



**CONTACT**  
Robin Crawford  
2019 Commemoration  
[robin.crawford@finnpartners.com](mailto:robin.crawford@finnpartners.com)  
PH: (202) 466-7800

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **VIRGINIA'S 2019 COMMEMORATION, AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ RECOGNIZES THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF VIRGINIA'S WOMEN PIONEERS DURING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH**

**Jamestown, VA** (March 1, 2018) – This March, for Women's History Month, Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution™ is recognizing 400 years of the accomplishments and struggles of the Commonwealth of Virginia's pioneering women who indelibly influenced the course of Virginia and America's history.

American Evolution commemorates the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of several pivotal events that took place in 1619 Virginia, which have had an enduring impact on Virginia and America's history. Setting Virginia and the nation on a course towards the ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity, these important 1619 events include the recruitment of English women in significant numbers to the Virginia colony, the First Representative Legislative Assembly in the New World, the arrival of the first recorded Africans to English North America, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America and the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of the Virginia colony. American Evolution events, programs, and legacy projects share stories of Virginia and America's diverse leaders, achievers and pioneers to bridge the past, present and future, and foster lasting connections within our communities.

"In March we honor the Virginia women who have helped change the course of our nation's history. These inspirational Virginia women's diverse stories share themes of survival, achievement, pioneering spirit, and triumph over difficult circumstances," said American Evolution Executive Director, Kathy Spangler. "Four hundred years ago in the Jamestown colony the struggle for equality in America began as women worked to gain the right to vote, hold public office, and control their own property. The media has called 2018 the *Year of the Woman* and American Evolution sees tremendous opportunities to explore the connections between the issues faced by women in the past, present and future."

This March American Evolution is showcasing a number of untold stories of women pioneers from across the Commonwealth over the last 400 years. With these stories we are working to tell a more authentic and inclusive story of Virginia's, and our nation's, history. A sampling of these stories include:

- **Angela** - Angela was one of the first Africans to arrive in the Virginia English colonies. Archeologists at Historic Jamestowne are actively digging to learn more about her life and experience as an enslaved servant in Jamestown in the early 1600s.
- **Ann Burras Laydon** - a 14-year-old who was one of the first two women to arrive in the Jamestown colony and endured both the "Starving Time" and a native attack that

decimated the colony. She found work as a seamstress and later went on to marry and have children.

- **Cockacoeske** – Queen of the Pamunkey tribe who led in peace for many years and was one of the first native leaders to negotiate a treaty with the English government effectively establishing the first reservation of their ancestral lands.
- **Queen Njinga of Angola** – a powerful ruler who deftly negotiated with the Portuguese and was respected as a brilliant military tactician.
- **Maggie L. Walker** – in spite of humble beginnings in post-Civil War Richmond, Virginia, Maggie Lena Walker achieved national prominence as a businesswoman and community leader. She was the first African American woman in the United States to found a bank. Her successes and vision offered tangible improvements in the way of life for African Americans and women.
- **Adele Goodman Clark** – suffragist who became president of the League of Women Voters in 1921. Adele was instrumental in the establishment of the Virginia Art Commission. She is considered to be one of the founders of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

American Evolution is also planning a number of upcoming events that will honor Virginia women, including:

- [“TENACITY – the Women of Jamestown and Early Virginia”](#) – a special yearlong exhibition at Jamestown Settlement, explores captivating personal stories of the women in Jamestown and the early Virginia colony, connecting women’s issues of the 17th century and their relevance today.. (November 2018 – January 2020)
- [Virginia Women’s Monument Dedication](#) – in December 2018 Virginia broke ground /18 for the first-of its kind Women’s Monument, *Voices from the Garden*, located in Richmond’s Capitol Square. The monument honors 12 influential Virginia women whose inspirational stories span 400 years of American history. (October 2019)
- [Women’s Achieve Summit](#) – The two-day summit will be a multi-faceted, interactive event to honor women 400 years ago, today, and in the future. The focus of each day will be unique; on the first day, *Women’s Legacy in America* and the second day, *A Vision of the Future of Women in America*. On both days, participants will engage (attending and online) in conversations regarding the role of women in all aspects of society, business, and community, and the power of women’s involvement and sensibilities. (October 15-16, 2019)

### **About the 2019 Commemoration**

The 2019 Commemoration, AMERICAN EVOLUTION™, highlights events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured programs, events and legacy projects will position Virginia as a leader in education, tourism and economic development. AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. Dominion Resources is an AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ Founding Partner and Altria Group is a Virginia Colony Partner.

###