

Press Release
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Virginia Museum of History & Culture to Host Arthur Ashe Boulevard Dedication and Grand Opening of Groundbreaking Exhibition, *Determined: The 400-Year Struggle for Black Equality*

Richmond, VA — On Saturday, June 22, at 11:00 a.m., the Virginia Museum of History & Culture (VMHC) in partnership with the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia, will host an historic event featuring the official dedication of Arthur Ashe Boulevard and the opening of their groundbreaking exhibition, *Determined: The 400-year Struggle for Black Equality*. The event is free and open to the public and will take place on the museum's front lawn (weather permitting).

"We are deeply honored to host this important ceremony, and excited about what it means for the future of this historic institution, our great city, and our Commonwealth," said Jamie O. Bosket, president & CEO of VMHC. "It will be a special privilege to welcome dignitaries and special guests from our city, around Virginia, and across the nation as we make an important step forward in remembering one of Richmond's most famous sons and better tell a complete story of the Commonwealth of Virginia."

Determined explores the black experience from the 1619 arrival of the first enslaved Africans in English North America to the present day. The exhibit traces the ways in which black people have profoundly shaped the course of American history and the nature of American democracy through their fight for freedom, equality, and justice. *Determined* features dozens of artifacts that tell the compelling story of a selection of remarkable Virginians, including Arthur Ashe, Jr. Other individuals highlighted in this four-century survey exhibit include Missy Elliott, James Lafayette, Mildred and Richard Loving, Mary S. Peake, Barbara Johns Powell, and Gladys West. These inspiring individuals showcase black contributions to America's founding and development as a nation, the evolution of civil rights, and the shaping of contemporary culture.

Nearly 100 historically important artifacts will fill this new exhibit, including slavery-era restraints, an African-inspired banjo, freedom documents, letters, works of art, a lunch counter stool from Woolworth Department Store, a pamphlet signed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., tennis shoes worn by Arthur Ashe, and a tear-gas canister from the events in Charlottesville in the summer of 2017. Perhaps the most significant items are extremely rare copies of the Emancipation Proclamation and 13th Amendment signed by Abraham Lincoln.

This new exhibition is a legacy project of AMERICAN EVOLUTION™, the state commission formed to commemorate the 400th anniversary of key historical events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 and continue to influence America today. The exhibit is curated by Dr. Karen Sherry, VMHC Curator of Exhibitions, with the guidance of an advisory committee consisting of distinguished scholars, museum professionals, public historians, and government leaders who brought a broad range of expertise and perspective to the project.

Determined will be on display June 22, 2019, through March 29, 2020 at VMHC. The exhibit is presented by Altria Group, Inc. Bank of America is a supporting sponsor. After opening day, when access will be free, admission to the exhibition is included with suggested admission to the museum.

For more information about the official dedication of Arthur Ashe Boulevard, contact Tamara Jenkins, Public Information Manager, City of Richmond Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities at tamara.jenkins@richmondgov.com or call 804.646.1087. Read the press release from the Mayor's office [here](#).

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society — a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation. For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is located at 428 North Boulevard in Richmond's Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the research library. For more information call 804.340.1800, visit VirginiaHistory.org, or connect on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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