



January 3, 2020
For Immediate Release

Media Contact:
 Lynette James, Portsmouth Museums
 jamesl@portsmouthva.gov
 Phone: (757) 393-8983

Contact:
 Corey Staten, Portsmouth Museums
 statenc@portsmouthva.gov
 Phone: (757) 393-5258

Black History Now 2020: Celebrating Today 's Change Makers
Presented by the
Portsmouth Museums and the Portsmouth Public Libraries
 January 11, 2020 - February 29, 2020

PORTSMOUTH, VA - The Portsmouth Museums and The Portsmouth Public Libraries will kick off 2020 with its fifth annual African-American Heritage Series, Black History Now - Celebrating Today's Change Makers. This year's series will commemorate African-American heritage with our series of cultural dance, music, plays, military tributes, and more as we celebrate Black History from West Africa all the way to today's change makers. (Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the public)

For updates about these events, visit the Portsmouth Museums' websites:
www.childrensmuseumva.com
www.portsmouthartcenter.com
www.portsvaAfricanAmericanHeritage.com

For information about the Portsmouth Public Libraries visit www.portsmouthpubliclibrary.org.

A complete schedule of events, exhibits, and activities is included below.

SATURDAY • JANUARY 11

What: **A Talk with Ted Ellis**
 Where: Children's Museum of Virginia
 When: 10 am

Ted Ellis' art captures and documents 400 years of the Black experience in North American and pays homage to his ancestors. For more than 25 years, Ellis has created over 5000 paintings that depict scenes from Southern churches, courtrooms, families, and everyday life of Black Americas' 400-year journey.

SATURDAY • JANUARY 18

What: **"When I Grow Up ..."** Career Day

Where: Children's Museum of Virginia (Included with museum admission)

When: 11 am - 4 pm

Children can meet NASCAR pit crew members, celebrity hair stylist, music producers and other African-Americans who are successful in a variety of professional arenas, while parents learn to encourage their children to "think outside of the box" when selecting a career path.

SATURDAY • JANUARY 25

What: **"Come Freedom Come "**

Where: Portsmouth Main Library

When: 2 pm

Celebrated storyteller and actor from film and stage, **Valerie Davis**, captures the physical, historical, and spiritual essence of this former enslaved woman, Martha Ann Fields, from the Nutshell Plantation in Hanover County. This story of freedom and empowerment is suitable for multi-generational audiences and includes a Q&A with the character Martha Ann Fields.

SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 1

What: **Women on the Warfront: African-American Women on the Battlefields of History "**

Where: Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center Art Annex

When: 12 pm - 1:30 pm

Taniki Richards of Just to Inspire will take visitors on a video and photographic journey through history as she explores the roles African and African-American women played in history's greatest military conflicts, including her own experiences as an officer in the U.S. Marines Corps during the Iraqi War.

SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 8

What: **"Let My People Go: Moses Grandy 's Financial Fight for Freedom "**

Where: Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center Art Annex

When: 12 pm - 1:30 pm

Eric Sheperd of Diversity Restoration Solutions will take visitors on a video and photographic journey from West Africa to the Dismal Swamp Canal to tell the story of how his ancestor, Moses Grandy, used industry and thrift to purchase his freedom from slavery in the early 1800s.

SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 8

What: **"Exploring Mali: A Young Person's Guide to Ancient Civilization "**

Where: Cradock Branch Library

When: 1 pm

Author **Linda Goss** helps young readers discover the history and culture of Ancient Mali as she leads a discussion of her book that includes the story of Sundjata, the boy who became king of Mali.

Target Audience : Ages 8 and up

WEDNESDAY • FEBRUARY 12

What: **Black History Expo**

Where: Churchland Branch Library

When: 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Join together with your community in honoring African-American history. Hear from guest speaker **Inez Randolph** discussing the history of Grove Baptist Church, listen to local musical talent, and see breathtaking display of local artisans' handiwork at this celebratory event recognizing African-American history in Portsmouth.

SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 15

What: **Neighborhood Black History Tour & Costume Parade**

Where: High and Green Streets

When: 10:30 am

Wear your favorite costume representing an African-American hero, past, present, local, city, state, national or international. Walk or ride a shuttle bus to see significant African American sites in Portsmouth, concluding at the Portsmouth Neighborhood Facility Recreation Center at 900 Elm Ave. To register contact Joyce White Tasby at 202-812-2804. Registration fees are \$10.00 for an individual and \$50.00 for 10 or more. The line-up begins at 10:30 am at High and Green Streets.

Target audience : Families, all ages

FRIDAY • FEBRUARY 21

What: **Portsmouth Community Concerts, Inc.**

Where: Churchland High School Auditorium

When: 7:30 pm

American operatic tenor **Orson Van Gay II** will bring audiences to their feet with his charisma and command of the stage. A native of Southern California, Orson is no stranger to the Hampton Roads community, as he honed his vocal talents as a Vocal Performance major at Old Dominion University. For ticket and other information visit the PCCI website:

www.portsmouthcommunityconcerts.com or call (757)686-5447.

SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 22

What: **"Java & Djembes"**

Where: Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center

When: 11 am - 12:30 pm

Enjoy coffee from different regions of Africa while learning traditional West African percussion rhythms from master musician Kamiruri Kelly, of the DAY Program. Hailed as the “Maestro”, Mr. Kelly is one of the few American percussionists to be declared a member of acclaimed musician Mammady Keita’s family of percussionists in Guinea, West Africa. Price: \$10 per person.

Intended Audience: Ages 17 & Up

Follow the link below to register for this workshop:

<https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/3281452/java-djembe-featuring-master-musician-kamiruri-kelly-portsmouth-portsmouth-arts-and-cultural-center-classes-workshops>

Workshop participants are eligible to perform in a **2:00 p.m.** public performance at the **Churchland Branch Library** as workshop participants showcase what they learned.

SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 29

What: **“Jammin’ at the Juke Joint ”**

Where: Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center Art Center

When: 6:30 pm - 9 pm

Local band leader **Robert Giles** of **God’s Finest Gospel, Blues and Jazz Band** will take listeners on a narrative musical journey through time to follow the gospel origins of blues, jazz, rock’n’roll, soul, R&B and funk music all the way to today’s hip-hop.

TEMPORARY DISPLAYS ON VIEW

What: **Portsmouth Institutions: Grove Baptist Church at 180**

Where: Main Branch of the Portsmouth Public Library, 601 Court Street

When: January 17 - February 28

Grove Baptist Church has contributed to Portsmouth’s spiritual, social, and community life since its establishment in 1840. Learn more about this historic congregation, founded as an African-American offshoot of a 19th century white church. Vintage images and articles will highlight the ways in which this long-standing church has truly become a Portsmouth Institution.

What: **Portraits of Service: Portsmouth African Americans in the Military, 1946 - 1967**

Where: Photographs from the collection of the Portsmouth Public Library. Portsmouth City Hall Lobby, 801 Crawford Street

When: January 17 - February 29

After World War II, the Colored Notes column of the Portsmouth Star newspaper described happenings in the African American community. The column included frequent photographs of local residents in military service. View this collection of military portraits and original captions in this temporary exhibit for Black History Month Now 2020.

What: **“Follow the Drinking Gourd ”**

Where: The Beazley Planetarium at the Children’s Museum of Virginia (Included in museum admission)

When: Show Times for the month of February:

Tuesday - Friday: 1 pm & 3 pm

Saturday: 11 am & 2 pm

Sunday: 12 pm

Analyze the celestial clues hidden within the Follow the Drinking Gourd folk song first published in 1928. This song reportedly used by the Underground Railroad offered hope to a people in an escape to freedom. Running time: 30 minutes

About Portsmouth Museums

The City of Portsmouth maintains five museums which provide the citizens of Portsmouth, Hampton Roads, the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond with high quality educational and cultural experiences in the arts, humanities and the sciences through the use of exhibitions, programs and collections. Two museums will host many of the Black History Now events: the Children's Museum of Virginia | 757-393-5258 | <https://childrensmuseumvirginia.com/black-history-celebration/>, and the Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center Art Annex| 757-393-8543 | <http://portsmouthartcenter.com/event-directory/>.

About the Portsmouth Public Library

The Portsmouth Public Library has been a cornerstone of the Portsmouth community for over 100 years providing free access to information, print and online resources, and fun programs. Portsmouth Public Library serves the community through four locations; Main Library, Cradock Branch, Churchland Branch, and Manor Branch. For more information call 757-393-8501 or visit www.portsmouthpubliclibrary.org.

About the City of Portsmouth, Virginia

The City of Portsmouth, Virginia is the geographical center of Hampton Roads located in the southeastern corner of Virginia. Over 250 years old, the city is a true historical gem with stories and architecture dating back to the American Revolution and earlier. For more information call 757-393-8000 or visit <http://www.PortsmouthVa.gov>.

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