



“King in Virginia, 2017-2018”

Prepared by for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission
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Among the enumerated powers and duties of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, pursuant to § 30-192.4 of the Code of Virginia, the Commission must:

- Identify, plan, develop, and implement appropriate programs and events that further the philosophy and memory of Dr. King;
- Facilitate the analysis of public policy relative to Dr. King's principles and philosophy, including his work pertaining to social and economic justice, ethics, and racial equality, and promote the appreciation of diverse cultures among the citizenry;
- Provide for the acquisition, collection, and preservation of (i) records, oral histories, and memorabilia documenting his relationship with and impact on the Commonwealth; (ii) research, collect, preserve, and educate the public concerning his life, work, teachings, writings, and philosophy in order that this information may be accessed for educational and cultural purposes; (iii) promote scholarly inquiry and writing at the undergraduate and graduate levels; (iv) conduct public policy analysis and offer public forums to discuss contemporary issues vis-a-vis Kingian principles; and
- Encourage and support collaborative activities among state, local, and national organizations that (i) emphasize the noncommercialization of the state and federal King Holiday, (ii) present his life and achievements in historical context, (iii) articulate the relationship between his philosophy, contributions, and current public policies, and (iv) demonstrate his principles consistently through significant participation of persons of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds in public and private endeavors and enterprises.

April 4, 2018, will mark the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although the nation is acquainted with his leadership of the Civil Rights Movement, particularly efforts focused in the deep South, few Virginians are aware of his influence on the fight for civil rights in the Commonwealth.

On November 5, 2014, Reverend Tylner Millner, one of the original Commission members, proposed that the Commission highlight significantly Dr. King's work and influence on civil rights in Virginia. At the Commission's January 7, 2016, meeting, it was agreed that a massive project would be initiated in 2017 to educate the public concerning Dr. King's influence in Virginia that will coincide with the 50th anniversary of his assassination in 2018. The project will entail researching, compiling, and exhibiting Dr. King's numerous visits to Virginia, documenting his travels throughout the state, collecting his speeches, sermons, media coverage of his trips, memorabilia, photographs, and interviews with Virginians with whom he worked and collaborated.

It is proposed that the Commission prepare for “King in Virginia, 2017-2018” with the following work plan.

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Proposed 2016 Activities: September - December 2016

- Encourage localities, schools, institutions of higher education, community organizations, and the business community to participate in the national MLK Day of Service on January 16, 2017, by choosing a service project.
- Collaborate with Reverend Millner to build upon his extensive research.
- Research and substantiate the purpose of Dr. King's visits to Virginia.
- Create a timeline of Dr. King's visits to Virginia.
- Seek the assistance of state and local media to collect and preserve photographs, articles, and memorabilia on his visits to Virginia.
- Identify localities, churches, institutions of higher education, and personalities associated with Dr. King in Virginia and with whom he worked/strategized.
- Appeal to the public to allow the Commission to digitize personal collections and memorabilia concerning Dr. King, including oral histories.
- Seek the assistance of the Virginia Historical Society, the Library of Virginia, the Valentine Richmond, Virginia's historically Black Colleges and Universities, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the faith community, and media and request access to their archives.
- Request the assistance of the King Center to access information and archives relevant to his work in Virginia and in the establishment of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.
- Appoint Commission, Subcommittee, work group members and others willing to work to assist staff in researching and gathering requisite information.
- Develop publicity campaign for events.

Proposed 2017 Activities

- Encourage localities, schools, institutions of higher education, and faith community partners to begin their individualized research concerning Dr. King's visits and activities in the Commonwealth.
- Encourage localities, schools, institutions of higher education, and faith community partners to host public forums in which Dr. King's principles of nonviolence and equality can be presented and discussed vis-à-vis the historical context and contemporary issues.
- Establish and sponsor an annual public forum, "*An Evening with Dr. King*," in which Kingian experts, historians, educators, public policy experts, attorneys to discuss Dr. King's life in context, his role in the Civil Rights Movement, the impact of his achievements on the legal landscape for African Americans and other minorities, and the relevancy of his principles and the "Beloved Community," to contemporary issues.
- Survey localities, public and private schools, and institutions of higher education, pursuant to § 30-192.4 of the Code of Virginia, regarding efforts designed to honor Dr. King's memory.
- Apply for an historical marker to be located at a prominent site visited by Dr. King.
- Host a series of sermons and speeches delivered by Dr. King during his life time, analyze his homiletical style, and determine the impact of his sermons and speeches on the sociopolitical discourse, the community, and civil rights.

Proposed 2018 Activities

- Encourage localities, schools, institutions of higher education, community organizations, and the business community to participate in the national MLK Day of Service on January 15, 2018, by choosing a service project.
- Organize multiple exhibitions statewide honoring Dr. King's memory.
- Introduce a resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of his assassination.
- Issue a press release encouraging localities, schools, institutions of higher education, and the business community to participate in the national MLK Day of Service.
- Publish a commemorative booklet, "King in Virginia, 2017-2018."
- Collaborate with the King Center regarding events and activities planned to commemorate his assassination.
- Sponsor/co-sponsor a "READ-IN" and "Speak Out," to allow the public to express opinions, reminisce concerning April 4, 1968, and make suggestions concerning what society can do to reach and maintain the "Beloved Community."
- Collaborate with Betsy Barton to establish a curriculum on Dr. King for use by teachers.
- Utilize the Commission's website and Facebook page to publicize events.

****Other Suggestions**