

2013

STRONG MEN & WOMEN

IN VIRGINIA HISTORY

PRESENTED BY



ONWARD

Building on the past, leading into the future

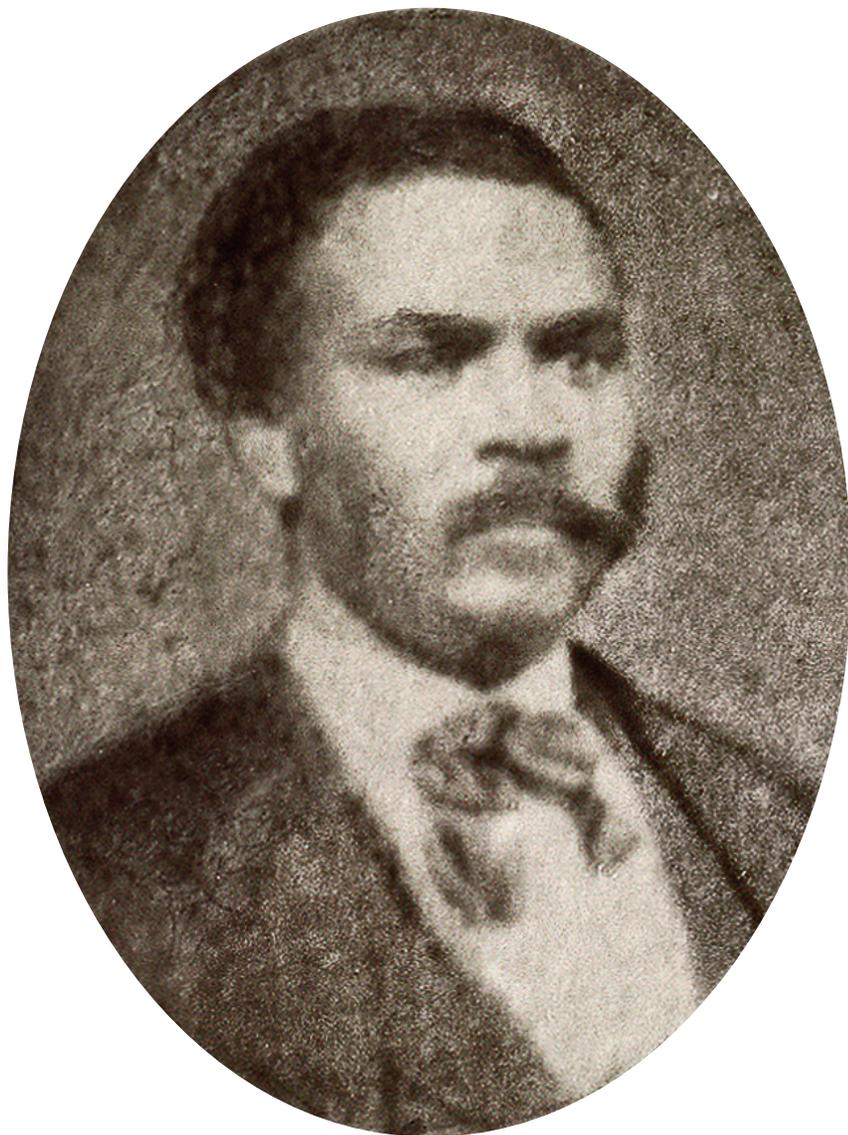
People of African descent have been a part of Virginia's—and America's—story since European colonization of the North American continent began. In observance of Black History Month, the Library of Virginia and Dominion honor eight distinguished Virginians, past and present, as *Strong Men & Women in Virginia History* for their important contributions to the state, the nation, or their professions.

To learn more about these extraordinary men and women, all of whom have used their talents and creativity to push for equality and inclusion in American society, visit our website at www.lva.virginia.gov/smw.

Further information about distinguished African Americans from Virginia can be found in the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 1998–2006) and on the Library of Virginia's websites, www.lva.virginia.gov and www.virginiamemory.com. Instructional materials, classroom activities, and nomination forms for the 2014 project are available at www.lva.virginia.gov/smw.

A joint project of the Library of Virginia and Dominion.

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PETER JACOB CARTER (1845–1886)

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
LEGISLATOR

Peter Jacob Carter rose from slavery to become an influential member of the General Assembly and sought-after political speaker during the 1870s and 1880s.

Born into slavery in Eastville, in Northampton County, Peter Jacob Carter (May 29, 1845–July 19, 1886) joined Company B of the 10th United States Colored Troops in October 1863 and served in Virginia through the end of the Civil War and later in Texas before his discharge in May 1866. He briefly attended Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (later Hampton University) before winning election to the House of Delegates in 1871. Carter was reelected three times and served for eight consecutive years, one of the longest tenures of any of the approximately 100 African American men who served in the General Assembly or in the postwar constitutional convention during the final three decades of the nineteenth century.

He served as temporary chair at the opening of the 1876 and 1880 Republican Party state conventions and was a delegate to the party's national convention both years. Early in the 1880s Carter and most other African American political leaders in Virginia took part in a bi-racial reform party known as the Readjusters, who refinanced the public debt, replaced a budget deficit with a surplus, and made major reforms in public education, including founding the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (later Virginia State University), of which Carter was the first rector.

An excellent public speaker, Carter campaigned for Republican candidates throughout eastern Virginia during the 1870s and later in the 1880s after the Readjuster Party ceased to exist. He continued to participate in Republican Party politics until his death.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE MANASSAS MUSEUM



JENNIE SEREPTA DEAN (1848–1913)

MANASSAS
EDUCATOR

Born into slavery, Jennie Serepta Dean founded a school at a time when segregation limited educational opportunities for African American students.

Born enslaved in Loudoun County, Jennie Serepta Dean (April 15, 1848–May 3, 1913) became involved with education at about the age of 30 when she founded a Sunday school in Prince William County. From there she established more religious schools, several of which grew into church congregations. She also taught classes in cooking and sewing.

Dean began planning a new institution that would teach skilled trades to African Americans. She, her sister, and one other person started building local support for the idea in 1888. Dean's organization found a suitable site near Manassas. She spent five years raising money and planning for the new school, even working as a cook in Massachusetts to raise funds. Her efforts led to the establishment of the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth. Frederick Douglass spoke at the dedication, and the first students arrived in 1894.

The school offered regular classes along with occupational courses such as carpentry, shoemaking, and sewing. Dean served as the school's matron for a time and also sat on its board of directors. It became so successful that Dean, students, and faculty met with President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House in 1906. The institution became a regional high school in 1938 and operated until 1959.

In 1995 the Manassas Museum System dedicated the Manassas Industrial School and Jennie Dean Memorial at the institution's former location.

Nominated by Kristi Jean Harper, Haymarket.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GLOUCESTER INSTITUTE

ROBERT RUSSA MOTON (1867–1940)

HAMPTON
EDUCATOR

Early in the twentieth century, Robert Russa Moton was one of the foremost African American educators in the United States.

The son of formerly enslaved parents, Robert Russa Moton (August 26, 1867–May 31, 1940), grew up in Prince Edward County. After graduating from Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (later Hampton University), he later served as the first African American commandant of the male cadets, supervising students and administering the school's regulations. He often traveled on fund-raising campaigns for Hampton, and Moton became widely known for promoting vocational education. As a founder of the Negro Organization Society of Virginia, he worked to strengthen African American communities.

In 1915, Moton became principal of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (later Tuskegee University) after the death of his mentor, Booker T. Washington. Moton expanded teacher training at Tuskegee, increased the academic coursework, and established a four-year college program. He believed that education and interracial cooperation provided the best methods for improving the status of African Americans.

Moton served on several national commissions and also privately advised United States presidents on issues concerning race. In 1918 he traveled to France at the request of Woodrow Wilson to examine the service conditions faced by African American soldiers. In his book *What the Negro Thinks* (1929), Moton described the daily discrimination faced by blacks in America. He retired as president emeritus of Tuskegee in 1935.

The Robert Russa Moton Museum interprets the history of civil rights in education at the Farmville school named for him, where a student walkout in 1951 led to a school desegregation case that became part of *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Nominated by Sally Miller on behalf of the fourth- and fifth-grade classes (2011–2012) at William Fox Elementary School, Richmond.



NANNIE BERGER HAIRSTON (1921–)

CHRISTIANSBURG
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

Activist Nannie Berger Hairston strives to make her community a better place.

Nannie Mae Berger Hairston grew up in West Virginia, where her father worked in the coalfields. Her parents taught her the value of knowledge, kinship, and kindness by sharing their home and food with travelers and neighbors. Since settling with her husband and four daughters in Christiansburg in 1953, Hairston has worked quietly and tirelessly for her community. An advocate for civil rights, she joined the Montgomery County–Radford City–Floyd County branch of the NAACP, in which she held numerous offices and continues to be a member. She was also a founding member of the Montgomery County League of Women Voters. Hairston has worked to expand local employment opportunities for African American women and opened her home to children in need.

Dedicated to preserving local history as well as educating young people, Hairston has been an advocate since the 1960s on behalf of the Christiansburg Community Center. Formerly known as the Hill School, it was the original site of what became the Christiansburg Institute, the only high school in southwestern Virginia for African American students.

In 1997 the state chapter of the NAACP recognized Hairston's civic and humanitarian work with the Maggie L. Walker Community Service Award. A bronze bust of Hairston, created to commemorate her community work, was dedicated at the Montgomery County Government Center in 2006 and the local branch of the Virginia NAACP annually presents the Nannie B. Hairston Award to a member for outstanding and long-standing service to the branch and community.

Nominated by the third-grade class (2011–2012) of Mary W. Biggs at Harding Avenue Elementary School, Blacksburg.



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE WYATT T. WALKER

WYATT TEE WALKER (1929–)

PETERSBURG
CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

A nationally celebrated Baptist minister, Wyatt Tee Walker was a pioneer in the civil rights movement.

Wyatt Tee Walker graduated from Virginia Union University in Richmond in 1950 and from its Graduate School of Religion in 1953. From 1953 to 1960 he was pastor of Gillfield Baptist Church in Petersburg, where he became president of the local branch of the NAACP and was arrested for trying to borrow a book about Robert E. Lee from the Petersburg Public Library.

Walker served as the first full-time executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from 1960 to 1964. He played a major role in the civil rights movement and worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He was arrested during a Freedom Riders protest in Birmingham in 1961 and helped organize the 1963 march on Washington.

In 1966 Walker became pastor of Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, in Harlem, New York City. During the 1970s he advised New York's governor on urban affairs. In 1978 Walker organized the International Freedom Mobilization to protest apartheid in South Africa and later welcomed Nelson Mandela to his church in New York. Walker also studied African American church music and became a nationally recognized authority on the subject. He published more than a dozen books on religious and musical subjects and later took part in documenting the civil rights movement. After suffering a stroke in 2003 and retiring from his ministry, Walker returned to Virginia, where he lives in Chester and remains active in promoting Christian brotherhood.



XAVIER R. RICHARDSON (1957–)

FREDERICKSBURG
MENTOR AND COMMUNITY LEADER

Xavier R. Richardson is a fervent advocate for underprivileged youth.

Fredericksburg native Xavier R. Richardson currently works in his hometown as executive vice president of Corporate Development and Community Affairs for the Mary Washington Healthcare system. He also serves as president of the Mary Washington Hospital and Stafford Hospital Foundations.

After receiving his MBA from Harvard University in 1983, Richardson worked on Wall Street and came to know Wyatt Tee Walker, pastor of Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, in Harlem. Inspired by Walker's work with disadvantaged youth, Richardson and a group of community professionals founded the Partnership for Academic Excellence to address the underachievement of minority students in the Fredericksburg area. Since 1989 more than 3,000 students have benefited from this initiative and many have gone on to become first-generation college students.

Richardson has parlayed his success into many other ventures that focus on improving his community. He serves as co-director of the Walker-Grant Cultural and Educational Center (housed in the school building he once attended) and has provided leadership to such varied organizations as the Moss Free Clinic, the Ann Hamrick Community House for preschoolers of low-income families, and the Black Arts Festival of Fredericksburg.

Richardson serves his community not only as a leader but also by example, often sharing adages with youth that reflect his principles and values. "You're writing your story every day by the way you live" sums up the spirit and philosophy he lives by and by which he inspires others to live.



GWEN BINGHAM (1959–)

PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL OF THE U.S. ARMY

Brigadier General Gwen Bingham was the first woman to serve as quartermaster general of the United States Army.

The daughter of a twenty-year Army veteran, Gwen McMillion Bingham joined the branch's Quartermaster Corps after graduating from the University of Alabama in 1981. She served her first tour at Fort Lee, a base outside Petersburg, that same year. Starting as a second lieutenant, Bingham worked her way up the ranks and also acquired two master's degrees. She became a battalion commander at Fort Lee in 2000 and settled in the community with her husband and two children.

In 2005 Bingham rose to be the first female garrison commander at Fort Lee, working in the position until 2008, when she became chief of staff to the facility's commanding general. Two years later she assumed command of the U.S. Army Quartermaster School. As the institution's commandant, she oversaw the training of 20,000 soldiers each year in the art of supplying the army's troops. On April 22, 2011, Bingham received a promotion to brigadier general. With that breakthrough she became the first female quartermaster general of the army, a position that dates back to 1775. The following year the Department of Defense announced that Bingham would transfer to New Mexico's White Sands Missile Range and serve as its next commanding general.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE FORT LEE CASCOM

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Dominion

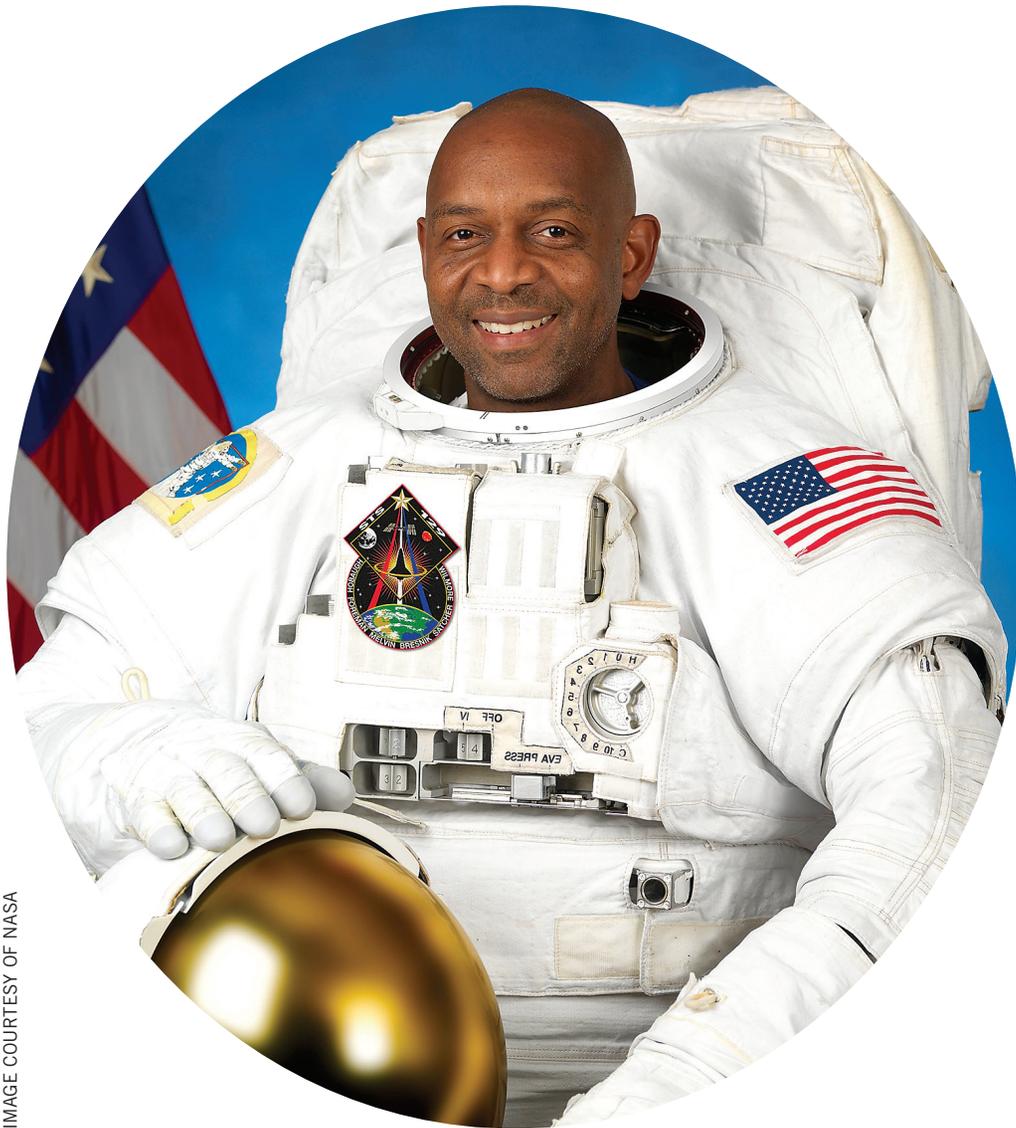


IMAGE COURTESY OF NASA

ROBERT L. SATCHER JR., M.D., PH.D. (1965–)

HAMPTON
ASTRONAUT

An accomplished oncologist and researcher, Robert L. Satcher was the first orthopedic surgeon to fly into space, where he participated in spacewalks to repair robotic arms on the International Space Station.

Born in Hampton, Robert Lee Satcher Jr. earned a PhD in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1993 and an MD from Harvard Medical School in 1994. His medical specialties are orthopedics and oncology, and he has done much work in treating adult and child bone cancer. With extensive experience researching, teaching, and practicing throughout the United States, he has embarked on mission trips to many foreign countries, including Gabon, Nicaragua, Nigeria, and Venezuela.

Selected as an astronaut candidate by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 2004, he completed his training two years later. Aboard the space shuttle Atlantis that journeyed to the International Space Station for almost eleven days in November 2009, Satcher became the first orthopedic surgeon to fly into space. Classified as a mission specialist, he studied the influence of zero gravity on muscles and bone density, as well as the effects of space on the immune system. He also used his surgical training to install an antenna and help repair two robotic arms on the space station. Satcher spent more than 259 hours in space, trekked 4.5 million miles in 171 orbits above the Earth, and took two separate spacewalks outside the shuttle craft. He left NASA in 2011 and is a surgical oncologist at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

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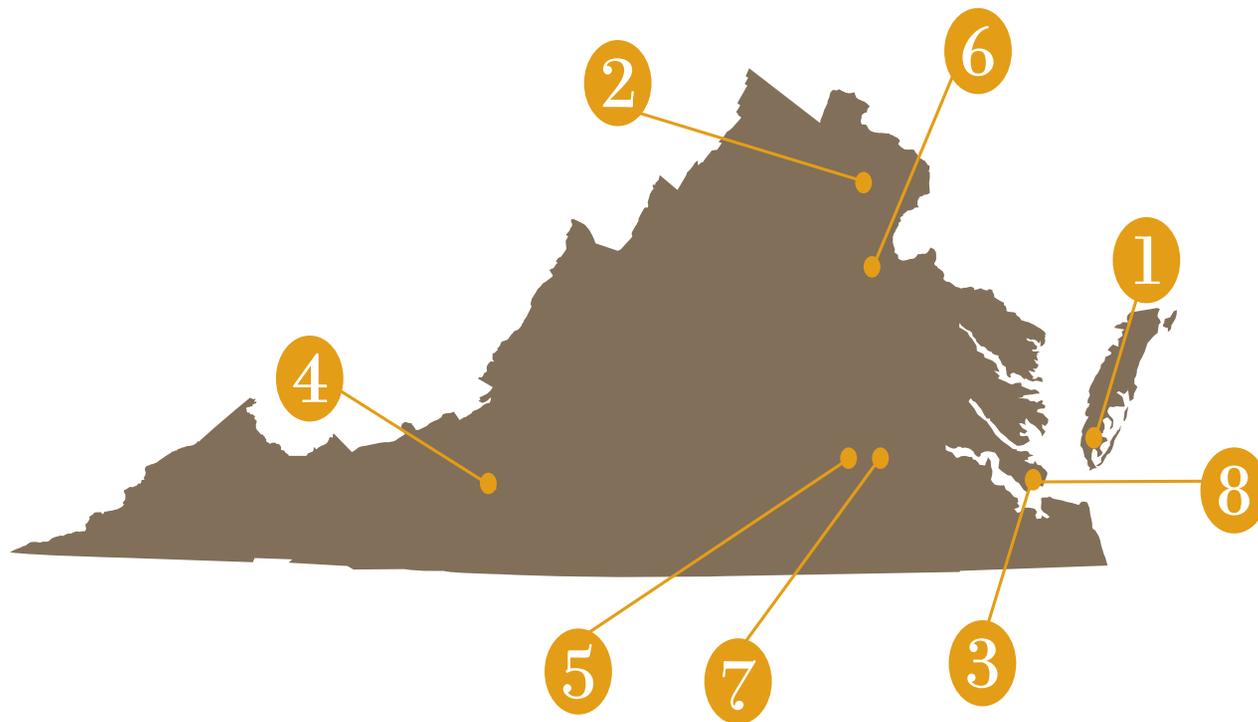
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Dominion



1. Peter Jacob Carter*

2. Jennie Serepta Dean*

3. Robert Russa Moton*

4. Nannie Berger Hairston

5. Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker

6. Xavier R. Richardson

7. Brig. Gen. Gwen Bingham

8. Robert L. Satcher Jr., M.D., Ph.D.

*deceased

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