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2019 Commemoration
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPEAKERS, ENTERTAINMENT ANNOUNCED FOR THE 2019 COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST AFRICAN LANDING IN HAMPTON, VA

The multi-day event centered around the 400th anniversary of the first African landing in English North America at Point Comfort will feature remarks from CNN's Van Jones, Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, African-American Political Firsts, and a concert featuring Common

Hampton, Va (August 1, 2019) – [Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution](#), in partnership with [Fort Monroe Authority](#), [Fort Monroe National Monument](#), and the [City of Hampton](#), will host the **2019 Commemoration of the First African Landing** on August 23-25, 2019 in Hampton, Va. The multi-day event is centered around the 400th anniversary of the landing of the first enslaved Africans in English-occupied North America at Point Comfort in 1619. The event will feature a commemorative ceremony, a preview of the new Fort Monroe Visitor and Education Center, black cultural tours, living history demonstrations, storytelling, youth and musical performances, and more.

On Friday, August 23 at 12:00 p.m. at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, Byron Pitts of ABC Nightline, and formerly of CBS Evening News and 60 Minutes, will host the **African-American Political Firsts Luncheon** featuring panelists Kentucky Lt. Governor Jenean Hampton; L. Douglas Wilder, former governor of Virginia; U.S. Representative Bobby Scott (VA-3), and former mayor and North Carolina State Senator Howard Lee.

On Saturday, August 24 at 9:30 a.m. in Continental Park, Fort Monroe, the **2019 Commemoration of the First African Landing Ceremony** will include remarks from CNN political contributor Van Jones and remarks and greetings from Virginia Governor Ralph Northam; U.S. Senator Mark Warner; U.S. Senator Tim Kaine; U.S. Representative Bobby Scott (VA-3), and Dr. Joseph Green, Jr., Chair of 400 Years of African American History Federal Commission. The ceremony will feature African drumming and the I.C. Norcom High School Choir from Portsmouth, Va. Following the ceremony from 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., there will be musical performances by Cheick Hamala Diabate, a GRAMMY-nominated World Music Artist; EMA Live, a billboard chart topping gospel group, RaJazz, and other musical acts. On the evening of August 24, the **2019 First African Landing Commemoration Concert** will take place at the Hampton Coliseum from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., featuring GRAMMY-award winning rapper and actor Common, with Sounds of Blackness.

The weekend commemoration will conclude on Sunday, August 25 with the **Day of Healing and Gospel Music Festival** from 1:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Continental Park. The event will include a bell ringing across the United States, gospel choir performances, and a keynote speech by Reverend Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, academic, author, media personality. The event will additionally feature a National Park Service Town Hall, libation ceremony, blessing of the land, a tribute to the ancestors with a release of 400 butterflies, and Ghanaian drumming. Dr. Michael Battle, General Theological Seminary and Director of the Desmond Tutu Center at General Theological Seminary in New York, will also make an address. The Gospel Music Festival will feature performances by 4 Him Gospel Quartet, Recording Artist Damien Sneed, and the First Baptist Church of Hampton Choir.

For more information, including a full list of programming about the 2019 Commemoration of the First African Landing Weekend in Hampton, Va., please visit: firstafricanlanding.com

For media interested in attending the commemorative weekend, please contact AfricanLanding2019@finnpartners.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 Energy is an American Evolution Founding Partner and Altria Group and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.

About Fort Monroe Authority

The Fort Monroe Authority, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, is primarily responsible for the care and conservation of hundreds of historic buildings and structures. The FMA is also responsible for the transition of this former Army post to civilian uses through historic preservation, residential and commercial leasing, and public programs. The Fort Monroe Visitor and Education Center, a legacy project of the 2019 Commemoration, is scheduled to open later this year. The exhibit galleries will tell the profound stories of Captain John Smith and the early colonists and their encounter with Native Americans, the arrival of the first enslaved Africans, and the culmination of 242 years of slavery as the first contrabands came to Fort Monroe seeking refuge and freedom. The Visitor and Education Center will be operated in partnership with the National Park Service and complements the existing Casemate Museum, which is located just a short walk from the Center.

About Fort Monroe National Monument

Identified by Captain John Smith as "Pointe Comfort" in 1607, later dubbed "The Gibraltar of the Chesapeake" and then "Freedom's Fortress," Fort Monroe was the third oldest US Army post in continuous active service until its closure as a military installation in September 2011. As the landing point for the first enslaved Africans in the English colonies in 1619 and the site of the first emancipation policy decision during the Civil War, Fort Monroe marks both the beginning and the end of slavery in the United States. The majority of the Fort Monroe peninsula was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Created by Presidential Proclamation

on November 1, 2011, Fort Monroe National Monument includes historic fortifications and the North Beach area. Visit www.nps.gov/fomr and www.facebook.com/FortMonroeNPS for more information.

About the City of Hampton

Hampton, Virginia is the oldest, continuous English-speaking city in our nation, and many pivotal moments in American history occurred here. The Hampton 2019 Commemorative Commission designated by Hampton City Council seeks to commemorate the 1619 landing of Africans at Point Comfort in English-occupied North America and to educate people about its role as a critical national turning point through programs, events, exhibits, and other opportunities for reflection.

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