

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hampton Honors Black History Month 2026: “Navigating Freedom: Hampton’s Streets are Paved with Stories”

Hampton, VA – This February, the City of Hampton invites you to embark on a journey of discovery and reflection, as we honor Black History Month with a series of events under the unifying theme, “Navigating Freedom: Hampton’s Streets are Paved with Stories.” Our vibrant programming delves into the profound narratives of Black individuals who have shaped our nation’s history, from pioneering jazz artists to influential figures in the American Revolution. Join us as we explore the rich tapestry of Hampton’s past and present, celebrating the enduring legacy of freedom and resilience.

HR Jazz Lecture Series

Thursday, February 5, 12, 19, and 26, 6:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

Hampton History Museum

120 Old Hampton Lane

The Hampton Roads Jazz Lecture series offers a deep dive into the rich history and cultural significance of jazz through a series of engaging presentations. Attendees will dive into topics of how pioneering jazz enthusiasts leveraged autobiographies to redefine their roles in jazz’s evolution, hear invaluable life lessons from jazz journalists, explore the intricacies of jazz composition, and trace the development of jazz trumpet performance from its early roots.

Lecture Series Schedule:

- **Thursday, February 5**
Dr. Tammy Kernodle – *“I’ve Got a Story to Tell: Black Women, Autobiography, and the Reimagining of Jazz History”*
- **Thursday, February 12**
Mark Ruffin – *“Lessons From an Improvised Life”*
- **Thursday, February 19**
Dr. Kelly Rossum – *“Jazz Composition: Composing for Improvisors”*
- **Thursday, February 26**
Dr. Steven Cunningham – *“The Evolution of Jazz Trumpet”*

Admission to these lecture series presentations is FREE, but you do not want to miss out! For more details and information, visit our website [here](#).

Black History Month Tour 2026 - Road to Freedom

Every Friday in February, 12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m.

Fort Monroe - beginning at the Visitor & Education Center

30 Ingalls Road

Join us at *Freedom's Fortress* to experience history where it happened. Take a walk in the steps of those whose actions resulted in the 1861 contraband decision, and hear how freedom seekers, despite peril to themselves and families, began the nation's movement towards emancipation. Hear about the many roadblocks and obstacles they faced along the path, and how their courage and resiliency gave hope to so many others on the Road to Freedom. There is no registration required, and tours are FREE. This tour is also available to book as a private tour year-round by calling 757 – 690 – 8181 or emailing visit@fortmonroe.org.

Youth Black Culture Festival

Saturday, February 7, 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Fort Monroe

20 Ingalls Road

Prepare for an exhilarating day of hands-on discovery and cultural celebration as the Youth Black Culture Fest returns to Fort Monroe! This dynamic event, completely free and open to the public, offers visitors aged 5 and up a unique opportunity to explore the rich heritage of Black cultural art forms through a variety of engaging stations, including African drumming, dance, archeology, drama, filmmaking, music, and photography. Special guests include TV personality and comedian Allision Moore, Virginia Black Film Festival founder Bryan Thompson, and UCLA Professor Dr. Justin Dunnivant.

New this year, features a new college and career fair, providing students with valuable insights and interactions with local colleges and organizations. Each station offers a 40 to 45-minute experience, allowing attendees to customize their day and engage in as many activities as they wish. Though this event is free and open to the public, space is limited so [sign up today!](#)

Black History Fashion Show

Saturday, February 7, 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

Little England Cultural Center

3922 Kecoughtan Road

Celebrate style and culture at the Black History Fashion Show—where heritage meets runway vibes! Join us for a vibrant, memorable runway show showcasing daring designs influenced by Black ingenuity and tradition. This experience will use fashion that speaks volumes to celebrate the past, rock the present, and inspire the future.

Although this event is free, [reserve your spot](#) today!

Storyteller LaQuita Marie Staten - “Magical Moments in Hampton Roads”

Sunday, February 8, 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

Hampton History Museum - Great Hall

120 Old Hampton Lane

Hampton Storytelling presented in partnership with the Hampton History Museum, the

Hampton Unity Commission, Virginia Organizing, Sonesta Simply Suites and Virginia Humanities, is hosting its free “No Rust Ears” program this February, focusing on “Magical Moments in Hampton Roads.” This interactive, family-friendly event will feature untold 757 stories, exploring local landmarks through comedy, call and response, and cultural rhythms.

Cultural Historian and Master Storyteller, LaQuita Marie Staten, who is also the artistic director of Atumpan Edutainment, a health educator, and published author, will be the featured storyteller for this event.

Unity Gospel Choir

Sunday, February 8, 3:00 p.m.

The American Theatre

125 East Mellen Street

Local voices with a big sound! The Unity Gospel Choir is a vibrant and inclusive community choir that celebrates diverse voices through the power of song. Bringing together people from all backgrounds, they will perform uplifting and inspiring music that reflects the rich cultural diversity of the members of The Unity Gospel Choir. Through harmony and collaboration, they aim to promote unity, understanding, and joy while sharing the beauty of diverse musical traditions.

Parking is free, and tickets may be purchased [here](#).

A Student’s Connection to the American Revolution - Hampton Arts Education

Thursday, February 19 and Friday, February 20, 10:00 a.m. (both days)

The American Theatre

125 East Mellen Street

Middle and high school students are invited to an interactive journey with John Rollison, an 18th-century African American businessman and patriot, portrayed by historical interpreter James Cameron. Students will engage directly with Mr. Rollison, a wealthy York County resident who financed the American Revolutionary War effort. This program aligns with Virginia SOLs in history, offering a compelling educational experience.

For more information, contact Ronald Boucher, Hampton Arts Education Program Manager, at ronald.boucher@hampton.gov.

A Conversation with John Rollison

Saturday, February 21, 7:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

The American Theatre

125 East Mellen Street

Embark on a unique journey into the American Revolution with historical interpreter James Cameron, as he brings to life the remarkable story of John Rollison. This engaging presentation offers lively storytelling and audience interaction, revealing the struggles and triumphs of an influential free man of color who stood alongside prominent patriots like Thomas Nelson and Patrick Henry. Known to have conducted business with George Washington and conversed with Thomas Jefferson, Rollison’s

legacy highlights the vital role of American-born Africans in shaping the nation's founding.

Parking is free. Tickets start at \$20, and are available [here](#).

Black History Month Celebration

Saturday, February 21, 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.

Mary W. Jackson Neighborhood Center

231 Lincoln Street

Celebrate Black History Month with our vibrant Afrocentric Fashionshow, an event that will be both inspiring and entertaining. This free and open to the public celebration will feature the elegant Mahony seniormodels, alongside captivating African drumming and dance performances, with light refreshments provided.

Home By Samm-Art Williams

Friday, February 27, 7:30 p.m. –8:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 28 and Sunday, March 1, 3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

The American Theatre

125 East Mellen Street

Prepare for a season of powerful storytelling and artistic excellence as the Hampton University Repertory Theatre, kicks off another year of excellence. This season promises to be an extraordinary one, beginning with the return of Home by Samm-Art Williams—a deeply moving and celebrated work that resonates strongly with our community, and stands as a testament to the enduring power of Black theatre to illuminate history, identity, and the human spirit.

[Tickets](#) go on sale February 1, 2026!

Dr. John T. Biggers and Ruth E. Carter Exhibition Displays

Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Hampton University Museum

14 Frissell Avenue

The Hampton University Museum invites everyone to explore Black History 365 days a year, with a special emphasis on their current, captivating exhibits. Experience the profound works of Dr. John T. Biggers, who became one of the most influential American art educators in the 20th century, and an incredible display featuring select costumes by Oscar-winning designer, Ruth E. Carter.

Admission is FREE and open to the public.

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Images attached:

- Black History at the Hampton University Museum
- Dr. Kelly Rossum, HR Jazz Lecture Series
- Dr. Tammy Kernodle, HR Jazz Lecture Series
- Dr. Steven Cunningham, HR Jazz Lecture Series

- Mark Ruffin, HR Jazz Lecture Series
- Magical Moments in Hampton Roads February Flyer
- Fort Monroe BHM Tour flyer

Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with the 344,000 sq. ft. Hampton Roads Convention Center and the award-winning Hampton Coliseum, is located in the center of Coastal Virginia and the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Hampton is the site of America's first continuous English-speaking settlement, the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America, and is home to such visitor attractions as the Virginia Air & Space Science Center, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton History Museum, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others.