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**AMERICAN EVOLUTION PARTNERS WITH VIRGINIA ARTS FESTIVAL TO PRESENT
VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL TATTOO'S "COURAGE & COMMITMENT:
A SALUTE TO WOMEN IN THE MILITARY"**

*Annual event convenes performers from around the world
and showcases groundbreaking military women*

Norfolk, VA (April 22, 2019) – On April 25-28, 2019, Virginia's 2019 Commemoration American Evolution™ and Virginia Arts Festival will present the annual [Virginia International Tattoo](#) at the Norfolk Scope Arena in Norfolk, Va. This year's event, themed, "*Courage and Commitment: A Salute to Women in the Military*," will feature music, historic photos and video, tributes from U.S. military bands, and special appearances by groundbreaking women to celebrate the extraordinary courage and commitment of the women who serve in uniform today and the women whose service blazed the trail before them. Smithfield Foods, Inc. is the American Evolution Presenting Partner for the Virginia International Tattoo.

Every year Virginia International Tattoo convenes performers from around the world for an awe-inspiring celebration of freedom and international friendship. Each year's theme is different; this year, the centerpiece of the celebration is a moving salute to women in the military. Honorary Chairs include Dr. Condoleezza Rice, Former Secretary of State and the first woman to hold the position as the National Security Advisor; Congresswoman Elaine Luria, 2nd District of Virginia, first female sailor to spend her entire career on combat ships; and Matice Wright, U.S. Navy Veteran, first African-American female naval flight officer, White House Fellow, and appointee to the United States Naval Academy Board of Visitors.

"This year the Virginia International Tattoo recognizes the courage and commitment of women who have strengthened Virginia and the United States. For more than 400 years, women have indelibly influenced today's America," said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director, 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. "We are honored to partner with Virginia Arts Festival to celebrate and share the stories of these brave, fearless women who have protected and served our nation."

"The Virginia International Tattoo is one of the most eagerly anticipated events of the Virginia Arts Festival each year," said Robert W. Cross, Executive Director of the Festival. "For 22 years, fans have flocked to Norfolk to see this unique, spectacular show. In addition to the four public performances, we welcome thousands of young people to student matinees. Our partnership with the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution and with Smithfield Foods, Inc. allows us to share vital concepts of democracy with these young people."

Every year, the Virginia International Tattoo welcomes over 1,000 performers from all over the world in a display of military bands, drill teams, massed pipes and drums, Celtic dancers, choirs and more. The term “tattoo” refers to a ceremonial performance of military music by massed bands. The event is the largest tattoo in the United States, drawing an audience of nearly 40,000 people each year, and was listed as American Bus Association’s Top North American Event for 2016. This year’s cast of performers from around the world will include Switzerland’s Central Army Band, the Army Band of France, the OzScot Australia Highland Dancers and pipe and drum corps from the United Kingdom and Canada.

[Virginia International Tattoo](#) is one of more than 20 events, programs and educational initiatives American Evolution is hosting with notable Virginia institution partners in 2019 to showcase key occurrences from 1619 Virginia. These events set our nation on a course towards the ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity, and include the first representative legislative assembly in the New World, the arrival of the first recorded Africans to English North America, the recruitment of English women in significant numbers, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America, and the development of the Virginia colony’s entrepreneurial and innovative spirit. A full schedule of American Evolution programming can be found [here](#).

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 Energy is an American Evolution Founding Partner and Altria Group and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.

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