



MLK Commission Work Group #1: Virginians on the Monument

**Senate Room 1, Capitol
Richmond, Virginia**

**Wednesday, June 7, 2017
2:00 P.M.**

SUMMARY

The Virginians on the Monument Work Group (the Work Group) of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) met to choose finalists for inclusion on the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument (the Monument) and to schedule public hearings for receiving statewide public input on the finalists. Images and brief biographical information engraved on the base of the Monument will honor four African-American Virginians who contributed to emancipation before the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865 and four who contributed to the struggle for freedom after 1865.

The Work Group reviewed the nine pre-Emancipation nominees chosen at the previous meeting and confirmed these nominees as pre-Emancipation finalists: Mary Elizabeth Bowser, Henry “Box” Brown, Anthony Burns, William Harvey Carney, John Dabney, Gabriel, James Lafayette, Dred Scott, and Nat Turner.

To select the 60 post-Emancipation nominees whose contributions span 1865 to the present, members received a list of nominees with biographical information categorized by the Library of Virginia according to the nominees’ area of greatest achievement or contribution. Nominees were sorted accordingly: religious leaders, leaders in education and social reform, political leaders, arts and science, medicine and law, military, Civil Rights Era leaders, journalists, and principals in major desegregation cases. Nominees were further categorized by region. In choosing top nominees, members considered a diverse range of contributions, geographical regions, and time periods.

Members discussed the post-Emancipation nominees based on these considerations and each member stated their top five candidates for inclusion on the Monument. The discussion yielded a list of 21 post-Emancipation finalists: Dr. Virgie M. Binford, James Wesley Douglas Bland, John Andrew Bowler, Rosa L. Dixon Bowser, Lucy Goode Brooks, Evelyn Thomas Butts, Peter Jacob Carter, Jennie Serepta Dean, James Farmer, Rev. Dr. Curtis West Harris, Andrew I. Heidelberg, Dorothy Irene Height, Rev. John Jasper, Charles Spurgeon Johnson, John Mercer Langston, Mildred Loving, John Mitchell, Jr., Lucy F. Simms, Gregory Hayes Swanson, Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, and Dr. James Edward Maceo West.

Public hearings will be held in summer of 2017 to allow members of the public to discuss the 30 nominees chosen as finalists. To schedule public hearings, members narrowed available dates to several weeks

in July and August, during which hearings will be held on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Norfolk, Blacksburg, Arlington, Danville, and Charlottesville. Staff will determine host sites and hearing dates based on the members' available dates and will publicize the final schedule.

Members planned to attend the public hearings and to meet again in September to finalize the Work Group's recommendations to the Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.