



Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

June 5, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

House Room B, General Assembly Building

mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov

The Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission (the Commission) met in Richmond and began its meeting with the election of the Commission's chair and vice-chair. The Commission reelected Delegate Delores L. McQuinn as chair and Senator Mamie E. Locke as vice-chair, and Delegate McQuinn proceeded with presiding over the meeting.¹ The meeting continued 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: 'Justice for Ourselves'

Catherine Fitzgerald Wyatt, Education & Outreach Manager, Library of Virginia

Ms. Wyatt updated the Commission on the Library of Virginia's book project, *Justice for Ourselves*, which is being published by University of Virginia Press for release on June 20, 2024. The book, written by John Deal, Marianne Julienne, and Brent Tarter, is 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 partnered with the Library of Virginia on the book project and funded \$2,500 of the project's costs. The Library of Virginia is hosting a book launch event on June 20, which Ms. Wyatt invited Commission members to attend.

Prince Edward County Schools History Report and Virginia Civil Rights History Digital Platform Concept Proposal

Brian Grogan

Mr. Grogan presented to the Commission on the history of Prince Edward County and the efforts he and others have made to document and preserve this history, which include past projects supported by the Commission. Among these projects are the book *A Little Child Shall Lead Them*, an anthology documenting the struggle for school desegregation in Prince Edward

¹ **Members Present:** Delegate Delores L. McQuinn (chair), Senator Mamie E. Locke (vice-chair), Delegate Alex Q. Askew, Delegate Betsy B. Carr, Delegate Mike A. Cherry, Delegate Joshua G. Cole, Delegate A.C. Cordoza, Senator Adam P. Ebbin, Reverend Ricardo Brown, Dr. Matthew S. Gibson, Tim Parrish, Kirk T. Schroder, J.D., Ph.D., Thomas Turner, Tobi Wiseman

Members Absent: Senator Ghazala F. Hashmi, Senator William M. Stanley, Jr., Dr. Karen Turner Ward, Paula P. Williams

County. The anthology was published in 2019 by University of Virginia Press and edited by Mr. Grogan and Brian J. Daugherty. Mr. Grogan is also continuing work on a documentary project, *They Closed Our Schools*, telling the history of the Prince Edward County school closings during Massive Resistance.

Mr. Grogan reported on the extensive Virginia civil rights history archives maintained by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in the university's Special Collections and Archives and requested the Commission's assistance in organizing his own collection, which includes extensive video footage, interviews, and transcripts, for transfer to and archival at VCU. Mr. Grogan also presented a proposal for a project to create a Virginia civil rights history digital platform, which would be statewide digital database connecting existing databases in Virginia dealing with Virginia's civil rights history.

Kirk T. Schroder noted that the Commission formerly had a subcommittee tasked with considering and awarding grants to various projects relating to the Commission's purpose. Delegate McQuinn requested staff to work with Mr. Grogan to develop a proposal that a subcommittee of the Commission might consider.

2024 Work Groups and Projects

Senator Locke reported to the Commission that the work group to plan a tribute for Senator Yvonne B. Miller intends to meet in the 2024 interim. Senator Locke also noted that during the 2024 session, the General Assembly passed Senate Joint Resolution No. 13, commemorating the 40th anniversary of Senator Miller's service in the General Assembly.

Delegate McQuinn reported to the Commission on work taking place statewide and nationally to recognize victims of lynching. The Commission's History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group plans to meet in the 2024 interim to take part in and continue this work.

Report on the Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans

Delegate McQuinn

The Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans (the Commission to Study Slavery) was established in 2020 and will sunset on June 30, 2024. At its conclusion, the Commission to Study Slavery will submit a report of its findings to the General Assembly and will hold an event in September to present its findings to the community. Delegate McQuinn noted that the work of the Commission to Study Slavery is relevant to the Commission's purpose and could be continued by the Commission.

Other Business and Next Meeting

Delegate Joshua G. Cole shared information on multiple Juneteenth events that will be held in Fredericksburg. Delegate A.C. Cordoza also shared information on a Juneteenth event to be held at Fort Monroe.

The Commission has two additional meetings scheduled for the 2024 interim to be held on August 21 and November 20.



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

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