



Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

Work Group 3: History of Lynching in Virginia

December 8, 2020, at 1:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov

The History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group (the Work Group) of the Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) met virtually with Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's website](#). Video of the meeting is archived on the [Virginia Senate Video Stream](#) page.

2021 Programming to Recognize Virginia's Lynching History

Lance Warren updated the Work Group on the development of plans for programming in Richmond, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 10, 2021. The Richmond event would include (i) a teacher workshop on addressing the history of lynching in the classroom, (ii) a walking tour of Richmond at selected sites that illustrate the history of lynching and of resistance to racial violence, (iii) a screening of Mr. Warren and Hannah Ayers' documentary, *An Outrage*, and (iv) a guide to conducting, recording, and archiving oral histories. Components of the event may be in-person or virtual, depending on the status of the pandemic in April.

Dr. Laurant Lee and Dr. Edward Ayers emphasized the importance of providing guidance for teachers and noted that the Commonwealth's new curriculum framework for History and Social Sciences includes the history of lynching. Dr. Lee suggested that a webinar might be helpful to introduce teachers to the new standards.

Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander updated the group on plans for an event in Hampton Roads in September, to include a panel discussion on what the community can do to recognize the history of lynching. Currently, the event is being planned as a virtual discussion, but it could have an in-person component if social distancing guidelines are loosened by September.

Zann Nelson is planning an event in Culpeper in November, to coincide with the anniversary of the lynching of Allie Thompson in Culpeper in 1918. Ms. Nelson plans to involve surrounding

¹ **Work Group Members Present:** Senator Jennifer L. McClellan (chair), Senator Adam P. Ebbin, Senator Mamie E. Locke, Rabbi Bruce Aft, Dr. Edward Ayers, Hannah Ayers, Dr. Gianluca De Fazio, Dr. Andrea Douglas, Brenda Edwards, Dr. Matthew Gibson, Dr. Gregg Kimball, Dr. Laurant Lee, Zann Nelson, Jalane Schmidt, Lance Warren

counties in the program in order to recognize the broader history of lynching in the surrounding areas and to discuss how people in these communities want to address this history.

Hannah Ayers is working with History United and the Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History on planning a virtual event, to include a film screening, focused on Danville's lynching history. The program would take place in the summer and would be geared toward middle and high school teachers.

Southwest Virginia Community Efforts

Preston Mitchell of the Wise County Community Remembrance Project spoke to the Work Group about efforts in Wise County to recognize the county's lynching history. Mr. Mitchell and other Wise County community members have engaged in grassroots efforts that have resulted in approval to place a memorial marker to commemorate the three documented lynchings of Wiley Guinn, Dave Hurst, and Leonard Wood that took place in Wise County. The Wise County Community Remembrance Project is working in conjunction with the Montgomery-based Equal Justice Initiative's Community Remembrance Project.

Other Business

Zann Nelson requested that members of the Work Group review the Work Group's existing web page and offer feedback, for discussion at the next meeting, as to how the Work Group could further develop its web page and resources.

At its previous meeting on October 19, the Work Group discussed the possibility of hosting an essay contest for students. Members agreed to tentatively plan to host this project in the 2021–2022 school year, after first focusing on assisting teachers in addressing the history of lynching in the classroom.

For more information, see the [*Commission's website*](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

Lily Jones, Reference Center Director, DLS
ljones@dls.virginia.gov
804-698-1888

Amigo Wade, Acting Director, DLS
awade@dls.virginia.gov
804-698-1862

