

Project Gabriel *About Us*

by Project Gabriel at VCU



VCU

FREEDOM



BACKGROUND: LEGISLATION AND PURPOSE

2021 HB1980 was passed establishing the Enslaved Ancestors College Access Scholarship & Memorial Program – the Virginia General Assembly with full support from VCU directs Virginia's five oldest colleges and universities, including VCU, to:

- Research historical involvement with enslavement
- Identify and memorialize enslaved individuals who were forced to labor for these institutions
- Provide tangible benefits to individuals or communities connected to this history to help break cycles of poverty



KEY EVENTS LEADING TO AND SHAPING PROJECT GABRIEL

2021 President Rao commissions Peter Wosh to research and report MCV/VCU's role in enslavement.

December 17, 2022

Peter Wosh completes the report *Slavery and the Medical College of Virginia*, documenting the role of enslaved people in the early development of VCU's historic Medical College of Virginia

➤ MCV was built and operated using the labor of enslaved people

Spring 2023

The President's Special Commission on Slavery and Justice is formed at VCU to guide research, community engagement, memorialization, and programs required under HB 1980.



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL COMMISSION ON SLAVERY AND JUSTICE

CO-CHAIRS:

SHERYL L. GARLAND, MHA, FACHE - CHIEF OF HEALTH IMPACT-VCU HEALTH SYSTEM; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR- VCU OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY

CLIFTON L. PEAY, M.D. - VCU BOARD MEMBER; FOUNDING MEDICAL DIRECTOR- THE AMERICAN EYE CENTER; OPHTHALMOLOGIST MEMBERS:

EDWARD "ED" AYERS, PH.D.- TUCKER-BOATWRIGHT PROFESSOR OF THE HUMANITIES AND PRESIDENT EMERITUS- UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND; HISTORIAN

FAYE BELGRAVE, PH.D. - ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR EQUITY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES; PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY, AND FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN PREVENTION, VCU

YVONNE BRANDON, ED.D. - MANAGING DIRECTOR- THE ARIA GROUP; FORMER SUPERINTENDENT, RICHMOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NAKEINA E. DOUGLAS-GLENN, PH.D. - ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL EQUITY, L. DOUGLAS WILDER SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT VCU

LEONARD EDLOE, PHARM.D. - RETIRED CEO AND PHARMACIST, EDLOE'S PROFESSIONAL PHARMACIES; PASTOR, NEW HOPE FELLOWSHIP

KEVIN HARRIS, PH.D. - ASSISTANT DEAN FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, VCU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

MAYA JOHNSON - VCU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, MAY 2023 GRADUATE

WILLIAM "BILL" MARTIN- DIRECTOR - THE VALENTINE, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

TOBI OJO - STUDENT-HEALTH SERVICES MAJOR, VCU CLASS OF 2026

RHONDA KEYES PLEASANTS - MANAGER-HENRY W. DABNEY FUNERAL HOME; FAMILY REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, EAST MARSHALL ST. WELL PROJECT

AD-HOC LAURANETT LEE, PH.D. - DIRECTOR OF RACE AND JUSTICE AT RICHMOND HILL, VISITING SCHOLAR IN THE CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND ADJUNCT ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, LIBERAL ARTS HISTORIAN, THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Fall 2023

The Commission presents its findings and recommendations to the VCU Board of Visitors, including proposals for memorials, scholarships, and community economic support

July 2024

After a competitive search VCU hires the inaugural Project Gabriel Project Director beginning the implementation phase of the Commission's recommendations

Fall 2025

The Project Gabriel Project Assistant and Community Liaison are hired

Fall 2025

The inaugural Project Gabriel Scholarships are awarded



REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**I. Community-Based Economic
Development Programs**

II. Scholarships

III. Identification and Memorialization



OUR GOALS AND PROGRESS

Restarting work sessions and advisory council and re-engaging our community while rebuilding trust.

We held a Town Hall meeting at MLK Middle School on September 30th and an Advisory Group interest meeting on November 6th. Both were well attended.



OUR GOALS AND PROGRESS

Community Based Economic Development Programs--support with fundraising

- micro-credentialing
- programming that supports small business development and entrepreneurship

da Vinci Center Shift Retail Lab-- Shelfie Program

<https://shiftretail.vcu.edu/programming/shelfie-program/>

Advanced Certificate in Youth Development Management

<https://mfyc.vcu.edu/rydn/ydncertificate/>



Scholarships

- 7 VCU “Gabriel Scholars” have received scholarship awards
- Scholarship language follows SCHEV guidelines

SCHEV GUIDELINES

“An ‘enslaved individual,’ in the historical context, is any person who was deemed property of the institution or was forbidden to quit their service for another person or corporate entity. An enslaved individual, in the historical context, may have been placed under this condition of servitude due to indebtedness, military defeat, having a parent who was enslaved, and in most cases for Native Americans and Africans through forcible removal from their native community, or forced in-place enslavement of entire communities.”



Reimagining Memorialization

Possibilities include:

- Genealogy research
- Student-led projects
- Public art and events

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