



CONTACT

Robin Crawford
2019 Commemoration
robin.crawford@finnpartners.com
P: (202) 974-5025
C: (703) 966-7616

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VIRGINIA'S 2019 COMMEMORATION TAKES BACK THE SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING AT VIRGINIA TECH VS. BOSTON COLLEGE FOOTBALL GAME

*Virginia Governor Ralph Northam Reminds Crowd
that the First Official Thanksgiving in English North America Occurred in Virginia in 1619*

Blacksburg, Va. (November 4, 2018) – Yesterday Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution teamed up with Virginia Tech and its Athletics Department to launch the [Take Back the Spirit of Thanksgiving](#) campaign at Virginia Tech's homecoming football game vs. Boston College. The game extended beyond the playing field, as both states claim to have hosted America's first Thanksgiving nearly 400 years ago.

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam addressed the crowd in a pre-game [video](#) and shared Virginia's untold story about the first official Thanksgiving in English North America. Scholars and U.S. Presidents have recognized Virginia's role in hosting the first Thanksgiving in English North America, and despite what you may have learned in history class, the first official Thanksgiving occurred in Charles City, Virginia in 1619. In December 1619, a group of English settlers led by Captain John Woodlief arrived safely in Virginia and held a ceremony of Thanksgiving which was to be observed "annually and perpetually" thereafter. The Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts didn't host their first Thanksgiving until 1620.

"We were pleased to partner with Virginia Tech President Timothy Sands and the Virginia Tech Athletics Department to shed light on the true history of Thanksgiving in Virginia," said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. "The game between the Virginia and Massachusetts schools brought together teams and fans from the two states that claim to have hosted America's first Thanksgiving and the event offered a terrific venue for opening a dialogue about the real meaning of Thanksgiving."

Governor Northam's video address also encouraged Virginians and all Americans to remember the true meaning of Thanksgiving as a time for giving thanks, coming together despite differences, and taking care of our families and neighbors. The *Take Back the Spirit of Thanksgiving* campaign message and #STATEOFGIVING hashtag were shared on the Lane Stadium

jumbotron and everyone was reminded to give generously to their local food banks to ensure that no one goes hungry this holiday season.

The *Take Back the Spirit of Thanksgiving* initiative is a part of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution, which commemorates the 400th anniversary of several key historical events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 and continue to influence America today. In addition to the first official Thanksgiving in English North America, these events 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, and the launch of free enterprise in the Commonwealth.

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.

###