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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ COMMEMORATES THE HISTORIC ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST AFRICANS IN 1619 VIRGINIA

The African Arrival will commemorate the history of the twenty Angolan Africans that reached the Jamestown settlement nearly 400 years ago

Williamsburg, VA (August 23, 2017) – On today’s International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, the 2019 Commemoration, AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ will recognize the 1619 arrival of the first Africans in English North America at what is present-day Hampton, Virginia. As part of African Arrival month, AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ invites participants and partners to explore the aftermath of the moment when African, Native American, and European culture collided and forged what would eventually become the United States of America.

African culture has had a strong and enduring influence on the trajectory of our nation, and this legacy began at Point Comfort, Virginia in August 1619. The 20 Africans arrived in bondage from what historians believe is present-day Angola. They were traded for food in the colony. Despite the fact that slavery was not officially acknowledged in the laws of Virginia until 1661, the first Africans brought to the colony aboard the *White Lion* were treated much as slaves were in other European colonies.

“For years, the story of the first Africans has largely been lost or distorted. This month allows us to reclaim that story,” said Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, historian and American Evolution committee co-chair. “Several sites throughout the Commonwealth serve as important touchpoints for African American history and the fateful moment in 1619 when African culture became embedded in America’s founding and trajectory as a nation. As the events in Charlottesville earlier this month demonstrate, 1619 Virginia still impact our society nearly 400 years later. It is critical that we closely examine our history and the many untold stories that have contributed to developing our AMERICAN EVOLUTION™.”

The 2019 Commemoration invites everyone to explore the various places across Virginia that honor the African American experience and provide further context about America’s founding such as:

- Fort Monroe, the modern-day site of the arrival and a Civil War-era shelter for refugee slaves and,
- Historic Jamestowne, archeological site where Angela, one of the first Africans to arrive in Virginia, lived.

- Jamestown Settlement, the “African to Virginia” exhibit and Queen Njinga of Angola statue
- The historic collections and art pieces at the Hampton History Museum,
- The Hampton University Emancipation Oak, the site where African American slaves in the South heard the Emancipation Proclamation,
- Monticello and Montpelier, the homes of former U.S. Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

To learn more about the African Arrival, be sure to visit our website at <http://www.americanevolution2019.com/>.

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.

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