

## **Nominees for the Virginia Emancipation Memorial Emancipation to Present**

### *Categorized Thematically*

Most of the nominees could appear in more than one category. I attempted to assign them to the area of endeavor for which they are best known. For highly accomplished individuals, this was extremely difficult and admittedly subjective. For instance, there are many ministers on the list, but in my view quite a few of them fit more comfortably under “Civil Rights Era Leader” than “Religious Leader.”

### **Religious Leaders**

#### **1. Reverend John Jasper, 1812-1901**

Richmond

Nominated by Benjamin Ross, Historian, Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church

#### **Religious leader**

Rev. Jasper was born into slavery on July 4, 1812 in Fluvanna County, Virginia, to Philip and Tina Jasper one of twenty-four children. Philip was a Baptist preacher while Tina was a slave of a Mr. Peachy. Jasper was hired out to various people and when Mr. Peachy's mistress died, he was given to her son, John Blair Peachy, a lawyer who moved to Louisiana. Jasper's time in Louisiana was short, as his new master soon died, and he returned to Richmond, Virginia. Jasper experienced a personal conversion to Christianity in Capital Square in 1839. Jasper convinced a fellow slave to teach him to read and write, and began studying to become a Baptist minister. For more than two decades, Rev. Jasper traveled throughout Virginia, often preaching at funeral services for fellow slaves. He often preached at Third Baptist Church in Petersburg, Virginia. He also preached to Confederate Soldiers during the American Civil War (1861-1865). After his own emancipation following the American Civil War, Rev. Jasper founded the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church in Richmond, which by 1887 had attracted 2500 members and served as a religious and social center of Richmond's predominately black Jackson Ward—providing a Sunday School and other services. Jasper's vivid oratory and dramatic speaking style brought renown and calls for him to preach throughout the Eastern United States. He delivered his last sermon a few days before his death at age 88.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Jasper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Jasper)

#### **2. George Freeman Bragg, 1863–1940**

Petersburg

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

Episcopal minister and founder and editor of *Petersburg Lancet*

George F. Bragg was born into slavery and later became a journalist and Episcopal minister. Dismissed from divinity school, he began his public career working for Readjuster leader William Mahone and establishing the weekly Petersburg Lancet. Bragg left politics in 1884 after divisiveness within the Readjuster Party. He returned to the seminary in 1885 and a few years later took over a struggling Norfolk congregation. Within five years he turned it into a self-supporting church. In 1888 he was ordained a priest at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church in Norfolk, making him only the twelfth black

Episcopal priest in the United States. Bragg moved to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1891 where he revived another church, edited a monthly newspaper, the *Church Advocate*, and wrote books and pamphlets. He died in Baltimore in 1940.

DVB and EV entry: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Bragg\\_George\\_Freeman\\_1863-1940](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Bragg_George_Freeman_1863-1940) LVA

### **3. William Henry Sheppard, 1865–1927**

Waynesboro

Nominated at GMU Public Hearing

Presbyterian missionary in Africa and anti-colonialist

William Henry Sheppard one of the earliest African Americans to become a missionary for the Presbyterian Church. He spent 20 years in Africa, primarily in and around the Congo Free State, and is best known for his efforts to publicize the atrocities committed against the Kuba and other Congolese peoples by King Leopold II's Force Publique. Sheppard's efforts contributed to the contemporary debate on European colonialism and imperialism in the region, particularly within the African American community. Sheppard was born in Waynesboro, Virginia on March 8, 1865, to William Henry Sheppard, Sr. and Fannie Frances Sheppard (née Martin), a month before the end of the American Civil War. Sheppard worked as a waiter to put himself through the newly created Hampton Institute. A significant influence on his appreciation for native cultures was the "Curiosity Room," in which the school's founder maintained a collection of Native Hawaiian and Native American works of art. Later in life he would collect artifacts from the Congo, specifically those of the Kuba, and bring them back for this room. After graduation, Sheppard was recommended to Tuscaloosa Theological Institute (now Stillman College, which dedicated its library in Sheppard's honor in 1959) in Alabama. He met Lucy Gantt near the end of his time there and the two became engaged, although they would not marry for ten years. He was ordained in 1888 and served as pastor to a church in Atlanta. After two years of writing to the Presbyterian Foreign Missionary Board in Baltimore, Maryland to inquire about starting a mission in Africa, he became frustrated and took a train to Baltimore to ask the chairman in person. The man politely informed Sheppard that the board would not send a black man without a white supervisor. Samuel Lapsley, an eager but inexperienced white man from a wealthy family, finally enabled Sheppard's journey to Africa. Sheppard's published reports on colonial abuses and atrocities led to a libel charge instigated by the Kasai Rubber Company, a prominent Belgian rubber contractor. The judge acquitted Sheppard on somewhat technical grounds, but it is likely that the case was decided in favor of Sheppard as a result of international politics. He returned to the United States in 1910, after the Presbyterian Foreign Missions Board expelled him for several counts of adultery, charges that he admitted. Not wishing to tarnish the reputation of a bona fide hero—or the reputation of the church itself—the Missions Board kept the charges secret but placed Sheppard on probation, forcing the minister and his family to scrape together a living in Staunton, Virginia. In 1912 the church relented and hired Sheppard as a pastor at Louisville's Grace Hope Presbyterian Church. He was officially installed as the church pastor on September 15, 1912. He pastored Grace Hope for 27 years. According to the Encyclopedia of Louisville, Sheppard's presence as a well-known and respected black minister brought new life to the church and the Smoketown community. Not only Smoketown, but Sheppard led Grace Hope to become the center for black Presbyterian leadership in Kentucky. Sheppard spoke around the city raising money for the church's mission work in the black community.

Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Henry\\_Sheppard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Henry_Sheppard)

#### **4. Lucy Gantt Sheppard**

Not sure where she was born

Nominated at GMU Public Hearing

Educator and missionary

Lucy Gantt was a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse in Tuscaloosa when she met William Henry Sheppard. They became engaged, but did not marry until ten years later. Traveling back to America, Sheppard married Lucy Gantt in Jacksonville, Florida, in February 1894 and returned with her to the Congo three months later. They expanded the Luebo mission and starting a second settlement, with American-style street names, in a place called Ibaanc (or Ibanj). There she had three daughters, Miriam and Lucille, who died as infants, and Wilhelmina, who survived the malarial Congo for five months before being taken home to Virginia to be raised by an aunt. In 1901 Lucy Gantt Sheppard had a son, William Lapsley Maxamalinge, shortened to Max, who was named after her husband's first partner at Luebo and a Kuba prince. (Sheppard also had a relationship with a Kuba woman, who bore him a son, Shepete, in 1900).

Read more: <http://www.notablebiographies.com/supp/Supplement-Mi-So/Sheppard-William.html#ixzz4hAnPIJhM>

<http://dubois.fas.harvard.edu/sheppard-william-henry-8-or-28-mar-1865%E2%80%9325-nov-1927-missionary-explorer-and-human-rights-advocate>

### **Education and Social Reform**

#### **1. Lucy Goode Brooks, 1818-1900**

Richmond

##### **Social Reform and education**

Lucy Goode Brooks played the primary role in establishing the Friends' Asylum for Colored Orphans, an orphanage for African American children in Richmond, after the American Civil War (1861–1865). Born into slavery, she married Albert Royal Brooks, whose master allowed him to operate a livery stable and eating house. Although he eventually purchased his freedom and that of Lucy Brooks and several of their children, one daughter was sold by her owner to bondage in Tennessee. After Emancipation former slaves flocked to Richmond to look for missing family members. Having lost one of her own children to the slave trade, Lucy Brooks had a special concern for the plight of parentless children. She worked with the Ladies Sewing Circle for Charitable Work, a local Society of Friends meeting, and several black churches to create an orphanage. In March 1872 the General Assembly incorporated the Friends' Asylum for Colored Orphans, which remained in operation for almost sixty years. Brooks died in Richmond in 1900.

DVB / Encyclopedia VA entry: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Brooks\\_Lucy\\_Goode\\_1818-1900](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Brooks_Lucy_Goode_1818-1900)

#### **2. William Washington Browne, 1849–1897**

Richmond

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

**Founder of the Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers**

William Washington Browne was a slave, a Union soldier during the American Civil War (1861–1865), a teacher, a Methodist minister, and the founder of Richmond's Grand Fountain of the United Order of True Reformers, an African American fraternal organization. As leader of the True Reformers, Browne strived to help members live productive lives without depending upon the white community. By establishing insurance that provided members with sick and death benefits and by encouraging members to purchase land and engage in practices of temperance and thrift, Browne believed that blacks in the post–Civil War South could thrive. Browne's enterprising mind helped lead the True Reformers in creating and organizing a bank which became the nation's first chartered black financial institution and a model that others, such as Maggie Lena Walker, would follow. Browne died in 1897 and the True Reformers initially continued to prosper, but the order collapsed in the wake of the scandalous failure of its bank in 1910.

DVB and EV entry: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Browne\\_William\\_Washington\\_1849-1897](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Browne_William_Washington_1849-1897)

### **3. Jennie Serepta Dean, 1848–1913**

Prince William County

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

Founder of Manassas Industrial School

Jennie Serepta Dean founded the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth. A former slave, Dean attended schools in Fairfax County and Washington, D.C., and in 1878 began to establish a series of Sunday schools. She was a skilled fund-raiser, securing money from African American and white donors in Virginia and in northern cities to support her plan to open a school that would teach skilled trades to young African Americans. The Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth opened in 1894 after nearly six years of fundraising. Dean served on the school's board of directors and executive committee. She died in 1913.

DVB and EV entry: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Dean\\_Jennie\\_Serepta\\_1848-1913](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Dean_Jennie_Serepta_1848-1913)

### **4. Rosa L. Dixon Bowser, 1855-1931**

Amelia County and Richmond

Nominated by Robious Elementary School

Educator and civic leader

Rosa L. Dixon Bowser, educator and civic leader, played a key role in implementing reforms that affected Virginia's African Americans. Bowser was most likely born enslaved. After the American Civil War (1861–1865), she moved to Richmond with her family and enrolled in public school, where she showed remarkable intelligence. She went on to become a teacher in Richmond's public schools. Her efforts on behalf of educators helped create Virginia's first professional African American teacher's association, and she later served as its president. Throughout her teaching career Bowser, like her contemporaries Janie Porter Barrett and Maggie Lena Walker, worked for societal improvement. She played a major role in African American reform organizations, industrial schools for black children, groups supporting universal woman suffrage, and associations publicly opposed to lynching and racial segregation. The first branch of the Richmond public library to be opened for African Americans was named for Bowser in 1925. She died of complications from diabetes in 1931 at her home in Richmond.

[http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Bowser\\_Rosa\\_L\\_Dixon\\_1855-1931](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Bowser_Rosa_L_Dixon_1855-1931)

## **5. Lucy F. Simms, 1855-1934**

Harrisonburg

Educator

Lucy F. Simms was born a slave in 1855 on the Gray family estate "Hilltop" along Harrisonburg's eastern edge. Miss Simms began teaching when she was just 17 or 18 years old and was able to attend Hampton Institute from 1874 to 1877. Upon graduation, "Miss Lucy" returned to the Valley and taught for a year at Zenda, a black community north of Harrisonburg. She then moved to Harrisonburg city schools, first teaching in a church room and then the new Effinger School. She taught there until the end of the 1933-34 school year and died on July 10, 1934. Lucy Simms' career spanned 56 years, with only one half-day lost due to illness. According to one writer, she is remembered as "a person of strong moral convictions. She could not abide dishonesty. Although loving and kind to her children, she also administered punishment when she deemed it necessary." In her obituary, the Daily News-Record stated, "The record of the faithful colored teacher has few if any parallels in Virginia. All of the pupils who have entered the primary grade at the Effinger Street School since its establishment have passed under motherlike care. She taught three generations in many of the Harrisonburg colored families and it is estimated that 1800 boys and girls were instructed by her." Harrisonburg named its new school, built in 1938-39, in her honor.

[http://www.heritagecenter.com/Web\\_Pages/Museum/Collection/blackedu/lucysims.html](http://www.heritagecenter.com/Web_Pages/Museum/Collection/blackedu/lucysims.html)

## **6. James Solomon Russell, 1857–1935**

Brunswick County

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

Educator and founder of Saint Paul's College

James Solomon Russell founded Saint Paul Normal and Industrial School (later Saint Paul's College). Born enslaved, after the American Civil War (1861–1865) Russell sought an education and attended Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (later Hampton University) when family finances allowed it. He established himself as a teacher and became attracted to the Episcopal Church. Russell entered divinity school, serving in a series of religious positions while attending what became the Bishop Payne Divinity School, in Petersburg. The church ordained him a deacon in 1882 and a priest in 1887. He began his ministry in 1882 in the Brunswick County town of Lawrenceville. In 1888 he founded Saint Paul Normal and Industrial School, in response to the local community's intense desire for educational opportunities. Russell fended off the school's early struggles by aggressively fund-raising, and Saint Paul's expanded in both its size and curriculum. He retired as its principal 1929 and was succeeded by his son James Alvin Russell. He died in Lawrenceville in 1935.

DVB and EV entry: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Russell\\_James\\_Solomon\\_1857-1935](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Russell_James_Solomon_1857-1935)

## **7. John Andrew Bowler, 1862-1935**

Richmond

Nominated by Robious Elementary School

Educator and minister

John Andrew Bowler was born on March 1, 1862, in Richmond, Virginia. He attended Navy Hill School. Bowler built the East End School, the first school for African Americans in the Church Hill neighborhood of Richmond. He was baptized at the age of 9 at the first African Baptist Church. He was the first

minister of the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. He died on October 7, 1935, and was buried in Evergreen cemetery Richmond Virginia. The former Springfield School on Twenty Six Street in Richmond was renamed in his honor in 1948. Virginia Union University bestowed an honorary D.D. degree on Bowler.

Source: nomination form

#### **8. Ora Brown Stokes, 1882–1957**

Richmond

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

##### **Voting rights advocate and founder of National Protective League for Negro Girls**

Ora Brown Stokes was born in Chesterfield County and raised in Fredericksburg. During her life, Stokes worked to improve the lives of African American women and girls. For twenty years she was employed as a probation officer with the Richmond City juvenile court. She organized the National Protective League for Negro Girls and a local chapter of the Council of Colored Women. Stokes was president of the Southeastern Section of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs and the Virginia Negro League of Women Voters.

<http://www.markerhistory.com/ora-brown-stokes-1882-1957-marker-sa-81/>

#### **9. Dr. Robert Russa Moton, 1867-1940**

Hampton

Nominated by the Robert Russa Moton Museum

##### **Educator**

Robert Russa Moton was one of the most prominent black educators in the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century. After graduating from the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (later Hampton Institute and now Hampton University) in Hampton, Virginia, in 1890, he served as the school's commandant of cadets from 1891 until 1915. He was a close friend of Booker T. Washington, the founding principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, and the two shared a conservative vision of race relations. They argued, sometimes controversially, that African Americans should not openly defy segregation, but instead cooperate with whites and better themselves through education. After Washington's death in 1915, Moton became the second principal of Tuskegee, where he made significant contributions to the quality of education, especially in teacher training. He served on various national boards and, during World War I (1914–1918), went to Europe on behalf of U.S. president Woodrow Wilson to investigate the conditions of black soldiers. Moton Field at Tuskegee was named for him, as was Robert Russa Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia, the site of a student walkout in 1951.

Encyclopedia VA: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Moton\\_Robert\\_Russa\\_1867-1940#start\\_entry](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Moton_Robert_Russa_1867-1940#start_entry)

#### **10. Mary Elizabeth Branch, 1881–1944**

Prince Edward County

Nominated by the Robert Russa Moton Museum

##### **Educator and president of Tillotson College, Austin, Texas**

Mary Elizabeth Branch was born near Farmville, Virginia, on May 20, 1881, the daughter of Tazewell and Harriett Branch. Although few African Americans received a public education in the late nineteenth

century, the Branch children attended Farmville's elementary school. Their parents, born slaves but now members of a developing black middle class, also taught their children at home. After completing high school studies in the normal school at Virginia State College, Petersburg, Mary Branch became an English teacher in the elementary school at Blackstone, Virginia. Later she joined the faculty of her alma mater, where she remained for twenty years. She was a challenging and popular instructor and also served as the college's housing director. During summers she attended the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, and the University of Chicago. The last granted her a bachelor's degree in 1922 and a master's degree in English in 1925. She also began studies there towards a doctorate in education. Towards the end of her career she received honorary degrees from Virginia State College and Howard University. Branch began teaching social studies at Sumner Junior College in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1927. In 1928 she became dean of women at Vashon High School in St. Louis, which was then the largest school for black girls in the country. In 1930 the American Missionary Association appointed her president of Tillotson College in Austin, Texas. A troubled institution, Tillotson had been forced by declining enrollments and poor administration to reorganize as a junior college for women in 1929. As president, Branch sought to make Tillotson a successful and respected four-year college once more. Under her direction the college's facilities were improved. The library expanded. Old buildings underwent renovation, and new buildings, including a men's dormitory and a gymnasium, were constructed. In order to attract new students and strengthen the educational program, Branch abolished the high school program and increased the college budget. She also doubled the size of the faculty and raised education requirements for instructors. She recruited students throughout the Southwest and offered scholarships to the most needy. In an effort to give Tillotson a more contemporary atmosphere, Branch abolished mandatory chapel, permitted the organization of fraternities and sororities, and encouraged the formation of academic and athletic clubs. Throughout her tenure she also worked to improve the college's relationship with the community by participating in civic affairs and establishing contacts with faculty at the University of Texas and Samuel Huston College, as well as with public school teachers and administrators. She also worked towards a merger with Samuel Huston College, although the two institutions did not join until after her tenure. During the Branch administration enrollment steadily grew. In 1935 Tillotson reorganized as a coeducational, four-year institution. In 1936 the college was admitted to membership in the American Association of Colleges, and in 1943 it received an "A" rating from the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. While in Austin, Mary Branch became active in the civil-rights movement. She became president of the Austin chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1943. She also served on the State Interracial Commission of Texas. During the Great Depression she devoted much time to the National Youth Administration. In 1935 Lyndon B. Johnson appointed her to the NYA Negro Advisory Board for Texas. In 1944 Branch helped to establish the United Negro College Fund. She died in Baltimore, Maryland, on July 6, 1944, at the height of her career.

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbray> Robert Russa Moton Museum

### **11. John Malcus Ellison, 1889–1979**

Richmond

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

#### **Educator and first African American president of Virginia Union University**

John Malcus Ellison was born in Northumberland County and was the son of Robert James Ellison, a waterman, and Margaret Jane Stepter Ellison. His father died when he was young, and he lived with his maternal grandparents, who like his parents had been born into slavery, until his mother married another waterman, Moses J. Conway, about 1895. Ellison worked as a day laborer from a young age and

received no more than a sixth-grade education before he began taking classes in 1906 at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute (later Virginia State University), near Petersburg. That prepared him for entry into the Wayland Academy of Virginia Union University, in Richmond. There he received a bachelor's degree in sociology in June 1917. Ellison resided in Northumberland County and served as pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church from 1917 to 1926. During the 1917–1918 academic year he was principal of Northern Neck Industrial Academy, in the Richmond County town of Ivondale, and from 1918 to 1926 was the founding principal of Northumberland County High School, located in Reedville and supported by funds from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Ellison resumed his education while teaching. He earned a second bachelor's degree, in education, from Virginia Union University in 1925, an M.A. in theology from Oberlin College, in Oberlin, Ohio, in 1927, and a doctorate in Christian Education and Sociology from Drew University, in Madison, New Jersey, in 1933. He co-authored several works in the 1930s, including *The Negro Church in Rural Virginia* and *Negro Life in Rural Virginia, 1865–1934*. From 1927 to 1934 Ellison taught at Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. While on the faculty he took leave to study at Drew University and also served as minister of First Baptist Church, in South Orange, New Jersey, from 1931 to 1933. In 1934 Ellison joined the faculty of Howard University as an instructor in the Department of Religious Education. In 1936 Ellison returned to Richmond as professor of sociology and philosophy at Virginia Union University and in 1941 he was the surprise choice of the board to become the first African American and the first alumnus elected president of the university. Ellison's first conspicuous contribution to the university campus was to complete the fund-raising for the project started by his predecessor, William John Clark, to install the building and bell tower that had been the Belgian Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1939–1940. Christened the Belgian Friendship Building, it served as the gymnasium, library, and sciences building and also as a recruiting station during World War II. Ellison created a graduate theological program that became known as the Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology, named for one of his protégés who was his successor as the university's president. Ellison was active in many educational and racial reform organizations while president of the university, including the Virginia Commission on Interracial Cooperation, the Negro Organization Society of Virginia, the Southern Regional Council, the Southern Education Foundation, and numerous other educational and religious organizations. Ellison died in Richmond on 13 October 1979 and was buried at the city's Riverview Cemetery.

DVB entry: [http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Ellison\\_John\\_Malcus](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.asp?b=Ellison_John_Malcus)

## **12. Dorothy Irene Height, 1912-2010**

Richmond

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

### **Administrator, educator, and civil and women's rights advocate**

Dorothy Irene Height, was a civil rights and women's rights activist specifically focused on the issues of African-American women, including unemployment, illiteracy, and voter awareness. She was the president of the National Council of Negro Women for forty years and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2004. Height was born in Richmond, Virginia. During childhood, she moved with her family to Rankin, Pennsylvania, a steel town in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, where she graduated from Rankin High School in 1929. She earned an undergraduate degree in 1932 from New York University and a master's degree in educational psychology the following year. She pursued further postgraduate work at Columbia University and the New York School of Social Work. Height started working as a caseworker with the New York City Welfare Department, and at the age of 25, she began a career as a civil rights activist, joining the National Council of Negro Women. She fought for equal rights for both African Americans and women.

In 1944 she joined the national staff of the YWCA. She was also an active member of Delta Sigma Theta sorority throughout her life, developing leadership training programs and ecumenical education programs. In 1957, Height was named president of the National Council of Negro Women, a position she held until 1997. During the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, she organized "Wednesdays in Mississippi," which brought together black and white women from the North and South to create a dialogue of understanding. Height was also a founding member of the Council for United Civil Rights Leadership. American leaders regularly took her counsel. Height served on a number of committees, including as a consultant on African affairs to the Secretary of State, the President's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped, and the President's Committee on the Status of Women. In 1974, she was named to the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, which published the Belmont Report, a response to the infamous "Tuskegee Syphilis Study" and an international ethical touchstone for researchers to this day.

### **13. Dr. Virgie M. Binford, 1925-2017**

Central VA

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

#### **Education**

Binford, Ms. Virgie M., 92, of Richmond, formerly of Mississippi, Petersburg and New York, a retired teacher, supervisor and consultant with the Richmond school system; a former supervisor of the Follow Through program for children in kindergarten through third grade; owner of the consulting firm I-U-CAN Co.; a former faculty member of J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College; the first black woman to serve as moderator of Hanover Presbytery, now the Presbytery of the James; and a motivational speaker.

[http://www.richmond.com/zzstyling/death-notice/obituary-listings-for-march/article\\_75caa656-bef2-52d6-8597-9e20f364ad1f.html](http://www.richmond.com/zzstyling/death-notice/obituary-listings-for-march/article_75caa656-bef2-52d6-8597-9e20f364ad1f.html)

### **14. Ruby Clayton Walker, -2014**

Richmond

#### **Educator and Civil Rights**

Mrs. Walker's initial professional appointment was as a social worker with the Richmond Social Services Bureau (now Department of Social Services.). Her community work and concern for families brought her recruitment to the faculty of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work where she taught Group Work and served as Liaison to numerous agency field instructors. Mrs. Walker's life has been one of service. Her boundless energy kept her involved with civic and religious affairs. She had a persistent sense of justice and the courage to do what is right. Her concerns were for the underprivileged and much of her community work was at the educational and training levels. She could marshal groups for good works, such as her former high school classmates to provide scholarship funds for New Kent students in need of college funds, or a church women's group to support families of drug abusers. She was deeply drawn to public movements such as voter registration and freedom marches. Mrs. Walker was a devoted member of Providence Park Baptist Church where she taught an adult church school class, was a congregational instructor and a model of spiritual sensitivity and concern. Her civic affiliations were many, including the Women's Political Network, delegate to the Democratic convention, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Council on Human Relations and the Executive Board of the Richmond Opportunities Industrialization Center, serving a term as Board Chairman. Taking personal risks when Prince Edward County, in defiance of the 1954 Supreme Court

decision, closed the public schools, Mrs. Walker tutored black children who had been deprived of their education. She also helped picket Richmond department stores that did not serve or hire black people, and later walked door to door, urging people to register to vote. A highlight of Mrs. Walker's life was the Virginia Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers' Lifetime Achievement Award presented to her in 1997. She went on to win the National NASW Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998, the first Virginian ever selected in the 100 years of NASW's existence. Mrs. Walker went about her good work modestly in the struggle for human rights, but her spontaneity and creativity brought distinctive recognitions from her professional colleagues.

[http://www.richmond.com/obituaries/article\\_ce03e9b2-4bcd-56d3-b98d-81bec75b08a3.html](http://www.richmond.com/obituaries/article_ce03e9b2-4bcd-56d3-b98d-81bec75b08a3.html)

[http://www.richmond.com/obituaries/featured/article\\_9d7a95e2-b237-11e3-aa42-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.richmond.com/obituaries/featured/article_9d7a95e2-b237-11e3-aa42-001a4bcf6878.html)

## Political Leaders

### 1. Anthony W. Gardiner, 1820-1885

Southampton County

Nominated by the Southampton County Historical Society

#### **9th President of Liberia**

Anthony William Gardiner (1820–1885) served as the ninth President of Liberia from 1878 until 1883. He was the first of a series of True Whig presidents who held power uninterruptedly until 1980. Gardiner was born in Southampton County, Virginia in the United States. In 1831, when he was still a child, his family relocated to Liberia under the sponsorship of the American Colonization Society. Gardiner received his law degree in Liberia and, in 1847, he served as a delegate to the National Convention, which drafted Liberia's declaration of independence and constitution. He became Liberia's first attorney general and later served in the National Legislature from 1855 to 1871. In May 1871, he was elected vice-president and was elected once again, serving until 1876. During the incapacitation of President J. J. Roberts from 1875 until early 1876, Gardiner was also acting president. Less than two years after leaving office as acting president, Gardiner won election to the presidency, taking office in 1878. In the same election, the True Whig Party won a massive victory and proceeded to dominate Liberian politics until the coup d'état in 1980, which brought in a Krahn-dominated military dictatorship. Gardiner himself was re-elected to two further two-year terms.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony\\_W.\\_Gardiner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_W._Gardiner)

### 2. Willis Augustus Hodges, 1815-1890

Princess Anne County

Nominated by Edna Hawkins Hendrix, Virginia Beach

#### **Abolitionist, editor, and member of the Convention of 1867-1868**

Willis A. Hodges was born to a well-to-do free Virginia family in 1815. Mr. Hodges was a minister and farmer who was actively involved in the abolitionist and black suffrage movements in New York. He was a cofounder of the Ram's Horn in 1847, a short-lived African American newspaper. Elected to the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1867-1868 from Princess Anne County, Mr. Hodges became a spokesman for the interests of poor African Americans, urging that public hunting and fishing areas should be set aside since "many poor people depend on hunting and fishing." He died in the North in 1890 while on a fund-raising trip for a home for elderly African Americans in Norfolk.

[http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov/lincoln/african\\_americans.html#ConstitutionalConvention](http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov/lincoln/african_americans.html#ConstitutionalConvention)

### **3. Thomas Bayne, ca.1824–1888**

Norfolk

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

**Abolitionist, Underground Railroad figure, and member of the Convention of 1867–1868**

Thomas Bayne was a member of the Convention of 1867–1868 and a Republican leader during Reconstruction. Bayne was born enslaved and was known as Samuel Nixon. Literate and possessing a keen intellect, he became an assistant dentist while working at his owner's Norfolk dental practice. His relative freedom of movement allowed him to work on the Underground Railroad until he fled to Massachusetts in 1855. There he adopted Thomas Bayne as his new name and established his own dental practice in New Bedford. Returning to Norfolk by 1865, he began working for African American equal rights as a political activist and an itinerant preacher. In 1867 the city's voters elected him as one of their delegates to the convention called to rewrite the state constitution. There he became the most powerful black leader of the Republican Party's radical faction, arguing forcefully for integrated public schools and equal suffrage. Bayne sought a congressional seat in 1869, but a split among party candidates doomed him to defeat. He reduced his role in state politics but remained active in local elections into the 1880s.

Source: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Bayne\\_Thomas\\_ca\\_1824-1888](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Bayne_Thomas_ca_1824-1888)

### **4. John Mercer Langston, 1829-1897**

Petersburg

**Abolitionist, U.S. Senator, and first president of Virginia State University**

John Mercer Langston served as Virginia's first African American member of Congress (1890–1891) and as the first president of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (later Virginia State University). The son of a white Louisa County planter and the woman he freed, Langston grew up in Ohio, where, as an attorney and local office holder, he helped recruit African American troops during the American Civil War (1861–1865). After the war, his involvement with the Freedmen's Bureau as inspector of schools brought him back to Virginia. In 1870 Langston became dean of Howard University's law school and served as acting president of the university from 1873 until 1875. In 1885, the Virginia State Board of Education named Langston president of the new Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. The new school grew under his leadership, but the Democrat-packed board of visitors did not renew his contract two years later. In 1888 he sought the Republican nomination for Congress, but party leader William Mahone engineered his defeat. Langston ran an independent campaign in which a Democrat was named the winner. Langston disputed the election results, however, and eventually Congress seated him for the final months of his term. He lost reelection and returned to Washington, D.C., where he published an autobiography. He died in Washington in 1897.

[http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Langston\\_John\\_Mercer\\_1829-1897](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Langston_John_Mercer_1829-1897)

### **5. John Brown, ca.1830-1900**

Southampton County

Nominated by the Southampton Co. Historical Society

**Member of the Convention of 1867–1868 and Republican Party leader**

John Brown represented Southampton County at the Convention of 1867–1868, called to rewrite Virginia's constitution. Brown was born enslaved, and before Emancipation his wife and children were sold and taken to Mississippi. How and why he entered politics after the American Civil War (1861–1865) is unknown, but he inspired a remarkable voter turnout during elections for the convention. White moderates who had been Whigs before the war sought African American support for the convention balloting. In an astonishing display of group cohesion, almost 98 percent of registered black men appeared at the polls on October 22, 1867. Brown received all 1,242 black voters to defeat his two white opponents. The turnout and support for Brown was a remarkable event in the county where Nat Turner's Rebellion of 1831 took place. Brown's political career did not continue after the convention. He likely never learned to read or write and died sometime between 1900 and 1910.

[http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Brown\\_John\\_ca\\_1830-after\\_1900](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Brown_John_ca_1830-after_1900)

#### **6. James Wesley Douglas Bland (James William D. Bland per DVB), 1844–1870**

Prince Edward County

Nominated by the Robert Russa Moton Museum

Member of the Convention of 1867–1868, state senator, and Republican Party leader

J. W. D. Bland was a highly respected African American politician during his brief career. Born free and educated, voters in Appomattox and Prince Edward counties elected him one of their delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1867–1868. He served on three major committees and reached out to conservative whites by opposing test oaths and disfranchisement for former Confederates. He was elected to the Senate of Virginia in 1869, where he became a conciliatory figure in a racially volatile era. Focusing on education, he sponsored a successful bill that established Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (later Hampton University). The next year Bland was among a large crowd attending a session of the Supreme Court of Appeals in the State Capitol. The floor collapsed, killing him and about sixty other observers..

Source: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Bland\\_James\\_William\\_D\\_1844-1870](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Bland_James_William_D_1844-1870)

#### **7. Peter Jacob Carter, 1845–1886**

Northampton County

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

**USCT soldier, member of the House of Delegates, and Republican Party leader**

Peter Jacob Carter, a member of the House of Delegates (1871–1878), was the Eastern Shore's predominant African American politician in the decades following the American Civil War. Born in Northampton County, Carter escaped from slavery and then served for more than two years with the U.S. Colored Infantry. In 1871 he won election as a Republican to the House of Delegates representing Northampton County. He was reelected three more times, and his eight-year tenure was one of the longest among nineteenth-century African American members of the General Assembly. Carter was a Funder Republican—that is, he supported the aggressive repayment of Virginia's antebellum debts—a rare position for an African American politician. Conservatives gerrymandered Carter out of his district ahead of the 1879 elections, and he lost his bid for a seat in the Senate of Virginia. He retained much of his political power, dispensing federal patronage and chairing the state's delegation to the Republican National Convention in 1880. He left the party to join William Mahone's Readjusters, a Republican-allied coalition that sought to readjust Virginia's payment of its antebellum debt. Carter was rewarded for his

support by being elected doorkeeper of the Senate of Virginia in 1881 and appointed rector of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (later Virginia State University) in 1883. He died in 1886, probably of appendicitis.

[http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Carter\\_Peter\\_Jacob\\_1845-1886](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Carter_Peter_Jacob_1845-1886)

#### **8. Daniel M. Norton, d. 1918**

Yorktown

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

#### **Physician and Member of the Convention of 1867–1868 and the Senate of Virginia**

Daniel M. Norton, one of three brothers elected to the General Assembly, was a physician who served in the Senate of Virginia (1871–1873, 1877–1887). Born enslaved, he escaped to New York in the mid-1850s. He learned the medical profession and by 1865 moved to Yorktown, where he quickly became a leader among the area's freedpeople. The region's voters elected him to the state Constitutional Convention of 1867–1868 and he later served for twelve years in the Senate of Virginia. Norton often clashed with the Republican Party's leadership and launched unsuccessful candidacies for the U.S. House of Representatives late in the 1860s and early in the 1870s. Norton aligned with the Readjuster Party in its early stages and played a key role in bringing African American voters into the short-lived, but powerful faction. He later clashed with political leader William Mahone, who engineered his removal from the Senate of Virginia. Norton owned considerable property in Yorktown, including the historic customs house. By 1910, he and his family were using the surname McNorton, although it is unclear why. He died in Hampton in 1918.

DVB and EV entry:

[http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Norton\\_Daniel\\_M\\_later\\_Daniel\\_McNorton\\_d\\_1918](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Norton_Daniel_M_later_Daniel_McNorton_d_1918)

#### **9. The Honorable Roland J. "Duke" Ealey, 1914 –1992**

Richmond

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

#### **Politics: former member of the Virginia House of Delegates**

Roland J. "Duke" Ealey (June 20, 1914 – March 23, 1992) is a former member of the Virginia House of Delegates from Richmond. In 1983, following the death of Delegate James S. Christian, Jr., who had been elected to represent the newly created 70th district, Ealey won a special election for the position. He served until his own death in 1992. In 2004 the House of Delegates designated June 20 as "Delegate Roland J. Ealey Day" in Virginia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland\\_J.\\_Ealey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland_J._Ealey)

#### **10. The Honorable William M. Ferguson Reid, M.D. 1925-**

Richmond

Physician, Civil Rights leader, and first black member of the Virginia General Assembly since Reconstruction

"Fergie" Reid was born in Richmond on March 18, 1925. He graduated from Armstrong High School in 1941 and received his bachelor's degree from Virginia Union University in 1946. He earned his medical

degree from Howard University and served his internship and residency in St. Louis. Later, he became a lieutenant in the Navy. He served with the 1st Marine Division in Korea and at the Bethesda (Md.) Naval Hospital. Dr. Reid, a surgeon, co-founded the Richmond Crusade for Voters in 1956 to register and mobilize black voters during Massive Resistance. A dozen years later, Reid would reap the fruits of the seeds planted by the Crusade, becoming the first black member of the Virginia General Assembly since Reconstruction. Reid's support cut across racial lines as he garnered the most votes among the winners on the Democratic ticket. Reid represented Richmond and Henrico County in the House of Delegates from 1968 to 1973. The Crusade helped guide a black political maturation that culminated with the election of the first black majority on Richmond City Council, which picked Henry L. Marsh III as the city's first black mayor in 1977. That same year, surgeon Reid left the area to join the Foreign Service, which took him to such posts as Bogota, Colombia; La Paz, Bolivia; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; the Philippines; and Ivory Coast.

[http://www.richmond.com/special-section/black-history/article\\_b26338cb-1e2d-5e59-94f9-be5d66da1787.html](http://www.richmond.com/special-section/black-history/article_b26338cb-1e2d-5e59-94f9-be5d66da1787.html)

### **11. The Honorable Yvonne B. Miller, 1934–2012**

Norfolk

Educator and politician

Yvonne Bond Miller was the first African American woman to sit in the House of Delegates as well as the first African American woman elected to the Senate of Virginia and to chair a General Assembly committee. During her legislative career, Miller fought for the underrepresented of Virginia, championing programs and services for senior citizens, funding for education, and restoration of rights for felons who have completed their sentencing requirements. Miller grew up poor with twelve siblings in segregated North Carolina and overcame many obstacles. Always striving to learn, she received a Ph.D. and taught education at Norfolk State University. As a professor and the head of the department of early childhood and elementary education, Miller touched the lives of countless students and perpetuated her love of teaching and learning. She retired in 1999 and became a professor emeritus. Miller believed that women have special talents as problem-solvers and negotiators that make them good leaders. She encouraged all women to exercise their political rights by running for office or supporting female candidates. Miller demonstrated those skills in her relationships with her colleagues at the Capitol, who described her as having "a great kindness about her." That kindness and a belief in the rights of all Virginians to education and political voice have fueled Miller's lifelong dedication to others.

AAT: <http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/trailblazers/2012/index.htm?bio=miller>

## **Arts and Science**

### **1. George O. Brown, 1852–1910**

Richmond

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

#### **Photographer**

George O. Brown established a family-run photography studio that recorded African American life in Richmond for seventy years. Brown, probably born enslaved, was working in the photography business

by age nineteen old. He opened his own studio in 1899 and moved it to Jackson Ward, the center of Richmond's African American community, in 1905. Two years later his skills earned him a silver medal at the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition. Along with his children, Brown became the most important visual chronicler of Richmond's African American population, documenting community life at schools, colleges, sporting events, and fraternal meetings. The studio took thousands of portraits of ordinary citizens and famed figures such as Maggie Lena Walker and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. Brown died in 1910, but his photography business continued to operate until 1969.

DVB and EV entry: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Brown\\_George\\_O\\_1852-1910](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Brown_George_O_1852-1910)

## **2. Eugene Allen, 1919-2010**

Albemarle County

Head butler at the White House

Eugene Allen was the first African American longtime head butler at the White House who served several presidents from President Reagan until his retirement during the Obama administration.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-butler-well-served-by-this-election/2013/08/13/961d5d78-0456-11e3-9259-e2aaf5e5f84\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.06c28932d253](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-butler-well-served-by-this-election/2013/08/13/961d5d78-0456-11e3-9259-e2aaf5e5f84_story.html?utm_term=.06c28932d253)

## **3. Charles Spurgeon Johnson, 1893–1956**

Roanoke

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

**Sociologist and educator, first black president of Fisk University**

Growing up Bristol, Virginia, Charles Spurgeon Johnson experienced racial discrimination that led to his lifelong fight for equal rights. His well-educated parents sent him to an academy in Richmond, and in 1916 he earned a bachelor of arts from Virginia Union University. His studies in sociology at the University of Chicago were interrupted by World War I, in which he served as a noncommissioned officer with the 803rd Pioneer Infantry in France. After returning to the United States, he was deeply affected by his experience in the 1919 Chicago race riots. Subsequently he conducted most of the research on the riots for the Chicago Commission on Race Relations. As a result of his work, the National Urban League appointed Johnson director of its research department in 1921. In 1928 he left New York for Nashville, Tennessee, to chair Fisk University's social sciences department. Johnson saw racial segregation as a threat to American democracy and prosperity. He systematically documented the negative economic and social effects of segregation on African Americans and made Fisk a center for studies on race relations in the South. Elected president of Fisk in 1946, Johnson was the first African American to hold the post, and under his leadership the university flourished. Widely recognized for his expertise on race relations, Johnson served on regional, national, and international organizations and commissions, including government appointments in 1946 to an advisory committee on postwar educational reforms in Japan and as a U.S. delegate to UNESCO.

<https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/smw/2017/honoree.htm?bio=johnson> and  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_S.\\_Johnson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_S._Johnson)

## **4. Mary Winston-Jackson, 1921-2005**

Hampton

Nominated by Brenda Edwards  
Science; engineer at NASA

Mary Winston Jackson was an African American mathematician and aerospace engineer at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), which in 1958 was succeeded by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). She worked at Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, for most of her career. She started as a computer at the segregated West Area Computing division. She took advanced engineering classes and in 1958 became NASA's first black female engineer. After 34 years at NASA, Jackson had earned the most senior engineering title available. She realized she could not earn further promotions without becoming a supervisor. She accepted a demotion to become a manager of both the Federal Women's Program, in the NASA Office of Equal Opportunity Programs, and of the Affirmative Action Program. In this role, she worked to influence both the hiring and promotion of women in NASA's science, engineering, and mathematics careers. Jackson's story features in the non-fiction book *Hidden Figures: The Story of the African-American Women Who Helped Win the Space Race* (2016). She is one of the three protagonists in *Hidden Figures*, the film adaptation released the same year.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_Jackson\\_\(engineer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Jackson_(engineer))

#### **5. Dr. James Edward Maceo West, 1931-**

Nottoway County

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

#### **Scientist and inventor**

Collaborated on creating the micro chip, which is the basis of the microphone. His creation allowed NASA Langley to communicate with the first astronauts in space.

James Edward Maceo West was born February 10, 1931, in Farmville, Virginia, and is an American inventor and acoustician. He holds over 250 foreign and U.S. patents for the production and design of microphones and techniques for creating polymer foil electrets. West received a BS in Physics from Temple University in 1957. In 2001, West retired from Lucent Technologies after a distinguished 40-year career at Bell Laboratories where he received the organization's highest honor, being named a Bell Laboratories Fellow. West then joined the faculty of the Whiting School at Johns Hopkins University where he is currently a Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. In 2007, West received an honorary doctorate from NJIT. Along with Gerhard Sessler, West developed the foil electret microphone in 1962 while developing instruments for human hearing research. Nearly 90 percent of more than two billion microphones produced annually are based on the principles of the foil-electret and are used in everyday items such as telephones, camcorders, hearing aids, baby monitors, and audio recording devices among others. Dr. West is the recipient of the National Medal of Technology and Innovation, and in 2010, along with Gerhard M. Sessler, West was the recipient of The Franklin Institute's Benjamin Franklin Medal in Electrical Engineering. He is also an inductee to the National Inventors Hall of Fame and an elected member of the National Academy of Engineering. Throughout his career West has been a fervent advocate for greater diversity in the fields of science and technology. While at Bell Laboratories, West co-founded the Association of Black Laboratory Employees (ABLE), an organization formed to "address placement and promotional concerns of Black Bell Laboratories employees." He was also instrumental in the creation and development of both the Corporate Research Fellowship Program (CRFP) for graduate students pursuing terminal degrees in the

sciences, as well as the Summer Research Program, which together provided opportunities for over 500 non-white graduate students.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Edward\\_Maceo\\_West](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Edward_Maceo_West)

## Journalists

### 1. John Mitchell Jr., 1863–1929

Richmond

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

**Editor of the *Richmond Planet*, banker, and Civil Rights leader**

Born a slave in Richmond on July 11, 1863, Mitchell attended Richmond Colored Normal School and was appointed editor of the *Richmond Planet* in 1884 at the age of just twenty-one. For forty-five years, the *Planet* covered local, national, and worldwide news especially lynchings, segregation and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. Mitchell's reports, editorials and cartoons denounced racial prejudice and ridiculed its perpetrators. Mitchell was a community activist and politician, a leader of the Knights of Pythias, President of the National Afro-American Press Association, and Founder and President of a commercial bank. In the spring of 1892, at the age of 28, he was elected to Richmond's Board of Aldermen from Jackson Ward, and he was re-elected in 1894. Mitchell ran for Governor in 1921 as a part of a so-called "Lily Black" Republican ticket. The National Afro-American Press Association elected Mitchell to consecutive Presidential terms in the early 1890s. There he led fellow newspaper editors in an organized outcry against "Southern outrages," and lynchings, and in their endorsement of the work of Ida B. Wells. Mitchell frequently travelled to communities where lynchings were reported to be imminent at great danger to himself. In 1904 he led a boycott of the Richmond streetcar system when the company imposed segregated cars. As founder and President of the Mechanic's Savings Bank, Mitchell strove to make it the place Richmond's African-Americans saved their money and did their banking. Later, Mitchell was accused of misusing the bank's funds. In a fight that was to go to the State Supreme Court, Mitchell countered the charges and accused the State's establishment of retaliating against him for his run at the Governorship. Mitchell's legal battle was to drag on for over a year. Responding to his public pleas for solidarity, the community increased savings entrusted to Mechanics Savings Bank and contributed to a John Mitchell, Jr., Defense Fund. While his conviction was ultimately set aside and he was cleared of all charges, the Mechanics Savings Bank went into receivership in 1923. Mitchell would not recover from this blow. His savings and assets were all but stripped away. He remained editor of the *Richmond Planet* until 1929, when fittingly he collapsed in the office of his beloved paper, and died at his home December 3, 1929.

<http://www.lva.virginia.gov/exhibits/mitchell/michlife.htm>

Ann Field Alexander, *Race Man*.

### 2. John H. Davis, d. 1896

Roanoke

**Founder and editor of Roanoke Weekly Press and Republican Party activist**

John H. Davis was an African American entrepreneur and newspaper publisher who advanced with the economic boom created by Roanoke's establishment in the 1880s and then lost much of his wealth in

the financial panic of 1893. It is unknown whether Davis was born free or into slavery, but in 1869 he owned property in Lynchburg. In January 1879 he purchased land in the Roanoke County community of Big Lick, soon to become the railroad center Roanoke. His business holdings expanded over the next thirteen years, ultimately solely owning thirty lots, the four-story Davis Hall, and the Roanoke Weekly Press published in the Davis Building. Davis attended two state conventions as a supporter of the Readjuster Party, and had two failed bids for city council. At his peak, his real and personal property valued between \$50,000 and \$75,000. Davis's holdings shrank rapidly during the economic bust of the mid-1890s, and he died in 1896.

[http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Davis\\_John\\_H\\_d\\_1896](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Davis_John_H_d_1896) LVA

### **3. Jeffrey Thomas Wilson, 1843-1929**

Portsmouth

**Worker at the Portsmouth Naval Yard, bailiff in the Norfolk courts, and author of "Colored Notes" column for the *Portsmouth Star* newspaper**

Jeffrey Thomas Wilson was born in Portsmouth, Virginia, in 1843. There is uncertainty about the ownership of his mother at the time of his birth and conflicting accounts, but Wilson appears to have been owned by the Charles A. Grice family, who he lived with beginning in 1853. Prior to then, he was living with his mother and stepfather. According to his obituary, he learned to read and write in secret. Based on his diary, he was the body servant of Alexander P. Grice, likely the son of his owner, who served with Company A, Cohoon's Battalion, Virginia Infantry, at least during a part of 1862. In 1866, after being freed, Wilson enlisted and went to Europe with the U.S. Navy. When he returned home, he lived in the house he inherited from his mother. Wilson worked at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, as a laborer, and as a bailiff for the Federal Court at Norfolk. In his later years, from 1924 until his death in 1929, he wrote a column called "Colored Notes" for The Portsmouth Star. The column included social news, Wilson's political views, and issues of race relations--all themes that occur throughout his diaries. Wilson was active in the Emmanuel AME Church in Portsmouth, where he taught Sunday school. In June of 1929, Wilson was hit by a car. He died at his son's home, two months later, on August 25, 1929.

<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=vt/viblbv00982.xml>

## **Medicine and Law**

### **1. Lavinia Marian Fleming Poe, 1890–1974**

Newport News

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

**First African American woman licensed to practice law in Virginia**

L. Marian Fleming Poe worked for a time in the Newport News office of black attorney J. Thomas Newsome before she decided that she, too, would be a lawyer. She had been learning by watching and by doing, and, under the 1920 statute, she knew that she might enter the profession. Though married and the mother of two young children, she moved to Washington, D.C., graduated from the Howard University Law School and then returned to Newport News to run her own law office. In 1925 she became the first black woman to be licensed to practice law in Virginia (or, it seems, anywhere south of the District of Columbia). By 1927, she had qualified to appear in the Supreme Court of Appeals. Among

black residents of the Newport News area, she functioned as a one-woman community center for nearly a half century until her death in 1974. In ways that reflected both her race and her gender, Poe participated in the profession outside Newport News, even outside Virginia. A charter member of Virginia's predominantly black Old Dominion Bar Association, she served as its secretary for many years. Roland D. Ealey, another charter member of the association and later a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, observed long afterward that she was "the glue that held it together," especially in the early years. As a woman, she was a member of a national—and biracial—group, the National Association of Women Lawyers, whose conventions she attended as the state delegate from Virginia, once at mid-century and twice in the 1960s.

Peter Wallenstein, "'These New and Strange Beings': Women in the Legal Profession in Virginia, 1890-1990" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 101, No. 2 (Apr., 1993), pp. 193-226.

## **2. Jean Louise Harris, M.D., 1931-1980**

Richmond

Physician and administrator, first black graduate of the Medical College of Virginia

Harris grew up in the Church Hill neighborhood of Richmond, attending George Mason Elementary School. She later graduated from Armstrong High School, before attending Virginia Union University, where she was a standout student. Harris was the first black graduate of the Medical College of Virginia, graduating in the spring of 1955 and finishing in the top five of her class. The magnitude of Harris' accomplishment became apparent soon after her graduation when *Ebony* magazine featured her on the cover of their July 1955 issue. Among her many accomplishments, Harris was both the first black and the first woman to ever serve in a Virginia governor's cabinet, holding the post of secretary of health and human resources from 1978 to 1982. Harris served as a consultant on health issues to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Congress. She held advisory positions on health commissions for multiple presidents. In 1990, she ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor in Minnesota, becoming that state's first black candidate for statewide office. Harris also served stints on the faculty of MCV (where she was the school's first full-time black faculty member), Howard University in Washington, D.C., Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and the Drew Postgraduate School of Medicine in Los Angeles. In addition, she held posts as director of medical affairs for the University of Minnesota Hospital and Clinic, as vice president with Control Data Corp. and as president and CEO of the Ramsey Foundation.

[https://news.vcu.edu/article/Trailblazer\\_The\\_remarkable\\_life\\_of\\_the\\_School\\_of\\_Medicines\\_first](https://news.vcu.edu/article/Trailblazer_The_remarkable_life_of_the_School_of_Medicines_first)

## **Military**

### **1. Robert Chester Williams, 1920–2017**

Emporia

Soldier and recipient of honors for action during Normandy invasion

" In a ceremony that took place March, 2010 at the Embassy of France in Washington DC, Mr. Robert C. Williams, Sr. was bestowed the French government's highest honor of Chevalier (Sir/Knight) as a result of his World War II military accomplishments that included being a member of the only black troop that landed on Normandy beaches during the Normandy Invasion that resulted in France being liberated

from Nazi Germany reign - the award is equivalent to the US highest honor of The Congressional Medal of Honor.”

<http://www.pearsonandsonfuneralhome.com/home/obituary/4099205>

## **Civil Rights Era Leaders**

### **1. Esther Georgia Irving Cooper, 1881-1970**

Arlington Co.

Nominated by the Library of Virginia

#### **Civil Rights leader**

Esther Georgia Irving Cooper was a civil rights leader in Arlington County. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, and the daughter of former slaves, Cooper moved to northern Virginia to work for the federal Forest Service. She became an advocate for the improvement of African American education after judging Arlington's black schools to be unfit for her own children. She served as president of the Kemper School Parent-Teacher Association, lobbied to establish an accredited junior high school, and organized and led the Arlington County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Under her direction, the Arlington NAACP launched a court case challenging inequalities in the county's high school facilities. The group's efforts culminated in *Carter v. School Board of Arlington County* (1950), in which the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the county's separate high schools constituted unlawful racial discrimination. Cooper died at her Arlington County home in 1970.

[http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Cooper\\_Esther\\_Georgia\\_Irving\\_1881-1970](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Cooper_Esther_Georgia_Irving_1881-1970)

### **2. Reverend Vernon Johns, 1892-1965**

Darlington Heights, Prince Edward County

Brenda Edwards

#### **Minister and early Civil Rights advocate**

Vernon Johns was born in Darlington Heights, Virginia, in 1892. He graduated from Virginia Theological Seminary and College in 1915 (AB), and earned a BD from Oberlin College three years later. Prior to his pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Johns pastored churches in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. As Dexter's pastor from 1947 to 1952, Johns was an early proponent of civil rights activity in Montgomery, urging his congregation to challenge the traditional status quo. In response to discrimination on city buses, Johns once disembarked in protest and demanded a refund. He was well known for his controversial sermon topics, such as "It Is Safe to Kill Negroes in Montgomery," and he also shocked his middle-class congregation by selling farm produce outside the church. His early activism and challenges to the power structure paved the way for Dexter's congregation to receive King's socially active ministry and enabled King to take a leading role in the Montgomery bus boycott. King and Johns were both frequent guests at Ralph Abernathy's Montgomery home. Following his departure from Dexter, Johns continued to speak at churches and colleges throughout the United States. At King's request, he returned to Dexter as guest preacher for its 79th anniversary service. In addition to his speaking engagements, Johns also served as the director of the Maryland Baptist Center from 1955 to 1960 and was active in Farm and City Enterprises, Inc., an economic cooperative that enabled farmers to sell their goods directly to the consumer. Johns continued to preach until his death in 1965.

[http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc\\_johns\\_vernon\\_18921965/](http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_johns_vernon_18921965/)

### **3. Ella Baker, 1903-1986**

Norfolk

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

#### **Civil Rights Leader**

Ella Josephine Baker was an African-American civil rights and human rights activist born in Virginia, who grew up in North Carolina and graduated from college there, and worked for most of her life based in New York City. She was a largely behind-the-scenes organizer whose career spanned more than five decades. She worked alongside some of the most famous civil rights leaders of the 20th century, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Thurgood Marshall, A. Philip Randolph, and Martin Luther King, Jr. She also mentored many emerging activists, such as Diane Nash, Stokely Carmichael, Rosa Parks, and Bob Moses. Baker criticized professionalized, charismatic leadership; she promoted grassroots organizing, radical democracy, and the ability of the oppressed to understand their worlds and advocate for themselves. She has been ranked as "One of the most important African American leaders of the twentieth century and perhaps the most influential woman in the Civil Rights Movement," known for her critiques not only of racism within American culture, but also the sexism and classism within the Civil Rights Movement.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ella\\_Baker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ella_Baker)

### **4. James Farmer, 1920-1999**

Fredericksburg

#### **Civil Rights leader and Educator**

James Farmer was a civil rights leader who pioneered sit-in demonstrations during the 1940s and led the Freedom Riders of 1961. After graduating from Wiley College, in Texas, Farmer moved to Chicago to serve as race relations secretary for the pacifist group Fellowship of Reconciliation. Dedicated to fighting Jim Crow laws, in 1942 Farmer helped form what became the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). The organization selected Farmer as its national director in 1961, bringing him to prominence. The violent reaction by southern whites to the Freedom Riders was the first in a series of confrontations and arrests for his work on behalf of African American civil rights. Farmer left CORE in 1966 and later served briefly in the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Farmer moved to Spotsylvania County about 1980 and became a professor at Mary Washington College in 1985. That year his book, *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement*, was published. Farmer received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.

DVB / Encyclopedia VA entry: [http://www.encyclopediaofvirginia.org/Farmer\\_James\\_1920-1999](http://www.encyclopediaofvirginia.org/Farmer_James_1920-1999)

### **5. Reverend Dr. Raymond R. Wilkinson, 1923-1993**

Roanoke

#### **Civil Rights advocate and pastor of Hill Street Baptist Church in Roanoke**

Roanoke Civil Rights pioneer Raymond R. Wilkinson was pastor at Hill Street Baptist Church for 33 years. He led the Roanoke Chapter of the NAACP from 1959 to 1969. In 1960 Reverend Wilkinson established a committee of black and white ministers and leaders to desegregate public accommodations in Roanoke. He was a active in numerous protests against segregation and racial discrimination.

[http://hsbaptistchurch.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=464&Itemid=260](http://hsbaptistchurch.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=464&Itemid=260)

## **6. Evelyn Thomas Butts, 1924–1993**

Norfolk

Nominated by Library of Virginia

**Civil Rights leader and voting rights advocate**

Evelyn Thomas Butts was a civil rights activist and Democratic Party leader from Norfolk who helped overturn Virginia's poll tax. Her lawsuit challenging the tax was combined with a similar action by four Fairfax County residents and argued before the U.S. Supreme Court as *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections* (1966). Butts conducted voter registration campaigns and helped establish Concerned Citizens for Political Education. The political organization achieved two key victories late in the 1960s with the election of Joseph A. Jordan as the first black city council member of the twentieth century and the election of William P. Robinson as Norfolk's first African American member of the House of Delegates. By the end of the 1970s Butts was considered one of the region's most important African American political leaders.

DVB and EV entry: [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Butts\\_Evelyn\\_Thomas\\_1924-1993](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Butts_Evelyn_Thomas_1924-1993)

## **7. Reverend Dr. Curtis West Harris, 1924-2012**

Hopewell

Nominated by Joanne Harris Lucas, Virginia Beach, and Carter G. Woodson Middle School, Hopewell

**Minister, Civil Rights leader, and politician**

Curtis West Harris, Sr. was born in 1924 in Dendron, Virginia. Harris' civil rights work began in 1950 with his stint as President of the Hopewell chapter of the NAACP. In 1960, he was arrested and sentenced to 60 days in jail for his role in a sit-in at segregated Georges' Drugstore in Hopewell, Virginia. Later in that year, he protested the segregation of the Hopewell swimming pool, which eventually led to the pool's closure. In 1966, Harris led a peaceful demonstration to prevent the building of a landfill in Hopewell's African American community; and was confronted by the Ku Klux Klan on the steps of city hall. In 1960, Harris helped to organize the Hopewell Improvement Association, an affiliate of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and was elected Vice President. He was named to the Board of Directors of the National SCLC in 1961. Also in 1961, Harris was cited for contempt by the Boatwright Committee of the Virginia General Assembly for not revealing the names of individuals associated with SCLC and not responding to the questions asked by the committee. On March 29, 1962, Martin Luther King along with more than 100 Virginia ministers and laymen accompanied Harris to his contempt trial (Boatwright Committee) in Hopewell. Harris worked with King on multiple civil rights initiatives, including the March on Washington and the Selma to Montgomery marches and considers King as one of his mentors in the Civil Rights Movement. He served as president of the Virginia State Unit of SCLC from 1963–1998, and was elected the National SCLC Vice President in 2005. In 1987, he led a march against discrimination in Colonial Heights, Virginia. In 1996, he filed a discrimination complaint against a Fort Lee, Virginia military unit. In 2007, Harris marched against a proposed ethanol plant being built in Hopewell with support from the national SCLC. Harris was ordained a Baptist minister in 1959, and with First Baptist Bermuda Hundred in Chester, VA being his first pastorate. In 1961, he was called to pastor at both Union Baptist Church in Hopewell, VA and Gilfield Baptist Church in Ivor, VA. Harris retired from Gilfield in 1994, and on December 16, 2007, he retired as pastor of the Union Baptist after forty-six years. Harris' moved the city of Hopewell to replace its longstanding at-large system with a ward system to elect city council

members. Harris was elected to the Hopewell City Council (Ward 2) in 1986. In 1994 he was elected vice mayor and in 1998 he became the first African-American mayor of Hopewell. After 26 years of service to the city as well as to his constituents in Ward 2, Curtis Harris retired from his seat on the Hopewell City Council on March 1, 2012. On February 11, 2014, the Hopewell City Council voted to rename Terminal Street, Rev. C. W. Harris Street. For 57 years, Curtis and Ruth Harris lived at 209 Terminal Street, a street in Hopewell which now bears his name. The council also voted to rename Booker Street (which intersects Terminal), Ruth Harris Way in honor of Curtis' late wife, Ruth.

**8. Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker, 1929-  
Petersburg  
Civil Rights leader**

Wyatt Tee Walker graduated from Virginia Union University in Richmond in 1950 and from its Graduate School of Religion in 1953. From 1953 to 1960 he was pastor of Gillfield Baptist Church in Petersburg, where he became president of the local branch of the NAACP and was arrested for trying to borrow a book about Robert E. Lee from the Petersburg Public Library. Walker served as the first full-time executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from 1960 to 1964. He played a major role in the Civil Rights movement and worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Walker was arrested during a Freedom Riders protest in Birmingham in 1961 and helped organize the 1963 march on Washington. In 1966 Walker became pastor of Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, in Harlem, New York City. During the 1970s he advised the governor on urban affairs. In 1978 Walker organized the International Freedom Mobilization to protest apartheid in South Africa and later welcomed Nelson Mandela to his church in New York. Walker also studied African American church music and became a nationally recognized authority on the subject. He published more than a dozen books on religious and musical subjects and later took part in documenting the Civil Rights movement. After suffering a stroke in 2003 and retiring from his ministry, Walker returned to Virginia, where he lives in Chester and remains active in promoting Christian brotherhood.

**9. William S. Thornton, M.D., ?-1999  
Richmond  
Civil Rights leader and podiatrist**

Dr. William S. Thornton was a native of Richmond, Virginia and a graduate of Virginia Union University. He received his Doctor of Podiatric Medicine at Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine. He was a member of the staffs of Richmond Community Hospital, Richmond Metropolitan Hospital, and the Medical College of Virginia. Dr. Thornton was actively involved in helping many community organizations, serving on the Boards of the Richmond Renaissance and Committees of the Central Richmond Association. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Riverview Baptist Church and a member of the Governor's Advisory Board on Medicare and Medicaid. He is best known as a co-founder of the Richmond and Virginia Crusade for Voters and the first president of the Richmond Crusade. The Richmond Crusade for Voters grew out of an interracial group called "the Committee to Save Public Schools," formed to oppose a January statewide referendum which would allow local government to block integration of public schools. After the referendum passed, members of the Committee decided that a voter education organization devoted to black people was needed in Richmond. The founding meeting was held at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church on North First Street in Jackson Ward. In attendance were Dr. William S. Thornton, Dr. William Ferguson Reid and Mr. John M. Brooks. The Crusade proved effective at mobilizing voters, culminating with the election of the first black majority on Richmond City Council, which picked Henry L. Marsh III as the city's first black mayor in 1977.

<https://sites.google.com/site/richmondcrusadeforvotersinc/home/history>

#### **10. Herbert V. Coulton, Sr. ca. 1934-2015**

Petersburg

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

##### **Civil Rights**

Mr. Coulton was field director for Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference and helped shape the movement that brought civil rights to millions of black Americans, not only throughout the South but nationwide. After serving in the military, he returned to Petersburg and launched his first voter registration drives. He teamed up with the Rev. Wyatt T. Walker, pastor at Gillfield Baptist Church to successfully integrate the Petersburg Public Library in 1960, and Mr. Coulton trained black and whites joining the movement how to remain peaceful and passive when facing aggression from those opposing racial desegregation. During the height of his work with SCLC, Mr. Coulton worked across the south, facing threats from the Ku Klux Klan and enduring arrests and beatings by police. He helped organize the 1963 March on Washington. In 1993, Gov. L. Douglas Wilder appointed him to the Council on Human Rights for the State of Virginia. From 2002 to 2006, he served on the Virginia Parole Board, at the request of Gov. Mark R. Warner. He also served on several boards and commissions in Petersburg and held various key positions at First Baptist Church, where he taught Sunday school.

[http://www.richmond.com/obituaries/featured/article\\_07376115-942c-544f-8bc1-3c792e504446.html](http://www.richmond.com/obituaries/featured/article_07376115-942c-544f-8bc1-3c792e504446.html)Brenda Edwards

## **Principals in Major Desegregation Cases and Events**

### **1. Irene Amos Morgan Kirkaldy, 1917–2007**

Gloucester County

#### **Principal in a landmark Civil Rights case**

Irene Amos Morgan left her mother's house in Gloucester County on July 16, 1944, to ride the bus to Baltimore to see her doctor. When more white passengers got on in Middlesex County, the driver asked her to stand to allow the white people to sit. She refused, and the bus driver had her arrested. A court convicted Morgan of violating a 1930 Virginia law requiring separation of white and black passengers. The Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals upheld Morgan's conviction. With assistance from attorneys of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Morgan appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. On June 3, 1946, the Court ruled in the case of Irene Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia that the Virginia law placed an unconstitutional burden on interstate commerce. Thurgood Marshall, who later served on the Court, declared that Morgan's victory was "a decisive blow to the evil of segregation and all that it stands for." Irene Morgan's husband died in 1948, and she later married Stanley Kirkaldy and lived in New York, where she ran a child-care center. She graduated from Saint John's University in 1985 and received a master's degree from Queens College in 1990. In 2000 the county of Gloucester honored her during its 350th anniversary celebration, and in January 2001 the president of the United States awarded her the Presidential Citizens Medal in recognition of her courage and the importance of her actions.

AAT: <http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/trailblazers/2012/index.htm?bio=morgan>

## **2. Gregory Hayes Swanson, ca. 1924-1992**

Danville

Nominated by Evans D. Hopkins, Richmond

### **Civil Rights; first African American admitted to UVA**

Gregory Hayes Swanson filed an application in 1949 to seek a master's degree in law as part of a larger strategy to desegregate higher education. Despite earlier court rulings, the University of Virginia's board of visitors still refused to admit Swanson. A team of NAACP lawyers, led by Thurgood Marshall, successfully sued for his admission in the federal courthouse that now houses Jefferson-Madison Regional Library. After the hearing before the Federal Court of Appeals on Sept. 5, 1950, Swanson became the first African-American to attend the University, enrolling as a graduate student in the law school 10 days later. Swanson had a long and distinguished career as an attorney with the IRS.

[http://www.richmond.com/news/local/michael-paul-williams/article\\_7d7f9aff-d4b0-5ad7-bf92-9f9a5147b260.html](http://www.richmond.com/news/local/michael-paul-williams/article_7d7f9aff-d4b0-5ad7-bf92-9f9a5147b260.html)

## **3. Dr. Calvin Coolidge Green, ca. 1933-2011**

New Kent County

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

### **Plaintiff in Green v. New Kent County**

Dr. Calvin Coolidge Green was the plaintiff in the U.S. Supreme case Green v. New Kent County which challenged a "school choice" system that left the county's two high schools virtually segregated. In 1968 — 14 years after Brown — the court ruled unanimously in Mr. Green's favor. That meant school systems everywhere had to get on with the business of integration. Mr. Green served for 16 years as president of the New Kent County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Mr. Green served in the Army in the Korean War and continued in the Reserve. He had degrees from Virginia State University and North Carolina A&T and earned theological degrees at Virginia Union University and a doctorate in pastoral counseling from International Seminary University in Plymouth, Fla. He served as pastor at several Richmond-area churches. He also taught science and was commander of the ROTC program at Armstrong High School in Richmond.

[http://www.richmond.com/entertainment/calvin-c-green-plaintiff-in-va-desegregation-case-dies-at/article\\_6b9cd639-9c4f-5a1b-ae41-4064d181e53d.html](http://www.richmond.com/entertainment/calvin-c-green-plaintiff-in-va-desegregation-case-dies-at/article_6b9cd639-9c4f-5a1b-ae41-4064d181e53d.html)

## **4. Mildred Loving, 1939–2008**

Caroline County

### **Civil Rights**

Growing up in Caroline County, Mildred Jeter Loving (July 22, 1939–May 2, 2008) fell in love with Richard P. Loving. In 1958 they married in Washington, D.C., because he was white and she had African American and Native American ancestry. A few weeks afterward, the couple was arrested at their home for violating Virginia's law against interracial marriage. They were each sentenced to one year in jail, with the sentence suspended so long as they lived outside the state and did not return together. The Lovings moved to Washington and had three children, but Mildred Loving did not like living away from

her home. In 1963 she wrote to the U.S. attorney general for help. At his suggestion, she contacted the American Civil Liberties Union, which filed a motion in the county court to vacate the sentence and allow the Lovings to live in Virginia as husband and wife. The local judge refused and the ACLU filed subsequent unsuccessful suits in state and federal courts. The United States Supreme Court heard their case, and its unanimous ruling on June 12, 1967, overturned Virginia's law, stating that the freedom to marry a person of another race was an individual civil right that a state could not deny. Loving and her family returned to Caroline County, where they lived quietly in the home they built together. She often demurred that "all we ever wanted was to get married, because we loved each other," but Loving's courage ensured that interracial couples no longer faced legal discrimination against marriage.

VWIH: <http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/vawomen/2014/honoree.htm?bio=Loving>

#### **5. Betty Ann Kilby Fisher Baldwin, ca. 1940-?**

Warren County

Nominated by Brenda Edwards

#### **Plaintiff in Betty Ann Kilby vs. Warren County Board of Education**

On July 19, 1958, Betty Kilby Fisher with her two older brothers James and John, were three of twenty-two children named in the lawsuit Betty Ann Kilby et als, Plaintiffs v. The County School Board of Warren County after the school board refused to let the children attend. In response, the Warren County schools were closed under Virginia's Massive Resistance policy. In January 1959, the Virginia Supreme Court struck down the state's Massive Resistance laws and ordered Warren County High School opened and integrated. White students boycotted public education the rest of the school year, while Kilby and 20 other black students attended school by themselves. The school was finally desegregated the following September when the white students returned. Kilby graduated from Warren County High School in 1963. Betty Ann Kilby Fisher Baldwin worked her way through college, earning a Master's of Business Administration degree from Nova Southeastern University and later received an honorary doctorate degree from her undergraduate university, Shenandoah University. After college, Baldwin rose from earning minimum wage as a factory worker to upper management positions.

#### **6. Reverend James Kilby (father of above)**

Warren Co.

#### **School desegregation**

Reverend Kilby, inspired by the Brown v. Board decision, attempted to send his three children to nearby Warren County High School rather than the separate black high school which was more than an hour away. He sought the help of the NAACP and well-known African-American attorneys Oliver W. Hill and Spottswood W. Robinson III, who had been lead counsel in the Virginia desegregation case of Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, which was ultimately consolidated with Brown at the Supreme Court level. A Virginia judge ruled in Kilby's favor to desegregate Warren County High School in 1958, but the state closed the school for six months under its Massive Resistance laws--Virginia's attempt to delay school integration. During that time, the family received abusive phone calls and shots were fired at their house. In January 1959, the Virginia Supreme Court struck down the state's Massive Resistance laws and ordered Warren County High School opened and integrated. White students boycotted public education the rest of the school year, while Kilby's daughter and 20 other black students attended school by themselves. The school was finally desegregated the following September when the white students returned.

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep04/personal.aspx>

### **7. Andrew I. Heidelberg, 1943-2015**

Norfolk

#### **Desegregation and sports pioneer and one of the "Norfolk 17"**

Andrew Heidelberg was born November 6, 1943, in Norfolk, and was one of the "Norfolk 17"—the first African Americans to integrated Norfolk's public schools. In 1961 during his senior year at Norview High School, Heidelberg made the school football team and was the first African American to play varsity football at a formerly all-white public school in Virginia and in the South. That same year, his team won the Eastern District Championship. In 1967, Heidelberg became the first African American Branch Manager, Credit Officer, and Commercial Loan Officer in Providence, RI. In 1976, he co-founded Heidelberg, Clary & Associates, Inc. After firm closed, he worked at Barclays and Banco de Ponce of NY as Vice President and Corporate Manager. He later graduated from NSU with his B.S. degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and pursued M. A. degree in Humanities at ODU. He served as Assistant Treasurer and Chief Deputy Treasurer for the City of Hampton in 2003 until retirement. Heidelberg was selected by Governors Mark Warner and Tim Kaine to serve as a member of the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Awards Committee for consecutive terms (2005-2011). In 2006, he published *The Norfolk 17: A Personal Narrative on Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia in 1958-1962*. He also finished a screenplay based on his non-published book *The Colored Halfback*. In 2009, he returned to Norview High School to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of "Massive Resistance" in Virginia and was inducted into the Hampton Roads Sports Hall of Fame in 2015. Heidelberg died on July 6, 2015. He was a member of the Church of God and Saints of Christ in Suffolk.

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/pilotonline/obituary.aspx?pid=175249303>

### **8. Gloria Jean Mead Jinadu, 1947-1997**

Richmond

#### **Desegregation pioneer and social worker**

In 1960, Gloria Jean Mead and a classmate were the first black students to attend Chandler Middle School in North Richmond. She went on to graduate from John Marshall High School and earned a bachelor's degree from Shimer College in Mount Carroll, Ill., in 1969. She did graduate work at the University of Minnesota and earned a master's degree and a doctorate in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University. After working in Illinois and Minnesota as a social worker, Dr. Jinadu moved to Africa in 1973 and settled in her husband's hometown of Lagos. She took a job in the Lagos State Ministry of Sports and Social Development and later joined the University of Lagos as a lecturer and coordinator of the school's social work diploma program. In addition, she served on the board of trustees and the board of directors for the Center of Advanced Social Science in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She and her children founded The Wings of a Dove, an international publishing and distribution company of religious and children's books.

From the Richmond Times-Dispatch (VA) - November 4, 1997:

[https://forums.findagrave.com/cgi-](https://forums.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSIn=Mead&GSiman=1&GSst=48&GSob=n&GRid=154594132&)

[bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSIn=Mead&GSiman=1&GSst=48&GSob=n&GRid=154594132&](https://forums.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSIn=Mead&GSiman=1&GSst=48&GSob=n&GRid=154594132&)

### **9. Lynn Swann--related to Carol Irene Swann?**

Brenda Edwards noted that Swann family is in Richmond and can be consulted ca.1948

Civil Rights; integration of schools. Two children integrated Chandler Junior High School in 1960: one was Carol Irene Swann (later Swann-Daniels)

### **10. Mrs. Hollaway**

Brenda Edwards noted that Mrs. Hollaway's name is not listed among participants in Thalheimer's protests, but is positive that she led the protest (possibly as an activist or an employee?) No first name available yet.? "protested Thalheimer's policy prohibiting African American women from buying shoes and clothes" (check)