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CHAIR
NINTH SENATE DISTRICT



DELEGATE DELORES L. MCQUINN
VICE-CHAIR
SEVENTIETH HOUSE DISTRICT

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL COMMISSION 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission), a statutory and bipartisan agency of the Virginia General Assembly, was created in 1992 to honor the memory and legacy of Dr. King and to continue his work through educational, historical, and cultural programs, public policy analysis, and public discourse on contemporary issues.

The Commission's projects in 2021 included:

Emancipation and Freedom Monument

The Emancipation and Freedom Monument (the Monument), dedicated to the contributions of African American Virginians in the fight for freedom, was completed and unveiled in September 2021 on Brown's Island in Richmond. The Monument, designed by Thomas Jay Warren of Oregon, features two 12-foot bronze statues representing newly freed enslaved persons and highlights notable African American Virginians on its pedestal. The project to construct the Monument had been ongoing since 2013.

Completion of Monument and Site Work

In 2020, the artist completed work on the bronze figures comprising the Monument at Artworks Foundry in Berkley, California. In April 2021, the figures were transported to the Commonwealth to be stored by the Department of General Services until completion of site work and installation on Brown's Island.

In April 2021, the contract with the artist, initially entered into in June 2018, was amended to account for the need for a soil management plan on Brown's Island due to contaminants in the soil, the need for an elongated site work schedule to accommodate planned events on Brown's Island, and other contingencies that led to increased costs and a revised schedule for the Monument site's landscape architect, Four Winds Design, and contractor, Williams Construction. In June 2021, the contract was amended again due to costs associated with the need to remove and replace soil under the Monument site. The Office of the Attorney General and the Department of General Services worked with the Division of Legislative Services and the Commission to ensure that the necessary contract amendments were made, as well as to complete the transfer of the property on Brown's Island from the City of Richmond to the Commonwealth. The site work and installation of the Monument were completed in September

2021, and final costs paid under the contract amounted to \$1,040,172.07. Total project costs amounted to \$1,184,102.07.

Unveiling and Dedication

On September 22, 2021, the Commission held a ceremony to dedicate and unveil the Monument. The program featured remarks from the Commission's chair, Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, and vice-chair, Delegate Delores L. McQuinn; remarks from Governor Ralph S. Northam and Mayor Levar Stoney; and a keynote from historian and Commission member Dr. Laurantt L. Lee. Reverend Tyrone Nelson delivered the invocation, and Dr. Janet Copeland and Reverend Donte' McCutchen and the Levitical Priests performed musical selections. The Ėlegba Folklore Society performed a libation ceremony. Dignitaries and families of the Virginians featured on the base of the Monument were present to unveil the Monument. Following the ceremony, Westrock hosted a reception at the site for attendees.

The Department of General Services, the Senate Clerk's Office, the House Clerk's Office, the Virginia Capitol Foundation, the Division of Capitol Police, the Division of Legislative Services, and Venture Richmond all assisted in planning and carrying out the event.

The full ceremony was recorded and livestreamed by Virginia Public Media and is available on the Commission's website.



Emancipation and Freedom Monument on Brown's Island | Photo by Ansel Olson

Fundraising

The Commission completed its fundraising campaign for the Monument in 2021 through the Virginia Capitol Foundation, the Commission's fiscal agent. The Commission extends its deep gratitude to the donors who enabled the completion of the Monument, listed below:

\$200,000+

Commonwealth of Virginia
Open Society Foundations

\$25,000–\$50,000

Dominion Energy
Richard S. Reynolds Foundation
James and Barbara Ukrop
Westrock Foundation

\$10,000–\$15,000

The Frederick Fund
Senator Jennifer L. McClellan and David Mills
Verizon
Virginia State Legislative Black Caucus

\$1,000–\$5,000

Altria
Dr. Edward L. Ayers
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Betsy Barton*
The Honorable Viola Baskerville
Dr. Ronald A. and Dr. Betty Neal Crutcher
Democratic Party of Virginia
Senator Mamie E. Locke
Senator Louise L. Lucas
Senator Scott A. Surovell
Theresa Walker
Woodfin Oil

\$25–\$999

Trent Bauserman
Deborah Benson
Lynne Bland
Isabella Brafman
Kim Bridges
Kathleen Burcher
Delegate Betsy Carr
LaJuana Chambers
Senator R. Creigh Deeds
The Honorable Peter Farrell
Claudette Fentress-Holmes
Fifth Baptist Church
Margie Gausby
Zeb Gray
Jane Harrington
Rudene Haynes
Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc.
Laura Inscoe
Christopher Larson
Dr. Luranett Lee
Barbara Melby
Rosa and Tyler Millner, Sr.
Julie Morrill
NAACP, Dinwiddie Branch
NAACP, Franklin County
NAACP, Halifax County South Boston
NAACP, Hanover County Branch
NAACP, Powhatan County
NAACP, Waynesboro Chapter
Old Dominion Bar Association
James Payne
Paula Pickering
John Quinn
Catherine Reed
The Honorable Nancy Rodrigues
Bruce Sams
Mary Jo Sheeley
Susan Swecker
Reginald Thompson
Karen VanLandingham

**deceased*

History of Lynching in Virginia

The History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group (the Work Group) was formed in 2018 to shed light on the long and painful history of lynching in the Commonwealth of Virginia by compiling and documenting the names and stories of victims of lynching in Virginia, creating programmatic outreach that will bring awareness of this history to communities across the Commonwealth, and assisting communities in their efforts to memorialize victims of lynching.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Work Group was unable to plan in-person programming in 2022 and intends to resume programming in 2022, with events to be held in Richmond, Northern Virginia, Danville, Hampton Roads, and Culpeper.

Local groups continued to hosts virtual events and dedicate historic markers recognizing Virginia's history of lynching throughout the year. Two Virginia Department of Historic Resources historic markers were placed in 2021, recognizing the lynchings of Leonard Woods in Wise County and of Thomas Washington in Essex County.

African American Legislators in Virginia

Nearly 100 formerly enslaved African men served in the General Assembly of Virginia between 1869 and 1890 until subsequent state constitutions, the Black Codes, and Jim Crow laws stripped away the franchise for African Americans. The Commission's website is home to a comprehensive database of these legislators, detailing their lives and contributions to Virginia's history. Working in partnership with the Library of Virginia, the Commission continues to support and maintain this database.

Upcoming Projects

In 2022, the Commission plans to begin work on recognizing Senator Yvonne B. Miller with a statue, bust, or portrait in Capitol Square; convene a work group to participate in ongoing, permanent programming surrounding the King Holiday in January; and resume its King in Virginia programming, holding community conversations around the state in locations that Dr. King visited.

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