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MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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Virginia Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument

Richmond--The Honorable Jennifer L. McClellan, chairwoman of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, announced today that the Commission will hold public hearings throughout the state to receive nominations of notable African American Virginians who have made significant contributions to the emancipation and freedom of formerly enslaved persons or descendants. The names, images, and brief biographical information about selected nominees will be engraved on the Virginia Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument. The Commission has been directed to construct the 12-foot monument, a permanent memorial celebrating the emancipation of slaves and freedom, pursuant to Item C-1.30 C. of the 2012 Appropriations Act, (Special Session 1, 2012). The Commission has selected a design by Thomas Jay Warren of Oregon to be located on Brown's Island in Richmond with an anticipated dedication in conjunction with the Jamestown 2019 Commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first recorded Africans to English North America.

Other members of the Commission are Senators Mamie E. Locke of Hampton, *Vice Chairwoman*, Rosalyn R. Dance of Petersburg, Frank M. Ruff, Jr. of Clarksville, William M. Stanley, Jr., of Moneta; Delegates C. Matt Fariss of Rustburg, Delores L. McQuinn of Richmond, Roslyn C. Tyler of Jarratt, Thomas C. Wright, Jr. of Victoria, and Joseph R. Yost of Blacksburg; and nonlegislative citizen members Reverend Ricardo L. Brown of Richmond, Dr. Ronald L. Carey of Richmond, The Honorable William C. Cleveland of Alexandria, LTC (Ret) Wesley H. Motley, Jr. SAI, of Richmond, Dr. Kirk T. Schroder, J.D., Ph.D., of Charlottesville; Dr. Robert C. Vaughan III of Charlottesville, Mr. Charles Withers of Roanoke, and Juanita Owens Wyatt of Petersburg.

The Commission is requesting nominations from the public of male and female African American Virginians from the period before Emancipation through 1865, which includes the great African kingdoms and slavery through Emancipation, and the period during the struggle for Freedom (1866-1970), including Reconstruction, Black Codes, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement. The monument will also include excerpts from the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. A work group consisting of legislative and nonlegislative citizen members, educators, historians, scholars, community leaders, representatives of state agencies, and other persons has been appointed to research suggestions received from the public and recommend to the Commission appropriate African American Virginians who meet certain criteria. Eligible persons must (i) have been native Virginians or have lived a great portion of their lives in Virginia; (ii) be known and recognized as Virginians; (iii) have contributed significantly to Emancipation and Freedom in Virginia and/or the state's political, social, economic, or cultural history; and (iv) have demonstrated notable achievement or set an important example within their chosen field of endeavor, their region of Virginia, or at the state or national level. Such achievements and contributions will be evaluated within the context of what was customary for African American males and females to have achieved or contributed during the particular time, place, and circumstances in which they lived or worked. Consideration will also be given to ensuring geographical representation of male and female African American Virginians and the full range of backgrounds, disciplines, and fields of endeavors in which such persons were involved.

The Commission invites you to present your nominations, together with documentation, at one of the following public hearings. **All public hearings will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

- Thursday, September 22, 2016, Hampton University, Educational Center, 100 East Queen Street, 2nd Floor, Hampton, VA
- Thursday, October 20, 2016, Dumas Center for Artistic and Cultural Arts, 108 Henry Street, Roanoke, VA
- Thursday, October 27, 2016, George Mason University, Merten Hall, Room 1201, Fairfax Campus, Fairfax, VA
- Thursday, November 17, 2016, Robert Russa Moton Museum, 900 Griffin Boulevard, Farmville, VA
- Thursday, December 1, 2016, Library of Virginia, Lecture Hall, 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA

All nominations must include the person's name and date and place of birth, the geographical area of Virginia with which the nominee is associated, a brief description and supporting documentation of achievements and/or contributions to emancipation or freedom in Virginia or the nation, and the name and contact information of the person or group submitting the nomination.

Persons desiring to speak should register onsite. Speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes. The Chairwoman reserves the right to further limit comments. However, typed comments and documentation submitted to the Committee may be as lengthy as you deem necessary. Others who cannot attend a public hearing may submit your nominations and documentation to Brenda Edwards at bedwards@dls.virginia.gov with "nomination" in the subject line. **Anonymous or incomplete nomination forms will not be accepted.**

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