



1619: Making of America Summit

Norfolk State University

September 25-28, 2019

Opening Session

Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, President of Norfolk State University

The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell, former Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander, Dean of Norfolk State University's College of Liberal Arts

The Honorable Jeanne F. Zeidler, Vice Chair for Outreach, 2019 Commemoration Executive Committee

VOG:

Welcome, everyone to the 1619 Making of America Summit.

The Honorable Mamie E. Locke:

Where we educate ourselves with the truth and commit to living out that truth, we can change our communities for the better.

The Honorable Karen R. Bass:

The sad thing about our nation, and why we continue to have the issues we do is because we have denied part of our history.

The Honorable Robert "Bobby" C. Scott:

Slavery first arrived on our shores right here, 400 years ago, the forced labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants built this great nation and that's part of our complicated history with which we continue to wrestle.

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam:

How do we tell the full and true story of our past 400 years with honor and dignity for people whose honor and dignity were taken away from them?

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox:

The strongest the chains of slavery were, they were no match for the perseverance, fortitude and faith of the enslaved community.

Van Jones:

African American people and our close allies have been the driving force for progress and democracy on these shores. Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman standing up to end slavery, were founders.

The Honorable Mark R. Warner:

If we're going to be a country that truly lives up to our founding principles, then we need to tell the whole truth about our history.

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine:

Let's honor our African roots by finally living up to the ideal that we're all created equal, and that we all deserve to live free.

Brycen Dildy:

As we commemorate 400 years of the first Africans landing here, I challenge you to let today be a celebration to become a more caring and kind individual to all.

VOG:

Please welcome the Dean of College of Liberal Arts at Norfolk State University Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander.

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:

Good morning and welcome to the 1619 Making of America Summit. To all of you here on the campus at Norfolk State University, in the beautiful Brown Hall, thank you all so much for being here. I'd like to welcome all of you, to those joining from the classrooms around the Commonwealth of Virginia, this region, as well as the country. As we live stream part of our 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. It's my pleasure to be here this morning. And we at NSU have been very proud to be a partner with American Evolution for this signature event.

We're highlighting the commemoration on the pillars of diversity, democracy, and opportunity that are at the foundation of this cross-cultural event, which asks the important question, who are we as Americans? Our vision for this commemoration and this particular signature event is that The 1619 Making of America Summit, will explore the 400-year journey of our founding cultures, beginning with the native peoples, the English, and the Africans and looking at all of their contributions and influences that have shaped the building of America.

Over the next two days leading with African American voices, we will collectively and collaboratively engage with our distinguished group of scholars, thought leaders, artists, filmmakers, dignitaries, and especially students, who will delve into America's current as well as historic chronicle with a lens towards accuracy and inclusivity. Each of us in this room and on this stage brings a unique perspective. And with that in mind, we wanted to let you know that on

your 1619 Making of America Summit app, you can access the polling questions and we very much want you to participate.

So, please go to the app and give your answer to 10 questions there. As we proceed throughout the summit, the moderators and the panelists will respond to this polling. Our history has certainly shaped our presence. And we look forward to your participation, especially your lively participation. And we hope that our students, as well as all of you that are here will help to shape our perspective on how to build a more inclusive future. We hope that you will immerse yourself in each of these conversations and see your place in his future. Thank you all for being here.

VOG:

Please welcome the newly installed President of Norfolk State University, Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston.

Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston:
Good morning.

Audience:
Morning.

Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston:

And welcome to Norfolk State University. We're so happy that all of you are here. Those of you who were here yesterday, I know had an amazing treat last night, if you were available to watch the documentaries that our students made, and to do see the work that the Nate Parker Foundation has been doing, you had to be mesmerized, that will continue today. There's an importance in the role of NSU with American Evolution's commemoration, because we are the conveners in these matters today, and we are looking at the power of student engagement.

Here at Norfolk State University, nothing is more important to us than our students' success. And that means that all students are engaged and have the sense that who they are in the world and who they want to become in the world is the work of the entire university here. And that we allow our students to grow and to develop and to become all that they are meant to become. Let me take a moment to recognize some very special guests that have joined us for this special event. We have the former Governor of Virginia, Robert McDonnell, who's here with us today. And I want to thank the governor for being here, and his long-standing commitment to public service. And one of the things he whispered in my ear this morning, is education is the most important thing.

I could not agree more. Virginia's Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax will be with us today. We welcome him back to campus and thank him for his strong support of Norfolk State University. The former mayor of the City of Williamsburg and President and CEO of Williamsburg Community Health Foundation Jeanne Zeidler is joining us this morning. And mayor, we are so glad that you're here. If there are other elected officials, if you would just raise your hand while we applaud all of our elected officials.

I would like of course to recognize those who work so hard on this project, and no one harder in the work and the commitment than our Dean, Dean Cassandra Newby-Alexander, she's led the efforts to ensure that all of the things that should be done, as we think about this 1619 Making of America Summit have been done. And she's been together with a planning team. And so, I'd like to applaud that team and Dean Newby-Alexander. This is an opportunity to think about our history as Americans, and how the year 1619, 400 years ago, stands as a pivotal moment in the nation's formative years.

It began with many things that are complex, difficult, and painful. And we have an opportunity 400 years later to think about, prepare, and perform action that ensures that our nation becomes all that it was meant to be. What makes the American story, what makes Americans unique is our ability to put aside our many differences, to rally together as one and to be in defense of our shared values. Perhaps President John F. Kennedy said it best, "That every nation knows, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we will pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty. To be sure, we are an imperfect nation, that we have not always lived up to our high ideals. We are learning from our history. And each day gives us the opportunity for new signs of progress. We want a brighter future. And that brighter future begins with each one of us."

We thank you so much for being here today. And I know that you will have an amazing, wonderful experience here at Norfolk State University. Thank you so very much.

VOG:

Please welcome a member of the 2019 Commemoration Executive Committee and former Mayor of Williamsburg, the Honorable Jeanne Zeidler.

The Honorable Jeanne F. Zeidler:
Good morning.

Audience:
Good morning.

The Honorable Jeanne F. Zeidler:
It's indeed a pleasure for me to be here today, and I would really like to recognize Dr. Newby-Alexander and Dr. Adams-Gaston for embracing this meaningful event at Norfolk State University. You have been an extraordinary partner for this commemoration in so many ways. The 2019 Commemoration American Evolution has been in the planning for many years, and it has engaged so many diverse and accomplished individuals, organizations, and leaders from across the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are grateful to all of them. During the first nine months of this year, we have experienced some inspiring moments of reflection as we commemorate Virginia's roots by exploring the commemoration pillars of diversity, democracy, and opportunity through a number of signature events.

None of this would have been possible without the deep commitment and support of the Virginia General Assembly and we thank them. The signature events of this year have also seen major

support from our founding partner Dominion Energy, and our two Virginia colony partners Altria, and Town Bank. Thank you to all of them for making this possible. On behalf of the 2019 commemoration American evolution, I am honored to present our next speaker, the former governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Honorable Robert F. McDonnell. Please join me in welcoming Governor McDonnell.

The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell:

Thank you. Well, thank you very much for that. Welcome, and Jeanne, thank you for your introduction and nice to be here with all your students, faculty and friends of Norfolk State. It's a treat to be here, especially with such distinguished speakers following me. We have Nate Parker and Barbara Lee, and so many others that are committed to this cause of truth failing and reconciliation and what a treat it is.

It was an honor to serve you for those four years as the Governor of Virginia and now to have this chance to talk about this very important topic. I very much appreciate what the American Evolution Program has done now over these last couple of years and preparing for this historic year 2019, the 400th anniversary of the first one and the first Thanksgiving, the first general assembly in the new world, and of course, the first Africans coming to America at Fort Monroe in August of 1619.

And so, I don't think there's really been much of a better opportunity, certainly, since I've been in Virginia, which is 64 years now. I came here when I was one if you're doing the math, but to be able to reflect and tell the truth and assess where we are, and ask ourselves, what kind of nation are? We what kind of nation have we been? And then based on that, what kind of nation do we want to be? And I'm excited with the tremendous guests you have to reflect on those questions here today. We're certainly honored to be at Fort Monroe and some of you may have been there.

Just a couple of weeks ago, a month ago when we had speakers from around the country who came to reflect on that date in August of 1619, when the first enslaved Africans walked off the *White Lion* ship, and were greeted by Governor George Yardley, the second royal colonial Governor of Virginia, who made the horrific and abominable and evil decision to accept these people into indentured servitude and ultimately starting the abomination of the institution of slavery.

And really, on behalf of all those 70 governors that preceded me, I want to offer my sincere apology for what George Yeardeley did 400 years ago to start this abomination that was a stain on the soul of America. So, we can tell the truth about that. But we can tell the truth, and then we can reflect on what progress we have made and what we still need to do. And I'd say it's going to be a lifelong journey for most of us to get to the dream that Martin Luther King had.

America, truly, I believe is a great country. I think never before in the history of the world has there been a nation where people from all over the world, all nations, all ethnicities wanted to come to this country, most lawfully, most by choice, some not by choice. And that's a huge piece of the African American story. But come here to be part of something that has been unique in history.

And that's America, that's creating the American dream with all of our stains and all of our problems, I still suggest there's more opportunity and more freedom in America than any other country on Earth, even with the pathway ahead of things we still need to do. I would suggest that here's the truth, that the early economy of Virginia in America was built on the black of enslaved Africans. For that 265 years, that was the institution that fueled the agrarian economy of America and made us prosperous in those early days, and we should tell the truth about that. We can say that from the Emancipation Proclamation of Lincoln in 1863, to the 13th and 14th and 15th Amendments that were passed after the Civil War ended that repealed perhaps the most horrendous decision in American history, the Dred Scott decision that said that Dred Scott from South Hampton, Virginia was not a man and not entitled a US citizenship and abominable decision of the court.

We've made progress with that, but you know what? It took another century before the laws really reflected the truth of that aspirational language of the Emancipation Proclamation and the constitutional amendments. Until 1964, when we passed the Civil Rights Act with Lyndon Johnson and John Kennedy and Theodore Hesburgh and all those who helped to put that together.

But you know what? That still wasn't the end, because the legacy of Jim Crow, and massive resistance and other things, still created inequities in the law and it took *Loving v. Virginia*. It took *Davis v. County Board*, which was a companion case to *Brown v. Board of Education*, for the Supreme Court to finally create equal laws in this country.

So, we've come a ways, but we have so much more to do. And I reflected a little bit on my time since I've been in the legislature and attorney general and governor, and things that have happened in Virginia, and there is cause for hope and there's cause for reflection on progress that's been made. I mentioned we've replaced that ugly legacy of Dred Scott and *Plessy v. Ferguson* with cases like *Loving v. Virginia* and *Davis v. County Board* that actually changed the ugly perceptions that the Supreme Court perpetuated. We had the first African-American governor in all of America, Douglas Wilder, my friend, and this building and this campus is set reflecting his legacy.

We had one of the first African-American Chief Justices in all of America, the State Supreme Court, my friend Leroy Hassell who died way too early. We had Governor Gilmore making Martin Luther King a separate holiday in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Just 20 years ago, we had multiple state laws now that have put nondiscrimination policies in everything from housing to health care, and other things to make the dream of those 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments a reality in the law of Virginia.

During the time I've been in office, I've had a lot of people, I call it the coalition of the willing, people, black, white, Democrat, Republican, that saw the same vision of having a society where all people are created equal. That's what the Declaration says. All are created in the image and likeness of God. That's what the book of Genesis said, and those are the principles upon which

this country has been built. And we need to make that an ongoing ever present growing reality in our state.

So, here's some of the things that I know that I thought were right to do. When I was governor, I was really pleased to appoint the first African American rector of the University of Virginia, George Martin, who did a great job in guiding that university founded by a slave owner, Thomas Jefferson, the second governor of Virginia, in 1825.

A number of things were done to put a patron of a disparity study in the legislature, start looking at the realities of state contracting, to be sure that we had equal treatment of minority businessmen and contractors to being able to apply for state jobs. And those numbers have gone up not enough, but we'd have much greater minority business participation.

I ushered in an automatic restoration of rights for nonviolent felons in Virginia, so that they could get their rights back and have a second chance. This is a nation of second chances. As far as I know, we're all sinners, and there's not a perfect person in this room. And so, we all need grace and mercy and having our policies reflecting that with the restoration of rights was so very important. We started a prisoner reentry system to give every person, in fact, the opportunity to have a pathway forward that's positive and uplifting and a support structure when they pay their debt to society.

We've had a number of programs to increase the access and affordability in college education, the 2011 Higher Education Opportunity Act, that was shepherded through giving more people the opportunity. And I think young people know that getting a good education is the key to getting a good job and living the American dream. And this place here at Norfolk State is a great example of that. We have to do more, to give people access to education.

And I'm delighted that right now, African American unemployment is the lowest it's ever been in the country and about the lowest it's ever been in Virginia. And so, that's progress but again, still more to do.

Here's what I think, the problems that we face today are legal, but the biggest problem we face is a matter of the heart. The heart of the matter of discrimination and prejudice is a matter of the heart. And so, we have to be about changing people's heart through following the golden rule, through loving our neighbor, and so many other things that I think we have to do, especially people that look like me.

Here's some of the things that I think are important. About a year ago with a number of other people - black, white, Republican, Democrat - we started a group of Virginians for racial reconciliation, about a year and a half old now. And the idea was to get leaders from the political realm, business, education, the faith community, the arts and culture, community all together, to get people to talk together, to worship together, to pray together, to do business together, to educate one another together, because if you care about each other, if you like each other, you're going to solve problems together. It's a pretty simple idea.

But that's the secret of American success, I think, is people finding ways to work together putting aside differences and do what's best for their state, their community, and their nation. You have to change the culture, you have to change the ugly stereotypes, and it's a matter of the heart to be able to do that. So, some of the things, and I would invite all of you to go and see the Virginians for Reconciliation website. Be part of the effort. We have everybody from the governor to former heads of the NAACP to legislators of African American and Caucasian. We have black and white pastors, people that want to work together, to be able to help to get people to love one another better. It's about that simple.

We have a pulpit exchange program where black and white pastors are exchanging the time at the pulpits of their respective churches. We have encouragement for people to walk that Richmond slave trail. I did it 10 years ago, and I've never been the same because I saw what happened in Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy, the capital of the slave market for about 50 or 60 years. If you walk that trail, it will give you a whole new view. Lumpkin's Jail, when I was governor, I put \$11 million into the budget and Mayor Jones in Richmond put four million in. So, we have \$20 million now dedicated to having a National Slavery Museum on that very site of Devil's Half Acre in Richmond, Virginia to tell the story, so never again will we repeat the mistakes of the past.

And have a National Reconciliation Center on that spot for Africans were once bought and sold as chattel, what a great story of restoration, reconciliation. The Chamber of Commerce is now doing very important diversity programs in all of their areas of the state to talk about diversity and opportunity in business.

We are urging people to read the seminal work, *The Color of Law*, to get a deep dive into what the legal system is like in America, what it was like, and what we need to do to change policies. That's a very reflective book. And we're getting groups of lawyers and pastors to read this book and then reflect in settings of small groups of blacks and whites to talk about "How do we do better?"

We're doing seminars now around the state. We had the descendants of Dred Scott and the descendants of Chief Justice Roger Taney, who wrote that evil, horrific decision, together in Richmond, Virginia back in April to talk about their story of reconciliation after 175 years. And we're doing it now at George Mason and at the Woodrow Wilson Center, in Western Virginia, and right here in Hampton Roads over the next couple of months to bring in speakers, the descendants of Jefferson, and Jefferson Davis, and Abe Lincoln, and Plessy, and Ferguson, and Dred Scott to be able to tell their story about how we can find a way for people to seek forgiveness about the abomination of slavery and find ways to work together.

So, I'm going to conclude with this. Talk is really cheap. It's important, but it's cheap, because you have to actually act and carry out all those values if you're going to actually get something done in this country. And so, I think there's a couple of simple things we can do right now that will make a difference reflecting on this historic opportunity of 1619, Virginia, the place of the first enslaved Africans, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy, can be the leader in restoring trust with the African community and having a reconciliation effort to go across the shores. It's a

beautiful opportunity. We start by telling the truth, the textbooks of Virginia need to be revised and reformed to tell the truth about all peoples' history, black, white, and brown. It's a story of all of those three great ethnicities that came together to form America.

Secondly, we need to have greater access to capital for African American entrepreneurs. If you can't get the capital, you can't start a business. I did some of this work a little bit as attorney general but there's so much more to do to actually allow entrepreneurs in the African American community to go into business and live the American dream. And thirdly, we needed some things to restore the inner cities of America. Kenny Alexander is doing a great job here, partnering with Ben Carson at the federal level to get a \$30 million grant to help rebuild the St. Paul's Quarter, they've got a beautiful vision. And people of all faiths and colors are working together to make that a reality.

So, I want to conclude with this message of hope. What moved me more than anything else about our opportunity to succeed is what Mary Lumpkin did 160 years ago. She was an African American enslaved woman and married Mr. Lumpkin, the owner of Lumpkin's Jail, Devil's Half Acre, the most evil place on earth for 50 years. And after he died, and after the Civil War was over, she did something profound and miraculous. She gave all the proceeds of her money, her estate, to a handful of African American educators, and they started Virginia Union University. What a beautiful history.

It's the story of Joseph. What man intended for evil, God purposed for good, and that's what happened to start Virginia Union University. A story that needs to be told. I would suggest to you that it's pretty simple. For us to solve this problem, it's a heart matter. And people like me need to be talking about following the golden rule about loving your neighbor as yourself, about treating people with respect. And about the things that Jesus says was the definition of greatness. It was humility. And it was being a servant leader with a servant's heart. That's the message of Matthew 18 and Matthew 20. God bless you. I hope you have a great conference. We've got some marvelous speakers. It's been an honor to be with you today. Thank you.

Moderated Conversation/Speaker Interview

Barbara Hamm Lee, executive producer and host of Another View, 89.5

WHRV-FM/WHRO Public Media

Nate Parker, actor, writer, director and producer

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:

Well, our next guest is an award-winning journalist, television radio host, and the owner of Sharing Info, LLC, a media communications consulting company that assists companies to strategically maximize media potential, market effectively, and protect their brand. She is best known as the executive producer and host of "Another View" weekly talk show on WHRO Public Media that discusses today's issues from an African American perspective. A local celebrity, she is called on regularly to emcee and facilitate programs as well as to deliver motivational speeches throughout Hampton Roads. In addition, she created a series of town hall

meetings entitled “Race: Let's Talk About It” in response to increasing tensions surrounding race relations.

She's very involved in the community serving as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the YWCA, South Hampton Roads. She is the former Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing, and is a board member for the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities and the National Center for the Prevention of Community Violence. Please welcome our moderator, and a very good friend of mine, for today's conversations, Barbara Hamm Lee.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Hello everybody. We are so pleased to have with us this morning an award winning actor, writer, director, and producer who has played lead characters and held starring roles in at least 19 films, *Beyond the Lights*, *Red Tails*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, *Arbitrage*, and *Pride*. He wrote, directed and starred in his own film, *The Birth of a Nation* which tells a story of Nat Turner, who famously led the 1831 slave rebellion in Virginia. *The Birth of a Nation* won both of Sundance's most sought after honors, the Audience Award and the Grand Jury Prize. Most recently, his new film, *American Skin* just premiered at the Venice Film Festival, and like his other films received awards and acclaim.

In addition to being a prolific artist, he is also a devoted activist. He once said, "If I am to be remembered by anyone, I would hope those people speak my name as an individual who possessed a riotous disposition toward injustice, offering life and career as one of service to the marginalized, subjugated and oppressed peoples of the world." He recently launched his own foundation, a nonprofit organization, with a mission to confront systemic crises and disparities within the African and the African American communities in the areas of education, cultural enrichment, and social and economic justice is an outspoken advocate for racial equality, dedicating much of his time to closing the opportunity gap for boys and young men of color. Please welcome, Norfolk, Virginia native, Mr. Nate Parker. How are you doing?

Nate Parker:

I'm doing really well.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Do you know what city you're in? I know you've been flying all over the world.

Nate Parker:

I call it home.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

You call it home?

Nate Parker:

I drove past my old neighborhood coming here.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Wow. How was that?

Nate Parker:
It's always interesting. It's always interesting to have grown up somewhere and have those memories and then to be an adult and to intersect that same environment and how it feels different at the same time it feels like home.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
I was telling you a lot of change has come into your home.

Nate Parker:
So many changes. I've seen a lot of them. Some done really well, some not so well, but that's why you have to be involved, right?

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Absolutely.

Nate Parker:
And also doing a lot, I was just talking to the governor about how I can be more involved, the work we can do, whether it be through film or just social engagement in the community.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
I want to start with asking you this question, as you look at media in general. We're talking about film, television, radio, all of it, social media, everything. Go back from the beginning of time to now, what grade would you give us in terms of the way that people of color are represented? Are we getting any better?

Nate Parker:
Okay.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Guess not.

Nate Parker:
No, well, I just think we have to be careful when we throw around words like progress or better because I think sometimes that can actually stifle or kind of blind us to the real crisis that we're dealing with. Malcolm has this great quote that says, "If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and take it out six inches, that's not progress." And he says, "If you take it out all the way, it's still not progress. That it's not until you clean, dress the wound, and then we have a conversation about why you stabbed me in the back, that there can be progress." I do think we have a long way to go, but I think that if we don't deal with the trauma that has taken place, specifically in this country, specifically in the south, and I can go so far as to say it's specifically in Virginia.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

In Virginia.

Nate Parker:

Then 10 years can feel like we're still 10 years ago, 50 years can still feel like we're 50 years ago.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

What's the harm that happens to people when they don't see themselves represented and in the way that they truly are? What harm does it do when a little child sees a negative portrayal of black men in handcuffs all the time in the news? Or what's the harm if there's a character on TV, and it may be showing a stereotype as opposed to reality?

Nate Parker:

Well, we just have to understand that it's programming. I went to school, I studied in a computer science and engineering program, I had a professor that said, a computer is not going to do anything or a program not is not going to do anything that you don't program it to do. If you write the code and you push execute, and it doesn't work, it's your fault. There's something in the code that you did improperly that it's making that. And I think the same thing goes for our children. Our children are being programmed from the moment their eyes open, and they're being designed so to speak, to react in society. So, if you see yourself in a certain light, whether positive or negative, it is having not only an impact, but it's programming you in how you approach the world.

We talk about self-esteem, we talk about engagement, we talk about relationships, we talk about community, all of these things with media. We're writing the code for that for our young people. And creating a legacy for them. And I think that that is where we have to really be introspective as leaders, because any group of young people are going to be a product of or reflection of the leadership that is around them. So, when a young person sees himself... how many of you are familiar with the doll test?

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Doll test, I am.

Nate Parker:

If you haven't seen it, just Google it and look it up on YouTube, I won't get too deep into it. But it kind of has very young children, specifically girls. And they have dolls of different ethnicities, and they ask them what doll is good? What doll is bad? What doll is dangerous? What doll is beautiful? And in every case, the doll associates the darker-skinned doll with the negative answers. And then the last question they asked the young child is which doll looks like you? And you can see the devastation because it was subconscious until that moment that was made conscious, and I think that answers your question. From a very young age, we are being designed and told how we're supposed to move into the world, what we'll be able to accomplish, what our capacity is.

I don't know how many of you have children, but we have this book in my house, that's the eagle that thought it was a chicken. You ever heard of that book? It's a great book.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

I'll go get that one. I wasn't familiar with that.

Nate Parker:

It's like... your child is like, "Oh, he thought he was a chicken," but as an adult, you're like, "This is so deep." Because here you are, here we are, as black people, people of African descent in this country. And we've been conditioned because of so many portrayals in media to believe that we are chickens that we don't have the capacity to lead, that we don't have the capacity to not only create legacy, but to walk in the legacy of our true ancestors in Africa. And to have kingship, we don't associate those things with our life because we just don't see those things.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

We don't see it on a regular basis. So, you've done so many things in film, from acting all the way through directing, writing all of it. Let's talk about from an actor's perspective for a moment. You get a character, and you feel that the character is not quite right. How much leeway do you have in terms of determining that? How are you going to portray that actor, that character? And how much of a difference you're going to make? Do you have to fight the director on that, for example?

Nate Parker:

Well, no, I don't think so. I think the good news about my industry is that you get to choose what you want to do or not do it.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Do you make conscious decisions based on if-

Nate Parker:

Absolutely.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Character is not right, I'm not doing it.

Nate Parker:

Absolutely. For me, it's important because even biblically, it means it says, "A good man or woman leaves an inheritance for his children's children." My filmmaking is the inheritance for my children. I want them to be able to, my grandkids and my great grandkids to see whatever skin I was in as that character and to be able to make some assumptions about what I wanted for our people, what I wanted for our country. So, I avoid things that I think that don't demonstrate that ideology, which comes at a sacrifice, because it's a job, it'd be like saying, "I'm only going to do a job where I can work from 11:00 am to 2:00pm. You know what I mean?"

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Yeah, exactly.

Nate Parker:

And so, you don't have to fight directors, because you meet them early on. And you say, "Well, these are the issues I have." And a lot of times, you'll have people that are writing our stories that don't look like us, and they're well-intentioned. But you'll read the script, and you'll say, "This isn't who we are, and you can make this go on."

Barbara Hamm Lee:

If you do that, then do you come across them as being, from the writer's perspective, then you're the troublemaker because I didn't mean that, I'm just writing about a character and here he comes with this race stuff.

Nate Parker:

Well, maybe he wants someone else. It's like when I did the movie about the Tuskegee Airmen, Red Tails, it was a very difficult project as an actor, only because these men were in their twilight, if you can imagine they were from anywhere from 88 to 90, I think I want to say-

Barbara Hamm Lee:

You said there was just a few that have been left.

Nate Parker:

You have a few left, and you're literally telling their story next to them. So, you had to measure what's on the page against their experience, and then find ways to engage the director about how you might portray that in a way that is honorable to the men or men and women depending on the story that you've told. It's not as easy as people think. But I tell you what, when you set your feet, you set your feet, you have to be willing to walk away from everything. Because once you step into that skin, it's forever. Always I'm one of those people where I don't do anything that I don't want to be on screen. So, sometimes a director says, "We'll just, all right, that was great. Now, just do this one thing for me."

I'll be like, "Well." Because inevitably you'll do that thing and then they'll use it and then you're sitting next to the Tuskegee Airman at the premiere, and that part comes up and he goes, "Really?" But, it's all about being on the same page, the reality is everyone wants to tell a story that's engaging, everyone wants to tell us a story that moves people forward, everyone wants to tell a story that is entertaining. You just have to hold accountable, the people telling the story, especially when they're stories that are stories and their stories that have information that needs to get to the people in a way that can be encouraging not only to an older generation, but the younger generation and the generations to come.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Did you just wake up one morning and say, "I'm going to do The Birth of a Nation?" What inspired that? Where did that come from?

Nate Parker:

I grew up in Taywood Park, five minutes away. And I never learned about Nat Turner. And I can remember being in high school and hearing whispers, but it was all in the context of being a

fanatic. But I never learned about him. We didn't learn about him in school. And I think that if any of you-

Barbara Hamm Lee:

You didn't learn about 1619 either, did you?

Nate Parker:

I'm sure, we didn't.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

And Point Comfort, did you?

Nate Parker:

Well, we learned about in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue, and then as an adult, I read his diaries. And let's just say that it was a disparity.

But, I learned about Nat Turner more when I went to college and took African American Studies class, and I felt embarrassed that here I was in Pennsylvania, learning about a man that grew up a few miles down the road, arguably one of the most heroic, in American history, a preacher turned revolutionary. Someone who said that "If God is God, then I have to stand in the name of God against the atrocities that are happening against my people in real-time, every day." And he answered the call. And so, for me, he was a hero of mine before he was someone that I knew I could make a film about because he became my hero before I became a filmmaker.

But when I became a filmmaker, I said, these are conversations I have with myself, every movie I make, I asked myself, "Okay, if this was the last movie I ever made, would I be okay with that? Would I be okay with where my legacy is right now?" And the answer for Nat Turner was an emphatic yes. And I remember my mentor; Brian is right there. I remember telling Brian I said, "Brian, there a lot of people told me not to make the film. They said, there's a reason why that film hasn't been made." And I said, "But we need him. My children need him. My children's children need him." I think that it can be a major step in opening up conversations around healing and reconciliation, by being honest about what happened, being honest about the resistance movement that happened because Nat Turner wasn't alone.

There were many people that had...there were people that poisoned food, there are people that cut their own Achilles heel so they wouldn't have to work. Resistance was in the air, and there was this false sense of benevolence specifically in Virginia, that we treated-

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Everything was okay.

Nate Parker:

No, no, our slaves love us, and we love them. Our slaves are happy. It's like I said earlier, and I'm from Virginia, and I feel like I can say this because I've lived here and people think Virginia is sometimes... I tell people I'm from Virginia and they ask "Is that north or south?" Don't get it

twisted. I said in some ways, Virginia is Mississippi with just nicer clothes. You know what I mean? And I don't mean that in a derogatory way. I just mean to say the trauma is real, and we can't ignore it if we want to heal from the things that have happened on the soil beneath our feet. Nat Turner was very intentional for me. And again, I said, I made another film that's coming out this year, but I said, "If I never make another film, it doesn't matter what happens to me when they say they can kill the revolutionary, but they can't kill the revolution."

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Exactly.

Nate Parker:
Fred Hampton said that.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
This has to go on. Tell us about American Skin.

Nate Parker:
American Skin is a film that deals with police violence in a way that I believe is fresh and new because I think that's the task, how do we tell the stories that we need our communities to see in a way that's fresh, that is not like, "Oh, here we go again." And it's unique because I won't tell you much about it, but it's too much about it. But it's a story about a man who loses his son to police violence. And after feeling invisible, he feels like he has to do something to let the world know how he feels. Ralph Ellison, in his famous book, Invisible Man says, "When someone feels invisible long enough, they will lash out at the world to let them know they exist." And that's what this film is about. It's about that quote.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Can only people of color tell our true story? Or can allies help us?

Nate Parker:
Can is an interesting word. I think anyone can do anything they want. But I will say this.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
With authenticity, let's put it that way.

Nate Parker:
I think it's been done in different ways, but I think we can look to the Jewish community and see. You look at Schindler's List, you look at the PNS, you look at some of these stories that have been told in such ways that they inspire. I remember seeing Schindler's List and being so outraged, more outraged than I was that I saw Amistad which is odd, right?

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Yeah.

Nate Parker:

But why? Because I think that there's a soul thing that happens, like I go back to the biblical, "A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children." What is my inheritance? I need my kids to understand the crisis so they can understand how to create solutions, so, I can die knowing they will continue the legacy. Can I assume that someone that comes from a legacy that's not of my ancestors can bring the same amount of intentionality and passion and spirit into telling that story? Can I assume they have the same stakes? And that means as much to them? I don't know. I don't know. But I think that goes back to representation. He who has the coin makes the rules."

If we were as passionate as other marginalized communities about telling our stories, and the people with money, we're as passionate and we had a pipeline coming from the top. The people that had the deep pockets to the product being on the screen to the distribution channels, putting it on the screens.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

And is that really where the issue is coming in, more so than the creative?

Nate Parker:

Yes.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Also just trying to get the information.

Nate Parker:

You know what? I don't want, look, I'm not here to be the end-all? I don't know, I don't have all the answers. All I know is what I see every day. And I think that if we had more distribution channels, and more people that were in pit positions and willing to fund the projects from beginning to end, I don't know if we'd be having conversations around, should this person be telling our stories, because we would have either done it already, or we'd be putting people in position to do it. I think that there just needs to be more of a dialogue around who are the people that are financing the projects? Who are the people that are distributing the projects? What are the distribution channels? Who are the people that are supporting the projects? Because that's another thing.

You look at the mantras of other communities, and it's never forget, but you look at the mantras of our community, and it's to get over it. There has to be a problem with that. We have to say to ourselves until we change, it's impossible for us to over tell our story. Because obviously, if we have not changed, if the culture hasn't shifted, if we're still enslaved and our minds are still controlled, then we haven't told the story enough because it hasn't sunken into the point that we're actually changing.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

As you talk to young people who are getting into the film industry, who are storytellers. What words of advice would you like to give them? What do you tell them about being authentic and not being afraid to be who they are, to be in their skin?

Nate Parker:

Well, I think they have to know who they are, to know that skin and love that skin. Because there's a counter-narrative. Just like with the programming analogy, with programming, you need counter-programming. You know what I mean? To be able to break certain habits and break certain generational curses and viral loops. When I talk to young people, it isn't just, "Here's a camera, go in, take the world."

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Go do a film.

Nate Parker:

With my foundation, The Parker Foundation, we actually teach them, we do a summer institute in the summer, we just started a film program at Wiley College and we're working on doing something very similar here. But we say, "Okay, the first two days of the week are about a culturally responsive education. Learning who you are, learning about Oscar Micheaux." Anyone know who Oscar Micheaux is.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

I do.

Nate Parker:

Yeah, right. There would be no black cinema if there wasn't Oscar Micheaux, who was the first to have his own studio and made over 40 films, and some people believe as many as 100 that have been lost. In 1918, 1919, he made a film that was in response to the original Birth of a Nation. This is a man that we don't know about. He had to have a cultural understanding of who he was to stand in that hostile environment and make films that were counter-narrative, that were the counter-programming to the white supremacists' work that was being done. My advice to young people specifically of African descent first is to know who you are, get a sense of who you are as an identity and where you come from because our history did not start in 1619.

If you really want to go back, to the original, to the beginning, we were here and we were thriving. We talked about the Ashanti, Timbuktu, Sundiata. We can go back, back, back, back, back, back, back, back, but it's understanding that part of who we are that we can best understand this sliver 400 years, this blip that we need to address to understand how we can make it back to who we are.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Do you worry that going forward in the future, as people look back on our time, that our story will be more of the negative narrative that's out there in terms of how we represent it, as opposed to the positive?

Nate Parker:

Oh, no, absolutely not. We are creating an army of filmmakers with my foundation. I mean, we have over 100 young people now in the past four years. And we're creating cells of people that

will tell our story, that will tell the story of America, that will help create healing within the context of who we are in this country. And that's healing for everyone that.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Exactly.

Nate Parker:

I think it's important that we don't separate the two that it's like, "Oh, well, we have the black story, the black healing and once we heal, everything will be fine." There's a lot of healing that needs to happen in the white community. And I think that, that'll happen when we're all engaged. But it's the Kellogg Foundation, give us our grant background for Nate Parker Foundation, talks about that truth, healing and reconciliation. We have to confront it, like we're doing with 1619. We have to have those conversations, those hard conversations in our households, we have to have more children, we have to push for more of a culturally responsive education in our school systems. And I think all those things will create a trickle-down that will affect the crisis.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

How do you find that when people say, "You guys keep talking about this stuff, you keep talking about it." But as opposed to taking it as an understanding, and as an education, it's almost like we were beat down again because we're talking about it. We have to keep it up.

Nate Parker:

Yeah, I think who is the we and who's the they? Because I think that sometimes we have to take things out of the, "Well, you know people say, you know they say." Well, who are those people? Because once we find those people we can engage and then we can get past it. It's like the elephant in the room or there's this mystical cloud, that we just have to be unapologetic about dealing with it and facing it down. Everyone that's here this morning, 9:00am showed up and all the people streaming are engaged enough to want to have made it. here. I think the next thing is the call to action, what will your legacy be?

And when I talked to...Chad, you want to wave? One of the brightest young men that I've ever met, and he's come to the program. He's a young man, he's got up, he's here at 9:00 am. I said, "Be prepared, I might bring you on stage." You know what I mean? We have to be, in my opinion, intentional about being the change, we want to see. We have to be intentional about confronting people, engaging people, not necessarily in a negative or violent way. But saying, "Okay, let's talk about how you feel." That's what the Storytellers Project is all about. If you notice in those projects, Chad is talking, going, walking up to people that don't look like him and saying, "You know what, let's talk about Net Turner. What do you know about him?"

"I've only heard bad things." "Well then, what have you heard?" "What my professor said?" "Well, let's talk about that more." And by the end of the conversation they're like, "You know what, I'm going to go and do a little bit of research." I think that is the thing that we need.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Because our history is American history.

Nate Parker:

That's right. And if we are to be expected to be patriotic, then we have to find a way to get our two-fifths of humanity back first. It's hard to be a lover of a nation, when you feel like you're still three-fifths of a person, we have to deal with that.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

We are almost out of time. Can you believe that?

Nate Parker:

It goes fast.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

But we're getting there, we're going to come back with you and another panel to continue this conversation.

Nate Parker:

Wonderful.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

But one last piece of advice that you'd like to leave the audience with, as they think about how we represent it in media today, and what we need to do to continue to fight for the proper representation.

Nate Parker:

I would just say that any problem that we can identify in our society, whether it be with media or be in our day-to-day is not separate from us. It's a problem that if we can, we can see it, we can address it. We have to be introspective about what our responsibility is to being the change we want to see in our community. Because if it's over there, it'll stay over there. But if it's in here, then we will be a part of the solution in fixing it. So, just be committed to being the change you want to see in your community and start where you are in the seat that you're sitting.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Ladies and gentlemen, Nate Parker.

Nate Parker:

Thank you. Thank you guys. Thank you very much.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

And we have reached the end of this session. And I'd like to just say, it was such a pleasure meeting you, Nate and talking with you, and sharing this conversation about re-imagining representations of people of color. Please everyone again, join me in thanking Nate.

Nate Parker:

Thank you. Thank you, Barbara.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

And thank you all for being here for the 1619: Making of America Summit.

Nate Parker:

Thank you.

Reimagining Representations of People of Color

Barbara Hamm Lee, Executive Producer and Host, Another View, 89.5

WHRV-FM/WHRO Public Media

Andy Edmunds, Director, Virginia Film Office

Nate Parker, actor, writer, director and producer

Anthony Stockard, Director, Norfolk State's Drama and Theatre Program

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax, Lieutenant Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia

VOG:

Please welcome back to the stage our moderator, Barbara Hamm Lee.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Good morning everyone and welcome again to all of you here on the campus of Norfolk State University and welcome to the 1619 Making of America Summit and a special welcome to all of you joining us from schools all around the Commonwealth and the country as we live stream this historic event as part of the 2019 Commemoration American Evolution. It is my pleasure now to introduce the panelists for this important topic, "Re-Imagining Representations of People of Color." We're now going to expand the conversation with some additional thought leaders, filmmakers, actors and practitioners who are deeply involved in this idea of re-imagining representations of people of color. As a note, you can find their full bios on the 1619 making of America app.

And speaking of the app, you can participate in our polling there. And this session will conclude with a question and answer portion. So audience, get ready with your questions on the app. You can submit questions you'd like us to ask our panelists. A few questions will be selected to be asked here on stage time permitting. And you need to get your questions in by 11:15 Eastern time to be considered. So go to the app and get your questions ready. And now let's meet our panelists. Please welcome back award-winning actor, writer, director, and producer Mr. Nate Parker.

Nate Parker:

Hey hello again.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Hey.

Nate Parker:
Did you hear what I said?

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Yeah. Okay, and we are honored to have with us the director of the Virginia Film Office with the Virginia Tourism Corporation. Please welcome Andy Edmunds.

Hi, Hi Andy, Oh I'm a hugger.

Andy Edmunds:
Oh yes, indeed, indeed.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Right here. Have a seat right there. Thank you. And we want to recognize that we're sitting here on the stage in front of the set for the August Wilson play "Gem of the Ocean." It will be performed tonight by the Norfolk State University Theater Company. So we have a special guest, the producing and artistic director here at NSU Theater Company, Professor Anthony Stockard.

Hey Professor. I'm good.

Have a seat, gentlemen.

Okay, so it is great to have all of you here. We're talking about re imagining the representation of people of color and hopefully you heard some of the conversation Nate and I had earlier today as we started this conversation, but I want to start this section with a question to you all about stereotypes and a particular one that we all know and love right now that a director caught a lot of flak behind and that's Tyler Perry and Medea. My question to you is, are we sophisticated enough of people now to know that Medea was a characterization of a lot of people and portrayed that way and was comedy and was an opportunity for Tyler Perry to make some money? Or was it more damaging as yet another stereotype about black folks?

Nate Parker:
I can start. Let me first start by saying I love Tyler Perry. He's a good brother and he's a great man. When I was, when I first made *The Birth of a Nation*, I had started having conversations with my team about distribution and how to change the way the power structure, I'll use the word, allowed us to tell our stories unapologetically. I called Tyler and asked him for his help, he said to bring my producer ... one of my finance ... my finance manager, and we flew out to the Bahamas and he put us up and he literally for 48 hours taught me everything I could ever ask for about how he got started. Why it worked. His distribution deal with Lionsgate. How that came about, why the plays worked, you know, all the work that he put in. This is a man that literally shut his life down to pull me up.

So I might have the education and knowledge around how I could create that from my situation. I'll say this, you know, no one is upset with Adam Sandler for making comedies that are way over there. You know, no one's ... the real conversation we should be having is why don't we

have 12 different versions of Tyler Perry? You know, why don't we have a Tyler Perry for drama, a Tyler Perry for, you know, horror, Tyler Perry for whatever genre.

I think that it becomes easy to ... what did they say? You only need one bull to run to have a stampede. And I think that's how cancel culture works. I think that, you know, it becomes convenient to target people ... to point out the flaws of a man because of we're not in alignment with what that representation is to the world rather than becoming a part of a solution that says Tyler Perry can exist, but also this young man can exist and this young woman can exist and this woman can exist and we're going to galvanize all of those who have the resources to make those things happen.

So I think that we will recognize him as the pioneer he is, as time moves on, you know his hero is Oscar Micheaux, my hero is Oscar Micheaux. He had his own studio. And if you look at now, everyone in Hollywood and in Atlanta is dependent upon Tyler Perry for their projects to be made.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
For their projects to be done.

Nate Parker:
So I honor him and I applaud him for what he's done in the face of anyone who's an adversary, you know, and so, and not to suck up all the time, you know, is it damaging that he dressed up like a church lady? I don't think so. I think that there are things that you can identify with and the things that you don't identify with them don't engage.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
I thought he was pretty funny quite honestly. But you know, I mean I guess because sometimes, and Andy, I'll throw this to you and Anthony to get you guys drawn into the conversation, but for me, a film, a lot of times I just want to go to be entertained. I mean, I want to go to, to get away, to escape, you know? And, but yet I recognize how critical it is that if you keep selling a particular point, it becomes a reality. So to your response to the original question and kind of this whole idea of, you know, is it still okay to do something that is considered stereotypical, but you know, is audience sophisticated enough to know the difference?

Andy Edmunds:
Well, in this industry. And Nate knows this, there's the saying, ah, it's show business, it's not show fun, right? And the color that this industry cares about more than black and white. What's that?

Nate Parker:
That's green.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Green.

Andy Edmunds:

It's green. So Tyler Perry proved that there was a market for this content. And I think it's funny, my kids love it and you know, it's funny and it finds a market and it's made money. And I believe without Tyler Perry, there would've been no Black Panther. That was a seminal changing moment in the industry putting big bucks behind a huge budget Marvel movie that it was just a ground breaking moment. I believe that to go to that theater that weekend, Nate and to see the pack crowds for that movie and what that movie meant for this industry and for black culture and for white culture, I mean to see all these people together and proving that you could have a blockbuster with this hero. I think it was a game changer.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Anthony?

Anthony Stockard:

I think that his offering to culture was business savvy, perseverance when everybody told him no, he was doing his plays first and all my aunts was popping in on watching TV every Sunday ordering the tapes and it was ... it wasn't absurdist comedy if you want to slap a label on it, but ... and it is run by green, but we control everything. Sometimes we don't realize it.

If no one ever supported his VHS, his DVD, his movie, then we wouldn't even know who Tyler Perry is. It was stated earlier, people didn't realize or trust that there was a whole market of money out there that people were missing. And when they found it, that's all they cared about. Up top. There's a whoa wait a minute. But he was smart. He made his own production company. He got his own studio. He started where he knew in terms of artistic temperament. The error would have been to stay there, but he continued to grow and develop, not necessarily to prove to other people because he was passionate about what he did, you know? And he ... Cicely Tyson, Louis Gossett Jr. These are all icons that he has plugged into his movies to make sure that we don't forget about where we come from and to give a platform to those that the industry shouldn't.

And he's just, I mean he is a brilliant businessman. He knows that he knew his limitations, but he had a platform and he wasn't going to be shamed about presenting the work that he had developed. Medea, if we don't like Medea then you don't like *Martin* or Sheneneh-

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Yeah, *In Living Color*.

Anthony Stockard:

That's old hat. That's not new to us, and it's hilarious. The spin is that it's a guy, but even if it was a woman, where do we see this woman anywhere in cinema or television? That woman, where do you find her? Nowhere. You don't find her anywhere, but she is one of the most familiar icons in a black family. Whether she the auntie or the grandma. We laugh because it is identifiable to us, and this was somebody that we didn't know, and it has an extra little funny spin on it being him. That's all that is. And if you're not smart enough to separate fact from fiction, if ... I mean we are led by media more than we think we know, but if we can't step away at the end of the day

and just say, like you said, it was funny, everybody isn't coming to be entertained for Pulitzer prize winning dramas or Academy ...

That's not everybody's bag. Some people just want funny date night.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Exactly.

Anthony Stockard:
You know, there's a place for everyone and everything. That's just where he started, but it's not where he ended.

Nate Parker:
Right-

Anthony Stockard:
And we're seeing his journey.

Nate Parker:
Right. You're absolutely right, brother. And we can ... and I think it's important because we are here and understand the implications of the question to address the elephant in the room when it comes to, well, because there are people, whether it be livestream or maybe here thinking, yeah but, you know it was a lot of, you know, shucking and ... I don't know if I agree that that is the barometer. It's just that that was the space.

Like you said, the people didn't think we existed and this is a man that owns all of this own content. It's like owning your masters. He said, "When I came to the table I said, yeah, I'm bringing an audience. These are the people that are going to come, you can borrow this. But then it comes back to me." What black man or woman has been able to walk into a studio and say that? No one.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Well is that one of the issues though is the education on the business side of this industry-

Nate Parker:
Yes.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
That is key to, you know, our being able to control the narrative period.

Nate Parker:
Yeah.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Because you have to know the money pot.

Nate Parker:

Absolutely. Because guess what? Now he's in a position where he can be supportive of things that have nothing to do with the Medea, and I know he is doing it because I know him. I think that Medea, I know personally created space for *Birth of a Nation* and *Birth of a Nation* has nothing to do with Medea, but it created space because I was able to walk in the rooms with investors and say, "We're out there. People want to see this. There's an audience out there that yes, comes in to laugh and to escape the hardships of being black in this country, but they're the same people that will come to be able to learn about their history in a way to see resistance in real time."

A film that will let them know what they should and should not tolerate.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Well and also see a different perspective of a story that we've been told over and over and over again. I mean you came at Nat Turner from a whole nother place compared to what is taught, what's taught in schools.

Nate Parker:

But there's room for both. That's all I'm saying. And I think it's up to the creators, you know, and you deal with creators all day and you deal with creators, I mean with the film commission to create the stories and to tell the stories that have the courage and the fortitude to get those stories told that expand the medium and the narrative. So there are different representations of who we are.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

So Andy, I got to tell you, last night I was doing my research and you know, I had to look you guys up and Google you and all that good stuff. But I went to the film to the Virginia film industry website and so it was saying, you know, which part of the state fits your narrative, the story that you want to tell?

And then there was a section that said, "Well, you're not quite sure. Take a look at these." And then there are these different categories and plantations was there. And I went, "Damn." I mean, honestly that was my reaction was like ... and I, and I understand that you can tell all kinds of stories with plantations as a backdrop. I get it. I get that but Virginia and the fact that that would even be listed as a, you know, here's a great place to come do a movie.

Andy Edmunds:

Yeah. Wow, that's embarrassing. But you know-

Barbara Hamm Lee:

I don't mean to embarrass-

Andy Edmunds:

No, no, no, but it's interesting-

Barbara Hamm Lee:
But I'm saying it's that mentality again-

Andy Edmunds:
Because my friends and colleagues, filmmakers, whatever, black, white, I mean, I have black producers that call, "Hey man. Do you have any plantations?" I mean, they're looking for that category to depict this story. I mean, you know, currently we're shooting this John Brown thing with Ethan Hawke and we did, you know Harriet Tubman of course last year, and Debra Martin Chase, you know, one of the main producers and like a leader, she was the first African American woman to have a studio deal. Debra Martin Chase with a major studio. Anyway, she, "Let's go see this plantation." So to people in the industry. It's just a category-

Barbara Hamm Lee:
The point being, you can tell all kinds of stories-

Andy Edmunds:
Yeah, the point being Virginia is a very versatile state-

Barbara Hamm Lee:
And it's not necessarily a negative story.

Andy Edmunds:
We have a palette for every type of location, but we also, we do play to our strengths. We have a lot of historical period assets here that are a great pallet for you know, for four centuries of, of history and beyond.

You know, we did *The New World*, you know, telling the story with Terrence Malick and telling the story of Jamestown. But of course we sell our history as an asset for filmmakers to tell these important stories. And you know, one of the greatest heartbreaks of my career, frankly, is that Nate had to go film *The Birth of a Nation* in another state because we didn't have enough tax credits to bring this movie to Virginia. Really broke my heart. But I understand that. So this is a whole different panel though to talk about how we can induce and attract more work. So hometown heroes can come and bring their work back in Commonwealth.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Anthony, when you are looking from the play side, and let's talk about from live theater, do select plays based on how people of color are represented? Does that play into your process in terms of deciding what stories you're going to tell?

Anthony Stockard:
Almost exclusively is the consideration. We're a historically black college and university, the students that we serve are 100% people of color at the present time. And if I was at another institution, a PWI-

Barbara Hamm Lee:
That stands for predominately white institution-

Anthony Stockard:
All their shows ... predominantly white institution ... their shows are for all white people so ... because that's who they're casting in their shows. The difference, you know you can go study a lot of subjects anywhere, but being here at this institution where they are always the lead, they have the same consideration. Like I wonder what roles I will get. I had experienced in graduate school, the first one I attended it was, I will not name it, but it was an experience, and they brought me there. But then it was very clear to me that I was only eligible for 50% of the season. All the other plays were for white characters. So I saw-

Anthony Stockard:
The other plays were for white characters, so I saw my colleagues all get considered and called back for the whole season. I got called back for Shakespeare. That's sort of the elk of what my strength was, but you know, I just noticed that and having a place where they're always the lead where they can, it's a skill to learn how to carry a show. That is a whole skill that at other places they have to wait until we do the black show or we're going to do some interesting casting. That is not the case here. They have the same equal playing field as their peers.

And I tried to do things that are classic. That's why we're doing August Wilson. We've done Tarell Alvin McCraney, we've done Suzan-Lori Parks. Whatever is the new, the now, the edgy that is on their resume that they might go get cast for, I do that and I try to diversify the spectrum of what parts of black culture are being told every year. I'm very careful about it. We're doing *Motown*. That is the happy-go-lucky, everybody wants to see it homecoming event, but then we're doing *Gem of the Ocean*, which deals with this very subject we're all here to commemorate in a very serious fashion even with flipping stereotypes on their head.

I don't want to say too much cause I assumed that most are going to be here tonight, but there's a character that is set up to be looked at as the joke, as the unimportant one. And in the end we find out way more about this character, and it's sort of inverted. What I love about theater is that when you come into the audience, you may have come to be entertained. You don't get the whole storyline as you might have in film all the time, but you're in the room, and now you have to hear it, you have to consider it. And it sneaks up on you, and you didn't know you was going to be exposed to it. I love it. That's the magic of live theater is that relationship.

And in New York. and that film industry, almost every Broadway star is plucked from Broadway shows and thrown into television series and what-not and stuff like that. But a lot of change in that part of the country emanates from live theater. There are stories that get premieres, that get buzz. Anything that we're like, "Oh my God, look at the film. Look what we're telling now." That first wave probably happened 10 years before in the theaters in New York City.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Right. So will there ever come a time then, because as you said, in your experience there are white characters, and there are characters for people of color. Can you mix them? Are we at the

point now where we're mixing so that it becomes a character, not a white character or a black character?

Anthony Stockard:

It depends on the story, *August Osage County* was a Broadway hit about this dysfunctional white family. Felicia Rashad took over the role as the patriarch. Nobody cared or batted an eye. Oh, that's what we're doing? We get it. Right? But sometimes stories are special in the conflict, the creation, the validity of the experience depends upon being true to the story you're telling. It depends on what story you're telling at the end of the day.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

And also back to the playwrights that you select. Do you look at them and how they represent people of color also in terms of your selection?

Anthony Stockard:

Absolutely. Even though it's 2019, Lord, there's only a couple of handful of playwrights that are predominant. You can almost name all 10 of them, but then there are other people. I have a good fortune of knowing a lot more mature actors in the New York scene. I have old scripts that are falling apart, that were written by playwrights that nobody knew, because the platform didn't exist for them.

I have tons of stories, and I expose the students to those plays. They have just as much value then as they do now. It's just like when you go with archeology, right? You go dig something up. It's like, Ooh, it has so much value. It didn't lose its value, because it wasn't seen. So I try to make sure that the playwrights are across the spectrum of what they might walk into the industry and know, but then they need to be armed with themselves, you know? And in the history of where they come from and those stories as well. And it changes things for them.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

You know, when I came up, my career has been in television news before I transferred to radio. But I was always in management, always behind the scenes because that's where the decisions were made. In this industry, are you guys encouraging people of color, black children particularly, to look at the behind the scenes positions, the positions where you're making decisions as opposed to the acting? I mean, I know you can do the acting too, but is there a push to get people to be more on the business side?

Nate Parker:

Absolutely. When actors come up to me and they ask, "What can I do to be successful?" or "What is your advice for me?" My first piece of advice is always start writing. You have to create the stories that you want to be in the world. I had to do it. When I first came to Hollywood, for the first year was very difficult, because the things that I was even just given to audition for, some of those roles were so disrespectful, you know? And I had to literally write out a measurement as to which I had to really look to when it came to how I would select a project. And it was--

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Do you remember?

Nate Parker:
Oh yeah! How would Grandma feel about this? Wow. Super simple.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Wow.

Nate Parker:
You know, because you get to a point--

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Simple but profound too when you think about it.

Nate Parker:
Right, when you get to a point where your agent is calling like, "Look, okay, you need to do this. Once you do this, they'll see what you can do and then we'll get you on this level and then you'll be here." And so they have you thinking way down the road, but right now I have to be a pimp and I have to like, smack a woman.

I'm like, no, I don't want to do that. I don't need that money. Whatever. In fact, there's a demonic quality in that project that I think will hurt the spirit of the people that watch it. I'm cool. You know? But it's hard because you got to eat, you know?

Anthony Stockard:
Yeah.

Nate Parker:
So first, it's about saying, "Well, what do I want to be? What do I want my legacy in filmmaking to be, and what will Grandma say?" Because when you ask Grandma, Grandma's going to tell you. Auntie and Uncle might, "Oh, you did good." Grandma going to be like, "But why did you?" You know? But then I start writing, first short stories. I was very much influenced by Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, bell hooks, Audre Lord, people that you could tell it was their soul work, not just for money.

Then I started my journey of writing and from that came some of my short films and then eventually *The Birth of a Nation* and then my next film. But writing is essential to creating counter narratives to what represents us in the mainstream today, I think.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Andy, when people come to you because they want to have a film made, particularly people of color, what's missing? You mentioned about Nate and the tax credits. Is there a thread that you see particularly with people of color that they just don't know in terms of this business and how to get things done?

Andy Edmunds:

Let me back up one second though to the question of technical positions behind the scenes. You're talking about writers, which is everything important in acting, but as far as the technical crew and the jobs available that are high paying really good jobs, content manufacturing jobs for an industry that purports to be so liberal, forward thinking, culturally evolved, Hollywood very poor thinking. It's really a lot of white people behind the camera in most of the crews, and it's really a problem.

So it's been a mission of mine to try to reach out and help change that because a couple of movies we did, we had very prominent African-American producers and came in and said, "We really want to find some people of color in the crew." And we're like looking everywhere and there's just not enough because these kids have not been given an opportunity to learn the role. So we started with the community college system. I've run about 600 kids through a PA training program through the community college system. Give them opportunities and some of them make it through, some of them don't because it's a hard business. You work 16 hours a day. It's really tough, and you could tell within the first day the ones that can hang, and the ones that are not going to be able to hang. But some make it and it's been so rewarding to me to see some of them now on the crews working, and having real jobs and then it's up to them to make the relationships that will lead to their next job and they have to learn that whole networking skill set.

But it's starting to happen. But what's happening now is some of the kids we've run through PA training, they have to go to Georgia to get a job because we don't have the tax credit base here to be able to induce the industry cause it, basically the tax credit program works, you give a production a dollar, they spend 10 so it's a pretty good deal for the Commonwealth. But it's hard, the state has multiple priorities they need to take care of.

So it's up to policymakers to determine what industry they want to induce. But that's my effort to try to get more people of color into this business because it is really behind the scenes a lot. Nate, as you can see, we're trying to improve that. What's your other question? I'm sorry.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

I'll come back to it. Let me get Anthony first to answer the question about the behind the scenes.

Anthony Stockard:

Well, that's also a priority for me here. Last thoughts on Nate. Last time we met we were in Old Brown Hall. We've come a mighty long way.

Nate Parker:

Yeah.

Anthony Stockard:

This building is probably one of the most technologically advanced buildings in all of the state of Virginia in terms of theater. Theater and film translate. The end user is different. But even in our

program, I got to help guide the curriculum for the degree program that was launched last year and I don't care that they want to major in performance. Everybody is required to experience all facets of it. Maybe to expand their skillset, maybe to discover that "actually this is my gift", but they all walk out with some level of understanding.

The translation between film, a stage manager is kind of like a first idea on a film set. Very similar requirements. But I do, I try to push them to be broad thinkers and in terms of backstage management, controlling things, I always connect it to that end game with them. Even if they're performers, no matter what they want to do, you should always try to have a way to find a way to give yourself a platform, or influence to have a voice in what it is you are doing.

When he was talking about Grandma, I was thinking about Angela Bassett and her Black Girls Rock! speech. She is one who after a while it was like, "Oh, well don't even bother asking her cause she's not going to." And while they felt like it was an insult, in the journey of a life, she is a queen.

Nate Parker:
That's right.

Anthony Stockard:
And whenever she transitions to the beyond, her legacy is going to be intact and flawless because she kept integrity and made decisions along the way. And as you know, management and that is the same thing, but she had the brains as an actor to not demote herself or devalue her power, to know that, "No, I have a say in this too." You might be my manager, but I am the final say on how this goes. And she empowered herself to do that, and that's the same journey that I give them with how they seek to exist in this industry.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Okay. So my question to you was what, if there is a thread or something that you noticed that people of color who are trying to be in this industry don't seem to know or need more help with as you are looking to finance their films, or allow them to make their films here?

Andy Edmunds:
I find that independent film makers, whether they're black, white, I don't really look at it as such, but they're all hungry storytellers. Everyone is trying to make a sale. They're either trying to find the money, find the talent, get clearance to use a location, to shut down a building and blow up a bridge or some type of thing. They need help from us to help them solve a problem.

Production is all about problem solving, disaster management basically in production a lot. So, we're there to help them no matter what color they are. But it's always the same kind of challenge of money. So what I wanted to say about that is there used to be gatekeepers in this industry, the studio, all the television networks. When I grew up, there were three television stations. Now the platforms are just wide open.

So for young storytellers out there wanting to get into this business, it's an amazing opportunity in time because the platform is even in that, with the YouTube channel that you create, or these other platforms you can get on. If you make something that's good, it will find an audience. It will just infectiously somehow find an audience. Now, how do you monetize? That is the trick, right? But there is an opportunity. There's no excuse.

If you're a storyteller with this iPhone, man, I could shoot something that looks like a Ridley Scott movie. I can edit it on my phone. If you have a good script and you have hopefully some talent that can get in front of the camera and you do a little bit of art direction, you have the opportunity to get your short out there that will find an audience, and then you could turn that into...it depends how tenacious you are to just carry it to the next level, but it's not like there's a road block of this big castle in Hollywood that's blocking you from going directly to a consumer.

You could do it now. It's just a great opportunity and we don't even know what the next step of this technology is going to be, because the content is starting to become shorter and shorter. There's only 24 hours a day. There's only so many monthly subscriptions I can pay for, right? So the content has to get shorter. There's Quibi. Now you've heard of Quibi? It's a new platform where Katzenberg and these very wealthy people have figured out they're going to start producing micro short content, because I think it's content people could see it work without getting in trouble. Little short things, right? So they're smart. That's where it's going. So you have the opportunities, the storyteller now with the technology, with the platforms, it's very democratic playing field now.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

So Nate, when you were making your film and Anthony, when you're doing the productions that you do, were there things that you didn't know that you felt like maybe some of your other non-African American colleagues may have known about the business part of it? Did you have to learn doubly fast?

Nate Parker:

Yeah, everything.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Everything.

Nate Parker:

Yeah. I didn't go to film school. I started making films out of necessity. You know, I felt specifically with the Nat Turner film that it just needed to exist. So for me it just began a journey of how do I make it. People are like, "Did you mean, did you always want to do all the different...?" I said, "No, not really. I just thought, you know, let's make Nat Turner." And people were like, "Don't do that." And I was like, "Okay, well I've got to make Nat Turner." But it's kind of like what you said. We have to be driven by something other than, and it's going to sound cliché, but something other than money.

We have to really want to put a legacy in place, and it's hard to hear because you know, specifically with your peers, you see your peers, they're just like, "I'm cool just acting. I'm just going to wait for them. I'm just going to keep my hand up, they're going to call me eventually." And you're in town and you see people literally get unplugged. I got into the business 2003 and there are people that aren't here anymore that were there in 2003. It's like a two, three year cycle, new batch, new batch, a new batch.

When you start writing and you start taking that camera phone and cutting things together and teaching yourself how to tell your stories, then all of a sudden you become someone they can't pull the plug on because you curate an audience, the audience know, they understand what your legacy is meant to be and then they support you for life.

To take it full circle, Tyler Perry and what brother Anthony is doing, the tremendous work he's doing at this school. What he's creating is people that will move, go out into the world as cells, understanding that what we did here, I can do anywhere. And if I have a camera, then I can use that to galvanize people, to understand my perspective on life and create a legacy that can affect my children's children because that's what storytelling is doing. That's what we're doing with my foundation.

When I started in filmmaking, it wasn't a technical thing, it wasn't a monetary thing by any means. It was more about how can I tell a story specifically for Virginia. Nat Turner was for Virginia, so no young person, male or female of any color would have to come up not knowing who this hero was that grew up right down the street in Cortland, and that was my goal. Everything else was just semantics. How to get my first..., how do I pick the right cinematographer, how to make...all that stuff for me was, was ancillary to me feeling the need for the story to exist.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Anthony.

Anthony Stockard:

Not that it wasn't taught to me or I didn't necessarily understand it, but I knew pretty quickly that I was in New York, I was doing regional theater, I was doing off-Broadway, I was doing film, doing all these things, but it was what he just did. It was the same thing. I don't like to raise my hand. I like to be able to go do. And I realized very quickly that I would be waiting in line forever until I find a way to make my own way.

And that's when I moved. I was an artistic director in Alabama, actually, for a theater company. It was the oldest theater for African Americans in the state. And I was drawn to that. I went there, I didn't have any real connection, and they gave me a building and that was it. But it was enough. But I tried to instill that in my students that you are always the one in control. And I wish I had that mindset from the jump.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

So I want to bring up another topic about representation. And that's color-ism in this industry, in all media. You know, when Viola Davis became the lead of Murder...

Nate Parker:

How to Get Away with Murder.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Yeah, *How to Get Away with Murder*. Right, thank you. I was getting ready to say *Murder She Wrote*. Wrong Show. Wrong Show. *How to Get Away with Murder*. Okay. So she becomes a lead actor. She's a dark-skinned woman, and there was a big, you know, hullabaloo about the fact that we have a dark skinned woman who was a lead actress. Is colorism an issue in the industry now?

Nate Parker:

Yes, absolutely. 100%, but that said, it goes back to what you were talking about with that phone.

There's one thing to talk about what our issues are and what the crisis is, but as filmmakers, I think that we are as a group, probably the most powerful group in existence as filmmakers and people of the theater. Basically, storytellers. Because if I'm a director and I want to make a short film, I can make a short film with the most darkest queen with the braided crown. If I can get it in front of the right people and it's done well, guess what? It can go viral. Morality can make money through ad sales because that's what's happening now. And they say, well, this project made X millions dollars, won a Student Academy Award, and now it is a standard because... When one bull runs, that's how you start a stampede.

Now all of a sudden it's, "do you know any really darker skinned"...

This is how it happens in Hollywood. If I made it... If we did *Gem of the Ocean*, I shot on my iPhone and you did it tonight, right? And then it went viral and 10 million people saw it. The studios will call me tomorrow. Do you have the rights to that? Do you want to film and if the lead woman was a dark... Are there any actors that you know? Because at the end of the day they want to get paid. It is dollars and cents, and we can take advantage of that because there's value.

That's why we need you to show up at the theater. That's why we need you to show up tonight, because at some point we have to prove that people want to see a dark skin woman as the lead of the show, and that's what happened.

All the naysayers were shut up the second the ratings came out. Then it was, now she is one of the most, if not the most, important person on television. Then Shonda is obviously the most important showrunner, now producer... And that only happens when we are able to get to those positions to prove that we want to see ourselves in those positions.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Anthony?

Anthony Stockard:

If you don't see it and go create it. It will find an audience for itself and validate itself.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

But is it important for us to also be pushing on the establishment, if you will. I understand that the young people can move that through but...

Anthony Stockard:

I hear you. You can push on the establishment, and the establishment is usually made out of titanium. You might make a dent, but until they have... There's two reasons why you can... The establishment can either see green floating around that they didn't know existed or somebody, some miracle somebody, and it happens, has this amazing connection where somebody takes a chance on somebody's work. That's not built off of a good submission, that's off of people.

Those are the only two reasons why, but the main reason why, 9.999 times out of 10, is because they see green floating around that they ain't getting, and that's because you create your own stuff. They see it in green, they follow the green, then they find you. Now you've got a platform.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Andy?

Andy Edmunds:

Of course, they hit it right on the head there. This power of the storytelling, this medium, is what brought down the iron curtain. It broke up the Soviet Union, it was not necessarily a military threat. It was the people behind there starting to learn about the culture and freedom.

I was just at the Toronto Film Festival two weeks ago, right? I saw a documentary film called, *I Am Not Alone*. Filmmaker followed this guy who's a political dissident in Armenia. There was a dictator running the country, right? Filmmaker followed him around. In 33 days, they went from this dictator in power to this guy walking down the street with a filmmaker following him. Facebook, social media, big rally in the square. 50,000 people showed up at the square, took down the dictator. This guy is now President of Armenia. I mean true story. It happened in 34, 35 days.

That's the power of where you are. Not only with the storytelling in a 2D way, but with this integration with social media in a positive way to make the change you want to be right there. You have the tools to rally like-minded people with all the tools at your disposal. It's just happening right now. If I were a young storyteller, the sky's the limit right now with the tools at your fingertips.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

What is the audience's responsibility about how people of color are represented in media? What's your audience's responsibility in that process? Is there or are we just supposed to accept whatever anybody puts in front of us, or what is an audience supposed to do? Do you remember?

Anthony Stockard:

I heard it differently until that piece.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Oh, sorry.

Anthony Stockard:

You control your world with where you show up to, where the numbers are. That's true of anything. Where there's support, there is reinforcement, there is validation. If we do go to anything and say, "Well this is all that's there," it goes back to the green in the air. They're still like, "Well, you can say what you want, we could say they're not, but our demographics show that blah blah, blah, blah, blah." That's what they're going to go back to.

When I first heard the question, I thought it was what is the audience's responsibility, literally on them, to this, and then my answer was going to be everything.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Well, that was my original, and that's what I meant. In other words, as a consumer of this, if I'm seeing something... I'll give you an example. Okay. Because I watch a lot of television, obviously TV is a thing for me, but the commercials that are running now, where there's this whole push of African-American women with white men as couples. Okay. While I am all for inclusion, I wonder why don't I get to see African-American men with African-American women as couples?

What's my responsibility as the audience? And yes, I could not buy... I think about the Cheerios commercial where the people went berserk the first time. And what was that? That was a black man with a white woman. Cheerios lost all kinds of support. Is that what we have to do? Walk with our feet and walk with our dollars. If we see something that we don't like.

Anthony Stockard:

That's the only way you're going to put a dent in it. Otherwise, they'll... There's murmuring in the air, but we'll be alright. Right?

Barbara Hamm Lee:

We got to get past the murmuring.

Nate Parker:

We were at the 1619 Conference, right? 1619, 400 years. I think we have to recognize when they are explicit agendas to create a division in our communities. We have to recognize when it's being done through the things that we watch, the things that go viral. We just saw a chicken sandwich go viral.

It's funny, but it ain't funny. You know what I mean? We literally, and I'm dating myself, we're literally... for a week, you could not look at social media, am I right? I'm not reaching, am I? You couldn't look at social media without seeing people fighting in driving lines, black people mostly, over a fried chicken sandwich.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Think about the implications of that. I mean, honestly.

Nate Parker:

As we talk about the things that we see and how they influence our actions. When we talk about the responsibilities of the audience, at some point, we have to... *sankofa*, look back at the blood in the soil and allow that to influence our response to these different things that are being used to denigrate us.

My responsibility as a filmmaker is to create legacy. I said it earlier, I'll say it again. The thing that sticks out to me biblically, in the Bible says, a good man or a woman leaves an inheritance for his children's or his or her children's children. That haunts me every time I wake up, every time I go to bed, because I have children. What am I leaving for them?

When I heard that, I was so excited, I just saw it. My nephew was in it back in North Ridge in California, August Wilson? That's looking back, reaching back and bringing that forward. It is my responsibility. It's our responsibility on this panel and yours. We're all in media. You are on the radio to create product that will enrich you, your children, and your children's children. It's your responsibility, and I'm putting this on you, to watch the things or to support the things that are going to enrich you, your children, and your children's children.

We can't do it alone. Like you can't do it alone. If we're not creating it for you, you can't support it. It goes, it goes back to back and forth. When you see something you don't like, allow that to influence the next thing you watch on the television and the next thing that you support in social media. There's a lot of stuff coming. Like you said, it was a story of Harriet. There are some not so good things coming.

We just have to be vocal and intentional about the things that we put our money into. Is everyone familiar with page views? And ad revenues? It's important that you understand this. Okay? Every time you click on a website, the ads on that website make money for the website. Every single time.

If the headline comes up, you click on it and accidentally go back. They already got paid right. It's true. Everything that is being done now is being done with the focus of being monetized, which provides an opportunity for us because if you don't watch it, you don't click it, they lose money. They shift and they change. Ain't no soapbox is going to get people to change. There's no big and banging on the titanium that's' going to get people to change. The only thing is going to be to hit them in the pockets. Economic empowerment.

Whether we're making a film about our community or we're making a play, we're trying to get the community involved. Understand that they are allowing your dollars to create content. If you step up and say something or, because I honestly, I think it's courage to say even what you just said. If that was on your mind, I'm sure you in your head like, do I say this?

It's going to take courage as well to talk about the things that make us uncomfortable. I see more division between our men and our women, black men and black women, right now, in media, than I ever have as long as I've been in media. I am all for empowering our sisters. I have five daughters and four younger sisters in all ox.

We need to do it together. I went to a Black Lives Matter... and I'm going off on a tangent, I'm going to switch it up. I went to a Black Lives Matter, my very first one, when Trayvon died. A sister said, black queer women run the movement. We were like, yeah. I said to the sister, I said, and we want to be involved, tell us how. Help us because black women have been carrying black men for a very long time.

They have. This is speaking to the black women in the crowd. We want to be there. We want to... We're not perfect. In their historical implications as we sit in Virginia, probably on someone's plantation at some point. There were times when we had no voice on the plantation. Black women were the only voice and the reason why we were able to eat. They kept us alive. Now you go 400 years later, we want to join the conversation and we need your help. That kind of counter-programming to the division, I think can make us stronger when it comes time for creating better content for our people and supporting it and lifting up our communities.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

All right. For the next few minutes, we're going to take some questions from people in the audience because they have some questions too.

How do we increase viewership among non-African-Americans without going to bootleg copies? In other words, how do we get white folks to watch our stuff?

Anthony Stockard:

I'm going to try to answer that question by starting with just how do you get people to watch? When I first got here, at the institution, most people didn't even know theater existed. Students didn't know the community was not... I was warned, don't get your hopes up buddy, there might be 12 people in this audience.

I was like, what? I went out into the community. I went and found people, put up posters. I went everywhere. I went on Google, all kinds of organizations, did phone banks with the students. We sat in my office calling and making sure that the calls went... I mean, we did ground roots. You got to go find your audience, and that's just true, period. If you want diversity of audience, the same thing I did there... There were high schools, there were organizations.

I was like, look, if your organization comes, I will just let you come see the show. I will let you see the show because I am so sure about what we're doing here, that you'd be a dummy not to come back and see it again. Sometimes you have to go find them and sometimes you need to give them a little free sample, so that they can see what they're missing.

You can't force them to return. That's a mental thing about where they are, what they want us to involve. What you can sit safely on is that no stone went unturned and that you did your effort.

Our audience is very diverse. We do a hundred percent African-American plays because of where we at, but you come to our show, there's no telling what the demographic is at this point. At first, it was 100% African-American. You have to go out there, you have to partner with people, go into organizations, do the grassroots stuff, but at the end of the day, just like producers chase product, audiences chase experiences that validate or value them, and that's your job.

You can't just put them in the room and then try to blame them. You might want to look at what you're creating to see if it's of a caliber or of an elk that everybody likes. What I experienced that day had nothing to do with diversity. That was just bringing us into the room in a place.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

It's interesting. My radio show, as you know, we discuss today's issues from an African-American perspective. My audience is 90% non-African-American. I have more trouble telling black folks to listen to us than I do everybody else. Everybody else says, "Oh, this is a chance for me to have a conversation, to hear a conversation I normally wouldn't be privy to." Trying to educate our community about NPR, about talk as opposed to music. It's a challenge. You're right. You do have to go out and get your audience. Andy.

Andy Edmunds:

This is why I have hope for the younger generation out there because my kids, I have kids that are from 16 to 23 and I have a mixed family. I have two adopted sons from Ghana. Okay. My wife and I went out six years ago and adopted two teenage brothers from God. They just fell in front of us. We had no plans to adopt. It was just a faith driven thing. So bringing these boys back, they'd never been on an escalator, an elevator, never had a pizza, but they were educated from the orphanages they came from. I brought them back to Richmond, Virginia. These boys from Western Africa, from Ghana, were 16, 14 when they came. I had to explain Richmond, Virginia to my sons.

Nate Parker:

Wow.

Andy Edmunds:

They had been educated in history, so they understood a little bit about civil war and slavery. When I explained to them this city right here, in this block, Shockoe Bottom, your ancestors very well could have been sold as property right here, but here I am bringing you here as my sons.

That gave me, with this whole theme of American Evolution, that there is hope and we are evolving. Right? My point about that with my mixed family, is my kids, they don't care whether you're black, white, gay, straight, whatever. This younger generation, these prejudices had been taught by parents before that these young,... They don't care.

If the quality of the content is good, they want to watch it. I can tell you my white kids wanted to watch *Straight outta Compton* a hell of a lot more than *Forrest Gump*. It crosses over and if the

content is good... They listen to more hip hop than they listen to Taylor Swift or whatever. If the content is good, it will find an audience whether you're black, white.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

We got this question for now since I'm still with you, Andy, I want you to answer this. When filmmakers asked the Virginia tourism office about locations for filming, are they mainly concerned about the visual aspect and landscape or is there sometimes an inquiry about the history of what occurred at the place? Is that important to filmmakers?

Andy Edmunds:

It depends whether it's a documentary or a feature narrative. They care about that authenticity that we offer here in Virginia, but frankly, we more often play Virginia not as Virginia. We play as some other location with anything from New Orleans to Boston. That's what's chameleon-like about our state and what's valuable. It's a pallet for filmmakers that we can do almost anything here. We've played Costa Rica and whatever. We can do it all.

I'll tell you for Spielberg on *Lincoln*, I worked on that for nine years, by the way, trying to get that to Virginia, and it was a great opportunity. The irony that here they were filming *Lincoln* in the former capital, the Confederacy, they loved that.

I did too. It's like, here's *Lincoln* taking over the Confederate capital, and we really surrounded trucks around the State Capitol to produce that film. That poetry was felt through that movie, that kind of justice and coming back. That was pretty powerful. Filmmakers that are really good storytellers, they recognize that historical legacy, like with Harry Tubman, Cynthia Erivo, we were on a plantation where we were filming a lot of that, and that spirit and pain and blood was coming through her performance, and we all felt it. They felt it, the filmmakers felt it, so that authenticity does give us an opportunity.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Okay. Another question from our audience. Affluent African Americans generally support black films, but how do we get those with less means to see the films? Which one of you wants to tackle that one. Nate?

Nate Parker:

Okay. There are two ways I'm going to answer it. First, I'll say there's a streaming world. It's not just in the theater anymore. A lot of things have changed with respect to how people have access to content as it's distributed. When you make a film, it's not just Fox anymore. It's like Netflix, Amazon, Hulu. There are so many different pipes under the table. So, there's that. But is the question saying, so for Tidewater Park, where I come from, how do we get those people?

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Apparently.

Nate Parker:

So one of the things.. I did a film, I just shot a film called *American Skin* that deals with police violence in America, and I'm excited for it. One of the things we're doing right now is we're screening for mayors all across America, and then police chiefs. We're screening for, we were sorting out a screening at the CBC, which is now going to be in DC for those who are there. But I was in Egypt-

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Congressional Black Caucus.

Nate Parker:
Yeah, the Congressional Black Caucus. When a film comes out that speaks to the needs of young people, specifically those who cannot make it to the theaters or need it because they're not getting that curriculum in their schools, what you do is you lobby for people to buy theaters in those communities, right? And so anyone that's interested, we can talk after. But what you do is you say: "Okay, so let's say in Norfolk, Virginia, I personally will buy 10 theaters, and we'll go, Granby, Tidewater Park Elementary School, we're going to these communities, the Young's Parkland.". I know, I think a lot of names have changed to these...

Barbara Hamm Lee:
We know what you're talking about.

Nate Parker:
We know we're talking about. We'll go out, and I'll buy 10 theaters for those people. We'll run buses and get them to the theaters, and it will be underwritten by some of these institutions that have money earmarked for those very things. They might not tell you they do, but when you ask they'll distribute some of those funds usually.

But it's a community engagement thing. I've learned that it's great for the community, because you get people involved, those affluent people that may not be engaged with those people in those more marginalized communities have to intersect and have community to be able to have these opportunities for those kids that go to the film.

So we do that a lot. We've done that with every movie I've ever done. And we have curriculums. So like with the *Great Debaters*, Brian, my mentor, Brian and I, who was over here, we sat down and wrote out an entire curriculum, then contacted schools and went into the schools with the curriculum. And then the school sometimes will screen in there, like form the film. So there are different times and different ways that the product can make it to the people that need it most, because sometimes it's those that aren't in the most affluent, but it's really holding those in those positions of affluence accountable to be engaged with those communities to make sure the kids can see them.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Okay, Anthony and same thing for the theater.

Anthony Stockard:

Pretty much. You want to make an opportunity for them, you partner with organizations that can subsidize their experience. Or if it's in institutions' wherewithal to give time, place and space for those who you are certain would like to, would want to, and just don't have the means. It's the same thing.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Okay.

Andy Edmunds:
You can say broadband should be considered, water and power. I mean cause it creates the fair playing field and to be able to consume content, be able to create content and get it out there.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
So making sure that broadband is in those marginalized communities-

Andy Edmunds:
And is affordable or free.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
And people can afford it or free. Absolutely.

So do you guys, when you talk about the different ways of distribution and so forth, is there a nostalgia for: "Gosh, I really want people to go to the theater and see this film" as opposed to watching it on that little screen? Well, it's not little anymore.

Nate Parker:
You know, absolutely. But I think sometimes that can be selfish. You want them to have the experience. And for me it's all about wanting people to experience it together. Specifically when it's dealing with issues of race and trauma. I've seen theaters that were mixed theaters for films that I'd done, and they walk out in the lobby, and for the next hour, they stayed in the lobby talking to each other. And these are people that never would have communicated, that come from different parts of the community. So in that way, I'm selfish in wanting people to have to be able to engage with each other, but the world is changing. It's like people saying: "Don't you just want to go back to the typewriter? Remember when that, the smell of ink on the paper?" No!

Barbara Hamm Lee:
That would be no!

Nate Parker:
But that's what I'm saying. It's like people didn't want, people didn't think, remember the word processor and then going into the internet, and email was never going to work. Like there's nostalgia, and then there's evolution. Things are changing, and I think that you either have to evolve or you will evaporate in this industry.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

When you see a play on TV, does it kind of grate back here or are you okay with it?

Anthony Stockard:

It depends, to be honest. There is nothing that will replace human exchange in time and space at the same time. Nothing. It is as old as the oldest living, breathing person. It will never lose its value or place or purpose. It is communal. It was birthed from our politics a little bit, but mostly from faith and ritual, and nothing will ever replace that. I look at the people in the audience and I'm like, "Why are the people on the screen not realizing that your experience is not their experience?" You want to be in the room whenever possible, even if it's a film.

I remember when *Dreamgirls* came out and I went to go see it and Jennifer Hudson's singing, and I'm telling you, it was like being at the theater, it was like the 11 o'clock number and everybody stood up screaming and hollering, but I was at a film.

You can't replace those experiences and while you're doing this, you can't have that experience. You got to worry about: "Hold on, look, see?" And then it's just you and another person. At the same time. You respect and honor people's perspectives, how they've come to create and engage in their experiences. But oh my goodness, what a sad place it is when you don't have those communal experiences.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

I had some, some non-African-American friends talking with me about, I can't remember which movie it was, but it was the first time they'd ever gone to a predominantly black movie.

And they were like: "People talk in the audience, they talk!"

Anthony Stockard:

But it's the same thing in the theater. We go to places! Then it's like everybody has been trained to, you wait, deny your expression until the appropriate time. But you know, that ain't us!

Andy Edmunds:

It does kind of drive me crazy, I got to tell you.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

It drives you crazy?

Andy Edmunds:

It kind of drives me crazy a little bit I must say.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

And see, that's a cultural thing.

Anthony Stockard:

Like, coming from the theater, it's a different thing altogether, like they're trained to anticipate those experiences, not as a derailment, but as a place to give the audience space to commune, to experience. It's crazy sometimes-

Barbara Hamm Lee:

“Girl, don't go in there!”

Andy Edmunds:

That must come from the gospel church, like being inspired, and everybody's engaged and active, it probably comes from gospel church. When you take white people to gospel church, they're like: "What is going on here?! I like this!"

Anthony Stockard:

We did *Fences* here two years ago, and some lady over there, when he was doing the speech about, “I do blah blah blah.”

And she was disgusted. I don't know what kind of personal connection, she got disgusted! She screamed off though, she's like: "Hit him with a chair!" In the middle of the show! And it is one of our fondest memories. It was crazy.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Oh my goodness. Okay. We got less than five minutes, and I know this question, each one of you is going to want to answer differently. So for people trying to break into filmmaking or we'll say theater also, or media, let's generalize. Let's expand that a little bit. How do you recommend meeting people? What are practical suggestions for networking?

Anthony Stockard:

My first response is, I think that some of that's a waste of time. I think let them meet your work, not you.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Amen.

Anthony Stockard:

If you ain't making no noise, when you take the meeting, nothing's going to come from and nowhere. That's what I think.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

So put your work out there first, and then come.

Andy Edmunds:

But you know, I know artists that are amazing artists that have no social skills that are still sitting in their basement, especially musicians that are friends of mine, because I came from the music world. So I see what you're saying. Let the work speak for itself.

But I also believe that, and someone made this quote: "Your destiny lies at the intersection of your preparation and your opportunity," right? So you keep putting in your 10,000 hours on that skillset, and you keep being the best you can at whatever you want to be. If you want to be a cinematographer or an actor or whatever role you want to play, you keep putting in the work. And then when that window opens, and part of that work is your social ability to make relationships in those things, right? And when that window opens, you're ready to go through and that's your destiny there. So-

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Because if the window opens, but you don't know anybody...

Andy Edmunds:

Well if you don't know or if you don't have any skill, because your job in the film business is, especially for crew people, it comes from the people you know in the crew, "Hey, we're going to work on this." And everybody comes along, and they want to bring the friends they like to work with. They don't want to work with jerks. They want to work with people. They might have an equal skillset or might not even be as good as the other person. But it's those friendships, relationships, all the relationships you make that... It's a very nepotistic business, too. But those friendships are what will drive you to your next job.

But you've got to put yourself in the room too, maybe join, like for us in Virginia, the industry, if you want to get in Virginia industry, the Virginia Production Alliance is a group you can join. It's like 40 bucks a year, and you go to networking opportunities, and you meet people. You might find someone who is getting involved in a 48 hour film contest. You jump on a crew, you make a little short film before you know it, you're finding that you might have similar tenacity to the great Nate Parker here, which you might have.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Nate Parker. How do you network? What do we need to do?

Nate Parker:

I'm going to agree with Anthony, all that matters is the work.

Your job is to get your talent in front of the people that need it, and the sacrifice. You know, people ask me: "What do I need to do?" I say: "Move! What are you giving up?" And, "I live in Lynchburg, Virginia, and I'm going to be the biggest actor!" No, you're not.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Pretty much.

Nate Parker:

It's real. There's this fear of being a small fish in a big pond, but that's faith, right? Either you believe that it's your destiny, and God has put you in that position or you don't. Either you believe he will keep you if you move out to Hollywood or Atlanta where the work is or you

don't. But I tell you what, if you do, and you're willing to work 10,000 hours to get to that talent level, you will have a career.

There's this quote that "Hard work beats talent, but only when talent doesn't work hard." There are people that are born with talent. Yes. And that can do it with the eyes closed. Yes. But most of those people, we don't know their names. The people we know are the people that looked to those people with the talent and outworked them and went to where they needed to go and figured out ways to distribute their work.

You know, if you want to show people you're the best director in theater, you may have to shoot the play and put it online. And then tweet about it or take your favorite scenes. If you are a filmmaker, you want people to know your work, shoot a scene, or go to Norfolk State, whatever. Go: "Do we have cameras? Can I take an online course?"

Shoot the scene that you want people to know that shows your talent. I had to do 12 short films before people gave me the money to do *Birth of A...* No one would take me seriously. My agents wouldn't read my script. You'd be like: "Why wouldn't they?" Because that was making money as an actor, right?

I'm shooting *Beyond the Lights* and calling my agents between shots. Like: "All right, did you guys read it?" They're like: "Bro, go get the money! What are you doing?" And I'm like: "That's cool, but did you read the script?" The thing was done, but it really was a function of me being just desperate about showing people that though the work is there and that if they embrace it, it can have an impact somewhere.

So whoever you are and whatever your goal, if you're not uncomfortable, you're doing something wrong. If you're not giving something up, you're doing something wrong. You wake up every day, you watch other people's stories. You're like: "I'm a filmmaker. Someone going to call me." No, they're not. They're not going to call you. No one's going to call you. If you're doing this all day, especially now in the age of digital and content creation, this gets you no work, nothing. I'm telling you because I've been there. Nothing.

I see it with these young people, and I tell my students all the time, if you're not creating, you won't exist. Create something, and I'm telling you, if you're willing to shoot on that phone, in my last film, we shot six cameras. We shot GoPros, we shot surveillance cameras, we shot the Alexa, we shot iPhones, we shot a Panasonic, and we shot a Fuji. We shot everything and I did that and invited my students so they could see, it doesn't have to be the \$200,000 camera. It can be an \$80 GoPro, and you stick it up and it'll cut. Because people in the audience, they don't, "That was Alexa, I'm going to close my eyes. That was an iPhone. Now it's Alexa." No one cares. Did you move them or did you not?

So my answer to that question is get uncomfortable and get uncomfortable fast. And that'll be the first step to where you achieve your goals in this business.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

All right. Wow! You guys.

So, let me read these very, very quickly. We have some after audience questions, the poll that was done. The first question in the poll was, do you believe that films, news, and popular culture entertainment play a significant role in shaping perceptions of people of color? 93% said yes. Are there more balanced images of people of color today being offered by filmmakers, storytellers, historians, and now novelists? 60% said yes. 30% said they needed more discussion. Okay. Cause it is something that's to think about. Do you think that delving deeply into our family histories helps us better understand who we really are? 89% said yes. And finally, are DNA tests and family histories providing a better understanding of the American story? 50% said yes, 30% were unsure. So, interesting.

So storytelling as a powerful tool has played a pivotal role in this topic. Sometimes divisive, often hopeful, which is the thing I loved about you all's conversation and will continue to be a cornerstone for the future. It comes with a huge responsibility that each of our panelists have taken with great pride. Thanks to each of you and thanks to everyone in our audience for contributing to this conversation with your questions. Now it is time for lunch. We want you to come back here at 1:15 please. Those of you who are watching us do the live stream, come back a little after one and we're going to have another session.

Finding America's Roots

Barbara Hamm Lee, Executive Producer and Host, Another View, 89.5

WHRV-FM/WHRO Public Media

Dr. Joanne Braxton, Frances L. and Edwin L. Cummings Professor Emerita, William & Mary; Founder, William & Mary Middle Passage Project

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax, Lieutenant Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia

Dr. Michael Gomez, Silver Professor of History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University, and the director of NYU's Center for the Study of Africa and the African Diaspora

Christina M. Rasberry, Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College Senior Fellow at Norfolk State University

Ric Murphy, National Vice President for History, Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:

Good afternoon everyone.

Audience:

Good afternoon.

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:

Welcome back to our 1619: Making of America Summit. Now we have a wonderful program for you, one in which we hope it will be interesting, insightful but most especially thought provoking. And right after this program you're invited to attend four of our terrific breakout

sessions, so you can choose which one you want to do and they're all beginning at 3:30 PM. And so check your app for the location or it's in your program.

And so the sessions include “America's Narrative Reframed” and it will be moderated by historian, civics educator, and museum professional who received his PhD in American studies from the College of William & Mary, my alma mater, and a BA in history from Christopher Newport University, Dr. William White.

The second breakout panel, “Finding America's Roots,” will be moderated by a professor of early American and Native American literature whose work has appeared in journals such as *American Literature*, *American Quarterly* and *Native American and Indigenous Studies* among others, Dr. Drew Lopenzina.

The third breakout session, “America's Future, Citizenship, and The Law” will be moderated by professor with expertise in modern European history, the African diaspora history, comparative world history, race relations, and current events. He was also very instrumental in the planning and direction of the “1619: Making of America Summit” and I'll do my little plug in, my husband, Dr. William Alexander.

And finally “Re-Imagining Representations of People of Color.” It will be moderated by the chair of the department of history and interdisciplinary studies here in Norfolk State University and a specialist in African-American Women Studies, Dr. Khadijah Miller.

When the breakout sessions are over, Mr. David Bearinger, who is the Director of Grants and Community Programs at the Virginia Humanities, will be meeting with the moderators. He'll also be stepping in in these sessions and seeing how the conversation is going. Then during tomorrow's morning session, which I hope all of you will be here, he will give us a brief report about each breakout session, especially as you've heard some of these polling results where people have said, "Let me discuss this topic more."

Now onto our program. Our presenter this afternoon moved with his family from Pittsburgh to Northeast Washington, D.C. when he was just five years old. After graduating from DeMatha Catholic High School, he went on to earn his undergraduate degree from Duke University, after which along with many other jobs in politics, he served on the staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He later graduated from Columbia Law School and went on to work for a variety of judges and lawyers before joining the US Attorney's office, and later served as a federal prosecutor in Alexandria, Virginia. In 2013, he ran for the position of State Attorney General, and although he lost by only a slim margin, he was endorsed by the Washington Post which wrote that he displayed "an agile and impressive command of the issues with a prosecutor's passion for justice."

In 2017 he was elected by the people of Virginia to be their lieutenant governor, only the second African-American to be elected to a statewide office. The first being L. Douglas Wilder. Please join me in welcoming the lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Honorable Justin Fairfax.

Justin Fairfax:

Thank you very much. Thank you. Good afternoon everyone.

Audience:

Good afternoon.

Justin Fairfax:

Thank you all so much for joining us here on this wonderful and momentous occasion. I'm honored to get to be here to speak with you about a subject that really touches all of our lives here in the Commonwealth of Virginia, but also around this nation. And I know that there are people who are watching online around the country and we welcome them and we thank them as well. Doctor gave a very generous and warm introduction and she mentioned in that introduction that I had run for office. Prior to running for lieutenant governor, I ran for attorney general of the Commonwealth of Virginia. And in 2013, as she mentioned, although we didn't quite win, we got over 48% of the vote, we traveled all around Virginia and got to meet some extraordinary people. And I got to know people who built the foundation of a relationship with the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia that we have grown and that I cherish to this day.

But to show you how your kids can sometimes put things into perspective for you, when I launched our campaign in 2016 for election in 2017 to lieutenant governor, we once again traveled in the car all around Virginia. After one particular trip where I was gone for about two or three days and had not seen my young family, my wife and two kids for several days, I got home just in time to put our kids to sleep. And I thought that it'd be a very tender, beautiful, wonderful father-son moment because they had not seen their dad in a few days. I took my son, carried him upstairs, tucked him into the bed, and he then looked up at me and I thought that he'd say something really sweet and nice to his dad. He said, "Daddy." And I said, "Yes Cameron." He said, "Are you actually going to win this time?"

So he had remembered that we didn't quite make it the first time, but your kids will put things in perspective and show you also what is important in life. And I am honored to serve as the 41st lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. I am honored to represent the eight and a half million people here in this Commonwealth that make it such a phenomenal place to live. And in particular in this moment in history where we stand at the intersection of 400 years since the meeting of the General Assembly, Jamestown in 1619, but also 400 years since the first enslaved Africans were forced to land right in this area in Hampton, Fort Monroe, Point Comfort. And I stood several weeks ago alongside citizens and leaders as we commemorated that landing of what they called in the history books, 20 some odd Africans. And I thought about their experiences, what they went through, what hopes and dreams and aspirations they had even in the midst of something as horrific as enslavement.

And I also felt some inspiration by looking back on that history, because among the 20 some odd Africans on a ship called The White Lion were two people, one Anthony and one Isabella. And several years after they were forced to land, they found love even in the midst of enslavement. And they had a child who they named William Tucker. William Tucker was the first African

child named, born in English North America. About eight miles up the road from Fort Monroe, is the Tucker family cemetery. And I had the opportunity and the occasion to be with the Tucker family and their descendants on that hallowed ground where they believe William Tucker and the descendants of Tucker family are buried. It was a cemetery that to me represented life more than it represented death. And I thought about the famous saying that they tried to bury us but they didn't know we were seeds.

Because from that Tucker legacy, has sprung an extraordinary line of people who have not only been a strong family for themselves, but who have shown us all here in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the power of faith, of hope, of education, of perseverance, of resilience, and that nothing is impossible. And so as we stood there 400 years later, I recognize the power that is within every single one of us. I like to say that we all have different versions of the same story and there is power in knowing our story. There is power in the truth. And there is power in knowing from whence we came. I got a particular and specific reminder of that fact during the week of our inauguration in 2018 because it was discovered that week how my family got the last name, Fairfax. In the old Fairfax County Courthouse, someone located a manumission document that had freed my great, great, great grandfather, Simon Fairfax from slavery in Fairfax County, Virginia on June the 5th, 1798.

He was freed by a man named Thomas Fairfax who was the ninth Lord Fairfax. My father got a copy of that document two days before our inauguration. He gave a copy of it to me and I saw it for the very first time in my life, 20 minutes before I walked out the steps of the Capitol on Inauguration Day, to take the oath of office as the 41st lieutenant governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. So I had a copy of that document in my breast pocket as I raised my right hand to take the oath. And in that moment I felt the weight of history. I felt a calling, not just for me, but for us all. I thought about Dr. King's famous words, that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it ultimately bends toward justice. Because 220 years later, Simon Fairfax's great, great, great grandson was being sworn in as the number two in command of the very same state where he had been enslaved. God is very good.

And I think that that was not just a powerful moment again for my family, but really for Virginia and for the nation because it is the strand that runs through each one of our lived experiences. As I mentioned, we all have different versions of the same story. And as we think back to our individual families, as you think back to your ancestors, to those that you knew and those that you did not know, and think about the power of their example in your lives, this is something that we carry forward and that we live with and hopefully will make us better as people and as a commonwealth and a community every single day. I also was mentioning that when the 20 some odd Africans landed in Fort Monroe, reports would often say that they arrived here with nothing. But I actually believe that that's not true. Because having nothing would not have allowed these brave surviving souls to endure months long, brutal journey on the wooden haul of a ship.

Having nothing would not have allowed them to believe in the capacity of love, even as degradation and hate was their daily lived experience. Having nothing would not have provided them with the internal fortitude to carry forward to believe that tomorrow could be brighter than today. So I believe they actually had something more valuable than anything we have ever seen.

They had something I like to call spiritual wealth. That's the faith, it's the values, it's the tenacity, it's the perseverance. It is the belief that there's something larger than ourselves that is worth fighting for. And that's how we were able to come 400 years starting in that place to where we now stand today.

And I believe that our calling as a community right now is to determine how the next 400 years will look in our nation. It is a heavy responsibility for us all, but I believe that if we rise the better angels of our nature, if we build people and communities up and do not allow people to tear others down, that we will set a tone for the next 400 years that will make it look very different from the prior 400. We have to be intentional about that work. We must focus on courage. We must stand up for the truth. We must not be in the business of searching and destroying, but rather of uplifting and bringing those along with us.

There's an old African proverb that says if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far go together. And that is really what we have to do is to go together. And I wanted to share another quick story from my children who again amused me to no end. Our son Cameron is nine, and our daughter Carise is eight. But my son on another occasion told me something that I really will never forget. He was only three years old at the time and he had gotten very interested in wildlife videos on YouTube. He watched them incessantly for weeks and weeks and weeks on end. And then on one occasion he came to me after having lost these videos and he said, "Daddy." He said, "Did you know that hyenas hunt in a pack?" And I said, "Yes Cameron. I knew that."

And then he said, "Well daddy, did you know that lions hunt in a pride?" And I was impressed that he was distinguishing between those two. And I said, "Cameron, I did know that." But I wanted to test his comprehension because I didn't want him just to be repeating things that he had seen on this video. So I said, "Cameron, why do lions hunt in a pride?" And he looked at me at three years old and said something that I will never ever forget. He said, "Daddy, lions hunt in a pride because when they work together they can take down much bigger prey." And I said at three years old, he got the concept that we are more powerful together. Now I did correct him and said, "Lionesses actually run the pride, so you better correct yourself right now. The men don't do very much."

So he got his first lesson in feminism that day as well, and that is very important. But I want to thank you all. I want to thank you individually, because what makes our commonwealth great, what makes our nation great is our people. It's people who are willing to get up every single day, even in the face, sometimes of very long odds and put one foot in front of the other, who are willing to go out and take a risk to help someone else, who are willing to stand up in the truth and for the truth, who want to create more opportunity for others, including people they may never have even met.

And I say that opportunity is the oxygen of a democracy. Where it exists, people and communities grow and thrive. Where it does not exist, people and communities can die. And so let's be about the work of creating more opportunity for every single person regardless of the color of their skin, who they love, what God they pray to, what zip code they live in. It is our

solemn responsibility to make sure that we rise in the next 400 years. God bless you all. Thank you very much for the opportunity. I appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you very much.

VOG:

Once again, please give a warm welcome to our moderator, Barbara Hamm Lee.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Hello everybody. Hi. Good afternoon and welcome back to all of you here on the campus of Norfolk State University, at the Ground Center and also the welcome of the 1619 Making of America Summit who've been with us thus far. And welcome to new participants in the room and in schools across the commonwealth and this nation as we live stream this historic events as part of the 2019 Commemoration: American Evolution. My name is Barbara Hamm Lee and it is my pleasure to introduce you now to our panelists for this important topic, Finding America's Roots. We covered a tremendous amount of ground this morning as we explored re-imagining representations of people of color. Please join me again with a warm round of applause for all those panelists who are with us this morning.

And before we get started, just a reminder that you all are a big part of this program and you can actively participate by getting on the 1619 Making of America app where you can participate in our polling. The result of which we will discuss up here on stage. And this session will conclude with the Q & A portion. So on the app, you can submit questions you'd like us to ask our panelists. A few questions will be selected to be asked here on stage, time permitting, and get those questions in before 2:00 PM to be considered.

It is now my honor to introduce a great panel for this afternoon's session topic, "Finding America's Roots." We'll be hearing perspectives from authors, historians, and a professor. Once again, I direct you to the panelists' full bios on your event app.

Our next panelists:

The Frances L. & Edward L. Cummings Professor of Humanities Emerita at William & Mary, please welcome Dr. Joanne M. Braxton. There she is. Come on out.

You are seated right here.

Dr Joanne M. Braxton:

Thank you.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

And now, please welcome the National Vice President for History for the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, Mr. Ric Murphy.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

I'm good.

Ric Murphy:
How've you been?

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Right there please. Thank you. And please welcome back the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, the honorable Justin E. Fairfax. Come on governor. Christina, you wait until I introduce you.

Justin Fairfax:
Thank you so much.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Absolutely. Have a seat right there. Now see, just like a student. And last but certainly not least, a student from right here at Norfolk State University. She hails from California. She is a transfer student who came to NSU and just fell in love. Christina Rasberry. Now Christina. Now. Hi sweetie. Have a seat.

Christina Rasbe...:
That was not that far.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Well good afternoon everyone. Thank you so much for joining us this afternoon. So I have to pull out my little cheat sheet here. Hold on. So I know your story, but I heard last night at 10:30 when I Googled you, I heard your 1619 story, and I wonder if you would share it with our audience.

Ric Murphy:
Well, I was here last night and I heard the students in the documentary and I was so impressed. And I had to think about what I was like at their particular age a hundred years ago. And it was a period where I also took an African-American history class. And that was when I started my genealogy quest back in 1976. It wasn't until 1982 that I realized through my grandmother, that her grandmother was a Gowen. Now that name had no meaning to me coming from the Boston area, but what I have since found out is that Harry Gowen, my great, great grandmother, was descended from John Gowen and Margaret Cornish, who were the first documented Africans that came here in 1619 wow.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Wow. So you trace your family all the way back?

Ric Murphy:
Yes.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
And you go further than 1619, don't you?

Ric Murphy:

I go back, way back.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

So what did you find out? You're going to make me pull it out of you...

Ric Murphy:

John Gowen and Margaret Cornish, we believe that they were on the *Treasurer*. There were two ships that came here. The first was the *White Lion* and that was the first group that got off, 20 or so in number. Then the second ship, when it came to Point Comfort, it was not allowed to land or they took off immediately, one or the other. My ancestors were on the *Treasurer*. They went to Bermuda, they then went to England, and they came back, a perfect Bermuda triangle. They both lived on the James River in two different plantations that were side by side, and the rest is history. They had a child, Mihill or Michael, and that's the line that I come from. So it's a very interesting line, and we have a book coming out about it sometime next year about a number of the Angolans who came here.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

You have relatives in the American Revolution and the Sons of the Revolution and so forth?

Ric Murphy:

I am descended from 13 men who served in the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, 12 of them, African-American from the north and from the south.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

That's incredible.

Ric Murphy:

And what's interesting is my free ancestors came from the south. My enslaved ancestors came from the north, which is unusual for anybody.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Now I know that Justin, you've... Excuse me, lieutenant governor.

Justin Fairfax:

No, still my name. You can call me that, no problem.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

You've traced her history, you've traced yours, what about you, Dr. Braxton? Joanne, have you done your genealogy?

Joanne M. Braxton...:

It's a little known fact that the reason I came to William & Mary was to search further into my genealogy. We didn't have all the digitized options that we have today, but I know that Braxtons come from Virginia. I immediately looked at the Braxton shipping records at Colonial Williamsburg. So the story goes that my great grandmother had been stolen from the mountains

by a ship captain, but that she was a woman who was considered African-American, but was white in appearance, but had the cultural behaviors of an African woman, that she could walk with a bucket of water on her head while smoking a pipe.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
Wow, wow. What a visual.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:
But arriving at William & Mary, there was a larger cultural need. So in 1995, I founded The Middle Passage Project at William & Mary. Looking forward to this day, and throughout those years, I didn't really have the opportunity to go back into my own individual story because the communal story was more important.

Meanwhile, I was training students to do this work. So today, because of my students, I know that the Braxton family, the white Braxton family, imported thousands of slaves directly from Africa into Westpoint, Virginia where George and Carter, two graduates of the college of William & Mary resided. That they always insisted on at least half that number being female.

Today, Westpoint has been recognized as a site of memory by UNESCO, this very recently. So when everyone else was down in Hampton on August 25th, I was in Westpoint with the Reverend Dr. Rebecca Parker, who's here in the audience, leading a conversation among descendants of both sides on healing the land we share.

We poured libations, we stated our reasons for being present, and we expressed our hopes with the future and how the expanding dialogue and changing narrative on 1619 might help us go forward in healing.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
Wow. That's fantastic, that's amazing.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
That's incredible. Christina, have you chased trace your genealogy or have you thought about it?

Christina M. Rasberry:
I honestly didn't think about it until yesterday.

Ric Murphy:
There's always a beginning.

Christina M. Rasberry:
Yeah, there's always a beginning, but one thing happened like a while back, my grandma passed away, and when she passed away I was like, "Oh God, there's so many questions I never got to ask her." There's so many things about everything before me that I just never got to ask. It was kind of like in that moment where I grew an appreciation for my past and wanting to know more. You know what I mean? Not really knowing where to start because sometimes we're younger,

we see the commercials, ancestry.com and stuff like that but it costs, so we ignore it. But we really don't know where to start most of the time. So it's just sometimes you might come from a family where they don't even know about their history, and they don't really know about their family. So you're just stuck knowing little bits and pieces and stuff like that. So I never really took like full initiative to pay that \$39.99.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Well, they may give you some tips before you... you don't know. But I want to ask the three of you what, how did this knowledge change you as an individual? Think about yourself prior to knowing your history and then think about yourself now that you know where you've come from. What's the difference?

Ric Murphy:

For me, it was very interesting. I was fortunate that I knew both of my, all four of my grandparents, and my grandmothers were very strong women. And my grandfathers liked to talk about their families, and the grandmothers were not going to be outdone. So whenever there was the holiday gathering, as young people we always heard about the family. There were these stories about the family. There were these stories about what they did, what they accomplished, where they live, what they owned. My mother's side, my mother's father, that line came from Massachusetts back to the 1700s, but her mother and my father's parents came from Virginia, so they would make that pilgrimage back to Virginia. So we always heard these stories, and unfortunately for me, the history that I heard as a young child was not the history that I read in school.

So to have these African American men who served in the Revolutionary War made no sense to the teachers, when I would share with them what I learned at home and they wanted to know, were they cooks, or did they dig the ground for the trains and to say no, they were soldiers. They were actually heroes, they actually were prisoners of war, disconnected with what I learned in school. As I became older, I realized that that oral history now had a meaning because I had the opportunity to research it and validate it.

So that's why as a historian now, I can really connect with all of this and I understand the frustration where someone would say, this really has no meaning to me and it's not till you reach a certain age that you realize the importance, but more important, 1619 has such an importance because it started in 1619, 2019 we're learning about it. In 2021, take it beyond, so that's really important.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

What about you, Dr. Braxton? What made it a difference in learning and in knowing?

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

I have never not known. I lacked the particulars, but growing up my grandmother imparted knowledge that had been passed down to her. I started taking the oral history of my family around 1970 in a formal way. My grandmother said to me, "We have a home over there." This is what my father told me and this was what my grandfather told me and her farthest ancestor back.

Peyton, excuse me ... Peyton Taylor Harrison. My family names are Johnson, Braxton, Harrison, Butler and Wings. Can you get any more Virginian than that?

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
That's true.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

So while I wait for ancestry.com to help me fill in the particulars, the DNA verifies that this is where we were. This is where we have been and we have been here a very long time. I am one of those few people who went away to an Ivy League school and did Black Studies. I have been doing this my entire life and I will do it as long as God gives me breath because the ancestors are here with us.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
Absolutely.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

And they need something from us. It's not just us. When Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter*, he knew what his ancestors wanted him to do. When Toni Morrison wrote *Song Of Solomon*, or *The Ancestor As Foundation*, she knew. The artist interprets ancestral presence for the rest of us that we may feel it in our bones and live into the promise they imagined.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Wow. Every now and then as an interviewer, you just meet people you talk to, you just go, "I got nothing." That's just incredible, I just want to absorb that, what you just said? How did it change you?

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

You know it, it changed me, I think, like these other wonderful panelists and very profound and very real ways. It's a very practical, political matter. I was able to convince people I didn't change my last name just to run for office here in the Commonwealth of Virginia. But we learned where that Fairfax came from.

And my father had actually begun this journey for us back in the early '90s, and he's the family genealogist. The way it started, and you mentioned here you've got to start somewhere, and there's always some particular story that gets you interested in it, was that both of his parents passed away, my grandparents.

And when he was growing up, there was a trunk in the basement of the home that his parents would never let him get into. They kept it locked. He asked what was in there. They said, "Mind your business, it doesn't matter."

And so he, he literally told me this, he said, "Well, once they pass away," he said, " ... they can't stop me now." So he went and he popped the lock on the trunk and in it he found a number of family heirlooms, including an old family Bible. He flipped open the old family Bible and it had

birth, marriage and death records, and that's how our journey began. So he started the early '90s and took him over 20 years to start to trace back. He worked with some other people who were just wonderful people, some of whom not even in our family, and they were able to piece the puzzle together, but we got stuck right around the early 1800s and then it was that week of my inauguration that they said, "We're taking take one last shot at it." Went to the old courthouse, found the actual document from 1798 which I've gotten to touch in my own hands and found out how we got our last name.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
That's incredible.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
So that ... It's been an empowering journey.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
So Christina, does this give you pause? Does it make you want to go rustle up the rest of your relatives and talk to them? I mean, from a young person's perspective, why does any of this matter?

Christina M. Rasberry:
Why does it matter?

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Mm-hmm.

Christina M. Rasberry:
I feel like because you have to know where you come from. I know it sounds really cliché, but I think it's really important to put in the effort. Even though I might have said that I was being cheap, I still think that it's important to put in the efforts as far as knowing your history, knowing what your past family members basically, what they went through, who they were, what they consist of, the characteristics, having an understanding of your ancestors so you know who you are.

I feel like, I'm on the stage, and I'm reflecting and I'm like, "Do I really know who I am?" If I don't know where I come from, if I don't know where we started, how do I really know who I am? I know who I am today as a scholar, but do I know who I am as a black woman? You know what I mean? I think it's really important for the youth to put effort into caring about our ancestors because they went through a lot, you know what I mean? They went through a lot to find love and keep love. They went through a lot to travel.

They just went through a lot to just live, and here we are in 2019 just living our lives, on our iPhones, just not really caring about anything, and there's so much history going on. We lose family members, we lose great aunts, we lose grandmas, grandpas, and every time we lose someone, we're losing the opportunity to have more of an oral opportunity to find a connection to

something where we do realize, all right, I should probably trace back to at least as far as I can trace back to, as far as my pockets will allow me to trace back to, you know what I mean?

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
We're going to give you \$39.99.

Ric Murphy:
Yeah, we'll take a collection. It's actually \$49.99 once you...

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:
Done. It's done.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
We're paying for it, right?

Christina M. Rasberry:
I do accept Cash App by the way. I'll give you guys that info later, but no, in all seriousness though, I really do think that in my generation, we don't really care. Not necessarily me, I was just being cheap, but we don't really care to know. I know a lot of people where they're just like, "That doesn't affect me," or, "That doesn't have anything to do with me." Some people who are just, they care more about the moment.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Hopefully by the time they hear the end of this conversation, that thought will change, because it really does make a difference. I had the honor of moderating a panel with Jamestown Settlement back in August. We were talking about tracing Angelo. Do you know who Angelo is? Okay, good.

Angelo, the first woman, documented woman, from the 20 and odd slaves that came to Point Comfort, and they're doing the archeological dig and so forth. But what I found interesting, and I want to direct this to the two historians in the middle here first.

There's still argument, not argument, but there's still tension, I'll put it that way, in the museum world, in terms of what's important, who really founded, did this really happen, and so forth. I just found it fascinating that in 2019 we would still be grappling with the history when the facts are there. So I'm curious. I'll start with you, Dr. Murphy, because you study this all the time, but is that another way to stop the progress as we try to recognize that we're all Americans?

Ric Murphy:
Well, it's interesting. I go up and speak all the time, all around the country, and when you put it in perspective, we've known about 1619 for 400 years. John Rolfe wrote that letter, but they disappeared, because nobody was really interested in them, and that's what's really unfortunate. It really didn't come to light until 1997 when Engel Sluiter found in Portugal documentation about where these first documented Africans came from. He found out what city they came from, historical events that were going on at the time, why they were kidnapped and stolen. He found

out what ship they were on. He found out all the particulars about their journey from Jamaica to the Bay of Comanche to be pirated by two ships and brought here. So as a result of that, all of a sudden he gave these people life. Now, the census records have been in the archives across Virginia counties and in the library for years.

So when I hear people say we don't know their names, you can go to the 1624, 1625 muster, and their names are right there. It says where they lived and you can begin to trace their lives. Now, we're told they were enslaved, but then we find that these people actually bought land. They owned land, they owned animals, they indentured their own children, so they themselves wouldn't be enslaved. So all of a sudden, now we're in 2019, and there is so much research going on that we're giving life to these ancestors. What's really interesting is, and I know we're going to talk about DNA a little bit, but what's really interesting is this is a story that's not just a black story. As people are doing their DNA, they're finding Bantu in their DNA. When I go to these different functions, what I'm finding is there are many white people who come up to me, as many Europeans come up to me and say, "I've got Bantu, and I'm now finding out that I'm descended from these original Angolans."

Now, whether they came on the *White Lion* or whether they came on the *Treasurer*, or whether they came 10 years later on the *Fortune*, there were only 300 of them in the colony until 1650. So if your ancestry goes back to that time period, you're Angolan, these are your people, and now there's an incentive for people to find out who their people really are, who their ancestors really are. That's really what's giving life to all of this and much like the doctor said, when you begin to realize who your people are, all of a sudden you get passionate about it. That's one of the reasons why I'm very passionate, and go back to Christina and the family bible, I too am in possession of a family Bible that goes back to 1840. I've got all the names, but something happened in 1863. In 1863, one of my ancestors decided to serve in the Civil War, and they sent signs up north. If your sons go into the Civil War, your colored troops, and we catch them, we're going to sell them to slavery.

So my great grandfather, his mother cut pieces of his hair and put it in the family bible, because if he got caught, there were no pictures, there were no passports, there were no licenses-

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Wow.

Ric Murphy:

... and that was the only way to prove that he was her son if they had to go get him and she put it in the Book of Esther.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Wow, that's amazing.

Ric Murphy:

So you can see how this is ... This is important. This is passionate. So we don't really know who we are unless we know the strength of the people we came from, the perseverance that they went

through. I'm proud of my free ancestors, but I'm so much prouder of my enslaved ancestors because that's who built the country.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Did you want to respond, Joanne?

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

Yes. I'll take a crack at that. I'm really more of a literary historian with degrees in American Studies, so I think it's tremendously important to examine the way the reframing of the narrative opens new possibilities for all of us. I've been out to Jamestown and looked at the site where they're trying to determine the actual habitation for Angelo and it's so important for us to begin to be able to recognize specific ethnic groups, specific peoples in Africa, specific rituals associated with a specific peoples to recognize the highly likely interactions between indigenous Africans and indigenous Native American peoples who had similar folkways, similar foodways, similar rituals and to look at how they sustained themselves in a situation where they had a common oppressor who was trying to set them against each other. I'm a member of the Weyanoke Association for the Preservation of Red-Black culture. This is an important organization founded by Hugh and Anita Harrell and I just want to say thank God for Hugh Harrell, who joined the ancestors this year. So important to have created these alternative spaces in their annual Coming Together festival where these interrogations could occur.

So there are some areas where this conversation has been going on for a long time and now we have the recognition of this discourse in The New York Times and elsewhere. Let us not forget the political economy of slavery as Eugene Genovese, called it, and the fact that our native cousins had to be swept away before tobacco and cotton could be established. So if there was a Weyanoke tribe, it was gone by the time William & Mary was established in 1693 either through forced migration, genocide, or intermarriage with people who would become red-black people today.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

So I have a two part question then, because first of all, I have an uncle who used to say ... God rest his soul, but he would say sometimes y'all need to let those roots lie. I wonder, is this an opportunity as we learn more about our ancestors and about our history, is this an opportunity for us to come together as the races, or is it another opportunity for us to even push further apart as people start to feel either guilty because their ancestors were the slave holders, for example, or their ancestors were slaves and they were embarrassed by that, or whatever. So is it a joiner or is it a divider?

Ric Murphy:

I really think it's one where we have to correct the false narrative. There's 400 years of a false narrative out there, and I think it really has impacted us as a people. We know that when young boys in particular, as an educator, are in the fourth and fifth grade, there's something that happens to them that that triggers their not to be as interested in education as they were in first, second, third grade.

Coincidentally, those are the grades when you start talking about slavery and we hear all the time about how slavery is taught in school, and it's not taught in a way that's inclusive. It's not taught in a way that we begin to understand the importance of free labor in building our country. So I think it's important that we began to address all of those things in the past that helps us move forward in the future. When we talk about Angelo, we talk about Jamestown. I mean, I think the archeological work that they're doing is phenomenal. I'd like to see them do as much work, above-ground researching as they do below-ground researching. And I'm not sure if you're aware of the incident that happened to me back in this past May, where I was present, when one of the managers said that we know that the Africans were enslaved because their skin was black, which represented dark, dirty, and ugly. We know that the whites weren't enslaved because their skin was white, pure, and beautiful. And then the story went on ...

Barbara Hamm Lee:
That was in the narrative?

Ric Murphy:
It was in the narrative.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Wow.

Ric Murphy:
And the story went on with an example of five black princesses who wanted to go north so their skin could become white and beautiful. Now, yes, it was part of the narrative, and there was actual letter from Jamestown explaining that this was a 1605 play, and this came from a play, a fictitious play.
So it's important in 2019, that we begin to correct those false narratives, because we can't let the next generation hear something like that, that their skin represents black, dirty, and ugly. So, unless we address those things in the past, we can't move forward. And we need to leave a better world than what we inherited. So when a kid like me, reads about American revolutionary history and says, "My ancestors were in that war," not to have someone ask me, "Were they a butler or servant or something of that nature?" "No, they were a full warrior fighting for independence and liberty and justice for all."

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
That's right.

Really quickly, and I completely agree with that. And, just to your point about whether it can unify us or divide us, we actually have an example from the story that I told earlier. I mentioned how the ninth Lord Fairfax was the one who had freed my three-greats-ago grandfather, Simon Fairfax. Well, this past summer, I actually traveled with my family, wife and kids and in-laws, to the United Kingdom, and we went to York, London, and Leeds Castle, which is celebrating 900 years old this year. And we were actually hosted on that trip by the 14th Lord Fairfax. The current Lord Fairfax, Nicholas. He and our family and his family have gotten to become very, very good friends, and we've explored jointly this shared history.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
So it is coming together.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Yeah, it is coming together. And so we talk honestly about it. I think there can't really be healing if there's no truth. I think we have to be mature in the way that we approach this particular issue, and it's not about guilt. It's not about assigning blame, necessarily, but it is about having a clear-eyed view of who we all are and, more importantly, who we want to be when we talk about the next 400 years. And I think you also made a point about it's empowering to know your history, to know the odds that people have overcome throughout your lineage and throughout the generations because it then empowers you in your moment on this planet to do what you have to do to overcome odds and help other people to do the same.

So I know we've all learned certain things about our families. I've, for instance, learned that my four- or five-greats-ago grandmother owned about 200 acres of land in what is now Fairfax County, Virginia in the early 1800s. I see Delegate Ken Plum, actually, here.

The Honorable Kenneth R. Plum:
Yes, thank you for having me.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Our longest-serving delegate. It's actually in her district. She owned what is now the Dulles toll road in Reston, Virginia.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:
Wow.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

And I still got to pay for the toll road now, which is unfair, I think, but ... And she was sued in court for this land that she'd inherited from someone she'd fallen in love with, and she won in court. She was winning in court in the 1800s as a free black woman. She then passed that land down to her children, one of whom, her grandchild named Rose Carter, born Rose Fairfax. I was taken to her headstone in 2017. It is right behind a little, white church on Hunter Mill Road called Cartersville Baptist Church. And so what I learned is that my great, great, great, great grandmother donated land to build Cartersville Baptist Church. And named it after her daughter, Rose Fairfax, who got married and was then Rose Carter.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Wow.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

So you're seeing the ancestors everywhere. And I think that's true for all of us. But it can be something that unites us and heals us if we are honest and truthful about it.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Okay, so I know the director is going to kill me, but I got to ask this question because I think this is so important. I'm listening to all of us here talking about how we have our families intact and our grandmothers told us and our mothers told us and so forth. And I'm concerned about our families that are broken and that don't have the time to sit down and have these kinds of conversations around the dinner table. We're privileged in that way. What do we do? Or how do we help those who are more marginalized even so that they can start to learn and have an appreciation for their own history and to recognize that they do have value? What do we do?

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

I think we need to engage art scholarship as a spiritual discipline and as we do our work and we get more data, we need to pause and have contemplative practice and reflection to allow us to understand what we have been given and what our responsibilities are as well as what the impact on the present is. We are in a *sane culpa* moment. We have to look forward as well as backward. So when we contemplate the inequities and the dislocations and fragmentations of the present, we must gift ourselves the gift of time to reflect and to share and to remember that some of us do have blood from both sides, whether we like it or not. I started with two Braxton descendants and someone who had married into the family and the one who had married into the family said "this doesn't pertain to me. I just married into the family." The elder aunt who was white said to me and to the others present. "That's right. Blood don't flow backwards." So there are possibilities.

Christina M. Rasberry:

I also think it'd be nice in school and elementary and in some high school, we do learn about genes and biology and stuff like that. But I really think genealogy it's not something really instilled in us, you know what I mean? We brush certain parts of it because it's a criteria for us to learn that curriculum, but it's not introduced to us in a way of empowerment. It's not introduced to us telling us we should know more beyond physical traits and dominant traits and recessive traits. We just get a very surface introduction to it.

I think children starting very young, if they knew the empowerment behind, just knowing their family beyond their mom, beyond their grandma, and like really had a real understanding of it, Starting them young. I feel like when they do get into that developmental age, when they're older, you can't tell teenager anything and they turn into an adult that you can't tell anything. It's just a cycle. But I felt like we don't get a lot of information about what it consists of because it's more than a biological aspect. It's a historical aspect, it's a cultural aspect, it's a mental aspect, it's a physical aspect, you know what I mean?

Just like you were saying knowing where you come from, knowing you come from strong people, knowing you come past athletes, past hard workers. If you know who you come from, I feel like mentally being a college student or just being a younger adult, it can kind of help you look back. Knowing you come from strong people kind of gives you strength to keep pushing to pass that exam, just to do certain things that we deal with. I feel like we look at our mom who's strong, who may look at our grandma who's strong, but what about our ancestors who were even stronger? But we don't get introduced to it at all.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

I think there's power in letting people know that they are worthy to be documented. And you think this idea for all of us, think about if there's somebody who's very close to you, who you thought it was very close to you, who forgets your birthday or forgets to call. Now just imagine that same person for gets a whole generation of your lineage, right? The pain that you feel when it's not worthy to remember is multiplied dramatically when you talk about forgetting about an entire line of people who came before us. And in fact that was part of the cruelty of slavery was that in many cases there were not records kept of them. Sometimes as property, of course. But it was sort of meant to reinforce the fact that you don't matter enough for history to take notice of you. What we're now doing is going back to the extent that we can and reaffirming the dignity of our ancestors.

I don't believe that we're giving them dignity cause I believe they had dignity in that moment and they have dignity today. But we are reaffirming that dignity and we want to make sure that everyone going forward has the exact same foundation, exact same basis and understands that we care deeply about them, that we are all uniquely human, uniquely important.

God has placed us here for a purpose and for a reason and we are going to make sure that we stay connected in that way. And I think it's something that does provide power and it something also can help heal broken families. When people know where they come from, they know from whom they come, then they're much more likely to want to carry that name. With pride, you think about a lot of young people who feel no connection to their families, to their communities. They feel a sense of worthlessness and we reinforce that by not taking notice of them. And that then dictates a lot of behavior that you see. So we have got to, if we want to heal the individual person, I think healing our history has got to be part of that. And that's why I'm excited about the work that everyone's engaged in.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

So I'm a single mother, I don't have time. I don't even remember what my mom had told me. How do you incorporate this discussion? Make it a part of everyday life in terms of what we do. I remember my household, there could be something that would happen and my mother would say, "Oh, your grandmother used to tell me..." And that was the lesson. It wasn't framed as, let me give you this genealogical piece of information here that you need to know, but it was more about this is who you are and this is where you come from. How do we help people to start to incorporate that?

Ric Murphy:

Well, I'm the national vice president for history for an African American historical genealogical society. So I look at it from historical perspective and I look at it from a genealogical perspective. I hate to say this, but the older I became, the more I was like my father. I know he would always say that because he and his father had conflict and he would always say, "the older I became, the more I became like my father." So all of a sudden I began to realize, it's almost like three generations. While we may not think about it on a day to day basis, we don't really realize how much we are like our people. We are who they made and we don't even realize it. I'm a strong person. I lock horns with my brothers all the time. We're all A Type personalities. And I

remember those Christmas dinners, all those A personalities coming together. So there's history there. There's a bond there and you don't realize the strength that you get from your parents.

Even if you're a single mom or you came from a single mother household, the strength that your mother had to get you up every day to go to school because school was important. Those life lessons that you really didn't realize are really your people talking to you and you don't realize that if you go back so far you will find your story someplace else in the family. You can find those lessons but we may not realize it.

You mentioned something earlier, I want to come back to it. DNA helps an awful lot with this because we're now beginning to reckon with history that many of us never thought about. We now have white families who now begin to realize that they have African ancestry and they have to talk about that. They have to think about that. They have to process that and somewhere in their family something took place that helped them become who they are, for better or for worse. The same is true for our families. You know, we're multi ethnic, we're multi-racial and all of that strength we get from all of these people, that's who made us. We get up in the morning, we go to work every single day, we come home, we take care of our kids, we pay our bills, we're taught that. That's our history. We get that from somebody.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Do you think it's a little bit more of a culture shock for white people though? Because we knew we were mixed. I mean honestly though, seriously. Because of slavery and so forth and we knew, about masters in the slave house and all of that. So we knew that in terms of our families. I'm just wondering, do you think that it's more of a shock for a white family to recognize that they actually have black lineage?

Ric Murphy:

Absolutely. Let's call it for what it is. Absolutely. And when they get their DNA kit back and it says that they're 5%, 10%, 20%, 30% Bantu or Cameroon or whatever else it is. It's a reckoning for them. But it's also a cleansing for them as well. Because my grandmother would always say to don't throw a stone in that school yard because you're going to hit your cousin. So the stones that they're throwing, they've been throwing them at themselves all this time and they didn't realize it. So yes, it's a reckoning for them. So I think this is part of the discussion here, reconciliation, recognizing and beginning to look at this whole issue because we are no longer them over there; we are them at the table. And you heard last night in that presentation where they were talking about, someone said, even at my own family table, we have all these different people come in with all these different opinions and we're walking away with different opinions. But it's now forced us to talk about this for the first time. Well we're doing the same thing.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

So if we're all mixed up together, then why do we talk about race? Why do we separate ourselves by race?

Ric Murphy:

I was over in Africa with a large delegation of African Americans and the Africans were at several large tables and they would point to each person and they would by the appearance. Say, you're this tribe, you're this tribe, you're this tribe. And they went to everybody around the table but me. So I said to them, "well, what tribe am I?" And they all cracked up and said, "You're a mutt." Isn't that who we are? So when we get our DNA back, that's what it tells us. We're all mixed. But again, that's what made us.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

We need to talk about race for many reasons. When we talk about the founding of the house of Burgesses, we need to recognize the connection with the economies that promoted violence to remove native peoples and to bring indigenous African peoples here and hold them in enslavement through violence. We must examine the violence that is at the core of the founding of this country. It is inherent in our legal systems. It is inherent in our faith communities. The churches had a role in maintaining enslavement and what the church helped to institute in the first place, the church has a moral imperative to help to undo.

Until we can make the inequalities and the roots of the inequalities in race and the connections with the systems that support that inequality and oppression visible, we must do the necessary analysis and with it the reflection. The reflection piece is important because it allows us to develop compassion.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

I'm going to let you, as we had talked about earlier, there's a reflection piece that you'd like to share with our audience.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

This is a prayer that was written by the Episcopal Bishop for the state of Virginia and maybe we should come back to me.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Then let me get a response from you in terms of why we talk about race.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

What I truly and firmly believes that we can never end racism by simply ignoring it. It's never been true throughout our history. It is inextricably linked to who we are as a nation and these are not issues that are simply 400 years ago. These are issues that have shown up right now. I think it was William Faulkner who famously said that "The past is not dead. It's not even past."

When you see these things showing up in our everyday lived experiences, where African American women are four times more likely to die in childbirth than any other group; where young on armed African Americans being shot dead in the street. And us addressing that issue where the wealth gap in this country is as dramatic as it's ever been. These are things that didn't happen overnight and they didn't happen by accident. So until, and unless we're willing to be honest and mature in our citizenship and say, yes, these are things that did start possibly before any of us were even born, but that doesn't mean we don't now have the responsibility to try to fix

them. And in fact, if we want to truly be united as a country and as a Commonwealth, it is our responsibility to do just that.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Okay. Hang on a second because actually I think they've given us a little bit more time. We do a bit more time. Oh yeah, I haven't forgotten about you. Ms. Christina.

Christina M. Rasberry:

To answer your question and my opinion on it, I do think we have a lot to work on as a country and I feel like I was introduced to race in the beginning before I really conceptualized what it was. Like when I was younger, if you have brown skin, I automatically thought you were black. I literally didn't learn a lot about race until like ninth grade. I don't know if that's just me being sheltered, but I feel like as people we come from different cultures, and we kind of have to work on our own camp, clean our own house. I feel like we all have a mess as a people, and we need to clean it up before we can really have one lit big party. You know what I mean?

Everyone has their own chores to do, and I feel like a lot of us, we act like our house is clean and it's really not. I don't really think one house is dirtier than the next. I just think we all have our own mess and I feel like some people don't put the effort into really cleaning it up. They blame it on other things. And I feel like our culture, for example, we are a hot mess sometimes, and I feel like we deal with so much from the neighbors.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Let me stop you for a second because I want to unpack some of that. So be more specific in terms of how are we a hot mess. I mean if we're going to talk about this, let's talk about...

Christina M. Rasberry:

For example, we have issues within our own, like colorism is a big thing in our community. There's no reason why lighter skinned African Americans should be separated from brown skin or dark skin. This light skin guy should [not] be criticizing darker skinned women. That's just an example. You know what I mean?

Barbara Hamm Lee:

We talked about colorism in the earliest session today, and I'm hearing people in the audience going, that's not happening now. But it is happening now. That is real. It's still very real.

Christina M. Rasberry:

That's just an example of my generation, just the younger generation in our community. We already deal with a lot on top of the things that were implemented before we were even born. We're dealing with social media that's amplifying our hot mess. People are just not focusing on the baggage that was already passed down to us, instead we're just buying new luggage.

But seriously, it frustrates me sometimes because I can't be the only one self-reflecting all the time. It's so draining to be checking myself, and then my peers aren't checking themselves, and it's like, how are you supposed to be better when the people around you aren't even cleaning up

their room, you know what I mean? And it's just like, I was raised, you make a mess, you clean a mess. And right now in society, people don't care. They leave their messes everywhere. And it's really frustrating, because people push for just everyone being kumbaya and everyone being together, but what meeting, party, encounter, anything, what has ever been successful if everything wasn't right? You have to line up your ducks and really get your stuff together before you try to have something successful.

And I feel like race, it has a negative connotation, but there's positives that can come out of it because there's history behind it. And also all the pain behind me provides opportunity to be able to know that it's a constant reminder. We have a long way to go, and we have things we need to clean up.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Okay, thank you. We've got some questions from the audience that we'd like to share with you all. The first one is, "The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has failed to eradicate discrimination since its establishment, and it has become apparent the system of equal opportunity is dysfunctional in its design. Will the system we use to measure inequality ever be properly calibrated?"

Wow.

Christina M. Rasberry:

I'll sit that one out.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

They actually read that first.

Ric Murphy:

I'll take a stab at that one.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Okay.

Ric Murphy:

Virginia in 1705 started the slave codes. And the issue of race started in 1619 clearly, but it was really perfected in 1705. And as we talk about unpacking baggage, there were laws in Virginia, if you had one drop of black blood, it classified you. So there were laws that were put in place year after year that really segregated us in many different ways. So when you look at the Equal Opportunity Commission, has it done all that we would have liked for it to have done? No, but it's going to take a long time to undo 400 years of laws that were specifically designed to discriminate against us.

These laws not only discriminated against us, but they were designed to keep us down. It was against the law for us to read or write. We couldn't communicate. There were laws that came out of the 40s, 50s, and 60s, if you lived in public housing, no man could live in the house with you.

So there were laws that were done to divide us. So can the Equal Opportunity Commission correct all of that in 20, 30, 40 years? I don't think so. Do we need another 30, 40 years? Well, I hope that the federal government and state governments, local governments, and when we get a new... another governor will help the state of Virginia do these kinds of things.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
I know a guy.

Ric Murphy:
We hope so. But when you think about this, they're not going to fix it. And at one point in time, I was a director of affirmative action, equal opportunity, and we did the best that we could, but we knew it was going to take years and years to undo this. And it's not just undoing the legal aspect, it's also undoing the mental aspect of this. And I think the Me Too movement, I think the women's movement, has changed an awful lot to change the women's role relative to civil rights, but still a long way to go. So...

Barbara Hamm Lee:
...In terms of civil rights, we're a little over 50 years away.

Ric Murphy:
A speck a ton of time.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
I mean, that's not...

Ric Murphy:
Speck of time.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Second question. "I recently visited the DC African American Museum, and was disappointed it failed to include blacks that contributed to America in science, technology, education and engineering and focused instead on entertainment. Do you feel that this was an effective representation?"

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
Just to clarify, is this the National Museum of African American History and Culture?

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Yes.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
Which I think is an extraordinary place, by the way, for anyone who has not had the opportunity to go, I would encourage you to go, bring your families and people from your community, because it really does richly tell a great story. Not just of long ago, but also of today. With regard to the specific question, I can't speak to whether they included that or not. I'd be surprised if there

weren't some representation there, but there's one thing about the museum, there's so much stunning about it, but there's one thing that stuck with me, and I think it's important for our discussion as well.

We are rightfully focused on 400 years of the history here in Virginia, and in this nation, the legacy of slavery. But the thing that I loved about the museum is that when you start, and I want to give this away for anybody who has not yet gone. When you start on the lower level, and it tells a story as you proceed, it starts way before slavery. It shows that people existed in a different space. They had advanced societies and cultures, they had economies, they had religious systems and beliefs, they were strong families. There was a sense of community and pride, dating back hundreds if not thousands of years.

And so while 400 years is an exceptionally long period of time, it's a blink of an eye relative to the experience of people. And that, to me, is empowering because it gives people their dignity and their worth. And you are not defined solely in relationship to enslavement in America, but instead are seen as a whole person, a whole community that has risen to incredibly high heights, and that can once again get to those heights. So it provides that kind of inspiration for the future.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Have any of you all been to the museum?

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

Yes.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Did you find that this questioner, did you find the same thing?

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

I would begin at the bottom, as the Lieutenant Governor suggests. And that exhibition was at the Merseyside museum in Liverpool first. So they imported some good stuff. And I would encourage this person to take one day for each floor, and at the end of each day, go and sit in the John Hope Franklin Reflection Room for 20 to 30 minutes, and reflect on what you have seen that day. So take three days and do it. At the end of that time, if you still feel the same way, take the time to show your love and write a letter. Tell them what they got right. Tell them what you would like to see in the future, and let them know what you invested in your letter.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Absolutely.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

That's what I would suggest.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Anything you'd like to add?

Ric Murphy:

I'd like to respond a bit differently. The museum is an absolutely phenomenal place. It really is a reflection of the struggle, the perseverance, the accomplishments of Americans of African descent. They have so much stuff that it's not all on display. And they have enough to change that every six months.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

Exactly.

Ric Murphy:

Now when you leave the bottom level, and you begin to go up through the generations, when you get to the top floor, it was specifically designed to be more uplifting. So you will find entertainment, you'll find sports. Those are the things that are uplifting, but they're also the things that our young people can connect to very easily. Now, there are things there that are relative to science and technology. Now is there a whole big room there? No, but that's not to say that it can't in the future, because they have so many displays. We know all the stuff that we've done relative to NASA and all of the inventions. They had a number of the black inventors in terms of what they did, going back to the 1800s. So an inventor in the 1800s is science and technology, although it's 1800s. So yes, those things are there. Maybe they didn't see it. I mean I've been there probably 20 times, and every time I go there I see something I haven't seen before.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Absolutely right.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

Have you been, Christina?

Christina M. Rasberry:

Yes, I have. I went when I was still living in Los Angeles, because I'm from California. And I went on a tour, an HBCU tour, and when we're visiting Howard, we stopped by there and I was like, oh my God. But I didn't know it was an African American museum.

So then I went in, and like you said, there is a lot, and I was only able to go once, so I know there's probably a lot that I did not see. But I was just in awe, being introduced... There's nothing like that on the West Coast. Like authentic black culture is not on the West Coast. It's really not. Like they promote everything but us on the West Coast. You know what I mean? Like we have to kind of promote ourselves, create businesses for ourselves. And it's okay. You know what I mean? It's not okay, but you live with it, because it's all you know. Before I moved here, I didn't know that I should be upset about not seeing myself. Because you're just used to that.

So the museum was actually really interesting to me, because I was definitely a student that didn't pay attention in history class. So there was a lot of stuff I didn't know in the museum, which was exciting for me. So for me it was like a fresh new experience. Because it's a nice museum, they got some money, they definitely invested in it, and it was really cool. So I would definitely encourage anyone that hasn't gone, especially as close as DC is, to definitely go.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

All right. "In addition to events like this, what are ways today that we can commemorate and celebrate our ancestors and heritage?" Let's start with you, Dr Braxton.

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:

We can commemorate collectively our ancestors and our heritage on many levels. We can do this in our family rituals. We can do it by creating rituals in our communities. I know the Sankofa Project has a Day of Remembrance every year here in Hampton. Those are enacted in other places around the country, and around the world, and we can keep these conversations going. Just like the little conversation that we had in West Point, sponsored by the Beverly Allen Foundation and the Braxton Institute for Sustainability, Resiliency, and Joy. When we have these collective conversations and commemorations, we can begin to heal ourselves. And my colleague, Dr. Parker, even raised the question as to whether our love and healing could flow backwards. Maybe blood doesn't flow backwards, but maybe love does.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Absolutely.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

How else can we celebrate?

Ric Murphy:

Well, I did keep back to 1619. I think that was the beginning. I think 2019 was a commemoration. And I think it's up to folks like us, as we march towards 2020, figure out how we take this forward. What's the legacy we're going to leave behind? How are we going to change this? How are we going to make sure that the textbooks are different? How are we going to make sure that the workplace is different? How are we going to make sure the cultural institutions are different? So I think this really is a reflection of where we came from. The things we need to begin to change, but more important, how do we move this forward to the next generation?

Because we don't want the next generation to inherit what we inherited. We need to take it a step further. History helps, genealogy helps, DNA helps, summits like this help. So I think there's a lot we can do, and I think there's a lot more that needs to be done. And I also look to the young people who are out there, because I'm just so amazed as to how smart they are, how sharp they are, how in tune they are. And I'm not so sure I was where they were at this particular time in my life. So if I got to where I am, I can imagine where they're going to be 30, 40, 50 years from now. I'm hoping they hit the ball out the park.

Barbara Hamm Lee:

Christina, how can you get your peers to be engaged? To start asking those questions?

Christina M. Rasberry:

I really think it'd be really cool if we put forth the effort to create a village that really consistently fuels the energy of having younger people, and people who aren't as young anymore, I won't say old, but just you know, wiser people. And really just creating an environment where you, everyone would feed off of each other for what each other needs. Because I feel like the past generation has to have an understanding of where we are, and where our psyche is, for what we've adjusted in this generation.

And then also the younger generation, just knowing where they need to be eventually. Like you can have fun, you can party, but you know in 10, 15 years, you need to be somewhere else. Because the world is just not set up for us like that.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
There you go.

Christina M. Rasberry:
You know what I mean? I just felt like back at my other school, we would do this thing called Umoja. We had this village, it means unity. And we would meet up, housing the BSU, black student union because you know, black people and...

Barbara Hamm Lee:
I want to give Dr Braxton the chance to read her prayer. Dr Braxton, can you read that before we run out of time?

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:
Yes. This is a prayer written by the Episcopal Bishop of Virginia for the commemoration of the 400th on August 25th, 2019, which we read in West Point, and was read by Episcopal churches throughout Virginia. This is an artifact, not a religious act.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Yes,

Dr. Joanne M. Braxton:
God, our governor, great is your name in all the world. Great as your presence in this land. You were here when native peoples first lived and loved and governed themselves. You were here when the first Englishman immigrated to these shores, and when they held their legislative assembly 400 years ago. You were here that same year, when the first English women chose to come and join the men in establishing settled communities. And when the first African people were brought here in harrowing circumstances against their will. You were with our ancestors, men and women of diverse races and cultures, through triumph and adversity, through hope and fear. In the same way that you were here with your people then, be with us now as we remember the relationships and legacies that have shaped us as Americans today.

Forgive us the ways that we have hurt and exploited one another. Give us the courage to do the hard work of real reconciliation, and bless our continued efforts for justice, freedom, and peace for everyone in this land. Everyone without exception, for you are a God who does wonders.

And in your name we see wonders. May it be so, and may we be partners with you in making it so. Amen.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Lieutenant governor, you have the last word.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

Yes. Again, well thank you all so much. Barbara did a brilliant job, as always. Thank you to our audience, to all those who are tuning in. And I just want to leave on a couple of quick reflections. I think the one way that we can honor our ancestors and commemorate this special intersection in history where we find ourselves, is to stand up with courage and tell the truth, even when it's difficult to do it. And I'll give you one example. As you know, now in my second year as the honor of serving as Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I was elected at 38 years old. When I came into office, I had a birthday shortly thereafter and turned 39, but I presided with the Senate of Virginia as Lieutenant Governor. And one of the duties that you have in addition to sort of running the daily operations of the Senate itself with the 40 senators there, is that you preside over various motions and do things in conjunction with the senators.

Well, one of the motions I didn't realize they still engaged in was that they wanted to adjourn our session in honor of, on one day, General Robert E. Lee. And on another day, General Stonewall Jackson.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
I remember that.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:

And as Lieutenant Governor, I would typically stand up and preside and mouth those words and close our session in their honor. Well, when I learned about this on the morning when it was supposed to happen, it literally took me no time at all. Not one second, to let people know I'm not doing that. And the reason I'm not going to preside over those motions is because, A. I'm supposed to represent all eight and a half million Virginians. And I thought that that was incredibly divisive. And I thought it cut so many people out of history, and showed them that they weren't important, because of what they wanted to do there in the Senate. But also I knew as a fact that I would not be presiding over the Senate of Virginia had the people you want to honor, gotten their way.

And so how could I bring myself to do something I believe would be a dishonor to the people of Virginia, and to my own heritage and our common heritage. And so on that day, I respectfully informed the senators that I would step down from the dais, and I sat on a bench that's reserved for our Senate pages. And the president pro tem took my place, and he presided over those motions. And that really set off a firestorm around the country the first time we did it. The second time that we did it again, the next session, the next year, they wanted to once again honor those two generals. Well, this time, not only did I step down from the dais, and not sort of quiet protest, but on this occasion, I brought two people with me as my guests to the Senate. One was a

direct descendant of Robert Lee, Reverend Robert Lee the fourth, and also a direct descendant of General Stonewall Jackson.

And so they came with me to join in that protest. We prayed together that day, spent the day together, and you talk about healing and unity, the descendant of someone who was enslaved in Virginia, the descendants of Robert Lee and Stonewall Jackson, coming together saying that we are now one people, and we're going to work on these issues. We're going to look at them with a clear eye and a clear vision. We're going to tell the truth and have courage, but the next 400 years are going to be different than the last 400 years. And someone came up to me after that protest and said, "How could you do this? You know, we've been doing this honoring of these generals for the last 155 years." I said, "Well, we're going to do something a little bit different for the next 155 years in Virginia."

Barbara Hamm Lee:
There we go.

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax:
Thank you all very much for your support. Really appreciate it.

Barbara Hamm Lee:
Thank you to my panel. Thank you so much, and I want to say thank you to all of you for being such a great panel, and opening the conversation surrounding this subject. It's a critical subject for all of us. Now it's time to head out to the terrific breakout sessions. Thank you all for being here today at the 1619 Making of America Summit. Take care everyone. Thank you.

Opening Remarks

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander, Dean of Norfolk State University's College of Liberal Arts

David Bearinger

Kathy J. Spangler

Student 1:
Today, we'll be diving into the history and culture of one of the nation's lesser-known cities, Norfolk, Virginia.

Just like many other places in the U.S, Norfolk, Virginia has always had a diverse population. However, the culture didn't always reflect this. It was constantly being distorted by things like slavery, racism, and segregation. Given this information, does our culture do any better now than it did, say 80 years ago? To truly know the answer to this question, we have to take an in-depth look at our recent past, starting with the Civil Rights era.

Student 2:

One of the more important events of this movement happened on May 17th, 1954. The Supreme Court ruled that segregation in schools was unconstitutional. This, however, would not be the end of segregation in schools. Many states still refuse to integrate their schools.

Student 3:

One of them was Virginia. Enter The Norfolk 17, a group of fascinating individuals who put what little they had on the line in order to integrate with their white counterparts. This, however, would be no easy task. Resistance against the integration of schools was very high around this time and it wouldn't be until nearly five years after the Supreme Court's original ruling that The Norfolk 17 would step foot into integrated schools. In order to get an accurate portrayal of this time. We interviewed a member of The Norfolk 17.

Javier Miranda-Castro:

Hello, my name is Javier Miranda-Castro, and today I have the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Patricia Turner, who was one of the original Norfolk 17 members. How are you doing today?

Patricia Turner:

I'm great, how are you?

Javier Miranda-Castro:

I'm doing fine.

Patricia Turner:

Do you have some questions for me?

Javier Miranda-Castro:

I do have quite a few.

Patricia Turner:

My brother and I had to take three tests. I was going into the 8th grade and I had to take an 8th, 9th or 10th-grade test. My brother going into the 7th grade had to take seven, eight and nine. We had to go to court every day for a week. We had to go to a psychiatrist. Then the court stepped in and Judge Hoffman said, these children are allowed to walk to school.

Now, how do my teachers treat me at Northview, horribly? They used gloves to touch my papers. They had a box at the end of the desk that I was to put my papers in and they didn't even look at them or read them or anything. They put a big red E on them and the papers had to be reviewed and rejected by someone else to make the teachers give me the correct grades.

How people say, well there are good days and some bad. With me there were bad days and a few good ones. They used to spit in my face, throw me down the steps, knock me out in any way possible. The parents were horrible. My high school life was not like you guys, nothing like what you're experiencing.

Student 4:

It's no secret that Dr. Turner has had her fair share of struggles. It's thanks to people like her that today we have the privilege to go to school, with all kinds of people, from all kinds of backgrounds. Now that we have sufficient knowledge of the past, we can analyze the diversity in our culture today. Now, in terms of diversity and acceptance, it's clear that our culture is leaps and bounds ahead of what it was 50 years ago, but that does not mean there isn't room for improvement.

Unfortunately, however, injustice based on race beliefs or religion is still a prevalent issue to this day. Thus, it is of great importance that we accept others regardless of race, religion, and especially opinions. In order to change someone for the better, one must first understand their point of view. Hate does nothing but create spiteful arguments that ultimately hinder progress. Martin Luther King did not change people with hate. He changed people with acceptance. Regardless of what they believed or who they were. We too must shape diversity in our culture through acceptance. I'll now leave you with some words from the inspiring Dr. Turner.

Patricia Turner:

If our America doesn't learn the word love, we're going to be in trouble. Because when you get my age, there may not be an America, because without love, our world is going to fall apart

VOG:

Please welcome the person who for the last four years has led the 400th Commemoration team, the executive director for American Evolution 2019, Kathy Spangler.

Kathy J. Spangler:

Good morning, welcome back for Friday. This is day two of the 1619: Making of America Summit. I'm really excited to be here this morning with some very special guests who produced this video you just saw. They represent Maury High School right here in Norfolk, Virginia, and they won a national contest that the commemoration created called Our American Story, that focused on representations of the themes of the commemoration, democracy, diversity, and opportunity. It is such an honor to have with us today the producers of this event. This wonderful award-winning video we have with us Kobe Nguyen, Javier Miranda-Castro, Jacob Hill and Kaleem Haq. Gentlemen, congratulations.

We also have with us their teacher, Mr. Bryan Bennett from Maury High School, and our very featured guest today is a member of the Norfolk 17 and was featured in this video short, Dr. Patricia Turner.

It is in the spirit of the 2019 Commemoration: American Evolution, that we have engaged all ages in this commemoration and we're so proud that in a national competition our own Norfolk, Virginia won the national prize. Thank you very much.

VOG:

Please welcome the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Norfolk State University, Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander.

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:

Good morning everyone. We hope that you've been energized and inspired by yesterday's lessons and I do want to just pause for a moment and congratulate the students who won the national prize. Norfolk state university has been working on making sure that this kind of history is preserved and I'm just excited that the students have taken that to a whole new level and I'm most appreciative that we have with us one of The Norfolk 17, in our audience. Those kinds of remembrances are critical and that's why we are doing this particular event. Now last night, we hope you had the opportunity to see one of our cultural presentations and welcome to those of you who are here today for the first time. Some of you may have gone to NSU state-of-the-art theater and witnessed the play, *Gem of the Ocean*. How many of you saw that play?

Incredible with our NSU Theater Company directed by and produced by our theater director, Professor Anthony Stockard, or maybe you attended the live musical performance of innocence, choir, and jazz ensemble. If you did raise your hands, they were fabulous. These were student performers here at Norfolk State, as well as in the region under the direction of our incredibly talented Dr. Harlan Zachary, Jr. But, you may have stopped to see the feature film screening of *Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked The World*. How many of you were able to see that? Raise your hands if you did. I'm sure you heard those new and interesting stories, so please join me in thanking all of those who are responsible for creating or participating in last night's cultural performances.

Now, there are two additional elements of the summit that I would like to point out. First, today following our last session here, you are all invited to a special screening of the feature presentation, *Ghosts of Amistad*, and that particular screening is going to be led by the creator of that film, author Marcus Rediker. And what is amazing about that and heartbreaking is that all the people who are part of that film are now deceased, because they died during the Ebola outbreak there. Marcus Rediker, of course, is a well-known author, historian, and film producer. That is a not to be missed performance. It begins at 4:30 PM today.

All right, and secondly, maybe you signed up for something very important also tomorrow and that is on the 28th we have an after summit tour. We have organized a Virginia historical tour. It is something that the city of Hampton and their 2019 Commission has organized for us and for all of the conference attendees. As many of you who haven't signed up, there are a few seats left on that tour. It takes you to Point Comfort at Fort Monroe, and it concludes, of course, they're going to bring you back, but it concludes at Historic Jamestowne, where you'll have an opportunity to see the Angela Site.

Now, here to tell you about yesterday's amazing breakout sessions, please welcome the Director of Grants and Community Programs at the Virginia Humanities, my good friend, David Bearinger.

David Bearinger:
Morning, everybody.

Since I'm leading off this morning, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge some people and I begin with the American Evolution staff and Kathy Spangler, who put this wonderful event together in cooperation with Norfolk State University and especially Cassandra Newby-Alexander and her team.

They've been supported by a company called Prosody Creative Services, which I think has done a wonderful job. Let's give them a hand too.

My job in the next about seven minutes is to summarize all four of the breakout sessions that happened yesterday afternoon. They were led by Khadijah Miller, Drew Lopenzina, William White, and William Alexander, and would you please give them a hand as well?

Since I couldn't be at all four sessions, this is going to be a little bit impressionistic, and it's far from complete, but this is what I took away. I did manage to spend a little time in each of the sessions. And the conversations, if I had to boil it all down, centered around urgency, roots, responsibility, and hope.

Several ideas permeated these conversations. One, America has been wounded by its history and the wounds persist. Two, we have been slow to acknowledge the painful and the shameful truths about our story. Three, the prevailing narratives of American history and the images that surround us are still rooted in the presumption that there is this thing called a hierarchy of human value, that some people are more valuable than others. Number four, and I think this may be the key, the most important of all, all of us share in the responsibility for changing and for complicating the narrative about American history.

Finally, number five, and this is tricky. Changing the narrative both requires and is necessary to create a change of heart. One of our speakers yesterday talked about changing hearts and this is a big part of what we need to do to find our way out of the mess we're in. It's as if we've all been standing under a waterfall. Some of us, in my case who are almost seven decades of simplistic, insulting, degrading, profoundly false depictions of large groups of people.

Whose roles in building and shaping America have been obscured and who until recently have rarely had a say in how the narratives about American history are portrayed or about how they, themselves are depicted in the images we see. Another takeaway from yesterday's conversations, is it's unrealistic to expect the owners of the means of production of these images and depictions to drive the change that needs to happen. The control of that process needs to shift, but consumers have those images, which is all of us and here we come to the idea of responsibility. We have a responsibility too and this is a quotation from one of the sessions yesterday. If we want a more inclusive, honest story of what America is and has been, it's our task to make sure we get it.

One of the sessions talked about law and citizenship. The constitution that was adopted in 1787. In that constitution, the enslaved were counted as three-fifths of a person in terms of congressional representation. The infamous three-fifths compromise and you know what? Indians were not counted at all. This is part of our collective birth story, our national birth story.

These are our roots. This is where we come from and we talked about this too. You can follow the legacy of that founding moment right down to the present day. You can follow it into Virginia, you can follow it to the racial integrity laws passed in the 1920s. That essentially put all nonwhite people together in one category, colored. You can follow it to a place just down the road to an assimilation boarding school where more than 1200, Indian kids were brought from their native places.

Hampton University was the home of the first off-reservation Indian boarding school program in the country. It was founded on the motto, "Kill the Indian and Save the Man." Indian kids were taken away from their language, their customs, their traditions, their communities, their families, to learn and be indoctrinated in the white man's way. This is part of our story too, and the separation of families defined the institution of slavery. It defined this piece of Indian education, and from my perspective, it defines what's going on our Southern border today. There's a question that came up again and again, how do we make this conversation about changing the narrative a productive one, for our communities, for the Commonwealth of Virginia, for the state as a whole? Put that another way, how do we confront the shameful parts of our past, and their legacies in the present, in ways that actually bring us together and don't further divide us? We did not answer that question, and that may be a question for some piece of what we do today.

There are some hopeful signs. The roles of traditional gatekeepers in the telling of our collective story, and in the spinning of these images and depictions we talked about, the roles of those gatekeepers are diminishing. There's broader access now to the means of production in creating these images and these stories, partly brought about by technology, but partly brought about by a change of heart. And then one of my favorites, community or what we call public history is alive today everywhere in Virginia, and in other parts of the country too. Keepers of the pieces of the story that have been omitted, excluded, are taking up the challenge of telling their own stories. They're being supported by trained historians in many cases, but they are doing it themselves. And I find that to be tremendously encouraging.

So the messages that we take away from yesterday I think are, we have to be the creators of a new national narrative. We have the tools to do this, we have the need, we have the desire, we have the opportunity, and we have the responsibility. And that brings us to another question, the last one I'm going to raise, can we come to a place, and this comes out of our discussions, can we come to a place where instead of a single story narrative, many stories coexist together, like threads in a woven fabric? And each one of these is respectful of the others in a way that it hasn't been?

So returning back to the beginning, urgency, responsibility, and hope. And I want to end with this affirmation that I gleaned from all four of the sessions, that we can, we actually can, step outside the ugly shadows of our history. But the first step in doing this is to acknowledge that those shadows exist, and they have an effect on us in the present day, that the past really isn't past. And finally that we can dress and heal the wounds that all of us carry, even the most privileged among us.

So let me end with this. About a month ago, there was an event at Fort Monroe to observe the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to Virginia. And in that observance, all of us were asked, invited, to think of ourselves as founders of a nation growing into its power. And that power lies in truth telling, and it lies in a full embrace of our multiplicity, our diversity. And so to close this out, I think we are at the beginning of the next step in our American evolution. The themes of democracy, diversity, and opportunity ran through everything we discussed yesterday. And I think this is the place where we begin our conversation this morning. Thank you so much.

VOG:

Please welcome back the executive director for American Evolution 2019, Kathy Spangler.

Kathy J. Spangler:

Thank you so much and welcome again. It is indeed a pleasure to be here and I would like to thank Dr. Newby Alexander and Dr. Adams Gaston for being such tremendous partners here at Norfolk State University and are our host for this event. Please let's give them a round of applause.

We've had great support from all of the partners here who have participated in this event. So we're really grateful. The 2019 Commemoration ,American Evolution has been in the planning for many years, and we are grateful that it has engaged so many great people, organizations, and leaders across the Commonwealth of Virginia. During the first nine months of this commemoration, we've accomplished some amazing moments of reflection on the 400th commemoration of Virginia's roots. As we've explored the commemoration pillars of democracy, diversity and opportunity, through a number of signature events and special exhibitions. None of this would have been possible without the deep commitment and support of the Virginia General Assembly and the generous support of our corporate sponsors. The signature events of the year have also found great support from our Founding Partner Dominion Energy and our two Virginia Colony partners, Altria and TowneBank. On behalf of the 2019 Commemoration, thank you all.

Moderated Speaker Interview

Juan Williams, journalist, author, and political analyst

Dr. Edward Ayers, Professor of the Humanities and President Emeritus, University of Richmond

The Honorable Mia Love, former Representative of the 4th Congressional District of Utah

Kathy J. Spangler:

It's now my great pleasure and honor to introduce our moderator for the day. As co-host of Fox News' *The Five* and a regular panelist on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace and as a special reporter with Bret Baer, he brings balance to important conversations on the nation's top rated cable network. His column for The Hill recently won best Washington weekly column award from the Society of Professional Journalists, Washington chapter, and he's also been a very award winning author of seven bestselling books, and an Emmy-winning TV documentary writer. His newest book has just been released, *What the Hell do we Have to Lose?* Please

welcome New York Times bestselling author, Fox News political analyst, and award-winning columnist, Juan Williams.

Thank you Juan.

Juan Williams:
Kathy, thank you.

Kathy J. Spangler:
Thank you.

Juan Williams:
Good morning. Thank you. Kathy, thank you very much. It's such a pleasure to be here at Norfolk State. It's the home of my favorite basketball player of all time, probably too much in the past for you, but Bob Dandridge went on to be a Washington Bullet. He's just terrific. I want to just welcome all of you here, of course, to Norfolk State for 1619: The Making of America Summit. It's my honor to be here today, as we start the second day of a historic event. I want to welcome all of you joining classrooms around the country as we live stream this historic event as part of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution.

Now when we talk about evolution, I think more minds might quickly go to the idea of change, because that's what we're really talking about, is change. And when you talk about change, well that invites the whole concept of memory, and your memory can be so tricky, because so often when you deal with memory, then you have to confront forgetting, and sometimes the forgetting can be intentional when it comes to difficult, painful situations. But memory, memory is the food for our identity, for our self-conception, who we are, as individuals, as well as members of the corporate body, the United States of America. Our stories, our stories define not only the way that we behave, it is the basis for the concept of virtue, for the hero, for the villain. That's what memory is about.

It's now more than 30 years since I wrote a book about the American Civil Rights Movement called *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years*. And I got to tell you, Thank you very much. I just want to quickly tell you, that over the course of those three decades, having written a book that is used by students, including some here at Norfolk State, I have had the experience as an author, of understanding how even the written word can change as a result of time, memory, and of course the current political context. So initially when I wrote that book, the tremendous reception came from people who said, "Thank goodness American history finally tells my story. I'd never seen that story told in American history books before, about the sacrifices, the martyrs, the tremendous principal of people who stood for equal rights, especially black heroes and black heroines."

But then, I was starting to get notes and letters from people who said, "My mom said I should read this book." and suddenly saying, "Did you talk to my Dad? Did you have anything to say about my neighborhood?" And now 30 years later, 30 years later, I get notes and questions and emails that say, "Did that really happen? Did that really happen?" They can't believe that some of

these events took place. It literally seems to them to be nonsensical, and again this is a function of memory, a function of how we tell stories to each other, to our children, to our children's children.

So today as we talk about evolution, we're really talking about memory, and about the stories that we tell ourselves that give us a sense of who we are. It's now my pleasure to introduce the panelists for this important topic, "American Narrative Reframed." Let's begin with our two featured panelists, just terrific folks, they're going to participate in the initial discussion with me. First, I'm so pleased to be here with a talented, incredibly thoughtful lady who I had the pleasure to work with on many occasions. She's the former Representative for the Fourth Congressional District of Utah, and you should know she is the first and only, I repeat only, Republican black woman to ever serve in the United States Congress. She's currently a CNN correspondent and was recently appointed as a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the United States Study Center at the University of Sydney, Australia. Most importantly, she's the daughter of legal immigrants from Haiti, a wife, a mother of three children, and a very proud American. Please all of you join me in welcoming Mia Love.

Thank you so much.

It's now my pleasure to welcome a learned man from right here in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He has been named National Professor of the Year. He's received the National Humanities Medal at the White House. He served as President of the Organization of American Historians, and he has won the Bancroft Prize and the Lincoln Prizes for his astute writing. He's one of the co-hosts of Backstory, a popular podcast on American history. He's also the Tucker Boatwright Professor of Humanities and President Emeritus at the University of Richmond, where he serves as executive director of the New American History Initiative. He's also devoted to creating and sharing, I should say, innovative ways to engage students in US history. So today is just perfect for him. Please join me in welcoming Professor Edward Ayers.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
Morning.

Juan Williams:
Well, we have a great audience, and we have great panelists. Thank you both for coming this morning. This is such an important event. American Evolution, Virginia to America, 1619 to 2019, 400 years. Let me begin with you Mia, and ask, do people call you Mia or Representative, Congresswoman?

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:
I always say many people have many names for me. Mia is just fine.

Juan Williams:
All right. I won't call your Mom. That's your children. That's what's they-

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Okay, yes.

Juan Williams:

When you think about the whole notion of reframing the narrative, I want you to just for a second, go back and say, in your mind, why did these early Africans in America matter?

The Honorable Ludmya “Mia” Love:

Oh gosh. Because everything that has happened in our history leads us to where we are today. And the reason why it matters is because we look at our history, we look at the struggles that black Americans have gone through, and you want to sit there and say, "It's too bad. It's really hard. We wish that they wouldn't have gone through that." But there's another side of that. Through our history comes our strength. It makes us who we are. Those struggles have allowed us to sit at the table, and it matters because I do not believe if it weren't for black Americans in history, if it weren't for my parents, and the struggles that they have gone through, there was no way I would be sitting here as the first and only black female Republican ever elected in Congress. I think we have a long way to go, but that history matters and what we do today will matter tomorrow.

Juan Williams:

Professor Ayers, let me ask you in a more clinical fashion.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

If she gets to be Mia, I get to be Ed, don't I?

Juan Williams:

Oh, you want to be Ed?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Yeah.

Juan Williams:

You don't want to be President Emeritus? You don't want to be Professor?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

No.

Juan Williams:

You don't want to be Winner of the Bancroft Award? No?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I want to be all those things. You can call me Ed.

Juan Williams:

Well, Ed, again, the same question I put to Mila, why did those early Africans in America matter? But I want it to be more specific with you in terms of your knowledge base about economic and cultural, as well as the historical impact that Mia discussed.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

First thing it leads us to do is pull the camera back to see what the heck this place was then, and we were pretty darn insignificant. If you think about the trans-Atlantic slave trade, we were an afterthought. Chronologically, there have been African people in slavery in the Western hemisphere for over a hundred years by the time that the English ended up basically getting, from pirate ships, enslaved people who'd been stolen on the high seas. And that's useful because we're talking about America and our own history, but we need to remember that we're a part of world history from the beginning. So if you pull the camera back and you see that over the entire expanse of the African slave trade, what becomes the United States only gets 6% of the population. We are a small part of the first real global economy, which unfortunately is slavery.

Juan Williams:

Let me stop you there. Just for the young people listening, I think it was such an important point you made. 6%. And you didn't explain it. But if you would just say that means 6% of the totality of slaves being sold in the world at that point were coming to the United States.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Yeah.

Juan Williams:

Or what would be the United States, right?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

That's right. So dwarfed by the Caribbean. There have been far more British people claiming to own slaves in the Caribbean than would have been in Virginia. So Virginia, at the time that the first 20 and odd people are brought here, is insignificant. Now we look back on it and see the seeds of the great nation, but it was a backwater. And so that's the first thing that would come to mind, is that this is a part of a global change, and we're not very important in it for a long time. As we're thinking about numbers though, think about this. So what becomes the United States only gets 6% of those populations, but it's the only enslaved population that biologically reproduces itself in the entire hemisphere? Everywhere else, the people in slavery die faster than they can be born. And that's how we can have by 1860 the largest and most powerful slave empire in the modern world, is the United States.

So for me, that's the story. It begins marginal and then expands so dramatically from the seeds planted here. So that was the economic part of it. The cultural part of it too is that despite the horrors of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, people brought their culture here and planted it, and so Virginia has been an African place from the beginning. There was the culture, the religion, the view of the world is shaped by Africa from really the first decades of this place. So I think the danger, if we think of this story, is that the English were here, and brought the people from Africa.

Well, they were barely here and they had died in enormous numbers. I mean, why does it take 12 years? It's because that's the first time, it's stable enough. And also there'd been enormous numbers of native people here for 12,000 years. So not only are we insignificant geographically, we're also insignificant chronologically, at that moment. So we know how the story turns out, but go back and look for its origins, but if anybody was telling the story for what's happening in the world that's important right now, this wouldn't have been seen as particularly significant.

Juan Williams:

So let me come to both of you because this question is organic in my mind listening to the two of you speak. You said, Ed, that what's different is that that population of black people coming to the United States then grows in a way that it doesn't grow in other places, but I'm thinking in the Caribbean we have black-dominated countries. Mia's family historically was from Haiti and I think many in the audience may know the story of Toussaint Louverture and the tremendous-

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Yeah. I was going to bring that up-

Juan Williams:

Right. Revolution.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

... the fact that they were the first...

Juan Williams:

So why did you say that? Because I think you know Jamaica was largely a population, now a black country.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Think about, I'm just speaking demographically, the people who were brought to places that we think of now are just the Caribbean, Bahamas or Haiti were dying faster than they were being born. Okay. That there were so many brought, and that's why it's only 6%. That and the transatlantic slave trade stops here in 1808, even though it continues for several more decades to Brazil, Cuba, thinking about the Caribbean.

So it's mainly a result, I think historians believe of climate and of the kind of crop in Louisiana where sugar grows, that demographics were quite different. People died in enormous numbers. You think about the people who were brought then from Virginia to Louisiana to work in the sugar plantations, 90% of them were men. The 10% who were women were bought as soon as they could bear children, and that was their job, and the death rate was enormously high.

So even within... The American South ends up being the size of continental Europe, right? So the things that we're talking about over time, not trying to get ahead of the story, but if we turn the story back and look at its moment, the fact that it's written down that the British, the English settlers traded food for enslaved people, gives you some idea of just how incipient this

connection was. So that the larger point of that is you can never tell how a story is going to turn out from the way that it begins.

Juan Williams:

Right. So Mia, again, let's go back though to Ed's point about the Caribbean and about Haiti, your family in Haiti and the whole slave... the importation of slaves. The slave struggle there. That's just part of your bones, that's who you are.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Yeah. Yeah. It's really interesting, and it's exactly the history I grew up with. And the pride of the Haitian people to know that they were the first little island to gain their independence. I mean they struggled. Now you have to understand that these are people that were stripped of every identity they had. Stripped up their name. Told that they were nothing, insignificant, lower than pets. To be able to come together like this and to be able to gain their independence was a... there's a sense of pride that my parents grew up with and instilled in me and said, "Look, these are people who had nothing."

When I first went to college... I think about being here in a university, I think about the history, the stories that my dad would tell me. And he said to me, "Mia, we did everything we could to get you here today." And when he says, "We," we're talking about grandparents and people before that, ancestors. He said, "You will not be a burden to society. You are going to give back." Thank goodness that was one of those messages that didn't go in one ear and out the other.

The struggle that also came from Haiti getting their independence so early, is the fact that they really didn't understand how to really govern themselves. They didn't have that education. So you see Haiti's and their struggle today, that cost them quite a bit.

The fact they were the first cost them the ability to be able to gain a hold of their electoral processes. They've suffered from one dictator after another, after another, and they're in some ways they see themselves as the sacrifice. They made a sacrifice for not just all of the other islands but for America.

Juan Williams:

Right. So let me stay with you for a second, Mia. We're looking today at the American narrative reframed as we talk about American evolution 1619 to 2019. So applying the same kind of thinking that you were just sharing with us to America, not to Haiti, how would you describe that impact? How do we reframe or change that narrative?

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Well, I think that the way that we reframe, we have to take it all into context, right? It's all intertwined. It's not, there isn't a way that you can separate what's happened in Haiti because this is a global... everything that has happened where we are today has been, there's been global participation in that.

But the way that we look at it also, is that when I look at history and when I look at what was instilled in me, wherever you are, you have to understand that you're giving these gifts and these talents. And even though you may think that you're an unsung hero, there are so many people that think that they are unsung heroes, you have the obligation or a responsibility to your community today.

And if you look at the things that have happened, all of the people that played a significant role, think about people, our heroes that we have. I mean, if you look right now, you think of Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, she's an unsung hero today. I mean, and hopefully we get to sing her praises later on and people will understand that she's making a significant contribution.

All of us today in the American history, all of us today where we are, where we sit, we have an obligation to use our gifts and our talents for the betterment of society. Because you think about grandmothers, you think about people who have raised us in the home and the people who have given us our rich history, we have an obligation to move that forward. So think about their stories and how do we change that narrative so that it fits us and what we contribute today.

Juan Williams:

I'm so reluctant to call you Ed. I want to call you professor.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Well, whatever you're comfortable with then.

Juan Williams:

I won't call you late for dinner. So one of the things that strikes me is that the New York Times recently put out a special edition called 1619. I don't know if you happened to see it.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I did. Yes.

Juan Williams:

I thought it was quite good because it was quite educational. I don't think it was intended for any of us on this stage. I think it was intended for young people, in terms of helping them to better understand slavery and what took place. As I was saying, when I was introducing myself to the audience, it's shocking to me how memory plays tricks and how different and new generations can be so quick to forget, but oftentimes they forget intentionally because they don't want to remember ugly things.

And so what I wanted to ask you Ed, coming out of that New York Times piece, I noticed their emphasis on how the history was initially told about those 20-odd black people arriving at these shores and how it then leads into post Civil War. The whole idea of the lost cause and the idea of these happy-go-lucky slaves and these virtuous white men who were saving this tradition and heritage, and that becomes the narrative.

Now we're sitting here and we're saying, "I think we need to change this narrative, not because of politics, not because of any desire to diminish or elevate one group or another. This is not some affirmative action effort, but in effort to tell the true story." If I'm wrong Ed, you call me on it.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I'm waiting. I haven't heard anything I disagree with yet. I think what people don't realize is that there's been a heroic effort of recovery of that history by historians, archeologists. You're talking about collaborating with the global division. So we actually think about the Caribbean and Africa and British North America in the same frame and indigenous people.

And I think that the... just a few weeks ago, the commemoration of the arrival at Old Point Comfort at Fort Monroe, the exact place where it happened and descendants of the first African-American person, the Tucker family. And been able to address what you're saying Mia, that the pride of surviving all of those centuries of not only of slavery, but then of the years after emancipation, when so much was denied the people who had actually built so much of the country.

It's interesting, that very same place, Fort Monroe is also the place where slavery began to end, when three enslaved men within weeks of Virginia's succession ... Now, here's the thing. You need to remember, at the time of the American Civil War, slavery had already been in Virginia 240 years, longer than we are from the Civil War today. As soon as Virginia secedes and there's a United States Fort right here in Norfolk, three black men row across Chesapeake Bay and say, "We're on your side." Slavery begins to end the first moment that African-Americans have an ally anywhere nearby.

And then in Hampton, very near here, 10,000 refugees come to that fort and call it Freedom's Fortress, and all that predates anything Abraham Lincoln did. All that predates any imagining in The North that you could bring to an immediate end, the largest and most powerful system of slavery in the world overnight. Enslaved people could imagine it. The leaders of the nation, it took them years to imagine it.

So what's so powerful is people could drive there in a very short time from here after we're done. That the very same place where the first African presence was made, felt slavery began to end within a quarter of a mile. So it's remarkable to think how this story and the memory overlaps. There's a new visitor center there and has a statue of those three men so that people can visit and imagine these were actually people, because they didn't know when they knocked on the door of this Union Army, what's going to happen? Are they going to be sent back? What if they're sent back to the Confederates?

So I think that that's the thing is that it's, that we're recovering memory that was not really lost but suppressed. And I think that what's wonderful that's being done through every means of discovery that we have. The incredible archeological work that's done at Jamestown, we thought that was lost. We actually know more about the past now than we did when we were far closer to it.

So that's, that's an illusion that we have, that the past is more distant, and therefore we can't reclaim it. With new tools that we have for digital work and archeological, new ways to imagine stories, the past can be closer to us now than it's ever been before.

Juan Williams:

Well. So Ed, you touched on something that's quite personal for me, which is as a black man, personal identity. And how black men are seen in American society 2019 versus 1619. So what you just said was, "Hey Juan, if you think that black men were standing idly by and accepting of being enslaved and that they didn't have the heart, the courage, the spirit to stand up and defy this oppressive system, you're wrong."

And that's a very important statement and you are saying that all of the literature and then of course, given what happened here yesterday, that Nate Parker was here, stage people, Gem of the Ocean on this wonderful stage last night, that so many of those stories about who black men are about indifferent, lazy, uneducated, the stereotypes that are at their most pernicious, they don't fit from the beginning.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

No. But the only way I would amend your story, and I know you didn't mean to imply this, women too. Right? So in that the great contraband camp, as it became known at Hampton, there are as many women as men. And you've got to remember too, to be a young mother with a baby and you're thinking, I hear that the Union Army is 20 miles away. What do I risk from picking up my child and trying to make it across this landscape to that arm and what might you discover when you get there?

So the bravery of everyone held in perpetual bondage. So they need to remember they might've been fifth-generation Americans by this point. Think how long. And that they had been Christian for a long time, but held in bondage in this country. For them to risk their lives, become free, you need to remember they take freedom, it's not given to them.

Juan Williams:

So Mia, how do you think we can go about again, in terms of this evolution, American evolution, changing that narrative to include that story that Ed just spoke about? The courage of people way back then?

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

It is digging into history and not being afraid to dig into history. Not being afraid to go back. I mean, you look at it and there are a lot of people that will sit there and say, "Well, we don't want to remember that. That was ugly. That was a time where people were, you saw the ugly sides of people." It's no different today. I mean there are ugly sides that we see today. But digging into that history gives you the audacity to sit at the table and say, "What am I doing today? what difference can I make today?"

And if you think about it, these men had no idea that that was a significant change. We have no idea what we're doing today, if that's going to be a significant change. What we're doing here

right now, whether that's going to be a significant change, but going back and looking at the courage of these men and women gives us the audacity to speak up today. Not in a way, by the way, that is, you don't have to be angry. You don't have to feel like you're a victim. It's switching from a victim to being empowered. You are now empowered to speak your truth because you know where you came from.

I think the other important work that we have to do is some of the things that my family has been involved in, and that is looking at our history. And one of the things that was done on the second floor of the African-American Museum that a lot of people don't know about, is that you can go back and look at, we're connecting families that were enslaved. People that were married but in the minds of America weren't married legally, to find out where those families came from. Putting families together. Getting some history.

I did some genealogy work for Representative Elijah Cummings and Representative Marcia Fudge. We went back six generations and that was a huge step in their history. And if we can actually do that and bring families together, we learned a little bit more about the courageous people that history hasn't really uncovered. They haven't told their stories.

So what you find out about your history, about other people's history and their narrative, frames our narrative today. And I'll tell you right now, if you do not know ... We say this all the time, we do not know where we came from. We don't have a clear understanding of where we're going to go. We need to know where we came from.

And the other thing we have to have today is what is the vision? Because there are people that had a clear vision of what they wanted and some of it was very simple. Some of it was something as simple as getting to a place where I can raise my children in a free society. What is our vision today? What do we want? And that'll tell us, that'll give us at least a step of where we're going to go, what we need to do.

Juan Williams:

All right. So let me challenge you on this because you posited it in terms of black identity.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Mm-hmm.

Juan Williams:

Well, what about white people? How does the story change for white Americans in your mind?

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

I think it's the same thing. Let me talk about one of the ... My and I were able to take a trip to Israel, and one of the things that we have learned in Israel is that there is a conscious effort to keep their history alive, their history of what happened in Germany during the time of the Holocaust. That is incredibly important because they have this clear understanding of, "We do not want to go back there. We don't want to do that."

Our history, whether it's slavery or not, doesn't just, it's not just black history. This is American history. The history of the Caribbean Islands is not just a Haitian history, it's France, it's all of us so we all own it. It's not just what happened with black Americans, it's what happened with families.

There are people that were part of the negative side, but there were also white Americans that were part of the positive sides of that also, that we found allies with that helped free slaves. So that history belongs to all of us and we can be part of it, and we cannot just stand alone in this, right? We need to start looking at ourselves as Americans with a common purpose.

Juan Williams:

So Ed, I just wanted to say that the other day, I read where a newspaper going back in time, to look at slavery, identified a slave-owning family, whites, and said, "Well, this person who's alive today is a member of that family." Well, he is now suing for libel. He clearly is uncomfortable with them saying part of your legacy is as a slave owner. And the thought occurred to me, that for many whites, it feels like a guilt trip. It's when you say, "Hey, what do you want from me? I didn't own any slaves." So this is what I put to Mia, how does the evolution, the change, the memory impact white America?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

It goes back to what you were saying before about the lost cause and Confederacy and so forth. So I'm a white Southerner, descendant of Confederates, and I speak about this a lot. And you may recall the phrase, "Heritage not hate," that you'll see. And I said, "You don't get to inherit just what you want to."

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Yeah.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I didn't know that was an applause line, but thank you.

Juan Williams:

Well it was worthy of applause.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

People will often come out to me and say, you know Dr. Ayers, I know we need to grapple with the fact that we belong to a group that tried to dismantle the United States, and that we tried to create a new nation based on perpetual bondage. But three fourths of white southerners didn't own slaves. And so they say "My ancestors," It was always their ancestors who didn't, of course. And you're saying that. And I'd say, yeah, they may not have been fighting for slavery, but they were fighting for a nation based on slavery.

Right. And so I think that we had these little formulas that people like to use to excuse themselves from responsibility for history. So do we inherit guilt? We certainly inherit responsibility, to act in our own time, to acknowledge the cost or your wonderful eyes on the

prize. You know what the flags were waving in the face of the children who had the courage to go into these schools and try and be integrated. You can't just claim that that symbol means only what you think it does and deny all the way that it's been used in history since then. So very often I was on the Monument Avenue Commission in Richmond, and we talked about what we should do about all the monuments, and people would often say, but Robert E. Lee was a fine man and Stonewall Jackson taught his slaves how to read. And I said, but what would have happened if they had won?

Forget about what kind of people, what would have happened if there are cause to leave the United States and create the fourth richest economy in the world based on slavery? What would world history have looked like? And people go, Oh, because we often allow quick formulas to do our thinking for us rather than looking at the evidence, and rather than thinking about it hard. That's the common theme in all of this. We all have to be brave because the past only answers the questions that we ask. Got it. Right.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

And take ownership too. I mean, there's nothing wrong with taking ownership and saying, look, this is what my family's history was. I understand at that time that the family was trying to fight for their way of life, whatever it is. I mean, you can take ownership because if you don't take ownership and you want to just step away from it, it's almost as if you're denying that it existed, right. The people just have to say, look, this is what our family did and we own this part of it now. This is what we're going to do to change that narrative.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

You don't honor the past. You don't, by leaving it...

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

...by pretending it didn't happen.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Right.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

I'm sure that there are some mistakes that I have made as a parent. You own that, you learn from it, you grow from it, and you do better and there's no way that you can actually take that step, if you're not owning that part of history. You have to take in all of it.

Juan Williams:

You know, this is such a difficult topic for a lot of people. So we just talked about the inspiration that black people can get from this history. We talked about the need for white people to accept the totality of their history, not just their heritage but the hate. And the question then becomes,, how do we teach about this history going forward? Because you want the history to suggest that the American family has had some problems. What is the phrase, original sin, with regard to slavery. But at the same time you want young people to say we're all part of this family. There's no way to say we should go back in time. Or those people are responsible for their, or this group

is responsible, or we hate those people. There has to be this notion that history would invite some sense of commonality and common purpose. How do we do that? Is that possible?

The Honorable Ludmya “Mia” Love:

Well, I think that one of the things that we have to do, again, this is changing to the empowerment, being empowered attitude that I think about with raising my children. My children are of mixed race. They have all of it. The history is all it is. We look at American history too. We're seeing so many people that are of mixed race. I think the part that I can play is not blaming or getting angry with somebody because of their history, but I can actually judge them for what they do today. What their involvement in creating a nation that is a loving nation, a compassionate nation, or what their character is like today. And so I think that's one of the things that we can do when we're teaching is to look back and say we're not going to take this angry attitude. We're going to take this attitude of, I am going to judge you on what you are contributing to our society today, what you're contributing to our youth today.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I think there's two dangers as we teach American history, and we're frankly not doing a very good job of it, partly because it's not required to be taught in the common core anymore. History has been reduced to nonfiction non literary texts.

The Honorable Ludmya “Mia” Love:

And that ticks me off.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I know. There we go. And so the fact is that nobody doesn't believe history is important, but in our fixation on other purposes, we've allowed the teaching of history to die. So I teach a lot of freshmen, who are starting college coming out of high school, and they feel that there are two alternatives. One, we can either talk about the emergence of the greatest nation on the face of the earth, and our story is a constant progression toward the perfection that we are today, or we're wallowing in hypocrisy and failure at every step. Both of those come from not looking at the entire story of what's happening in each moment. It's been a struggle from the first moment those Africans were brought on this ground, to today, to reconcile our aspirations for a democratic society and the reality of what we've created. It's not a failure to acknowledge that. Who has higher aspirations in the United States?

We're destined to fail, right? We're destined to struggle, to live up to those ideals. I wouldn't want less exalted ideals, right? But we have to realize that every day it's a measure. How far are we from getting that? So I feel very often the kids will write their first essay, and it's like they always have to end, and yet, despite these tribulations today, America stands as the no, you don't have to do that. And that, don't do that. Right? Or we can say, no matter what we say, we've always been a nation of hypocrites and that doesn't get us anywhere either. So that's the reason I began my first answer to your first question, with what does history teach? Humility. Humility to know that as you're saying real, we can't know if what we're doing today is the beginning of something great, or something we'll look back on later and say, Whoa, because, after studying

history for 40 years now, I've only been able to find one great truth, is that what people expect to happen never does.

If you told anybody, Frederick Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, those three enslaved men in 1860, that slavery was going to be gone in five years with no compensation to the richest people in America, the slave holders, and that the 13th and 14th and 15th amendments would make them citizens, nobody would have believed it. It was impossible.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Or they would have taken that step a long time ago if they could have. Right?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

So that was a great blessing to the nation, that we need to recognize that we were fortunate that it happened and as you were saying Mia, live up to it. But so cynicism and bland optimism, are two sides of the same coin. We can't really afford either one.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

He mentioned something I just wanted to pick up on something that you mentioned is the failure part of it. We cannot protect us from future failures. That's not going to happen. We're going to fail. It's going to happen. Failure is not final. It's one of the key elements that my parents taught me, is failure is not final. It's what you do in that moment of failure. It's what you learn from that moment. A failure is what's going to make the difference. So do you take those moments of failure and cause it to keep you where you are, or does it allow you to grow from that, and learn from that, and teach from that?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Think about the freedom rides, right? The best is burning. Is that a failure, or is that a step toward justice?

Juan Williams:

Well it's a big step.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Exactly.

Juan Williams:

I mean, you'd have to look back historically and understand the impact that had, not only on the civil rights activists of that moment, but on the nation.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Exactly.

Juan Williams:

The tremendous impact. I wanted to wrap up, we're just about out of time, but something you said about history that Mia applauded, was that somehow history is being reduced to like

footnotes and not being taught aggressively in our schools. I'm kind of shocked to hear that from the two of you. I didn't know that. Why do you say that?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
That's unfortunately true.

Juan Williams:
I mean, you wait, you mean if I go to high school today, I don't have to take a history class?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
No, this is in elementary school, that they're not teaching history until much later in your education. So and so.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:
And there's only so much you can learn. So if you're not learning from the very beginning, it's very hard to catch up with what's going on. History, by the way, you retain by repeating, and listening, and hearing it over and over again. And those stories are important. And what's also tragic is that the people who are making history, their stories are dying along with them. So if you do not get that information and retain that information, then those stories die with them. And all you have at the very end are footnotes of someone's interpretation of somebody else's story.

Juan Williams:
No, but I think what bothers me is, as I was saying to the audience before, most of the history books, when this old man was in school, not only didn't tell the story of slavery, it didn't tell a story of the struggle to end slavery, and what we've gone through afterwards. Everything from reconstruction, to legal segregation, to the movement. But it also seems to me that today, textbooks are struggling with this issue. But you're saying to me it's beyond that. It's not being taught.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
Yeah, I'd say that. The flip side of this, however, history has never been richer at museums, at historic places. You can go see and feel history in such a much broader way than you could have when we were in school. Right? So the textbooks usually come in for criticism, but they're often paying more attention to this richer story. It's the structural thing in our schools, with standards and we're valuing STEM so much, that we're de-valuing learning about who we are. So I'd like for us to have a Sputnik moment about American history, a sense of crisis, that if we were as lost in space as we are in time, we'd be freaking out, right? If we didn't have any idea of where we were...

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:
There is also something that was brought up. The way that history is being taught, and being taught so quickly through a curriculum, is also I think a detriment. I can share a quick experience. We live in the state of Utah. There are very few of us in the state of Utah, I probably know everyone, but I remember my daughter coming back and she was really distraught and really upset about something, and I asked her to tell me what was going on and they touched

briefly upon slavery and segregation. So they went in one day, went from slavery to segregation, in one day, and at the end of it, all my daughter knew is that the teacher pointed her out and she was the only student of color in that class.

She said now back then, Elisa wouldn't have been able to take a drink in the water fountain like you guys would have, or she wouldn't have been able to do that and so all of a sudden here she is instead of, again a daughter with rich history that is empowered, now she was pointed out, singled out as a person who didn't have as many rights back then. I had to do some damage control, and I had to go in.

This is why it's really important to stay involved in the school system guys, but I had to go in, and pretty much explained to the teacher that no, you have a responsibility to teach these kids in a way that they have to understand that this is not something to go back to. You can't just brush upon this, because what you ended up with, at the end of the day, is a student that was singled out, that felt like she was less than who she actually is.

Juan Williams:

Ed, I see you shaking your head. I'm out of time, but I just wanted to invite your thoughts on that powerful story.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

It speaks for itself, in all honesty. It is rare you will find me not have something else to say, but in this regard, I think that if we value and honor all the children, for whom we have responsibility, and think that they all have a history, that'd be a good place to begin. So that's what I would say is that I like to think we'd learn a lesson from that. Maybe now a lot of people will learn from your daughter's experience. Maybe that's the way that that failure of that teacher can turn it into something better now.

Juan Williams:

Well, I want to thank you all for coming out. It's been an enlightening conversation, with Mia Love and Edward Ayers. We're going to take a short break, and I'd like you both to come back, because we're going to add some other panelists for further discussion. So I'm going to see you both, and of course, I hope all of you in the audience have the patience to stay with us. But if you give us a few minutes, we're going to be back on stage. Thank you very much.

America's Narrative Reframed

Juan Williams, journalist, author, and political analyst

Lynette L. Allston, Chief of the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia

Dr. Edward Ayers, Professor of the Humanities and President Emeritus, University of Richmond

Dr. Rex Ellis, Associate Director for Cultural Affairs Emeritus, National Museum of African American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution

The Honorable Mia Love, former Representative of the 4th Congressional District of Utah

VOG:

Welcome back to the 1619 Making of America Summit.

Juan Williams:

Good morning and welcome to all of you here on the campus of Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Virginia. Welcome to 1619: The Making of America, American Evolution. It's great to be here with you. A special welcome to all of you who are joining us from classrooms around the country as we livestream this historic event. It's all part of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution.

I'm Juan Williams, and it's a pleasure to now introduce an outstanding group of panelists to discuss this important topic. As a reminder, we want all of you in the audience to feel that you are part of the panel. So we want you to participate. We want to hear from you. We're going to take questions from you. So if you haven't already, get on the 1619 app where you can participate in our polling questions. This session will conclude with a Q&A portion with the audience and with all of you around the country. On the app you can submit questions you'd like us to ask the panelists.

A few questions will be selected to be asked here onstage. Of course, time has to allow us to get all of those questions in, but that's going to be our goal. So please get those questions in before 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time so that we can properly vet, consider. They're going to be brought to me and then I'll read them to the panelists. If you have a panelist in mind for a specific question, please indicate so.

We're going to continue our conversation around the idea of America's narrative reframed with the addition of some new voices. First let me thank Mia and Ed for coming back for this portion of the conversation. It was just terrific.

We're now thrilled to be joined by the Chief of the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia. She's a graduate of Duke University with a degree in history. She spent her career encouraging and mentoring citizens of her tribe to embrace traditional creative art forms. She's also focused on incorporating their contemporary interpretations. She's currently on the board of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Southampton County Planning Commission, and is chairman/woman of the Virginia Indian Advisory Committee. So please put your hands together and help me to welcome Chief Lynette Allston.

And it's a personal pleasure for me to have with us a gentleman who has served as the Associate Director for Curatorial Affairs at the National Museum of American History and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution. Prior to his work at the Smithsonian he was Vice-President of the Historic Area for Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, where he oversaw all programs and operations. He's also, you should know, the first African-American Vice-President in the foundation's history and served in that position for eight years. Let's all welcome Dr. Rex Ellis.

So earlier today we were talking about cords of history, memory, identity. This conversation will explore how the information taught in schools, and colleges, cultural institutions influence the

perspectives of America's heritage as shaped by Native, European, African, and Latin cultures. Acclaimed writer, Ralph Ellison, author of what I consider to be the greatest novel of the 20th century, *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison emphasized the importance of integrating Black history into our national narrative by asserting, and here I'm quoting, "Without the Black American something irrepressibly hopeful and creative would go out of the American spirit."

In other words, the American spirit is not the American spirit without the idea of including all voices, and in specific, even voices that have been disparaged and put down in the past. So let me begin this conversation by asking, and I think this is the way we started the last conversation, was to ask about the significance of the people, the 20-odd people, black people who came to this country 400 years ago.

But, Chief Allston, your people were here for hundred-

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
For thousands of years.

Juan Williams:
There we go. Right.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
Okay?

Juan Williams:
Right. So this now brings a new perspective to this very important conversation because I want to hear from you about the idea of how you view the arrival of those 20 and the people who brought them here.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
Well I go back to the fact that when Jamestown was established it was dropped right in the middle of 30-some tribal towns. Chief Powhatan was their paramount chief, but each one of those towns had a society. That beginning with Jamestown was like dropping a rock in a pond, and it's the ripples. We begin to see things begin to change.

1619, here we are with women coming in, English women. We have the establishment of democracy with the House of Burgesses. That's another ripple. But then we have people coming who are of color and who are coming out of a situation that they understand what our people are going through. Conflict, invasion, taken away from your family, removal from your children, a whole different environment. Native people also are experiencing those same conditions. And so there's a bond that maybe didn't happen right there at 1619, but as we go forward with those ripples, that bond begins to be fused. Our cultures begin to intertwine.

And that's a part of history that has not been discussed in-depth. There's certain historians who have talked about the relationship between Africans and Natives. But that's not something that's

done in a general history book, history for everyone. And I think that's time for us to discuss this a little bit more.

Juan Williams:

Well I just want to pick up on that because Ed mentioned in the first panel that it's not as if somehow you had this established White British culture here, that it was really very small and then you have the presence of the Africans and their culture with them. And then in addition to which here is the Native American culture already established. So you have all of these forces interacting at point zero that we call America.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

Exactly. And what we find is, okay, the Native population is there's conflict so people are being scattered. There's also the point where we have Indian slavery. This is the first time we begin to see if you're captured from a conflict, particularly Nathaniel Bacon when he did Bacon's Rebellion. If you were captured, you could be kept as a slave. So there's the first instance we see-

Juan Williams:

Hang on now. So you're talking about-

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

... Native American-

Juan Williams:

... intramural for different tribes of Native Americans to hold each other as slaves?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

No. I'm talking about in this case Nathaniel Bacon, who did a major raid on a trade operation by the Occaneechi Tribe. And with that in his directives to his militia he said, "If you capture a Native, you may keep that Native as a slave."

Juan Williams:

So this is Whites holding Native Americans as slaves?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

As slaves.

Juan Williams:

Got you now.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

Yes.

Juan Williams:

Okay.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
Yes.

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:
1676.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
Exactly.

Juan Williams:
Right.

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:
Evocative date, right?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
Exactly. Then 1677 is when we begin to see the creation of reservations because that restricted travel from Native populations, we could not go off of the reservation without a badge, it disrupted trade. That's the economy. Native American people interacted with each other. And our trade routes, you can still see them if you go down Highway Number One. That's an old trade path. If you go down Highway 11 in the mountains, that's the Great Warrior Path.

So these trade routes were already in place. And here we are, we're being disrupted. Our trade, our economy is being disrupted, in addition to the social part of it, our social life, our education. Children immediately within the first 20 years of the arrival, Native children were pulled away from their families and put into households to be educated in a trade and to be Christianized because Christianity was to be taught. What it was doing was it was disrupting the culture. All of a sudden you remove the young people from a culture, we're dividing. We're teaching you something new. You're being removed from your culture.

We find in addition to economy and slavery and social issues, education became one of the top weapons. Education with the establishment of Fort Christanna, which was near Lawrenceville, Virginia. That was one of the first Native schools, and that was in the 1600s. We then go to the Brafferton Indian School, which was at the College of William and Mary. And that was late 1600s into the 1700s. And then we go to Hampton University where they had the Indian School, where they brought children from the Plains. So here we are with this ripple effect through generations.

After all of that, whereas we see identity being addressed, Native identity, in the 1800s census takers started changing documents. So in 1870 we have people listed as Indian. In 1880 they're listed as White or Black. We have split a community. And then you go to the 20th Century with the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 and Virginia establishes that there are only two races in Virginia. You're either White or you're Colored. So, effectively you have erased on paper the Native population. We no longer exist. We no longer can talk about in public who we are.

But we keep our culture. We live in communities. We work together. We can talk to our family members about who we really are. And time has taken care of this.

Juan Williams:
Right.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
Because 1984 the first tribes in Virginia became state recognized tribes.

Juan Williams:
Yeah.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
We now have 11 tribes recognized in the commonwealth. Seven of those have actually achieved federal recognition. So it has come full circle in that respect. But the ripples are still there. They're still a problem. The thing about history is we should learn from it. We don't want to repeat it. And we have to heal from it because we're suffering, all of us are suffering from historical trauma. There's something.

Juan Williams:
Let me go to Rex Ellis on just this point, historical trauma, because I think the story that we just heard, Rex, from Chief Allston had to do with a forced inclusion. All these stories are coming together here in Virginia. And you worked at Williamsburg right next door, College of William and Mary, that the Chief mentioned. And you could see there the impact of communities working together, the cultures coming together.

But how do you tell that story that people can hear it and that people don't think, "I don't want to hear about slavery. I don't want to hear about Native Americans. I just want to hear about the colonists, the White colonists."

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:
Well, that is part and parcel of what was the problem at Colonial Williamsburg. Went to Carter's Grove, which was the sort of rural opposite of Colonial Williamsburg, owned by Colonial Williamsburg to talk about the plantation and plantation life. I was there one day and a visitor began talking about how they were, as they were in the Carter's Grove, which is sort of this large Robert "King" Carter's mansion, and people when they come to Carter's Grove they just make a beeline to the house assuming that if they make that beeline to the house they are more closer to their history, to their White history than they are any other place that they could go.

Well, in somewhere around 2000 we actually put together a slave quarter that used to be at Colonial Williamsburg. It has since been dismantled, but it was there at that point. And it was right on the road to the Carter's Grove mansion. You went down this visitor's center, down this bridge and you'd see a barracks kind of duplex structure. You'd see a small one-room structure. And they were sort of to talk about the African-American, the enslaved Africans that were on the

Carter's Grove property to sort of open the door on it in ways that they had not talked about it before.

And so you could come off the bridge, first thing you did was you'd see the slave quarter and you'd see that before you continued up the path to go to the main structure, the main house. And so people would come out of the visitor's center after seeing the video and they'd go straight up to Carter's Grove without even stopping by to see the slave quarters and hear the story about the enslaved.

One of our interpreters got the bright idea of being at the end of the bridge as they crossed the bridge. It was a sort of pedestrian bridge so wasn't any wider than that. And this young man who was the interpreter, he was about big enough that when he did this, you could not get past him. And so people started coming one day out of the visitor's center heading toward the bridge and there he was at the end of the bridge. And he said, "Just a moment. Just a moment. I know you want to go up to the house." They couldn't even see the house from where they were, but they knew that somewhere there was Shangri-La.

And so he said, "I just want to hold you for just a few minutes. How many of you belong or are related to the Du Ponts? Anybody related to the Du Ponts, raise your hand. Raise your hand." Nobody raised their hand. "Is there anybody related to the Rockefellers? Raise your hand. Raise your hand." Nobody raised their hand. He said, "Is there anybody here related to the Gettys? Raise your hand if you're related to the Gettys." Nobody said anything. He pointed to the slave quarter and he said, "Welcome home," because clearly 80% of the white population during the colonial period lived in architectural structures that were more similar to the slave quarter than they were to the mansion that they were going to see.

If you ask me what you do, you have the audacity to use history and the knowledge of history to debunk myths about what people think they know about history.

That was him using the history that he knew and finding a way to be bold enough to say to the visitors, "Your perspective of who you are as white Americans needs some adjustment. And as you adjust it, you will find it's closer to what you think is far from you than you should believe. Here's your home."

That I think is what we need to do. Be bold enough to find ways to tell the truth and not, there was nobody who wrote back and said, "Oh, he did this and he did that." People appreciated his perspective and they learned it as a result.

Juan Williams:

Just let me pick up on that with you. You use the term debunk. For a lot of people, these would have been closely held myths that they would have integrated with their sense of self, who they are in America. You're saying to them, actually you're not at the top of this socio-economic pyramid. You're far closer to people who were being held as slaves. Oftentimes, I suppose these were tenant farmers and the like, but they were white people. But when you use the phrase

debunked, I wonder if people are put off. You said you didn't get letters complaining about it, but I imagine that people thought, "I'm here for a good time, I didn't come here to be debunked."

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

I know no conversation that doesn't revolve around a story as far as I'm concerned. Same place, Carter's Grove. Same thing, people going across the bridge, seeing the enslaved quarters, and wanting to get to the mansion. A university professor. He's brought his students to Colonial Williamsburg. He's gone through Jefferson. He's gone through George Wythe. He's gone through Duke of Gloucester Street. He's gone through the Capitol, he's gone to the palace, he's learned at all. Talking to his students about everything that he's gone through, because he studied this, he knows it. He's able to take his students on a special tour through Colonial Williamsburg because of it.

The other half of the day- the first morning they spent at Colonial Williamsburg - second half, they went on to Carter's Grove. To get to Carter's Grove, there is the slave quarter. And he decides he's going to take his students through the slave quarter, and he goes through, sees all of the houses, the barracks. Sees all of the collections and everything, and then he goes as quickly as he can up to the mansion. He goes back to his hotel room that night, and he writes to the director of Carter's Grove, his name was Larry Henry at that point.

And he writes a letter, and he said, "Dear Mr. Henry," he said, "I want you to know that I came with my students." He says, "Every year, I come with my students. Every year, I look forward to coming to Colonial Williamsburg. I came to that new site you all have, that slave quarters site. I want you to know that it's the most reprehensible thing I have ever seen. It is not the kind of history I want to teach my students. It is not the kind of history that I have been studying for the last 50 years, and I want you to know that we had a horrible, terrible time." And then he wrote his name down there.

Now here's the point. Larry Henry wrote him a letter back, and he said, "Dear Dr. Whoever-It-Was," he said, "I've enclosed two tickets hoping that you will come back to visit us again. I also would like you to know that your letter is an indication to us that we are on the right track."

Again, what I mean by this, it depends on how you take the history to teach the history. But sometimes you simply have to be bold enough to take a stand, and that's what he did. Colonial Williamsburg and all the donors and everybody else could have said, "No, that's a bridge too far, Larry. You should write him back and apologize to him." But that's not what they said.

Juan Williams:

All right, let me get personal with you. Sorry to stay with you this long. We're going to get everybody else involved in the conversation, of course. But the other experience that I've read about with regard to Colonial Williamsburg is that black people don't come in the numbers that they should.

And my perception of this is informed by a visit that I had with my deceased parents, and my dad upon seeing the stockades was repulsed in a way that I was like, "Dad, what's that about?" Right? But this is many years ago. And I just think that the whole notion of slavery more real to him than it is to me, his son.

But in general, there was at that time very little representation of the presence of black people in Williamsburg or Carter's Grove, as you describe it. Is there more of a sense of a willingness of black people now to come to these historical sites to understand that past? Or is it still so emotionally weighted that they're just like, "Man, this is too much."

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

We were in enslavement for 246 years. We've been free for what, 150? Over 150. It is still raw for a lot of people, for a lot of generations. It is still something that people don't like to see. There is no Dolemite. There is no huge hero in the colonial period that you can ... there is no person that you can see. You can see a Benjamin Banneker, you can see Douglas later on. You can see a variety of people who begin to question slavery and begin to go to large civic-minded people or people who are connected with the leadership and ask those kinds of questions. But they are few and far between.

The story of Colonial Williamsburg is a story about how we became Americans. That's what they talk about. And in many ways we became Americans on the backside of slavery. It is not something that can be erased simply because Colonial Williamsburg wants to do a good job and wants to invite folk there, does not in some way change the story.

As a matter of fact, if they are responsible, it in some way makes the story even more complex and even more hurtful. I have respect for every interpreter that is now at Colonial Williamsburg doing what they do. Because people will say all kinds of asinine things to them. Simply because they happen to be African American that they happened to be saying, "I don't want you to ask me about being a bookbinder. I don't want you to ask me about being a leatherworker. I don't want you to ask me about being a carpenter. I want you to ask me about the African Americans, the other half of the population who lived here during the 18th century." That takes boldness and it takes creativity.

As I was telling you about the young man at Carter's Grove, it is never going to be... If you take a job at Colonial Williamsburg or any other place that has this tough history, it's never going to be easy.

I used to talk to... when I gave people interviews to be an interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg, oh man, I took them through the ringer. What if somebody calls you this? Because they did? What if somebody says that? Because they did. What if there are people who are saying things or embarrassing you in front of others simply because you have a costume on, what are you going to do? They had to answer those questions to my satisfaction because you can't, every time somebody says something you don't want them to say, smack them in the face.

Juan Williams:

But you're not just talking about black people. You're talking about white people as well.

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

Right now I was talking about African Americans-

Juan Williams:

African Americans.

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

Because to me, they have more of a difficult job than anybody else. They are African American, they are putting on colonial costumes. And no matter how good the costume is, in making an enslaved costume, it does not look, it's not brocade, it doesn't have a baton. It doesn't have a tricorn hat. They look like an enslaved person and wearing that every day, day in and day out, takes a special person who wants to teach African American history regardless of the price it might be in terms of how people perceive him.

Juan Williams:

Yeah, but the emotional price they pay. And this reminds me of your story, Mia, about your daughter, that they suddenly are seen as the slave. To me, by the way, you didn't answer my question. There are more black people now coming into Williamsburg?

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

No.

Juan Williams:

Okay. You answered my question.

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

I was trying to explain why before I got to the killer. No, but there are more teachers and more educators who are seeing African American history as important and they are bringing their school groups to Williamsburg. We just need to make sure that the schools are not taking those funds away from them so that they are taking less and fewer field trips to go to places like that.

Juan Williams:

And by the way, Chief Allston, when it comes to telling that history, do you find that Native Americans are reluctant to deal with this history?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

Yes. It's because it's ugly, okay? And anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, you want to avoid. And having that conversation is so important. It's just finding the methods that make it powerful.

Juan Williams:

Have you found one?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

I find that small groups is the best way to talk to people, because you can get into a more personal dialogue. You can explain things in depth, and you can have them ask questions. And that way, you connect with the person, they begin to have empathy. That's an emotion that is difficult for some people.

Juan Williams:

Empathy.

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

Juan, I've been unfair in terms of only talking about the difficulties of interpretation. There are some of those interpreters that I was telling about who do a fine job and actually reach people. There's one young woman who does a program in a closed area and she talks about not just the character that she portrays, but she talks about how difficult it was for her to even put the character together.

She talks about the costume and how hard it is for her to put the costume on everyday. That's all a part of her program. She talks about how difficult it was for her, in some ways, to explain to her husband and her daughter what she did at Williamsburg and why she thought it was important. Audience members are sitting and listening to her talk about how difficult it is for her to portray a slave. Then she does the character and she finally ends the program about 45 minutes later. It's in an auditorium. When she leaves the stage, there are so many people behind the stage wanting to meet her and wanting to talk to her, because they've connected to her as a person.

That is one of the most valuable programs they have there, because it's somebody who is willing to reveal themselves, disclose things about themselves that talks about the difficulty of enslavement, and she has people, and I'm talking about the majority of them, all white visitors, who simply want to talk to her because they have some questions about slavery. They have some questions about how they were raised. They have some questions that they want her to answer, and because they have in some way connected to her, they feel she can understand them in ways that they won't be accused of being racist or they won't be accused ... how do you break down this history so people want to talk about it and are willing to talk about it.

At Colonial Williamsburg that's a challenge. At the National Museum of African American History and Culture that's a challenge.

Juan Williams:

Well, I just so much appreciate it. Now I want to bring Ed and Mia back into the conversation. You know what we've heard from Chief Allston and Rex Ellis is this idea that once you get personal, you can get more honest and there's more of a connection that allows people then to learn. You can get beyond some of the resistance that says historically, especially for whites, this makes me uncomfortable or feel guilty. Or for black people, this makes me feel less. Or for Native Americans, this makes me feel like an afterthought. I got trampled by history. There's so many reasons to avoid these stories. But part of the power of personal connection, small groups that you were talking about, someone revealing themselves as you were talking about Rex also

comes with music, comes with food, comes with conversation and the way that we use language and suddenly you think, "Hey, this is an America. Unless you have all these elements in dynamic interaction." Ed, you're shaking your head. Go right ahead.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I was just agreeing with you and thinking ... I think, and I know that Rex and I worked together on enterprises. I think I can say this, that there are huge advances being made at places like Montcello and Montpelier, Mount Vernon, where the story and the elements of the culture are being woven together. And it requires bravery too, if you're a 501c3, to risk attendance by telling these hard stories as well.

I think that we need to acknowledge that we're actually making progress telling more and the fact that this exists, right?

Juan Williams:

This event.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

This event, and the vision that animated it. I was doing a podcast about Harriet Tubman, because there's a new film that's being filmed in Virginia, even though her great actions were mainly in Maryland. And I talked to the people, I said, "They want to talk to me about a slave message. It's going to be a hard story, that this is what you want to tell people and get them to come to Virginia." They said, "That's what they want. People want the truth." You actually having the Tourist Bureau making a point of telling the story-

Juan Williams:

What people are they talking about?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

They would like to have African Americans, but also people who are not African Americans who want to understand slavery.

Juan Williams:

What I was hearing earlier was a resistance, but you're saying now they want to hear that story.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I'm saying the people who are creating this, the interpreters that Rex is talking about, there are brave people everyday who are running these organizations and professors who are writing the books that are breaking the ground that other people didn't interpret. I just wouldn't want us to think that there's a stonewalling on all this. In fact, there's a great fervour all around the country of people trying to tell all these stories.

The trick is how do we persuade people who might be inclined to come but don't know that if they go there, their history would be honored, right? We don't have a connection between all the

goodwill that's going into making these things and the people who would benefit from hearing the story if they came there with an open heart.

Juan Williams:

Wait a second. You just said their history would be honored. You're talking about blacks, Native Americans?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

Yes.

Juan Williams:

But you're also talking about white people wanting it, right?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I find that white students are hungry. White people, audiences are hungry to know the truth. We have the...

Juan Williams:

You do think that?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

I see it all the time. We had the-

Juan Williams:

You're shaking your head too, you think so?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

Yeah. We have an interpretive center, and we probably have more white visitors than any other population. And they come, and they're teachers, because a lot of things ... the school books don't have information, right?

Juan Williams:

Yeah, I agree with that.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

And so they come to us to get it firsthand. So we can talk to them and say, "These are the points. This is the evolution of Native Americans in Virginia and specifically to my tribe, the Nottoway Tribe." But which is eliminated from most of the books. The history books in Virginia that are in the schools predominantly deal with the Algonquin tribes, which are the ones associated with Jamestown. The Suwon speakers who were to the west, you hear very little about those tribes. The Iroquoian people, my people, who are to the South, you don't hear about them. There's just a mention that there are three linguistic groups in Virginia, Algonquin, Suwon, and Iroquoian speakers, and that's about it.

So teachers come to the source. Let's talk about this, and then they incorporate it into their curriculum.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:

There's nothing like place to convey this. And so I think that's what I'm saying, the people who are the trustees for these places are working to make the connections. We have a long way to go to make them, but I think there's more hunger for honesty than we might imagine.

Juan Williams:

So, Mia, let me come to you. I apologize for not bringing you in earlier.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

No, this has been fascinating.

Juan Williams:

So let me just do this very personally. So recently, I know a lot of history, because I've had to work with it as all of you here, but recently I found myself reading about what it's like to have been a slave. I read a book and the reason I direct this to you is this book starts with a slave in Barbados. Ed, you were talking about slavery in the Caribbean as much larger initially than slavery here in the USA. I then went from that book to a book by a science fiction writer, Octavia Butler. It's called Kindred. And the whole idea is of a modern day black woman, I think she's in Oakland, California, but she finds herself transported through time, back to a slave plantation in Maryland, not far from I guess, across the Eastern shore from Virginia.

And the whole idea is a 21st century black man, me, trying to understand slavery in a way that never came through for me in school. And away from the whole idea of discomfort or shame or guilt or whatever you want to put on it or what happened to your daughter in school, that you wouldn't have been allowed in here. But to understand what it means, and boy, to me it was a revelation I never got from the history books. I mean to be just explicit, the sexual relationship between the slave owner and the slave woman. It's awful.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Perspective is really, it's all relative, right? What may have happened in one household is different than something that may have happened in a different household. To be able to try and transfer or go back and really understand, I think that, that's actually impossible because you can't smell, you can't feel the pain. You can't really understand what it was like unless you've had your children ripped from you or unless you couldn't be with the person you loved. You can't. You can't do it. The best thing that you can do, I always say, you mentioned that it's ugly that people don't like to, but I always say to my children and I've understood this from my parents, that leaders, teachers put themselves in uncomfortable situations and find a way to get comfortable there. That is the only way that you could try and at least learn from other people.

I'll give you an example about where some of this is and where I am and what I feel like my little contribution can be. I went to the University of Chicago to speak to some aspiring black students

and I was told, "Don't go there as a conservative black woman." I was told, "Don't go there. They don't want to hear what you have to say. They're not going to be happy with you."

And I said, "You know what? I'm going to go because I think that at least there's a perspective." So I went and I spoke and this one lady, I told them about my history. I told them about my parents, and one young lady stood up and she said, "I don't understand how you could be a conservative from the state of Utah in today's America. I just don't understand it."

And I said, "I am these things because I refuse to fit this mold that society tells me I have to fit into. Imagine if Martin Luther King, and all these people that have spent so many times saying you speak your mind, listen to government saying you are a second class citizen. Imagine if they didn't stand up and said, no. I preserve the right to have my own mind. You wouldn't be here today. So you don't have to listen to what I say, but at least know who you are, where you come from, make your decisions and preserve the right to be able to keep, to speak your truth. To speak your history."

So this is same thing. Joining the Congressional Black Caucus. "Don't go there, Mia. They're, they're not going to ..." I found family in the Congressional Black Caucus because there was a history there. There were bonds that can't be broken through politics. I had a conversation with Cedric Richmond who's Representative from Louisiana and he asked me, "Why are you conservative?" And I said, "It's because I believe in state rights as opposed to the federal government. I believe in ..." And I said, "Well, what about you?" And he said, "It was actually the States that were holding Black Americans back and that it was the federal government."

So all of a sudden you go to places and why I'm saying this is that it widens your sphere of knowledge. Getting that experience from you, listening to the experience from you, listening to the experiences here, widens your sphere of knowledge so that way when you stand in your truth, you can say, "Look, this is my history. Now I get to be here. I get to talk about why it's important for you to know that if somebody bumps into you and has a problem with you because of your color, that's not your problem. That is their problem. That is their flaw. They have to change it. They need to understand their spirit knowledge."

So no matter how difficult it is. No matter how hard it is for me to go to these places. No matter how difficult it was for me to sit in a group filled with people who do not look like me, my story, your story, our story, is important to be told. If we don't tell our story, the United States will continue to go backwards, it will not go forward. And so we all have a place in history. We all have the obligation to learn the hard truths so that we can get to a better place and be an example of who we are.

Juan Williams:

So do you guys, when we think about trying to teach this history is we are obviously personal contact, personal stories matter greatly in terms of educating young people. But very quickly, does it also matter about then beyond that, the movies, the books, the music, the food? Does it matter?

The Honorable Ludmya “Mia” Love:
I think it all matters.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
It all matters.

The Honorable Ludmya “Mia” Love:
It all matters. You really can't embrace a culture without understanding where the food comes from. A lot of people have no idea where barbecue came from. They just think it's, "Oh, this was great food." They have no idea that there are people that have the worst parts of the animal and made it taste good. You know, they found a way to feed their families. They have no idea that's where it came from. But that's how you learn. You can't be there, but you can try to get as close to that as possible. Going to those uncomfortable places. Going to the places that are ugly, so that way you can actually learn something.

Juan Williams:
Ed, do you have the experience, you're a learned man and you're a man of a classroom, but going outside the classroom, what do you think is most effective in helping young people come to appreciate the whole notion of a diverse, inclusive American history?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
Yeah, I think it's important to say, first of all, the classroom is still the best place for us to make this progress on this front. We've been disparaging textbooks and talking about history classes, leaving things out. The history class is built to be small and built to have conversation. The classroom is the most sacred place in America.

Juan Williams:
But you said earlier, it's going down.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
I'm saying that because lawmakers are disparaging, are fighting over it. One set of heroes against another set of heroes. They're not honoring the classroom by trusting the teachers and giving them the resources that they need to teach with.

Juan Williams:
I hear you.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
So, I'm devoting much of my energies now to public history. I'm on seven different boards and helped create the American Civil War Museum in Richmond that tells the full story and integrating slavery with the war. But if we give up on the kinds of the flip side of the connection your daughter had, imagine the difference she could have made, the teacher could have made if she used that moment in a different kind of way.

If we lose the classrooms, the museums and the movies aren't going to do the work that only hard conversations with people who trust each other. The other places where I've seen, when we had all the conversations in Richmond, all about the meeting of the Civil War and Emancipation, I found faith communities to be places where people would be honest with each other in a way that I didn't see anywhere else. And that people would bring the religious faith to bear and this was across all faiths and trust each other to tell each other hard stories.

I think that we need to take advantage of the places of trust that already exist. And a movies powerful but a teacher has more time with her students in a classroom than all the movies that people are going to watch. So we need to put our energies where lifetime memories are made. But I agree with Rex that they need to be ... to answer your question rather than my little sermonette, which I don't regret. But there's nothing like seeing the place, the feeling. Mia's right. We're never going to go back a time. We're never going to know what it was like to have your children sold away from you, but there's something about being in that place where that happened. It gives you a sense that this actually did happen. Right here.

So I think that's why we need to work so hard to preserve the places that we have and interpret them. Places that are silent now can talk to us if we have people to tell us what they mean.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

I have a unique situation where my tribe is located and that is Southampton County, Virginia, where the Nat Turner rebellion took place, just right there where we are. And our stories say that free Blacks ran to the reservation for safety. That's where they found Safe Haven and we're proud of that. That's a good thing. Part of our history.

Juan Williams:

So we have now for the next few minutes, the opportunity to take some questions from the audience and here's the first question. It doesn't have anyone designated to answer, so please feel free. What do you say to people who play the "suffering Olympics" between African Americans and Native Americans in this country?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

Say that again.

Juan Williams:

All right, chief, because I'm saying again for you, you're going to have to answer. What do you say to people who play the "suffering Olympics" between African Americans and native Americans?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

Okay, so you've got a double whammy. It makes you stronger. Okay. Just know who you are. You carry a lot of oppression, but that's to make you stronger. It's America, because we are a blended society now. We may as well face that and we embrace all of who we are.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

I love that. I love that because I say that all the time to my kids. Don't let it make you mad. Let it make you strong. Make sure it makes a strong.

Juan Williams:

Rex. Here's a question for you. If you could tell students today one story about the past that would help them correct the narrative, what story would you?

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:

There's a story about a woman who was recorded during the 1930s, during that whole era of recording of ex slave narratives. Her name was Susan Douglas. She was from El Dorado, Arkansas. She told in her narrative about a situation that she had with her mistress. She said her mistress used to tie her up and put her arms around a tree, tie her arms around the tree. And she said she would take a whip that had lead weights on the end of and she would whip her. And in this narrative she told how her mistress, not the overseer, not the master, her mistress would whip her so badly until she would bleed. And one day she said, "I couldn't take it anymore." And she said, "I said, Oh Miss, if I were you and you were me, I wouldn't whip you like this." She said her mistress stopped whipping her. And she said, from that day on, she never whipped her again.

The reason I think that's an appropriate story to answer that question is because this enslaved woman found a way to reach her mistress's heart and her mistress as a result of ... I don't know how she said it. I don't even know what her perspective was when she said it. I don't know anything about what she said, but in some way she communicated to her mistress in a way that motivated her mistress to change her behavior. Nothing is going to happen until we find a way to connect heart to heart. We can't legislate this. The government can't make us better with one another. As good as it is, he can't convince students until they change their hearts. That's the...

Juan Williams:

Chief, you want to take a shot at that. Do you have a story in mind that you think you would tell, one story?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

Not exactly in that vein, but I do have a story and this is about food. If you don't mind,

Juan Williams:

Please.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:

Okay. Several years ago, I was on a panel like this and I had a roll your eyes moment. Okay. It's how history was told years ago. There was a representative who was for the colonists and she had been a school teacher for many, many years, she was in her 90's. There was a representative from the African American community, and then there's me. It started with the lady who was the teacher, and she said, "Indian's didn't know how to farm. They had to wait for the colonist to come to teach them how to plant food." I don't think I rolled my eyes, but the audience ...

Juan Williams:
It was a rolling moment.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
It was a rolling moment and everybody looked at me, and because of her age, I did not come back on her like that. When they got to me, I told the story of the three sisters. Of the corn, the beans and the squash, and that was the root of Native American agriculture. And that is what sustained those first colonists when they came to Jamestown. And when there was conflict and people decided we don't like how you're treating, the colonists were treating the native population, they stopped feeding, and those were the starving years.

So that little story was to the point, everybody understood what I was saying without having to address my friend on the stage who had been teaching her students for years that Native Americans didn't know how to farm. Okay. I know that might've been off topic.

Juan Williams:
Not at all, I appreciate it. In fact, having heard your story and Rex's story I'm just going to keep going on this one for a second. I know it was one question. Allow me, Ed is there a story that you would tell to students?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
The story that we have right now about reconstruction is that it was a terrible failure, and people from different political perspectives believe it was a failure for different reasons.

Juan Williams:
Yeah.

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
But what we forget is that the African American people who came out of slavery, seized from Reconstruction- now sometimes people say, well, what followed slavery was just as bad. It was not, they could not sell your children after slavery's over. So we know that Reconstruction doesn't last long, but black people themselves created their own schools, their own churches. They didn't wait for something to come from somebody else.

So there's a story in Staunton, young man was 13 years old when Emancipation comes and he assembles an education out of the pieces that he has there. And he ends up editing a newspaper, becoming a minister, a school teacher.

The point being is that if we imagine that the greatest experiment in democracy in American history was a failure, we're missing the story that the formerly enslaved people themselves refused to let it be a failure. There's no more successful post-Emancipation society in the world than African Americans. Why? Because they taught themselves to read. They built their own businesses. They built their own families. They built their own organizations. I think that we forget that history is not just what is given, it's what's created, and it's the black people themselves made something of that moment.

Juan Williams:

That's pretty powerful.

Mia, you told that great story about your daughter in the school, but I would invite you if you have a thought of a story that you would tell to students to help them understand and gain a better understanding of this American history.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

Oh gosh. I don't know how I could talk about some of the stories that were given. The only stories I have are stories of listening to some of the things that my parents went through. My dad told me at one point, living in Haiti, there was a group or the thugs of Duvalier at that point called the Tontons Macoutes.

And he said that there was one point where he was leaving a movie theater and he was 14 at that time and he saw a bunch of people running in one direction. And so, he decided he was going to run also because in that time if you saw people running, you didn't ask questions, you just ran. So he ran and when he looked behind him, there was one person, one man with a black beret, blue uniform, black boots that everybody was running from.

And he knew that that person was somebody who could do anything to you, and no law would be able to affect them. So he climbed into a drainage hole and he stayed there and he said, "Survival mode must've hit because when I opened my eyes, it was daylight. I must have just hunkered down and went somewhere else."

And he said he went home, and he said he looked at his mom and the look that he saw on his mother's face was a look that would shape our family history. He said that in that time if your child didn't come home at night, then you weren't coming home. And he said, "At that point I knew that I was going to leave and I was going to come to the United States and I was going to do everything I can to make sure I didn't have that look on my face also."

What I mean by that, feeling history and what's happened in Haiti, what we talked about and the slavery that happened in the Caribbean Islands, we still feel the effects of all of those today. And that story and all of the things that we learned from tells us where the pitfalls are, where not to go back to. And so, if I would tell a story, that would be the story I would tell, because the decision that my father made to say, I'm never going back to that position again, is what led for us to be here contributing here.

One of the things I wanted to mention is when I was talking about why it's important to put yourself in positions that are uncomfortable for you, it's because we need people of color as teachers. We need them as police officers, we need them in all areas of government because that is the only time where you look, and somebody says, "I see that, I can do that. I can be that."

There is no way if you're not getting involved that someone can look and say, "I can do something like that." They need to see it in order to do it. And so, that's a story I would tell. So

many of us have been through so much and it means that we have something we need to contribute from the past. We take that past and use it in our future.

Juan Williams:

So I think all these stories have been terrific and personal. I just want to say thank you to all of you, those are great stories. So let me tell you something about the polling, because people have been watching us online through the streaming and they have some thoughts.

One question is this, should America's narrative be reframed to be more inclusive? Well, it's almost universal. 96% of the people who are watching and in the audience said, yes, we need to reframe that narrative. But here's a second poll question that involves more, well of a complex thought about the response. The question was, are there signs that Americans are embracing a more inclusive story about a culture that includes language, art, music, architecture, food? Only 57% said yes.

So in other words, get about 43% saying, no, Americans are not embracing that inclusive story. I don't know how to make sense of that. Why did that 43% say no because I would think just not only on the stage, but just in American life with the shifts in our demographics, that there is a more inclusive America. We were talking about greater representation. You talked about participation, higher numbers of people of color in Congress, for example but here is more than 40% saying no, what do you guys make of this?

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

I say it's not enough still. I do think it's not enough. I mean, you go and you look at Parliament as opposed to Congress we actually have a higher percentage of black Americans involved in Congress. I do think that we need, again, black Americans on both sides of the aisle because what that does is it helps us tell our story better. If you think about the congressional black caucus, right? And the fact that I was in a conference that had no one, no black Americans there but I can argue and I could make the case for the black community that ...

Juan Williams:

You mean the Congressional Republican Congress?

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

No, no, so I'm talking about being part of the Congressional Black Caucus being the only Republican there.

Juan Williams:

Oh, I thought you said being the black person there.

The Honorable Ludmya "Mia" Love:

So I was the only black person in the Republican conference.

Juan Williams:

Yes.

The Honorable Ludmya “Mia” Love:
And I got to be there arguing for the black community.

Juan Williams:
I got you.

The Honorable Ludmya “Mia” Love:
If we don't have a voice there, all of a sudden we're absent from all of that. And decisions are made without that perspective. And so, the reason why I don't think that we're that inclusive is because I feel like we need to be more diverse. I think my daughter may have had a different experience. Well probably would have had a different experience if there was a teacher of color that was teaching that perspective.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
Right.

The Honorable Ludmya “Mia” Love:
She may not have felt different. Not to say, by the way, not to say you're a great teacher, I want to make sure everybody knows, but the way you teach is important. You have to know the ugly in order to teach correctly. So it's important for us if we want our young men to have good role models, it's important for us to have black Americans as police officers, it's important for us to have them in the media. That way everyone gets a full perspective.

Juan Williams:
Ed?

Dr. Edward L. Ayers:
I feel like I need to answer the question honestly. We're talking a lot about honesty. Why would almost half of people think that we're not moving toward inclusivity? We just talked about the importance of stories. The story that we're hearing about America now is that immigration is a source of weakness and disease, instead, immigration is the story that's made this nation great. So why do we think that it's because stories matter. It matters who tells them.

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
Yeah. My feeling is that it's what we see on television every day and hear on the radio and through social media, it's impacting our psyche and we're carrying that weight with us. And that's how we're beginning to feel disconnected. We're not feeling like we're coming together. We're finding our little spots, the safe places, you think on college campuses that students require, instead of being in a global setting, they're seeking out a place where they can say, oh, that's my safe space. That's not what America is supposed to be. And so, we are kind of going in a reverse spiral.

Juan Williams:
Huh, you think we're going backward?

Chief Lynette L. Allston:
I think we're going backwards.

Juan Williams:
Really? Rex?

Dr. Rex M. Ellis:
I really think it has to do with what the Chief said about where it is we find our information. If you look at television enough, you will assume everything is going to hell in a hand basket. You really do have to widen your perspective so that you can see and understand that there are other things going on.

My favorite story about the museum is, and I'm sorry y'all don't ask me more about the museum. Anyhow, one of the most moving exhibitions in the museum is in the segregation section and it's the end of the segregation section and it's an exhibition that specifically focuses on Emmett Till. I don't care where a youngster comes from, I don't care how old or how young he is when they get to that section of Emmett Till, nobody has to tell them to shut up. They understand it's a sacred space. Woman goes into the exhibition and she's sitting there looking at the casket and she all of a sudden begins to cry. A man goes in there, reads everything that she read, stands beside her, and as he's hearing her whimper and cry, he says to her, "Can we cry together?" He grabs her hand and they stand there and cry together. That wasn't a media event, but it was something that changed that man's life and changed that woman's life.

We don't see enough of those moments, what we is the degradation on television because television sells Nielsen's ratings by doing that. That woman and that man, that won't make the news, that won't even make the newspaper, but they're the kinds of things that we need to see over and over again to remind ourselves there is hope and that there are things happening all over the nation, in communities all over the nation that simply don't make the news. But are very important to be happening as communities are looking at themselves and asking themselves, how can we be a part of the solution rather than continue to wallow in the problem?

Juan Williams:
Again, that's pretty powerful. I don't know about all of you, but I have so enjoyed being with these fabulous people. I hope that all of you here at Norfolk State, I hope all of you who have been watching the screen have appreciated this effort to open eyes, open minds, open hearts to American history that's inclusive, a comprehensive history and true. Thank you all so much. Dr. Ellis, Chief Allston, Ed Ayers and Mia Love. Thank you all for being here today. Thank you.

America's Future: Citizenship and the Law in America
Moderator: Juan Williams, journalist, author, and political analyst
Dr. Martha S. Jones, Society of Black Alumni Presidential Professor and Professor of History, The Johns Hopkins University
Ayevi Price, Student, Norfolk State University

Robert L. Woodson, Sr., Founder and President, The Woodson Center

VOG:

Welcome back to the 1619: Making of America Summit.

Cameron Patterson:

I'll always believe in the power of place to be in this space where history happened. I think that makes a powerful connection with folks that visit. My name is Cam Patterson and I am the managing director of the Robert Russa Moton Museum here in Farmville, Virginia. We frame ourselves as the birthplace of the student led Civil Rights Movement, so these students were doing these courageous acts before their time.

Dr. Larissa M. Smith:

That generation of students at Moton were a bellwether for what would later be, what we associate with the student movement of the 1960s.

Joy Cabarrus Speakes:

And we are now sitting in the auditorium of the Moton Museum, which was formally the Robert Russa Moton High School. Barbara Rose Johns led a strike on April 23rd, 1951 of over 400 students and I was one of the strikers. I was in the eighth grade. Before the strike, the conditions that we were studying under were deplorable. We had no gymnasium. We didn't have a cafeteria. In a white only school, the conditions were extremely different. They had all of the amenities that we did not have.

Barbara felt that something had to be done. And then she gave her speech saying that we didn't have to accept that anymore, of being like a second class citizen. And then that's when everybody started to get up and everyone walked out. I never thought it would be a 13 year struggle. Well, I personally feel that what Barbara did was very necessary. It was courageous and it not only changed this community, it changed America.

Dorothy Holcomb:

Right now I'm standing in front of the Prince Edward County Courthouse. Well, I was born in Prince Edward County in a little area called Prospect, Virginia and in 1959 that's when schools closed, and the fourth grade was my last year of attending schools in Prince Edward County. Prince Edward County joined the Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas suit. And as a result of that, the board of supervisors in Prince Edward County decided rather than to integrate the schools, that they would close. So in 1959, as I said, when I was in the fourth grade, the schools closed in Prince Edward County. There were no public schools for any students.

My dad rented an old dilapidated house in Appomattox County, and we pretended that we lived there. Every morning on his way to work, he would drop us off, and we would have to hide out behind the house until we heard school bus coming. And then we would go through the back door and through the front and get on the bus. And when we started off, there were about six kids there. But before that two year period was over, we had as many as 21 children some days coming to that house and pretending that they lived there.

Dr. Larissa M. Smith:

We are sitting in the sanctuary of First Baptist Church in downtown Farmville. Places of public assembly were all segregated at the time, movie theaters were segregated. So African Americans had begun too, to kind of push against these boundaries of segregation during the war years. By 1963, schools here in Prince Edward County have been closed for four years, and there were a lot of young people here who had not received any formal education for four years. And so young people wanted to protest against these conditions.

So the photographs of the 1963 protests were actually not taken by journalists but taken by police deputies who were watching and monitoring the actions of the student protestors. That's why in so many of the photographs, the students aren't looking at the photographer, because they were aware that they were surveillance. And so one of the most powerful images is of Doris Williams, now Berryman, looking straight into the face of the camera. She had just tried to buy a ticket at the state theater which denied entrance to African-Americans and she has a real look of defiance on her face. She wants the photographer to know who she is.

Cainan Townsend:

Hi, I'm a Prince Edward County native, born and raised. I'm a great grandson of a plaintiff in Brown vs Board of Education as well as two of my great aunts were plaintiffs. My dad was actually out of school for all five years when school were closed from 1959 to 1964. He was six when the schools closed down in 1959, and then when he went back, he was 11 years old. Luckily he graduated high school at age 22, but you know, he was the same age as his high school geometry teacher. We have a huge sense of place here in Farmville. I've lived in Prince Edward all my life. I love this area, and I just think that it has so much potential to do some good.

Dr. Larissa M. Smith:

And so Main Street is a place where we encourage people to come and explore Virginia's history, but also enjoy everything in between, which includes shopping, great restaurants, great art here downtown.

Cameron Patterson:

You know, you can take advantage of our civil rights walking tour. We have become a strong historical and cultural arts destination.

Dr. Larissa M. Smith:

Coming to places like Farmville and the Moton Museum really underscore the fact that these are truly stories of citizens who take it upon themselves to really make America live up to its ideals. And so these places give us great hope.

Cainan Townsend:

Use history as a source of healing, to not repeat those same mistakes as opposed to just forgetting it and pretending and closing that chapter of our history forever.

Dorothy Holcomb:

I think people can learn a lot from Virginia history. There's a lot that happened here that caused other things to happen in the country. You know the fact that these schools were closed, the fact that the majority, 75% of the plaintiffs in the Brown decision were from Prince Edward County. The fact that the movement was led by a 16 year old student in 1951. Those things are historical events that the whole country needs to know about.

Dr. Larissa M. Smith:

Farmville is a place and Prince Edward is a place where ordinary people made extraordinary change. And that's something that I think we all have to remember and keep in mind in our own lives.

VOG:

Please welcome back Juan Williams.

Juan Williams:

Good afternoon. Thanks for coming back. We had a wonderful morning session and let me just again welcome all of you to the campus of Norfolk State University, and of course, welcome to "1619: Making of America Summit." Welcome to all of you who are joining us from classrooms around the country via live stream. This historic event is part of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution.

This morning, for those of you who missed it, we had a discussion about American history and the American narrative being reframed, if you will. How do we tell stories? How do we remember our history at this moment? We talked about the connection between evolution and change, and of course, change means that you have memory of what came before and with memory of what came before, sometimes you have forgetting and sometimes the forgetting can be intentional as people try to reshape so much of the history in order to fit their preconceptions.

But that preconception also has to do with individual identity: who our heroes are, who our villains are, but also - and this fits with what we're going to do this afternoon - our concept of justice. And when we talk about 1619, we're talking about Jamestown here in Virginia, the House of Burgesses and the whole notion of equal rights under law. Democracy. Law and order. But how does that apply and how does that fit when we also include the notion of race.

So today, this afternoon we're going to try to extend the conversation about reframing that narrative to the specific of law and order. Justice for all. Now it's my pleasure to introduce the panelists for this important topic.

She's a presidential professor for the Society of Black Alumni and professor of history at the Johns Hopkins University. Please join me in welcoming Professor Martha S. Jones. Gee, we thought you were the late Martha Jones for a second there. Thank you so much.

Next we have a founder and president of the Woodson Center and a leader on issues of poverty alleviation and empowering disadvantaged communities to become agents of their own uplift. Please join me in welcoming the legendary Robert L. Woodson, Sr.

An important thread of this afternoon's discussion is the idea of a more inclusive future. So in this afternoon session we want to have some generational perspective available to you, and so it's our great honor to have with us this afternoon two students. We're pleased to be joined by a student at the Norfolk State University Honors College. Please welcome Ayevi Price.

Welcome Ayevi.

This student is currently Silver Professor of History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University. Also the director of NYU's newly established Center for the Study of Africa and the African Diaspora, having served as the founding director of the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora. He supports the struggles of African people worldwide. Please welcome Michael A. Gomez. Michael, thank you for joining us.

We felt, as I mentioned earlier, that it was so important to have generational impact. That's why we invited Bob. But Ayevi is going to help us out too.

Beginning with the House of Burgesses that first met in Jamestown in 1619, we understand that America was founded on the idea of democracy. And ingrained in that democratic pre-concept, or precept if you will, is the idea of rule of law. And with this conversation, we'd like to explore and illuminate Virginia's political, economic history as it relates to that foundational aspect of America. And how that foundation of the notion of law and order in a democracy has fared through the centuries. But when you add race to that calculation, you can see that it changes things quite quickly.

I just wanted to start with you, Professor Jones, and ask about, it's not only race, which has been the focus of our discussions here today, but it's also women who did not have equal rights under law in 1619. How do we think about this idea that America is founded on justice for all, law and order for all, and yet at that moment of conception, we do not give equal rights to people of color or women?

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

So thank you for that. It's a great place to begin because it's a reminder that when we take up a phrase like for all, we've got to do some scratching under the surface. Because those kinds of ideas that today we would call racism or sexism are qualifying this notion of the all, are arbiters of who can be a member of the body politic, who is in and who is out.

And then we appreciate the ways in which part of what we wrestle with when we return to a founding moment like 1619 is the unevenness and the story then of the nation becomes one of how we wrestle with that unevenness across, we'd say many centuries and I think some of us would say even today. So we live today in a world where we can recognize American women including, and this may be especially African American women as vital influential figures,

members, forces in our body politic. But the story of the nation is how we get from that founding moment of exclusion to our own time.

Juan Williams:

Break it down for me on a personal basis. I think one of the things that we're going to try to do here with our session today is help people to break through some of the barriers of time and space and understand how they would fit in. Now you are talking about this in terms of the changes, the evolution, right? But I'm also thinking, well what if you had been there at that time, right? And you had stood up and said, wait a minute, hey guys, I am an American citizen. Would they say, no, you're not a citizen under the law?

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

I think in 1619 we're not quite at a point where we're thinking about citizenship, right? Subjecthood in a British empire. But certainly, by the time we get to the 18th century and the American Revolution and then the Constitutional era, the answer is yes, that language is there. And already that pressure is there, right? American women standing up sometimes more often in that period in texts, right? In their written work beginning to challenge their exclusion. So I think what happens by the 18th century, if I stand up and say, hey, what about me?

And I don't know if you ever have read the work of the great legal scholar Derrick Bell, but Bell had a series of parables that were about time travel, and he sends his best student, Geneva Crenshaw, an African American woman back to the Constitutional Convention. And what Bell tells us is that when Geneva, through the gift of time travel, arrives on the floor of the convention, well, chaos erupts because while the idea of women is certainly familiar to the Framers, the idea of Black Americans is familiar to the Framers, when a Black woman lands herself and begins to speak about the Constitution, about the rule of law, about equality, the language of natural rights, as Bell tells the story, they wheel in a cannon and she needs to actually be transported right back out of there in order to survive.

So it's to say the question is a familiar one, is an academic one, but we're talking about an era in which women imagined and real and when they present themselves are eliciting a kind of chaos because there's not a set of ideas that have been woven into the fabric of the body politic. That will take a much longer time.

Juan Williams:

It really is interesting. Bob Woodson, you're all about uplift as I've known you for a while and just been a tremendous advocate for Black uplift in this country. So here we are in a conversation about going back time and the evolution of that change. The evolution of the idea of equal justice. And Bob, I wonder if you would tell this audience about your experience because you were someone involved in the early Civil Rights Movement in this country trying to achieve equal rights for all.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Yeah and I think that though certainly at the time of the American Revolution, there were other revolutions too in France and Russia and China. The difference was after the Revolution was

successful, what came afterwards was worse than what they were fighting against. America is the only nation that ordered its revolution and enshrined in the Constitution. And the virtues and principles of that constitution talked about I'm endowed by my creator equal... It was done, conceived by imperfect people whose own actions were contradictory to what they would produce. And a lot of people would therefore like to diminish the importance of those principles because it was written by imperfect people. But I believe as Dr. King said, that the only power that a minority has or safety in a majority country is to insist on moral security, moral consistency.

And so Dr. King said that therefore we are holding America to its promise, recognizing that we're living in its problems. But what happened was in the 60s if you were a Black person who committed a crime against a white person he was severely punished in the South and in the North. And if you were a white, that committed a crime against a Black, you were not punished. If a Black committed a crime, it was dismissed if you were working for the right white man.

And so under that, Dr. King said in that arrangement, what we as Blacks, we must insist upon being judged equally and therefore that's what. But right now, that is being threatened because you cannot generalize about women anymore you can about Blacks. We talk about the Me Too movement. It doesn't include Black women who are in prison. The remedies are for middle-class women to be required to get on boards of directors of companies. What does that have to do with the plight of Black women who are in prison, who are being raped by their guards? And so it seems to me that when we, we're talking about this issue we cannot generalize about, we need to particularize it and recognize that there are class elements too. Whenever you're talking about race, there are class elements that somehow overshadow the issue of race. But we don't discuss that.

Juan Williams:

But to go back to the roots of this conversation by the whole notion of insisting on equal rights you present from the Dr. King perspective, as fulfilling the promise.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:
Fulfilling the promise.

Juan Williams:

And holding America to its biased ideals.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Absolutely. But Juan, what we tend to do is we want to define people by what they used to be. How many of us want to be defined by the worst things we did when we were young? Well as a nation too, we should not just always try to redefine America by what it used to be. We should instead define it for what it's doing now and what it can do in the future.

Juan Williams:

Okay. Ayevi, I'm going to skip you for just a second. A privilege of age. Michael, I'm not talking about you now. But Michael, you know I'm picking up on what Bob said about revolutions

around the globe and he made the point that in America they enshrine this principle of equal rights and they did it right here in Virginia. And I'm thinking to myself, given your work around the world, looking at the African diaspora, is it different here than anywhere else in terms of insisting Black people arriving, insisting that they be given civil liberties, civil rights?

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

That's an excellent question, Juan. First of all, let me thank the organizers of the summit for inviting me in for accommodating me because I was actually supposed to be here yesterday and am a bit of an interloper because I'm not a legal scholar, but hopefully I can bring something of use and worth to the conversation. So if we take a comparative approach to the experiences of Africans and their descendants in this hemisphere, in one sense the discussion can be placed under the rubric of the quest for citizenship. And in those countries in which Africans and their descendants found themselves in the minority, United States, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, there's been a struggle since the period of enslavement to achieve what in Brazil was called the full free.

Juan Williams:

Say it again.

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

The full free. That is to say to experience full, wholesome, complete citizenship. This has been the project for some time. I have to remark that the quest for the full citizenship or for the full free has been encumbered by the institution of slavery. And when we look at that institution throughout the hemisphere, there are some differences between English speaking zones, Francophone zones and Lusophone zones, Anglophone zones, some differences. For example, in the Spanish speaking areas you had slave laws were based upon a very ancient medieval system of legislation known as the Siete Partidas, in the French speaking areas, the Gaulois, and in what becomes the United States we had a kind of brick-a-lodge of laws in the colonial period corresponding to some of the laws in the Caribbean.

What's really very interesting about these laws is that in the former instances with the, with the French and with the Spanish speaking areas, slavery was horrible all over the place, but these laws contained within them considerations for the enslaved. And at least alluded to the need for some modicum of treatment and so forth for people. And what devotes-

Juan Williams:

Can I interrupt? Is that right? They had slave laws that ensured what you described as a modicum up treatment or justice for the slaves or was that modicum of justice for the slave owner's property?

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

We could put it that way. We could say that because they were definitely chattel. I am not adhering to the thesis that slavery in these other areas was worse than what took... was better rather or more benign than what develops in the United States. What I'm saying though is that in

the law, which was aspirational and usually theoretical, there was discussion about the responsibilities of slave holders to those they claimed ownership over.

One of the things that's interesting about the laws that develop in Virginia and the Carolinas so forth and so on, is that the laws are basically designed and strictly speak to the question of the interests of the slave holders. I'm going to a point here. The point I'm going to is that with respect to the law and its relationship to Africans and their descendants, the purpose of the law throughout slavery was to control and prohibit and restrict the potential of black people. To prescribe our movement, to limit what we could own, if we could own anything, to redefine us as something other than human beings.

This is very, very clear. What I'm suggesting one, is that this is the substructure of the relationship of African-Americans to the law to this day. That is to say that our relationship to the law, to the legal system comes out of this very difficult period. In which the law was promulgated for the purpose of proscription. Hints from the end of slavery on, our struggle has been one of trying to gain citizenship. It's arguable that African Americans didn't really become citizens until the 1960s. We can have that argument. That's something that other scholars have made the point on.

When we look at the difficulties, and I very much agree with the position with respect to the interpenetration of race and class and gender. When we look at the situation today where we have, it seems like every day, another account of some black person in some difficulty with the law. Whose rights are egregiously violated almost every day. I'm saying that this has something to do with this earlier relationship. Within which black people are seen as persons to be controlled, surveilled and this is a problem. This is a real obstruction in this overall project to achieve citizenship.

Juan Williams:

Ayevi, here we come now with you, a younger person looking back at this tremendous history that you've heard described here by your fellow panelists. When I think of this generation, I think of Black Lives Matter and Black Lives Matter, speaking to oftentimes what Michael was talking about, the law. Suggesting that if you have some conflict with the law, "Wait a second, why are we not treated equally?" Do you buy this or do you see it differently?

Ayevi Price:

Please excuse my cough. When we look at the American promise as Martin Luther King spoke of, and we look at the reality of where African Americans are today under the law, as well as many other marginalized groups, what we protest for is the presence of an assertion of what the law should be, of what justice should be, of what everyone postures it to be. Telling us that it is fair. Please excuse me.

Telling us that it is equal and that we will be treated equally. Even putting the blame onto African-American individuals. How many times have we heard the excuse, "Black people are violent. Black people commit this crime, that crime, the other crime." Yet the profiling that we see or the assumptions that people will make coming in to meet you, it shows us a presence of

bias against an entire wave of people. That has very often gotten people into situations that harm them because of this, I believe to be flawed, understanding of where the law is.

If you say that black people are more violent and are arrested for more crimes, but there are more police going to a disturbance or more violently reacting to a disturbance or more inclined to arrest an African American. If you're going to let a white teenager off with a warning of shoplifting, but arrest a black teenager for the same offense. If you're going to call the police on a black child, first... If you're going to present more assertive legal repercussions to African Americans for any offense and then turn around and say that the law is just. When you crack down, perhaps more officially, but perhaps more severely for something that you would otherwise overlook, then where is that equality?

If you're going to express wholeheartedly that you believe that the United States of America has provided a space for everyone to be who they are, to be free in their religion or their gender or their orientation or their race, then equal justice should not mistreat any individual by being more lenient or more severe to any person. As someone who's only been on this earth for 20 years, I look around and see these things that people consider to be archaic and dismiss it as, "That's over now. Everything's over. Everything is fine. Things are well and done with. Everyone has the same opportunity." To see people who look like me reach for those opportunities when there are still people who would slap their hand away. That's where the desire for change comes in. That's where the protest comes in. That's where the social media movements come in. When people are told one thing but experience it entirely differently.

Juan Williams:

Bob Woodson said and made the case that none of us want to be remembered by all the errors that were made in the past. If you look at the course of the battle for equal rights in this country, you would see everything from civil war. I could go before you, slavery rebellion and civil war, reconstruction, passage of the amendments to guarantee equal rights. We talked about women's rights. I think the coming, is it this year or next year, is the hundredth anniversary of women getting the right to vote? Again-

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

Some women.

Juan Williams:

Some women. Again, this is all in service to the idea of citizenship. You're saying as you live your life as a 20 year old in America today, you're not so much in touch with the idea of fighting to assert these equal rights under law, as you sense. That there is still socioeconomic in justice that really colors the execution of the ideal. Is that right?

Ayevi Price:

Yes. I would say that one of the major disconnects among many people in my generation are what I believe is to be almost a split in ways of thinking about what is here for us and what we can see. What people don't want to give us. There are countless, countless moments in my life where everyone of course has told me, "You can be anything you want it to be. You can do

whatever you want to do as long as you put your mind to it, as long as you study hard." Which I believe of course, but there are also people in this world that I've encountered, mostly on the internet. I'm a good GenZ millennial who's on the internet most of the time where people can say whatever they want, because they're hiding behind a screen. Where they feel that they have the rights to say the N word to me or say it to other people and face no repercussions or assert in more argumentative ways, how and why we don't deserve what we have or how we're not going to perform to a certain level.

Juan Williams:

But that speaks to citizenship and to the law or to then that justifies denying you equal treatment under law.

Ayevi Price:

Right. That's what they use to justify that denial of treatment.

Juan Williams:

Okay. Let me ask Bob to jump in here before he jumps out of the seat.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Yeah. I was 20 one time. Long time ago. When I was 20 I only knew of one person that I went to school with who was killed. A 20 year old today knows of 10 people who were killed. That isn't because white people were fairer then. I lived at a time when there was the jury segregation. There were no black police officers. Racism was enshrined in the law. Even in the face of those barriers, we did not slaughter one another the way we're doing now. You got to understand, there are about a thousand people who were shot by the police every year. There are 6,000 blacks are killed by other blacks every year. That is because ... But this is not always true. In other words, I think the worst thing we're doing to young people like you, we're giving you false information and false perceptions.

What we're saying to young people is that if because of racism and slavery, you are exempt from any personal responsibility. Whatever you doing to injure yourself or other, it's not your fault, is because of racism. The reality is back ... We talk about the education gap. Between 1930, I mean 1920 and 1940 in the South, the education gap between blacks and white was eighth grade for whites, fifth grade for backs. We closed that gap within 20 years, within six months, because we established 5,300 Rosenwald schools and we closed the gap. The incarceration rate for blacks at the turn of the century up until 1960 was just slightly above our percentage in the population. But that number has shot up since 1960, 900%. Are you going to tell me that white people are worse now than they were then or is there something else going on inside 82% of all blacks lives in two parent households up until 1965. That's gone down to 70% of it.

I'm saying there are other cultural factors that are happening inside that we must address if we are to change. Instead of always looking outside. In St. Louis in the last five months, 14 children under the age of 14 were killed and only one arrest. Because the police have been told they're racist and therefore, it's called the Ferguson effect. They're not going to investigate those. It is not middle-class academics who are suffering their problem, they're low income blacks who live

there. I really think that I'm a little upset, because we have turned civil rights into grievance. People are marketing that to the benefit of themselves at the expense of people in neighborhoods. I think black America needs an internal debate. We need a family discussion about what are we doing to disable ourselves.

You had a child shot on this campus. Spelman had four students shot at an event there. All of Morgan State, children are being robbed, not by the clan or by racist, by our own people. What I'm saying is that Dr. King said the highest form of maturity is the ability to be self critical. We really need a time to just leave white folks out the room and just sit around ourselves and talk about what are we doing to ourselves and what we can do to change it. What we do at the Woodson Center, we go into gang related neighborhoods. We were able to reduce the violence and many terrorists of 53 murders in two years down to zero for 12 years.

Juan Williams:

Well Bob, let me stop you there because I want to allow Ayevi to respond to you. Because remember the premise of this discussion is about the notion of equal rights under law and living up to the ideal. I think Ayevi acknowledges that the ideal is in place, but where you suggest that there are some socio cultural issues that now impact the law. Ayevi, you see it differently. You see the socio-cultural stuff. You mentioned the internet and the kind of abuse that you might suffer there, as limiting how the larger society would allow you to benefit from equal rights under the law.

Ayevi Price:

The reason I say that is because sooner or later that person who thinks they can hide behind a screen is going to get off of their computer. Sooner or later, that person is going to speak with their family and their friends and they're going to surround themselves with people who think likewise. Not because ... People aren't going to just say that to you just because they can for no other reason on the internet. They have an understanding and an idea that they want to stick to. Sometimes they frame it behind jokes. Sometimes they frame it behind just messing with you to mess with you, but sooner or later they're going to speak with someone in real life and those people are going to speak to more people.

Juan Williams:

Let's speak to Bob's point though. Bob said ... You said at Spelman, I don't know if you said here at Norfolk State.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:
At Spelman.

Juan Williams:

That these things that there's lots of black on black issues that he would argue are not about the application of equal rights under law for all, but about the breakdown of law inside black America. Is that right, Bob? I want to make sure that I'm speaking. I want Ayevi to respond to that.

Ayevi Price:

Well, black on black crime does not erase the pain that is still being caused to our community from the outside. I have no intention to... I agree a discussion would need to happen within our community, but there are still dangers impacting our community from the outside. From what I mentioned before, calling the police on a black ... A white manager calling the police on a black teenager and letting a white teenager off for the same crime. When you have white parents, white individuals, adults calling the police on black children for nonviolent and non-defensive non job related crimes, such as selling water or just standing.

There have been cases of that this year. Black individuals standing by a store and having the police called on them. Those instances, they can lead to not only the legal issues and to the scrutinizing legal assessments, but also the scarring. As someone who, I'm 20 years old, but I have cousins who are children. I have friends who are still children who ... What are they seeing? If they happen to look in the news or their parents have to explain to them that there might come a time where someone who is white is going to look at them and there's a potential for them to have the police called on them or there's a potential for them to be caught up into a legal trouble.

This is a saying that is still relatively new to me, but I see it a lot, "Don't let your white friends get you in trouble." For blacks, children to have what I was explaining before, to have that double sided expression on them of you can do whatever you want to do and no one can treat you differently, because you're just as important and everybody else, but also be careful because there are people who don't think that way.

Juan Williams:

What you're saying to me is that in a sense what this generation lives with is the idea that or the reality that the law does not apply equally to you. Even as my generation says, we fought for equal rights under law and there is a structure there that attempts to fulfill the ideal. You're saying that a policeman who stops you, you assume is going to treat you differently because of the color of your skin.

Ayevi Price:

I'm saying that it's always going to be there in your mind. We know that there is no reason why it should happen. We know that there are nice police officers out there. I've met them. I've seen them and I've interacted with them myself. But we know that there is always going to ... that there's still, I'll say, because in an ideal situation, in an ideal future, we wouldn't have to worry about that. In an ideal present, we shouldn't have to worry about that.

Juan Williams:

Let me bring the two other panelists in here. Michael, can you jump in? I'm going to let you pick your point of entry into this very interesting discussion.

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

The conversation about what's happening internally in the black community and issues that we can take care of internally does not mean that we can't have a conversation about what's happening between the relationship between the black community and the law. Those

conversations are not exclusive. It can happen at the same time. They need to happen at the same time. Going back to the comparative framework, black people are catching hell all over this hemisphere. We find out ... This is the statistical ... This is the case. This is the truth. If you go to Cuba, if you go to Brazil, if you go to Columbia, if you go to Venezuela, it's the same thing. What that tells me is that the descendant of Africans, we have been constructed in a certain way. Our identity has been constructed in a certain way across cultural zones such that we are seen as a menace and a threat.

We are seen as being outside of the intentionality of these governments. As a consequence, we find ourselves in a situation in which we are fighting against a very deep structure. There's a reason. The reason why we're having these difficulties is not simply or only because black people can't get their acts together. I reject that categorically. Michelle Alexander has written about this brilliantly. There's a reason why the incarceration rate among African Americans is so astronomically high. It is not because there's something wrong with us. This has been analyzed ... With respect to the educational gaps and the divergences between black and white, now Asian communities, Latino communities. This has been studied very extensively. This is about investment in black children. This is not about, there's something wrong with black children. We can have a conversation about culture. We can have a conversation about what black people can do to improve themselves without denying that we are fighting a very serious foe here in the case of institutional structural racism. This is real.

Juan Williams:

Hold on a second. Martha...

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

This is not a mutually exclusive conversation.

Juan Williams:

Martha, I just wanted to bring you in here on the idea that we have equal rights, but what you're hearing at least under law, but what you're hearing from Michael, what you're hearing from Ayevi, the suggestion that it doesn't play out in reality that way. Do you agree?

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

I absolutely agree. I've come to you all from my home, my black community, my black city, Baltimore, Maryland. Maybe you've heard of it. Well, you know what folks in Washington, highly placed ones, have had to say about my city in the last weeks and months. What I want to tell you as a historian is that that kind of rhetoric, that kind of blame that has been leveled at my city, has a history, has a history. I'm a historian of Baltimore as well as someone who lives and makes her life and her family there. What I know is that if we turn back the clock and we visit the earliest decades of Baltimore and black Baltimore is what we discover. Folks in officialdom, blaming us for our enslavement, for our poverty. That blame game is an old, old story in this country.

I think part of what this conversation as I understand it over these days, has been about narratives, the stories we tell. What my work has been is to recover not simply the story about

the blame game in black Baltimore, but actually about the ways in which communities like mine historically have done the work to try and lift this nation up to its best ideals. So where we began was with a question about citizenship and if we ask about the story of American citizenship, and we set that story in my city, what we discover are two things, is a nation that neglected us, that wrote us out, right? That blamed us, right? For our own marginalization as enslaved people, but in my city as free people as well. And that it was black Baltimoreans and other black Americans like them who insisted, who looked at that constitution, who scrutinized it, who asked hard questions that the country had never asked before about what it means to belong, who is a citizen and who is not.

It is out of my city and communities like mine historically that the foundation, the bedrock of our citizenship regime, birthright citizenship comes out of because former slaves are people who exist in limbo and in my city, they insist that the constitution is theirs, that the rights that the constitution promises are theirs to actualize and that to me is the story we need to tell which goes far beyond a blame game and realizes that again and again across history, black Americans haven't had any central role in holding the feet of this country to its own fire.

Juan Williams:

Did you hear what Bob said when Bob said that if you look back at incarceration rates earlier in the century, when there was more rank segregation and abuse of the principle of equal rights for all, fewer black people in jail, then there are as a rate today, how would you respond to Bob?

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

I'd respond from the perspective of my city, I don't know about yours, that the answer to that equation has to do with disinvestment, right? Not only on the state level and the local level, but a disregard. I live in a city where my governor is prepared to nix everything from public education to afterschool recreation to fundamentals like transportation.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

So you are saying it's money? You saying we have not spent a lot of money in Baltimore?

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

I am saying it's the quality of life.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Are you really-

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

I am absolutely going to say that to you.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

So there was investment up until 1930s and 40s and 50s, you saying they invested, and therefore that's why the incarceration rate was down?

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

What I'm saying to you is this moment a combination of a complex force of public policies over time from segregation to disinvestment to the militarization of my police force and more has given us this world that we live in where the young people of my community are at extraordinary risk.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

May I tell you something about your city in terms of ... in other words, I guess the problem I have is that, yes, we could talk about balance but there is no balance. If you look at all of the books that are being published in the last 10 years, they're all victim's books. They are telling us, "Oh, we can't make it, white people had done this and until white people change, we can't change." And that's the message. We ought to be going into our history to find out who achieved in the face of discrimination.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

That is just the story I told you Bob.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

In Baltimore, Maryland, in Baltimore Maryland in 1868-

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

That is just the story I told you.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

... where a 1,000 blacks were fired from the docks of Baltimore for striking. They didn't March on Washington demanding jobs, peace and freedom. They went to their churches in the burial societies and borrow \$10,000 and started the Chesapeake Maine Dry Dock and Railroad Company and successfully operated a railroad that hired thousands of people, including whites. They ran it from Baltimore to Maine. When we were denied access to hotels, we built the Saint Teresa, The Walla Haji in Atlanta, the Carbon Calvin hotels in Overtown in Miami. I can go on and on, when we were denied access to insurance companies, transportation systems, in other words, when we had all of the forces against this. We need to tell our young people about resilience, about how we achieved in a face of opposition, not just how powerful white people are. Sometimes you all sound like whites supremacists when saying that we can't achieve until white people change.

Juan Williams:

Well hang on Bob, but Bob-

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

One can make the allogamy that you are the one that sounds like the white supremacist.

Juan Williams:

But Bob, the idea is to hold people to the principle of equal justice under law, right? So I think what you're hearing from others on the panel is a suggestion that you know what, the law is as it's constructed, in its ideal, seems to apply to whites or the white upper class in the country.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:
I accept that in the country.

Juan Williams:
You accept that?

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:
Sure, racism exists in America, and it has-

Juan Williams:
And that racism then affects the way that equal justice under law works for-

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:
Exactly.

Juan Williams:
... black people and poor people?

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:
Right. But that's like having a coach say to players, "They are bigger than us, they're better equipped, they got better coaches, so go out and try not to get killed." People are motivated to change when you give them an aspiration of what you can do. We've had 20 blacks who were born slaves who died millionaires. We ought to know how they did that.

Biddy Mason, all of you should Google Biddy Mason. She was born 1818 illiterate, had three babies by a slave master, walked behind a wagon from Mississippi to Utah and then to California and then got free, delivered babies, saved her money, bought land down, and became a millionaire and helped hundreds of people in her city.

In other words, it is fine. The reality is racism is a fact of life. It is not the only fact of life. And so therefore, if you want people to achieve, tell them how they can score in a face of opposition, not just by leaving it by saying there is opposition. Yeah, that's an incomplete story.

Juan Williams:
Okay, let me let Michael come in.

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:
Well we haven't had a lot of time, and so I would say that we shouldn't be so quick to judge one another's perspectives. I understand what you're saying Bob, and you're not an unknown quantity. You've been around for a while. You've been very consistent. I respect your struggle. I respect your contribution to the struggle. I respect your position. And it could be a matter of what is emphasized, but I certainly understand where you're coming from and I think that what you're saying, there's a lot that the community could benefit from. So I accept that.

I do think however, that it is a situation in which we as a community are asking ourselves over the decades, why do we find ourselves in this situation?

And it's a complex question, it's not an either or. You have multiple factors bearing upon us as a community, and we can't just say structural racism is there but, we are able to do A, B and C. For example, with respect to, I go back to Michelle Alexander's work, she has dissected this brilliantly with respect to the war on drugs. That's the answer to why so many of us are in prison. It's very, very clear. The incarceration rates have skyrocketed over the so-called war on drugs. Most of these people are in prison over drugs.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

But I lived in New York with the Rockefeller law, I lived in New York during that time. The demand for those incarceration came from the black community.

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

Some of it-

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

We had Nicky Barnes-

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

Yes. Some of it. You're absolutely right some of it-

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Sterling Johnson-

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

As a matter of fact there's been-

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

A friend of mine, Sterling Johnson, was a drug prosecutor. We worked with the Guardian Civic League, The Black Police Association, all of us, and grassroots people living in Harlem who had sons and daughters dying by the hundreds. They said a drug dealer ought to be given life in prison. So Rockefeller Drug Laws came and responded to a demand from the black community.

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

In part, I think that's a part-

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

In large part it came from them.

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

Well, I wouldn't say in large part, but we don't time to have to litigate that. But the point is, it is very clear that the differential in the legal response to the differences in the way that people use drugs has resulted in this incarceration rate, that is no question. And so it's not about necessarily

how black people can get their acts together so much as in that case. The point I really want to make here, and beyond getting beyond this, is the law constitutes an area of contestation. We're having a struggle over drug laws, we're having a struggle over voting rights, and so this is an ongoing project. The purpose of the law, okay, ostensibly is to protect persons and property. In many instances the reality of the law has been to protect privilege and power, and that's the conflict we're having and it's racialized, it's racialized.

Juan Williams:

Martha, I just wanted to come back to you to make sure. Would you buy into this idea that the law, for all the ideas of equal justice under law for all, we discussed that at the very beginning, has now become something that is weighted by those in power using the law to protect themselves, their persons, their property, I think Michael said privilege and power, Michael?

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

Mm-hmm.

Juan Williams:

Versus an actual equal application of law for all.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

I think Michael hit it on the head for me, which is to say the law is a site of contestations from its origins until this moment, which is to say one of our threads, who is a citizen, right? Who belongs, who is a member. This is an eternal question in this country. It is one that black Americans have confronted from the beginning when notoriously Justice Taney says, no black person can be a citizen of the United States, be the enslaved or free, Chinese Americans face this question after the civil war when they are denied reentry into the country.

Mexican Americans who are forcibly deported from this country in the depression era, on and on. And the point is not that anyone gets to define that core legal concept like citizenship, but that indeed the story is about the way in which ordinary people, my oppressed people, organize around an idea like citizenship and in some moments managed to leverage their own kind of power to transform that. That is the story of civil war and reconstruction and black Americans seeing their claim to citizenship now being memorialized in the constitution. So it's to me ... it shouldn't surprise us, right? There is no end to that story. There is a story about the way in which these key legal concepts, these key ideals will continue to animate conversations like this for I think the all of our existence.

Juan Williams:

For a contestation, I think to pick up on Michael's phrase is something that you tap into, so Ayevi I just want to come back here as we approached the end of our panel time before I go to these audience questions and ask you if you would say yes, America is different, I think we heard this from Michael too that America's different than other places and Bob Woodson as well. We have laws on the books to protect the individual, protect the property and you are aware of that. You would appreciate that, but you're saying in this generation you're less interested in that past struggle than you are in the current reality of feeling the law is not equally applied to you.

Ayevi Price:

When I can express, sorry, express the essential point that I've been trying to as far as someone who's my age, who is experiencing the world very freshly and very recently, who is armed with the empowerment I've experienced over a generation. The excitement I see in empowering other people of my community. My peers are never not excited for a black owned business or a black empowered, we're at HBCU the biggest important thing though is that there are so many young people who will not accept that the system that they were born under, that they have a right to is not being effective for them and that is what they want to fight for. There is nothing wrong with empowerment. We are all four empowerment especially if no one else will give it to us, we have to give it to ourselves.

But as we continue to exist, as we continue to live, these interactions will continue to harm us and we will fight for what our rights are. When we have these rights presented to us, we're being told that system is fair and we can see that it isn't, when we can see that something is wrong, something is not working. When we believe we are not being given what we deserve, in the same with the two hands-

Juan Williams:

Hang on, you're not being given something you deserve under law?

Ayevi Price:

Right. If we have people who are more harshly judged under law than another individual from a different community or someone whose justice has been glossed over or extended or delayed because of who they are, because of their race, then we have people with the same demands, so I was going to say, but the same hand that we are lifting up our community, we are fighting for our right under this country that we are living in. People like to say, "If you don't like it then leave." Why should we have to leave? Because we were born here, we were born here and if we're going to define a citizen of the United States as someone who was born here or naturalized to the United States, then there should not be a reason for that to be withheld from us.

Juan Williams:

Okay, so now we go to audience questions and what's interesting to me as your moderator is to see that several of the questions touch on nationalism and populism. One of them is directed to Bob, Bob let me start with you. It says that you mentioned Dr. King's charge of holding the majority society to what a moral right. And I imagine I'm inserting this thought here under law.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Yeah, under law.

Juan Williams:

Okay. Is America, Dr. Woodson, still listening given the rise of nationalism and populism and the policies enacted from nationalism and populism?

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Yeah, I think that, again, this is a country that is still evolving on that issue and it will continue to evolve. But when I look around to see not everybody is suffering equally, I can take you to six different zip codes in America where blacks live and their median income is higher than most whites. And so there is progress being made and there are communities that become stabilized under our system of government, yeah. But it's uneven is going to get better and worse. But everybody is coming here because we have a system where there is this give and take that moves us forward and moves us back a little bit. But I'm not going any other place. This is my home.

Juan Williams:

But what about this populist fervor?

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

I think populism, it's like any other trend. I think it's a trend and where it's going, God knows. But all we have to do is do what we do best to try to direct whatever happens.

Juan Williams:

And if it's white nationalism that's born of it?

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

I don't think white nationalism is our biggest problem. I really don't. I believe it exists, but I don't think it's our biggest problem. Our people of color are running all these cities, have for 50 years. The question we have to raise is why aren't we achieving more progress in places where we have control already?

Juan Williams:

Okay. Michael, this question is for you and again speaks to this nationalism, populism issue. It must be big for the folks who are watching. How damaging is the nationalist and populist movement as it relates to citizenship and immigration across the global North and industrialized nations?

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

That's a big question. So my view, and it could very well be wrong, is that much of what passes for nationalism, whether it's American nationalism, French nationalism, German nationalism and so forth, are ideologies that are for the most part led by elites in those societies who are in position to play one segment of the population against the other for their own benefit. So at the end of the day, I think that it's the elites in the American society, British society, French society, German society who will benefit the most from kind of nativist tendencies.

And indeed we see these tendencies emerging not only in the US but across Europe as well. And so what's happening in these countries is that as a consequence of economic changes with respect to the demise of industrialism, the relocation of jobs, so forth and so on. What's happening is that the global North is the working class in the global North, okay, is losing out. And the elites in those societies are telling them as they benefit that the problem consists of these immigrants coming into these countries taking your jobs and so forth. That's the essential situation. So in the United States, that is the narrative. Our problem is a kind of the immigrants who want to come in

from the outside, and Bob, if you would allow, the other that exists in the inside this constitutes our problem.

And without looking at some real structural changes that are taking place across the planet, which really explains the flight of jobs and the flight of capital and the relocation of jobs and so forth. So in my view, white nationalism, so-called white nationalism, is something that is being manipulated, it is real, but it is something that is being manipulated. And I think that those who are involved in it really do not understand the forces that are really being brought to bear upon the economic circumstances. And so they are living in a moment of fear.

Juan Williams:

Professor Jones, this one also touches on this nationalist populist urge. It's interesting to me and we were just having a discussion here about the law, but people see this as impacting the way the law is being delivered.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

Sure.

Juan Williams:

So here's the question for you, the naturalization act of 1790 only allowed, "Free white persons of good character" to become citizens. Why do you believe current American public policy nationally and statewide under the influence of this populist fervor is becoming less inclusive of who can become a citizen under law in America?

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

It's a great question and the people I write about are interested in the naturalization act of 1790 because they recognize that it has a sort of cast, if you will, right? That marginalizes their claims to citizenship. Those same people are interested in, another early expression of citizenship, which is one we've talked a lot about in recent years, which is that the president must be a natural born citizen and black Americans read the constitution and they said, "Well, that's interesting because we too are natural born and if there's such a category as a natural born citizen, why aren't we?" So it's to say from the very founding, right? At that moment, there are these contradictions built into law and we live with those contradictions until today. And there really is no moment in our national history when we haven't wrestled and fought over the question of who belongs, former slaves before the civil war, Chinese Americans after the civil war, Mexican-Americans in the early 20th century, women in the early 20th century, black, white, and otherwise who marry foreign nationals are denaturalize and lose their citizenship on and on.

Today, our debates fresh and right in the headlines over birthright citizenship and its future. It's to say that citizenship belonging has always been a weapon. It has always been one of those contested places, so for me as the historian, there's no surprise that we live in a moment in which those very old ideas, those very old terms of belonging are animating our own political moment. The thing to know about this country when it comes to citizenship is that we have never been a nation of political philosophers. It is to say we have never sat down in a serious convention to reflect, to read, to ponder how deep principles about belonging. We have always defined and

redefined citizenship in the midst of a political crisis, I would say in our own time, a humanitarian crisis, and frankly to make policy in.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

Very in crisis, and frankly to make policy in that way is to find yourself making it, and remaking it, and remaking it again. Do we live in a time where we think we might convene with cool heads and clear minds, and resolve who is a citizen and who is not, by what terms? I'm afraid not, precisely for the reasons that have just been described. Some of us would say that's not a convention that I would call, because as has always been true, racism, xenophobia, and more, pollute and contaminate and distort our thinking on this subject. Today it is immigrant Americans, Latino Americans who are on the front lines of this debate. But part of what I'm here to say is black Americans are the original story, right? Are the first story in that long debate about citizenship, and it's important to tell our story because it gives a kind of, I think, hope and a kind of legitimacy to the claims that people are making to date.

There was a time when people said that we were not citizens of the United States, in a fundamental sense. And today, when you hear that said about others, for me it's important to remember that that was once said about us, and it took civil war to resolve that profound question. And I don't know how we resolve it in our own time, but I know that we have to.

Juan Williams:

Ayevi, this one's for you. You've heard, it says, "Professor Gomez discuss how laws and policies were created to limit black people's potential through slave codes." So you had slave codes as the application of law at that time. I think Michael and I went back and forth about property and person, privilege and power. So, this question for you says, "Do you see the laws and policies doing the same thing today through the way that they are applied to black people?"

Ayevi Price:

Today I see the law being very conditionally upheld, very conditioned based on the type, quote unquote "black person" that you are. One of the arguments that I have seen about how to approach justice for a black person is to always know your rights. That is an expectation for your own survival, to know, not only your rights, but to know how people will attempt to take them away from you. The assumption is that someone is going to take them away from, attempt to take them away from you, and that is why you need to know them. So, when we get under the law, a black person will come armed with everything that they know about how they are meant to be treated, or what was promised to them. As far as we see today, that attitude, it can be seen as a revitalization of, I would say, a very subtle undercurrent of a behavior expectation.

I understand that slave codes or even going further into Jim Crow, how you're meant to act, how you're meant to present yourself is going to reflect on how people treat you, especially as a black person. So, when we get under the law and we get into how you're going to be handed justice, I think that there has been progress, that the severity has changed its face, and the methods have changed their faces of how these sorts of codes present themselves.

Juan Williams:

So they think in essence, the slave codes now apply to lower class black people?

Ayevi Price:

Yes, the people who fall by the wayside, the people who are at the bottom. For example, I'm in college. I was lucky enough to have a scholarship, blessed enough to have parents provide for me. The people who could not afford to sit up here, the people who could not afford to tell their experiences.

I lived in a bit of a stasis of suburbia for a good chunk of my life, so I don't have the experience of the weight that comes with those expectations. I can remember, if you'll allow a personal anecdote of my own father, a black man being terse around a group of black teenagers because of the assumption of what they could do, or what their personality was, or what their moral code would be, based on just them being a group of black teenagers. I don't have that story, but I see what it's done to people, from people who are protesting, from the people who are waiting for justice, for a loved one or for themselves, for their families, the way that they are meant to express themselves, and people telling them that they're doing it wrong. People telling them that they are not being patient enough, or kind enough, or eloquent enough, and how they're meant to act, and how they are meant to present themselves under law, unable to express their frustration, or even their denial of an unjust law.

If we go back to the example of just selling water, children selling water for their own school, for their own school funds.

Juan Williams:

So, Bob speak to Ayevi about this,

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

About...

Juan Williams:

Well, she says her own dad, a black man, would see a group of young black men and have a negative reaction in terms of expectation. And this is not a matter of under law, but then you can imagine the white police officer maybe having a similar negative reaction. What does Bob Woodson think?

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

I mean, perceptions are created by facts. I mean, that the fact is that, in other words, it's what you witness. There's too many examples, as you know, in the inner city of Washington DC. When we have 47 people mugged on our Metro system in a year, and they're young, black man. 130 violent carjackings, only black men. This reality colors your perception. But what we got to do is change the behavior of the people and therefore the perception will change. I think unfortunately your dad is just confronting his reality. We got to change that reality and we can do it.

Juan Williams:

But, that's not to say that we shouldn't be a nation of laws and equal rights.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Oh, absolutely. We should have people accountable. But the question that this begs is that one of the goals of the civil rights movement is to put black people in positions of authority, and running law enforcement, and the judges and the prosecutors. And that has happened over the last 50 years. In many of these cities where you're talking about, the prosecutors are the same color as the assailants, the police, the juries. In those situations, how do you find those injustice still occurring?

Juan Williams:

Michael and Martha, let's wrap up here. We've heard, I think the core of the dispute here, young and old, beautiful, not so beautiful. Tell me where would you wrap this up?

Dr. Michael A. Gomez:

We'll, in some ways the wellspring of this conversation began over a hundred years ago in the debate between Marcus Garvey and WVU boys. And the tragedy, that is to say that in Garvey we had the personification of a philosophy that believed that black people could build something for themselves. I think the boys has been a kind of caricatured, because he also believed in that, but he also believed in fighting for civil rights. The tragedy of that moment is that those two individuals who couldn't stand each other, by the way, personally. There were stories of them passing each other on Lenox Avenue in Harlem, and refusing to recognize each other. The tragedy of that is they couldn't see that they were presenting themselves and their followers with a false choice, that these two vectors are not incompatible, that they both have to be addressed, and they can be addressed, and I'll leave it.

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Let me just agree-

Juan Williams:

Hang on now, I need to-

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

I'm going to-

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

Can I just agree that what is missing today is precisely what you said. There is no debate. The debate has gone in the black community, but we need it. It's not just for King, Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, the civil rights movement itself was fractured from SNCC, and there was a difference with the people in Atlanta who didn't want civil disobedience, and sent King to the... Chose students to change. They didn't want the Montgomery bus boycott either because... So there has been a dynamic that is missing today. We don't have us coming together like we are doing on this stage and having a reasonable discussion about what are some solutions, and that's what has to happen. I want to thank this University for-

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

So I'm going to-

Juan Williams:
Bob, hang on. Hang on.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:
So, I'm going to take us out.

Juan Williams:
Yes, to wrap it up.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:
If I could, and I appreciate-

Juan Williams:
Take as much time as you like, Martha.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:
Thank you. I appreciate... I really appreciate Michael sort of taking us a little bit to that political philosophy place that we don't get to spend a lot of time. I'll confess that I am a Harperian. Are there any Harperians in the room? So my thinking is deeply influenced by a 19th century poet, anti-slavery activists, novelist, extraordinary figure, a woman named Frances Ellen Watkins-Harper. Watkins-Harper's born in Baltimore in the decades before the civil war. She lives long enough to see emancipation, and citizenship, and a great deal more, and leaves us an extraordinary record, and I recommend anything and everything she's written to you. But she is an activist in the period immediately following the civil war, and the questions for the nation are profound.

The most profound of which is who are going to be those 4 million+ formerly enslaved people in the new United States. But Harper is part of a political coalition, an old one that included anti-slavery activists like Frederick Douglass, and women's rights activists like Susan B. Anthony. And this coalition comes together to try and talk through the future of the nation, through the power of that moment, but also the chaos of that moment. And in the midst of the debate where many people are speaking from very personal interests, very narrow interests, Harper says, "We are all bound up together in one great bundle of humanity." And for me, it is a humbling assertion from a black woman who then goes on to tell this group that the measure of the society is her, and that whatever happens out of this coalition, out of Congress, out of the courts in this extraordinary experiment of reconstruction, on that she will always measure the society by her own life, knowing that she is someone who lives at that terrible intersection of racism and sexism.

Harper stays with me because I think she calls upon us to be part of and to stay in hard conversations, even across tremendous difference. But she also calls upon us to look around us and beyond ourselves to ask, as she would put it, who is the weakest and who is the feeblest among us, and measure where we go from here by those folks and not simply by ourselves. So, for me that's the takeaway.

Juan Williams:

So, the bottom line for you is looking at how the law then would apply to the weakest?

Robert L. Woodson, Sr.:

The least of these.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

Absolutely.

Juan Williams:

And that's your point.

Dr. Martha S. Jones:

Absolutely.

Juan Williams:

Martha Jones, Bob Woodson, Ayevi, Mike, I just want to say thank you all. It was a great thoughtful panel. Thank you so much.

I really enjoyed being with all of you. Very good audience. Great questions this afternoon. Thank you all of you who have been watching the streaming. This has been a terrific moment to consider American history, and the principles that were put in place back in 1619, and the evolution of how we think about us, ourselves, our people, America. Thank you all. And now please welcome back the Dean of the college of liberal arts at Norfolk State University, Cassandra Newby-Alexander.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander

Kathy J. Spangler

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:

I hope you all have enjoyed this program. Maybe a little bit more than me, I don't know. This has been a seven year journey for us here at Norfolk State. We started the 1619 Making of America Program, Conference series in 2012. This is the culmination. This is the end of this journey as we begin a new journey. So, here we have come to the closing of 1619 Making of America Summit, and we want to thank both our featured moderators, Juan Williams and Barbara Hamm Lee who was here yesterday. You all kept us on track, and opened up many enlightening discussion doors. To all of our panelists, both here now and those who came before, we thank you so much for your time, your energies, and your thoughtful participation. You made the summit memorable, not only for me, but I think for everyone who's here and those who tuned in. The program has been a signature event of the 2019 commemoration American Evolution, and we here at Norfolk State University have been honored to be your partner in this particular thing.

Now, what I want to do also is to give you just a little hint of what's to come. We have one more thing today, and we hope that you will make your way there, to our students center room 138-B for an award winning film, The Ghosts of Amistad, and it is going to be hosted by the filmmaker of that particular film, Marcus Rediker. So, we hope that you will come and participate in that, our final event for this evening.

And for those of you who have signed up for the tour, 50 people have signed up for that tour. It is sold out. We actually have a waiting list, and I want to make sure because it's an early morning departure, that you are back here on Norfolk State University's campus. The bus leaves, not comes, leaves at 7:45 AM. So, we need you to make sure that you get here around 7:30. Aim for 7:30. You won't miss the bus. So you come into gate three, it leaves from lot 20, lot 20. You will have lunch, you will have snacks aboard the bus. But most importantly you will have an experience that you will remember for the rest of your life.

Our partners, the 2019 Commission in Hampton, have not only planned this event, but they will be the ones taking you from place to place. It will be a guided tour. Starts at Old Point Comfort at Fort Monroe, where the Africa landing happened, and it will end at historic Jamestown, where you will have an opportunity to see the Angela Site.

I hope that those of you who signed up will have a wonderful time. I thank you all so much, and I'm going to welcome to the lectern Kathy Spangler.

Kathy J. Spangler:
Thank you.

I'd like to thank Juan Williams, our moderator this afternoon and our panelists. They've done such an excellent job. Let's give them a round of applause. Thank you.

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:
Thank you so much.

Kathy J. Spangler:
So, let's give them applause.

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:
Thank you. You were fabulous.

Kathy J. Spangler:
Thank you so much.

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:
Thank you so much.

Kathy J. Spangler:
So, Cassandra, we've been planning this for four years.

Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander:
Yes.

Kathy J. Spangler:

And we need to say thank you to Norfolk State University, Cassandra and her entire team here at Norfolk State University.

This is a beautiful campus. This was a powerful program. This was important to each and every one of us here in the room and over these two days, but also those that are watching on live stream. So, we would like to thank you and all of your colleagues who are here in the room and around the campus for participating. I will emphasize in closing that the 2019 commemoration is about Virginia's history, which is America's history. Together we have been telling stories all year long. You've seen the videos of the stories that we've been telling. The themes of democracy, diversity, and opportunity have resonated not only across the Commonwealth, around the nation, and I dare say around the world. For stories like the arrival of the first enslaved Africans, and the inequities and challenges that have been fought for and overcome these 400 years, the first representative government in English North America, and that journey, that arc of 400 years, Virginia to America, 1619 to 2019 is not the end.

This 1619 Making of America Summit is a reflection of the legacies that we are putting in place to begin to change these narratives, to build greater awareness and understanding of who we all are together as Americans, and what our force in the world needs to be. It starts with each and every one of us. We hope that you've been inspired, we hope that you've been curious about these conversations, and that you will continue the conversation. We're not done. We still have a few programs left in this commemorative year. Next up is our Women's Achieved Summit on October 15th in Richmond. We hope that you can all join us as it will be another enriching opportunity with our host, Queen Latifah, and keynote speaker, Mika Brzezinski. So please, this isn't the end. This is really just the beginning.

But from the bottom of my heart, thank you, Norfolk State University. Thanks to all of our partners, and most importantly, thanks to all of you who have joined us for the 1619 making of America summit. Let the journey continue. Thank you.

Thank you everyone.