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## DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL COMMISSION

### 2023 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 met twice in 2023, and its projects and partnerships included:

#### **History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group**

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. The Work Group was inactive through much of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Commission plans to reconstitute the Work Group and renew its efforts.

#### **Tribute to Senator Yvonne B. Miller**

The Commission received a \$50,000 budget appropriation in fiscal year 2022 to begin the process of planning a memorial tribute to Senator Miller to be placed in Capitol Square. The Commission is establishing a work group to determine how the project will go forward, and the work group will coordinate its work with the tentative plans that are in development for honoring Senator Miller with a statue on the Virginia Women's Monument in Capitol Square.

#### **Library of Virginia Black Delegate Book Project: 'To Secure Justice for Ourselves': Black Virginians Claim Their Freedom**

The Commission partnered with the Library of Virginia (the Library) to provide funding in the amount of \$2,500 to support costs of the Library's book project 'To Secure Justice for Ourselves.' The Library will publish a book in 2024 with University of Virginia Press based on biographies of Virginia's 92 Black legislators who served in the nineteenth century. The book derives in large part from research that began in 2012 with the Commission's African American Legislators in Virginia project, which the Commission completed in partnership with The Library of Virginia.

## **The Reverend Dr. Curtis West Harris Monument Project**

In December 2023, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation, Inc., (the Foundation) unveiled a monument to the Reverend Dr. Curtis West Harris in Hopewell. The monument features a bronze bust of Rev. Harris atop an African black granite pedestal. The Commission purchased a miniature bust of Rev. Harris in the amount of \$5,000 from the Foundation to support the project.

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