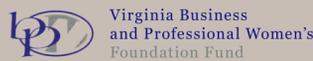


# 2018 VIRGINIA WOMEN IN HISTORY

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*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Women have played an integral part in Virginia from its beginnings, yet their contributions have often been overlooked in the history books. Until well into the twentieth century, written histories tended to focus on the historically male-dominated fields of government and politics, the military, and large-scale property ownership to the virtual exclusion of all other venues of leadership or achievement. They ignored women's critical roles as educators, nurses, lay leaders and missionaries, farmers, artists, writers, reformers, pioneers, business leaders, laborers, civic activists, and community builders.

Today, we recognize and celebrate women's accomplishments in all walks of life, particularly in March, which Congress has designated as National Women's History Month. The Library of Virginia presents the 2018 Virginia Women in History project to honor eight women, past and present, who have made important contributions to Virginia, the nation, and the world. We encourage you to learn more about these extraordinary women who saw things differently from their contemporaries, developed new approaches to old problems, served their communities, advanced their professions, strove for excellence based on the courage of their convictions, and initiated changes in Virginia and the United States that continue to affect our lives today.

[www.lva.virginia.gov/vawomen](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/vawomen)

## Temperance Flowerdew Yearley

d. 1628 | JAMESTOWN  
Colonist

Temperance Flowerdew (d. 1628) was born during the 1580s into a gentry family in Norfolk County, England. She may be the woman of that name who married Richard Barrow in London on April 29, 1609. She embarked for the Virginia colony in June and after surviving a hurricane, her ship and several others arrived at Jamestown in August. She endured the period known as the Starving Time during the winter of 1609–1610, when three-fourths of the colonists died at the fort, leaving only sixty survivors.

During the 1610s she married George Yearley, a leader in the colony who served as deputy governor (1616–1617). The couple returned to England, where he was named Virginia's governor and knighted in November 1618. They arrived back in Jamestown in April 1619 and he acquired 1,000 acres on the south side of the James River, which he named Flowerdew Hundred for his wife (hundred refers to a semi-autonomous subdivision of an English county). Lady Yearley and her husband resided in Jamestown with their three children and approximately two dozen indentured and African laborers. She assisted with his business and financial matters before his death in November 1627. Named sole executor of Yearley's estate, she took financial responsibility for his property, including exporting more than 300 hogsheads of tobacco to England. Prior to her March 1628 marriage to Francis West, who had succeeded her husband as governor, Temperance Yearley negotiated an agreement to maintain her property separately in order to preserve Yearley's wealth for herself and her children. She continued to manage her own business affairs until her death late in 1628.

NOMINATED BY CONNIE LAPALLO, MECHANICSVILLE,  
HANOVER COUNTY.

## Isabella Gibbons

d. 1890 | CHARLOTTESVILLE  
Educator

Born enslaved during the 1830s, Isabella Gibbons (d. February 3, 1890) learned to read and write despite Virginia's laws that made it extremely difficult for enslaved people to do so. By the 1850s she was owned by a professor at the University of Virginia, where she met William Gibbons, an enslaved man owned by another faculty member. They married early in the 1850s, although their marriage was not recognized by law, and Isabella Gibbons ensured that their children also learned to read.

With the end of the Civil War, formerly enslaved men, women, and children quickly took advantage of the ability to gain an education, and Gibbons established a school for freed people in Charlottesville. A few months later she became an assistant to Anna Gardner, a

representative of the New England Freedmen's Aid Society, who came to Charlottesville late in 1865 to open a free school. Gibbons attended Gardner's school while also assisting her and earned a diploma in 1867. An esteemed teacher at one of the society's schools, Gibbons joined the newly established public school system in 1870 and taught in the city's segregated schools for more than fifteen years. She and her husband, a Baptist minister, acquired property and were highly respected members of Charlottesville's African American community.

In 2015, the University of Virginia named its newest dormitory Gibbons House in recognition of the accomplishments of Isabella Gibbons and William Gibbons.

## Marii Kyogoku Hasegawa

1918–2012 | RICHMOND  
Peace Advocate

Born near Hiroshima, Japan, Marii Kyogoku Hasegawa (September 17, 1918–July 1, 2012) arrived in the United States as an infant when her father, a Buddhist priest, was sent to California. She earned a degree in home economics at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1938. After the United States declared war on Japan, she and her parents were forcibly removed from their home and sent to a Japanese internment camp in Utah. There she served as a social worker and managed a field kitchen, skills that led to her release in 1943. She found work in Philadelphia, where she married in 1946.

Deeply affected by her experiences in the camp and the United States' use of atomic bombs to end World War II in Japan, Hasegawa joined the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. During the 1960s she moved with her family to Richmond and joined the staff of the Virginia Office on Aging. She sat on the board of the Richmond Human Relations Council and was a founding member of the Richmond Peace Education Center. Through speaking engagements around the country, the soft-spoken Hasegawa shared her belief that freedom and social justice were necessary to achieve world peace. She served as president of WILPF's U.S. section (1971–1975) and was part of an international delegation of women who visited North Vietnam in 1973. In 1996 the Niwano Peace Foundation awarded Hasegawa its Peace Prize for her work in promoting peace and human rights worldwide. A documentary about her life, *Marii Hasegawa: Gentle Woman of a Dangerous Kind*, premiered in 2012.

## Mary Aydelotte Rice Marshall

1921–1992 | ARLINGTON  
Legislator

Mary A. Marshall (June 14, 1921–October 15, 1992) represented Arlington County in the House of Delegates from 1966 to 1969 and again from 1972 until 1991. After studying political science at Swarthmore College,

from which she graduated with honors, she worked for the U.S. Department of Justice during World War II. The mother of three daughters, Marshall got involved in politics during the 1950s to keep Arlington's public schools open when the state's policy of Massive Resistance threatened to close schools that obeyed federal court orders to desegregate. She sponsored voter registration drives and was the first woman elected chair of the county's Democratic Committee before winning election to the General Assembly.

Marshall was a strong supporter of public education, health care, help for the mentally ill, and issues relating to children and the environment. During the 1970s she was a leader in the unsuccessful attempt to have the General Assembly ratify the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Smart and funny, Marshall was a skilled legislator and served on some of the most important House committees, including Privileges and Elections. For her last six years in the assembly she was chair of the Committee on Counties, Cities, and Towns, which was of critical interest to her Northern Virginia constituents, and during her last term she was also a member of the influential House Committee on Appropriations. Considered one of Northern Virginia's most effective delegates and sometimes spoken of as the likely first female Speaker of the House, Marshall retired from politics in 1991.

## Gaye Todd Adegbalola

1944– | FREDERICKSBURG  
Musician and Civil Rights Activist

RECIPIENT OF THE  
VABPW BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD

As a teenager in Fredericksburg, Gaye Todd participated in sit-ins and in picket lines against segregated businesses. She graduated from high school as valedictorian and studied biology and chemistry at Boston University. While living in Harlem, she worked as a bacteriologist, became involved in the Black Power movement, and began using the surname Adegbalola (roughly translated as "reclaiming my crown"), which a Yoruba priest gave her in 1968.

In 1970 Gaye Adegbalola returned to Fredericksburg and helped direct the Harambee Theater, which her father had established to foster pride in African American history and culture. She joined the public school system as a science teacher and later developed the city's program for gifted and talented students. Recognized for her creativity in the classroom, Adegbalola was honored as Virginia's Teacher of the Year in 1982.

Moonlighting as a blues musician, she co-founded a trio, Saffire —The Uppity Blues Women. Saffire self-recorded its first album, *Middle Age Blues*, in 1987 and went on to release nine albums with Alligator Records. Adegbalola left teaching in 1988 to become a full-time performer, touring nationally and internationally, and her song "Middle-Aged Blues Boogie" won the Annual Blues Award for best song in 1990. Saffire disbanded in 2009, but Adegbalola continues to perform and provide workshops on music, education, and human rights. Through her music she strives to empower people marginalized by society and seeks to inspire joy in everyday life. For her advocacy of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) rights, Equality Virginia named Adegbalola an Outstanding Virginian in 2011.

NOMINATED BY ELLEN FOSTER, GUM SPRING,  
LOUISA COUNTY.

## Kay Coles James

1949– | RICHMOND  
Government Official

Portsmouth native Kay Coles James has held high-profile positions in Republican state and federal administrations throughout her career in public service. She grew up in Richmond, where she spent some of her early years in public housing and realized the importance of family and faith to nurturing strong communities. After graduating from Hampton Institute (later Hampton University), she worked for Housing Opportunities Made Equal, in Richmond. She joined the federal government in 1989 as an assistant secretary for public affairs in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and in 1991 President George H. W. Bush named her associate director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

From 1994 to 1996 James served as Governor George Allen's secretary of health and human resources, where she helped shape and implement Virginia's welfare reform initiatives. She was dean of Regent University's Robertson School of Government and a fellow at the Heritage Foundation before being appointed director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management by President George W. Bush in 2001. She initiated changes to encourage flexibility in federal workforce policies and oversaw the merging of approximately 170,000 government employees into the new Department of Homeland Security before she left her post in 2005.

In addition to sitting on the boards of numerous health and educational organizations, James founded and chairs the board of directors of the Gloucester Institute, located at the former home of educator Robert Russa Moton, which trains leaders who seek solutions to social and economic problems within the African American community.

## Rita Dove

1952– | CHARLOTTESVILLE  
Poet

Ohio native Rita Dove realized her love of poetry as a student at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. After earning her English degree with honors in 1973, she spent a year as a Fulbright scholar in Germany. Dove then joined the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she received an MFA in 1977. Since 1989 she has taught in the creative writing department at the University of Virginia, where she is the Commonwealth Professor of English.

Dove published her first collection of poetry in 1980. Her third book, *Thomas and Beulah* (1986), a collection of poems based on the lives of her grandparents, who had migrated from the South to Ohio, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1987. She has also published short stories, a novel, and a play, as well as lyrics for musical compositions. Dove edited the landmark work *The Penguin Anthology of Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (2011), in which she showcased the diversity of American poets.

Dove was appointed United States Poet Laureate in 1993, the youngest person and first African American named to the largely ceremonial post. She raised the position's profile during her two years of service, traveling around the country, working with students, and even appearing on TV's *Sesame Street*. From 2004 to 2006 she also served as Poet Laureate of Virginia. Throughout her career Dove has received numerous literary and academic honors, including the Library of Virginia's Literary Lifetime Achievement Award (2008) and the National Medal of the Arts (2011), the nation's highest honor for artists.

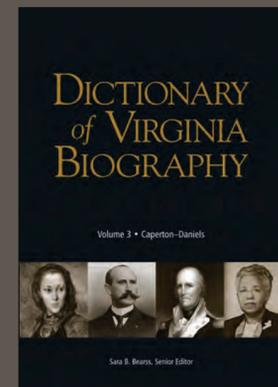
## Barbara Kingsolver

1955– | WASHINGTON COUNTY  
Writer

Growing up in rural Kentucky, Barbara Kingsolver loved to tell stories. She became a science writer and journalist after earning degrees in biology. In 1987, she faced a crucial decision: throw away the novel she had written or send it to her agent? She chose the latter, and the 1988 publication of *The Bean Trees* accelerated a highly acclaimed career spanning books, essays, and articles. Her 1998 novel *The Poisonwood Bible* was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. *The Lacuna* (2009) received the prestigious Orange Prize for Fiction (now the Women's Prize for Fiction) in 2010. The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded Kingsolver a National Humanities Medal in 2000 for her advocacy of human rights and the environment through her fiction. The Library of Virginia honored her with its Literary Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014. She has also created and funded her own award, the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction.

While on a teaching fellowship at Emory and Henry College in Washington County, Kingsolver met and married professor Steven Hopp. They spent summers in a log cabin on his farm and in 2004 settled in Meadowview. Concerned about the nation's fast-food culture, Kingsolver and her family decided to rely on only locally raised and produced food for a year. Their account, published as *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* (2007), became a best seller and spurred the creation of the Meadowview Farmers Guild to promote the local economy and the Harvest Table Restaurant, which emphasizes regional ingredients.

In addition to writing, Kingsolver continues her commitment to local food by raising poultry and Icelandic sheep and tending a large vegetable garden on her family's farm.



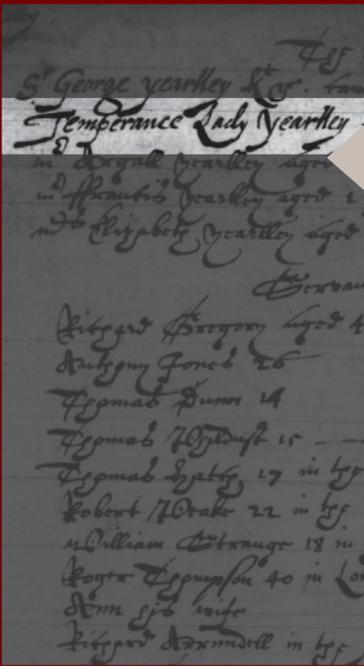
Learn more about Virginia women in the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* (Library of Virginia, 1998–2006), *Changing History: Virginia Women Through Four Centuries* (Library of Virginia, 2013), and on the Library of Virginia's websites, [www.lva.virginia.gov](http://www.lva.virginia.gov) and [www.virginiamemory.com](http://www.virginiamemory.com).

Instructional materials and nomination forms for the 2019 project are available at [www.lva.virginia.gov/vawomen](http://www.lva.virginia.gov/vawomen).



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## Temperance Flowerdew Yeardley

D. 1628  
JAMESTOWN

*Colonist*

A prosperous woman during the earliest years of the Virginia colony, Temperance Flowerdew Yeardley took steps to maintain control of her financial affairs after her husband's death.

## Isabella Gibbons

D. 1890  
CHARLOTTESVILLE

*Educator*

Isabella Gibbons learned to read while enslaved and later educated hundreds of African Americans as a teacher in the freedmen's schools and public schools of Charlottesville.



## Marii Kyogoku Hasegawa

1918–2012  
RICHMOND

*Peace Advocate*

As a result of her experiences in a Japanese internment camp during World War II, Marii Kyogoku Hasegawa devoted her life to promoting human rights, disarmament, and world peace.

## Mary Aydelotte Rice Marshall

1921–1992  
ARLINGTON

*Legislator*

Mary A. Marshall advocated public education and equal rights as a member of the General Assembly for more than twenty years.



## Gaye Todd Adegbalola

1944–  
FREDERICKSBURG

*Musician and Civil Rights Activist*

RECIPIENT OF THE  
VABPW BUSINESS  
LEADERSHIP AWARD

Award-winning educator and blues musician Gaye Adegbalola celebrates diversity and strives to empower others through her music.

## Kay Coles James

1949–  
RICHMOND

*Government Official*

Throughout her career in public service, Kay Coles James has been an advocate for families, faith, and communities while working in local, state, and federal government.



## Rita Dove

1952–  
CHARLOTTESVILLE

*Poet*

A former poet laureate of the United States and of Virginia, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Rita Dove cultivates public awareness of American poetry and its increasing diversity.



1. Temperance Flowerdew Yeardley
2. Isabella Gibbons
3. Marii Kyogoku Hasegawa
4. Mary Aydelotte Rice Marshall

5. Gaye Todd Adegbalola
6. Kay Coles James
7. Rita Dove
8. Barbara Kingsolver

## Barbara Kingsolver

1955–  
WASHINGTON COUNTY

*Writer*

Acclaimed novelist and writer Barbara Kingsolver addresses issues of social justice, the environment, and human rights through her fiction and nonfiction.



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