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MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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Virginia Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument Public Hearings

Richmond, VA - As part of its commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and abolition of slavery in the United States, the Virginia Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission will construct the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedom Monument on Brown's Island. The monument, designed by Thomas Jay Warren of Oregon, will feature a 12-foot bronze statue representing newly freed slaves. Dedicated to the contributions of African American Virginians in the centuries-long fight for emancipation and freedom, the monument also will highlight notable African American Virginians who have made significant contributions to the emancipation and freedom of formerly enslaved persons or their descendants. The base of the monument will feature the names, images, and brief biographical information about eight African American Virginians whose lives were dedicated to Emancipation and freedom — four individuals from the period before Emancipation through 1865 and four who continued to work for freedom from 1866 to 1970.

Nominations for individuals to appear on the monument were received from members of the public, schools, museums, and historical organizations from January 13, 2016 through March 31, 2017. A work group consisting of legislative members, educators, historians, and community leaders and led by the Commission's Chair, Senator Jennifer L. McClellan, narrowed the list of nominees to the following 30 finalists. The work group will make a final recommendation to the full Commission for approval in September 2017.

Finalists from the pre-Emancipation period: Mary Elizabeth Bowser, Henry "Box" Brown, Anthony Burns, William Harvey Carney, John Dabney, Gabriel, James Lafayette, Dred Scott, and Nat Turner.

Finalists from the period from 1866 to 1970: Dr. Virgie M. Binford, James Wesley Douglas Bland, John Andrew Bowler, Rosa L. Dixon Bowser, Lucy Goode Brooks, Evelyn Thomas Butts, Peter Jacob Carter, Jennie Serepta Dean, James Farmer, Rev. Dr. Curtis West Harris, Andrew I. Heidelberg, Dorothy Irene Height, Rev. John Jasper, Charles Spurgeon Johnson, John Mercer Langston, Mildred Loving, John Mitchell, Jr., Lucy F. Simms, Gregory Hayes Swanson, Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, and Dr. James Edward Maceo West.

The Commission will host a series of public hearings to receive public comment on the finalists chosen for inclusion on the monument. Public hearings will be held in five locations across the state, each from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.:

- Thursday, July 27, Perspective Gallery of the Virginia Tech Squires Student Center, Blacksburg
- Monday, July 31, Alexandria Black History Museum, Alexandria
- Wednesday, August 16, Piedmont Virginia Community College, Main Bldg., Room 158, Charlottesville
- Thursday, August 17, Nursing and General Education Building, Norfolk State University, Norfolk
- Monday, August 21, Danville Community College, Danville

Persons desiring to speak should register onsite. Speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes. The Commission's Chair reserves the right to further limit comments as necessary to allow all persons desiring to speak an opportunity to do so.

For biographical information on finalists and updates on the monument's progress, visit <http://mlkcommission.dls.virginia.gov/lincoln/monument.html>.