watch Here](#)

The Fort Monroe Authority Presents:

Evolution of Freedom featuring Les Nubians

Thursday, February 25, 2021 | 3:00 PM-4:30 PM



"Evolution of Freedom" is a new forum series hosted by the Fort Monroe Authority and the Fort Monroe National Monument (National Park Service) and is being supported by a grant from Huntington Ingalls Industries. In this series we are exploring the topic of freedom and how cultural influences continue to impact, and have impacted the arc of freedom in the United States. This month we feature, Les Nubians, a French neosoul musical duo from Paris, France. Historian of slavery and the African Diaspora, Dr. Jessica Marie Johnson of Johns Hopkins University will guide us in a discussion of their music as we explore together the influences of culture and history on their lives, and expressions of FREEDOM! This virtual performance and conversation is free and open to the public.

About Les Nubians: Born in France from a French father and a Cameroonian mother, Hélène and Célia Faussart spent their childhood in Chad before going back to their teenage hood in Bordeaux. That's where the sisters started their musical career and created their band Les Nubians in 1995. The duo begins with acapella covers of the Great Black Music Repertoire as if it was a tree, from its roots, traditional african songs through Jazz, Bossa Nova, Soul, to its leaves: Reggae and Hip Hop...

Progressively, they add original compositions to develop their own branch and style: Afropean Soul.

[Register Here](#)

Jamestown Settlement Presents: After Angelo

Saturday, February 27, 2021 | 11:00 AM-5:00 PM

"After Angelo," a one-day program honoring the legacy of the first African woman mentioned by name in the historical record at Jamestown, returns to Jamestown Settlement on Saturday, February 27, 2021, for a lively celebration of African-American culture and heritage. Festivities begin at 12 noon with a traditional African Libation by Corey Staten and a performance by Atumpan Dance Theatre. The rest of the day will be filled with art, music, storytelling and a community conversation. [See the full schedule of event activities](#). All programs and activities have been adapted to meet [protective protocols](#) and social-distancing procedures to create a safe museum environment for everyone to enjoy. Capacity is limited in indoor performance locations. Event activities are included with museum admission.



[Learn More Here](#)

Virginia Environmental Justice Council Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2021 | 10:00 AM

Addressing environmental injustice has been and continues to be a focal point of Governor Northam's administration. Establishing a state advisory council on environmental justice was part of his campaign platform in 2017. Because this issue is so important, Governor Northam continued Governor McAuliffe's Council through his first term. Governor Northam issued EO-29 establishing the Virginia Council on Environmental Justice (VCEJ) on January 22, 2019.

The Virginia Environmental Justice Council will convene for their inaugural meeting of the calendar year. During the meeting, board members will outline their 2021 priorities.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Save the Date

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, February 18, 2021

10:00 AM

[Register Here](#)

Fort Monroe Authority Board of Trustees Public Meeting and African Landing Memorial Sculpture Concept Design Discussion

Thursday, February 18, 2021 | 1:00 PM-4:00 PM



On Thursday, February 18, 2021, the Fort Monroe Authority Board of Trustees will convene for their public meeting. During the meeting, attendees will hear and see the concept design for the memorial presented by the artist, Brian Owens. Meeting attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and offer comments on the design. This one-of-a-kind sculpture will commemorate a singular moment that reverberates

through the fabric of more than 400 years of American history that started here at Point Comfort, now known as Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia.

This meeting will be conducted using an electronic process due to the COVID-19 state of emergency and as a precaution to reduce the risk and spread of the COVID-19. Members of the public are invited to address the FMA Board of Trustees with written comments. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, interested persons may submit written comments to the FMA in advance of the meeting by email to dswiney@fortmonroe.org. Each comment will be limited to three minutes. All comments must be received by noon on February 17, 2021. These written comments will be read by the Board Secretary at the meeting during the public comment period and included in the official record.

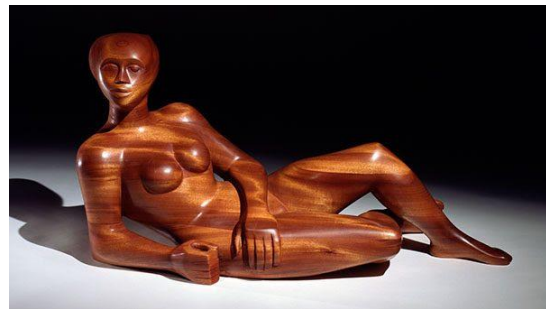
[Register Here](#)

Events Around the Commonwealth

Virginia African American Cultural Center, Inc. | "Inside a Silent Tear"

Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Join the Virginia African American Cultural Center, Inc. and the Chrysler Museum of Art for "Inside a Silent Tear," an evening exploring African American art at the Chrysler. Participants will learn about the Black experience in America through art in a conversation led by docent Becky Livas, McKinnon Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art Kimberli Gant, PhD, Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond and Joan Rhodes-Copeland from the Virginia African American Cultural Center.



[Register Here](#)



Diversity Richmond

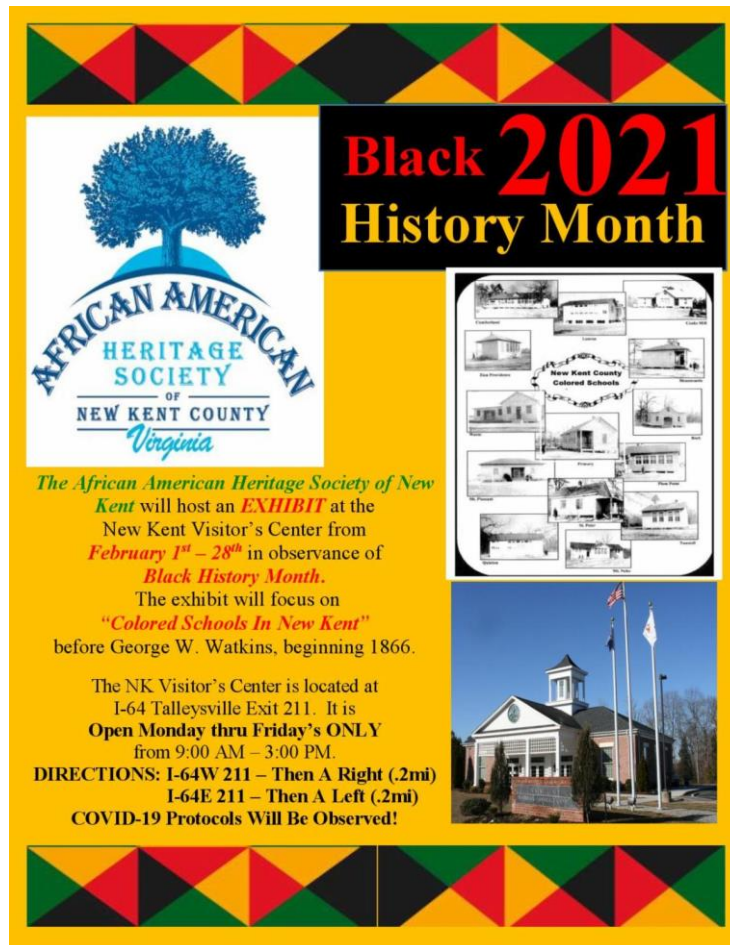
**5th Annual Black & Bold RVA Awards
Sunday, February 25, 2021 at 6:00 PM**

Join Diversity Richmond and save the date for their 5th annual Black and Bold Awards. They will virtually announce this year's honorees that have shown outstanding leadership within the Black

LGBTQ+ community. The program will be streamed over Facebook and posted later to YouTube.

[Register Here](#)

**African American Heritage Society of New Kent County
"Colored Schools in New Kent" Exhibit
Monday, February 1-28, 2021**



**Black 2021
History Month**

The African American Heritage Society of New Kent will host an **EXHIBIT** at the New Kent Visitor's Center from **February 1st – 28th** in observance of **Black History Month**. The exhibit will focus on **"Colored Schools In New Kent"** before George W. Watkins, beginning 1866.

The NK Visitor's Center is located at I-64 Talleyville Exit 211. It is **Open Monday thru Friday's ONLY** from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

**DIRECTIONS: I-64W 211 – Then A Right (.2mi)
I-64E 211 – Then A Left (.2mi)**
COVID-19 Protocols Will Be Observed!

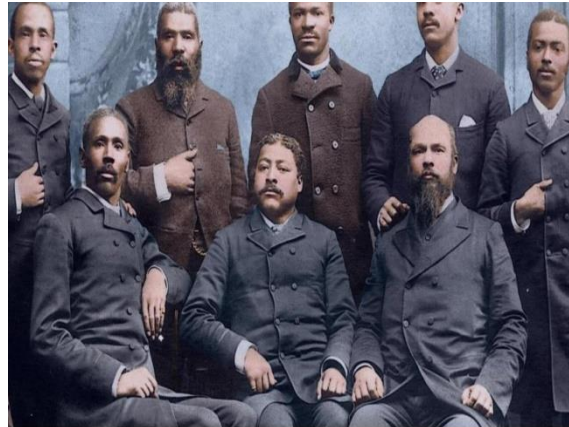
**Applications Open | December 1-March 21
Emancipation and Evolving American Identity**

While the Civil War and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution emancipated 4 million enslaved people in the United States, that momentous transformation was not inevitable, nor was it clear what freedom would mean.

Emancipation and Evolving American Identity is a three-week virtual summer institute that will run from July 5 - July 23, 2021. The institute is for K-12 educators and includes discussions with leading scholars, virtual field trips to Virginia sites that highlight the complex history of emancipation, and workshop sessions focusing on the techniques and strategies that you can use in your classroom.

Discover how many Americans, including enslaved and free black people, chose to act boldly against the institution of slavery, while political leaders influenced national policy. In what ways are the choices and legacies of their experiences still shaping our evolving view of this history, as well as our lives today? How can we help educators be more comfortable, competent, and confident teaching this topic, both in content and strategies?

[Learn More and Apply Here](#)



Ongoing **Virginia Jazz: The Early Years**

VIRGINIA JAZZ: The Early Years is a visual feast of musical artists who, from the early 1900s to the mid-1960s, helped to establish a pathway for merging culture and tradition, with innovation and style, to create a provocative genre that still excites audiences today. Richmond's Historic Jackson Ward was once called "The Harlem of the South." Did jazz

artists from Virginia play critical roles in developing this great American music? The answer, of course, is yes! Richmond Jazz Society curated the exhibition that brings to light the talent and accomplishments of 35 Virginia artists, recognized on the national and international jazz scenes, as having made extraordinary contributions to the development of jazz. If you love jazz and history, you will love this exhibition

accompanied by both live and recorded music. Visitors will be enticed to share their family stories and inspire a new generation to keep jazz alive.

[Learn More and Register Here](#)



CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution of Virginia in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

WHEREAS, in 1926, historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a native Virginian and son of formerly enslaved persons who became the second African American man to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University, established what would become Black History Month to bring special acknowledgement and awareness of African American accomplishments, contributions, and history in the shaping of America; and

WHEREAS, Black and African Americans have contributed to the rich fabric and diversity of our Commonwealth and have made significant strides in the arts, business and entrepreneurship, civil rights, culinary arts, education, entertainment, journalism, law, literature, medicine, music, STEAM-H fields, and sports; and

WHEREAS, in 1619, the first documented enslaved Africans arrived at the English colonies at Old Point Comfort, Virginia known as present day Fort Monroe, on the English ships White Lion and Treasurer, and these individuals were sold in exchange for provisions, while others were transported to Jamestown, where they were sold; and

WHEREAS, between 1670 and 1865, Virginia's enslaved population expanded to 550,000 individuals, which constituted one third of the Commonwealth's population, and although an act of Congress in 1808 banned the international slave trade, one of Virginia's largest industries included the domestic slave trade; and

WHEREAS, between 1863 and 1865, hundreds of Black men fought in the American Civil War and died as enlisted men in the United States Colored Troops, seeking life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as a free people; and

WHEREAS, after 1865, and the ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, the complete freedom and civil rights granted to previously enslaved men, women, and children was subverted by brutal Jim Crow laws, preventing their ability to live as fully free citizens and pursue life, liberty, and happiness as guaranteed to white citizens; and

WHEREAS, between 1867 and 1890, African American men were given the right to vote for and to be elected delegates to the Virginia Constitutional Convention, and nearly 100 African American men won election to the convention, the Virginia House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia, and hundreds more as workers in city, county and federal government offices; and

WHEREAS, between 1954 and 1968, Black activists, in particular women, spearheaded the Civil Rights Movement, fought for social justice, constitutional rights, organized sit-ins, marches, workshops, boycotts, and grassroots campaigns; and

WHEREAS, attacks on the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments continue to persist in the 21st century, and the Commonwealth of Virginia devotes its citizenry and resources to fulfilling the promises of the Emancipation Proclamation and the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, it is important to reckon with the storied truth of our historical past, as well as the Commonwealth's explicit and implicit contribution to the institution of American slavery and the subsequent systemic racial inequities of today; and

WHEREAS, today, African Americans continue to make gains as entrepreneurs, in public service and across professional fields, challenging structural and systemic barriers put in place to hinder their success; and

WHEREAS, the observance of Black History Month calls us into celebration and acknowledgement of the undeniable contributions of Black Americans and it also calls our attention to the ever-present systemic racism and oppression embedded in our institutions and everyday life and the continued need to work to build an equitable and just society; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia will join the nation in acknowledging that *Black Lives Matter* and celebrating the 95th National Black History Month by honoring the essential accomplishments, contributions, and sacrifices of the Black family in shaping American history and culture;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ralph S. Northam, do hereby recognize February 2021 as **BLACK HISTORY MONTH** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ralph S. Northam".

Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kelly Thomas".

Secretary of the Commonwealth

Looking for Black History Month Events? We've Compiled a List!

Think We Missed An Event? Email it to us so we may add it.

[Click Here for a List of Black History Month Events](#)

Traci J. DeShazor
[she/her/hers]
**Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth and
Director of Black/African American Outreach**
Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam

