



Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

November 21, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

House Room C, General Assembly Building

mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov

The Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) met in Richmond with Delores L. McQuinn, chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's meetings webpage](#). Video of the meeting is archived on the [House of Delegates Video Streaming](#) webpage.

Update on Library of Virginia Black Delegate Book Project: 'To Secure Justice for Ourselves': Black Virginians Claim Their Freedom

Dr. Gregg Kimball, Director of Public Services and Outreach, The Library of Virginia

The Library of Virginia is publishing a book with University of Virginia Press based on biographies of Virginia's 92 Black legislators who served in the nineteenth century. The book derives in large part from research that began in 2012 with the Commission's African American Legislators in Virginia project, which the Commission completed in partnership with The Library of Virginia. The Commission agreed at its May 15, 2023, meeting to partner with The Library of Virginia on the book project and fund up to \$2,500 of the project's costs. Dr. Kimball updated Commission members on the status of the book, which is expected to be released in June. An event will be held in June when the book is released.

The Reverend Dr. Curtis West Harris Monument Project

Lily Jones, Legislative Projects Manager, Division of Legislative Services

At its May 15, 2023, meeting, the Commission voted to purchase a \$5,000 bust of the Reverend Dr. Curtis West Harris to support the plans of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation, Inc., (the Foundation) to place a monument to Reverend Harris in Hopewell. The monument, which features a bronze bust of Rev. Harris atop an African black granite pedestal, will be unveiled in Hopewell on December 2, 2023. Herbert Bragg, chairman of the Foundation, extended an invitation to members of the Commission to attend the unveiling.

¹ **Members Present:** Delegate Delores L. McQuinn (chair), Senator Mamie E. Locke (vice-chair), Delegate Betsy B. Carr, Delegate Mike A. Cherry, Delegate A.C. Cordoza, Jr., Senator Ghazala F. Hashmi, Delegate Thomas C. Wright, Reverend Ricardo Brown, Dr. Matthew S. Gibson, Kirk T. Schroder, J.D., Ph.D., Dr. Karen Turner Ward

Members Absent: Senator Adam P. Ebbin, Delegate C. Matthew Fariss, Senator William M. Stanley, Dr. Laurant L. Lee, Jr., Edward McCoy, Thomas Turner, Paula P. Williams

Living the Dream Presentation

Bernice Travers, Board Chairman, Living the Dream

Living the Dream, Inc., is a nonprofit organization created for the purpose of enhancing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolence throughout the year, recognizing and teaching human understanding, and promoting academic excellence. Ms. Travers spoke to the Commission about the organization's mission and invited the Commission to partner with Living the Dream in its future endeavors.

History of Lynching in Virginia

Lily Jones, Legislative Projects Director, Division of Legislative Service

The History of Lynching in Virginia work group was created in 2018 to develop programming to bring awareness and recognition of the history of lynching in Virginia. The work group put forth HJ 655 (McQuinn) and SJ 297 (McClellan) in the 2019 Session of the General Assembly to acknowledge with profound regret the existence and acceptance of lynching in the Commonwealth; the resolutions passed both houses unanimously. The work group was not active for much of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Commission determined that it will reconstitute the work group and resume its work immediately following the 2024 Session of the General Assembly.

Tribute to Senator Yvonne B. Miller

Senator Mamie E. Locke, Vice-Chair

Senator Locke spoke about the life and legacy of Senator Yvonne B. Miller, and the Commission discussed plans for a memorial tribute to Senator Miller to be placed in Capitol Square. The Commission received a \$50,000 budget appropriation in fiscal year 2022 to begin the process of planning the memorial. The Commission is establishing a work group to determine how the project will go forward. Members also discussed introducing a resolution in the 2024 Session to honor the 40th anniversary of Senator Miller's election to the General Assembly.

Virginia Union University Community Leaders Breakfast

Delegate McQuinn, Chair

The Commission voted to purchase a \$2,000 community sponsorship package for Virginia Union University's Community Leaders Breakfast on Friday, January 12, 2024. The Commission annually purchases a table at the event.

Other Business and Next Meeting

Rev. Ricardo Brown announced to the Commission that the Baptist Ministers' Conference of Richmond and Vicinity will host the annual Emancipation Day worship service on Monday, January 1, 2024, at Sharon Baptist Church in Richmond and invited members to attend.

Members will be polled for the date of the Commission's next meeting, to be held as soon after the end of the 2024 Session as possible.



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

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