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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VIRGINIA GOVERNOR RALPH NORTHAM CALLS ON PUBLIC TO COMMEMORATE 400th ANNIVERSARY OF 1619 EVENTS WITH AMERICAN EVOLUTION

*Leading Virginia Corporations Join as Sponsors in Commemoration's Year-Long Statewide
Initiatives*

Richmond, Va. (October 17, 2018) – Today Virginia Governor Ralph Northam joined Virginia House of Delegates Speaker M. Kirkland Cox, and President and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation Rita McClenny, at the State Capitol in Richmond, Va. to formally launch Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. Governor Northam provided welcome remarks to the crowd, including Virginia students and commemoration partners, elected officials, and Virginians from across the Commonwealth. Governor Northam also signed a [proclamation](#) recognizing the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution.

“Virginia history is American history and I am proud that so many of our institutions are committed to expanding their missions by including all those who lived and toiled to build this great Commonwealth and our nation,” said Governor Northam at the event. “American Evolution will share authentic and inclusive stories of the untold, or under-told history that is Virginia. Stories of courageous women, African Americans and Virginia Indians, which we likely didn't learn about in our history books, but forever altered the course of history and continue to influence us today.”

Speaker Cox delivered remarks about the key 1619 events and the importance of the 2019 Commemoration to the Commonwealth and the nation, while Ms. McClenny discussed the tourism and economic development opportunities that American Evolution will cultivate across the state in the coming years. Kathy Spangler, American Evolution Executive Director, invited local, national and international audiences to participate in a year-long statewide series of [featured events](#) and [educational programming](#). She also encouraged the public to engage through social media, the recently-launched [Virginia History Trails mobile app](#), and American Evolution Stories, the Commemoration's [online storytelling platform](#).

“Today, joined by Governor Northam, the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, and our partners, I’m honored to announce our official schedule that will encompass 400 days of Virginia’s 400-year history and our American Evolution,” said Kathy Spangler. “Virginia has long been recognized as the birthplace of our nation, and as we explore the 400-year arc of history of our country, we hope to engage the public in commemorating the 1619 Virginia events that indelibly shaped our nation and continue to impact Americans today.”

A full schedule of programming can be found [on the American Evolution website](#). 2019 marks the 400th anniversary of pivotal 1619 Virginia events that forever changed the trajectory of Virginia and America’s history. These 1619 events set the state and the nation on a course towards the ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity and include the arrival of the first recorded Africans to English North America, the First Representative Legislative Assembly in the New World, the recruitment of English women in significant numbers to the Virginia colony, the launch of free enterprise in the Commonwealth, and the first official English Thanksgiving in North America.

The 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution has partnered with notable Virginia institutions and national partners to inspire local, national and international engagement in the themes of democracy, diversity and opportunity and to reinforce Virginia’s leadership in education, tourism, and economic development. These partners include:

- Association for The Study of African American Life and History
- Christopher Newport University
- Cinebar Productions
- City Of Hampton
- Colonial National Historic Park (NPS)
- Fort Monroe Authority
- Fort Monroe National Monument (NPS)
- UVA Galant Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- George Mason University
- Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance
- Hampton History Museum
- James Madison’s Montpelier–The Robert H. Smith Center for The Constitution
- James Madison University
- Jamestown Rediscovery
- Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
- Library of Virginia
- Lynchburg College
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National History Day
- Norfolk State University
- Omohundro Institute
- Pocahontas Reframed: Native American Storytellers Film Festival

- Preservation Virginia
- Presidential Precinct
- Richmond Symphony
- Thomas Nelson Community College
- Tom Tom Founders Festival
- University of Richmond
- University of Virginia
- UVA Center for Politics
- UVA Miller Center
- Virginia Arts Festival
- Virginia Association of Museums
- Virginia Capitol Foundation
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Virginia Council of Churches
- Virginia Department of Education
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources
- Virginia General Assembly
- Virginia History Trail Partners
- Virginia History Day
- Virginia Humanities
- Virginia’s Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission
- Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
- Virginia Museum of History and Culture
- Virginia Thanksgiving Festival
- Virginia Tourism Corporation
- Virginia Union University
- Virginia Wesleyan University
- Virginia Women’s Commission
- William & Mary

In addition, corporate partners have provided more than \$3.2 million in private support to the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. Corporate sponsors include:

- [Dominion Energy](#), Founding Partner
- [Altria Group](#), Virginia Colony Partner
- [TowneBank](#), Virginia Colony Partner
- [Sentara Healthcare and Optima Health](#), Presenting Partner
- [Virginia Tech Carilion](#), Presenting Partner
- [Huntington Ingalls Industries Newport News Shipbuilding](#), Virginia to America Partner
- [Inova Health Systems](#), Virginia to American Partner
- [McGuireWoods](#), Virginia to America Partner
- [Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation/Amtrak](#), Statewide Engagement Partner
- [Virginia Lottery](#), Statewide Engagement Partner

The 2019 Commemoration intro video can be found [here](#). For more information about the American Evolution’s 2019 upcoming events, programs and educational initiatives visit 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 and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.

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