

# James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives, Inc.

## 2020 Museum Update

P. O. Box 551, Lawrenceville, Virginia 23868

[www.jsrussell.org](http://www.jsrussell.org)  
[www.spcmuseum.org](http://www.spcmuseum.org)

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives has had an active 18 months since our grand opening on August 10, 2019. We are appreciative of all the support we have received over the last year and look forward to a productive 2021. The following is an update on the museum's progress in 2020 and projects for 2021:

### Dedication, Virginia Women's Monument



The James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives supported the efforts to have two Brunswick County natives included as part of the new Virginia Women's Monument. Nellie Pratt Russell from Brunswick County and Patti Buford were included on the Wall of Honor.



Russell

Russell was born in Macon, Georgia, in 1890

and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Howard University. After college she taught for two years in Topeka, Kansas.

To be closer to her mother, she took a teaching job at Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial School, later known as Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville, Virginia, where she taught English for over 50 years. In 1913 she married Dr. J. Alvin Russell, the elder son of the schools founder, James Solomon Russell. In the same year, she and several former classmates at Howard founded and incorporated Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the first established by African-American college women. She was also a civic leader and led women's organizations in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia. Russell lived in Lawrenceville for the remainder of her life. She died on December 13, 1979.



Buford

Buford was born in Brunswick County on March 14, 1836. She was known for her life's work for the betterment of the lives of freedmen following the Civil War and Reconstruction in Brunswick County and Southside Virginia. Among many other things, she was instrumental in helping James Solomon Russell become an Episcopal priest in 1882. Buford spent over 25 years caring for the African Americans of Brunswick County. She died on January 17, 1901.

The dedication ceremonies were held on Capitol Square in Richmond, Virginia on October 7, 2019.

The museum is most appreciative to all those that supported the inclusion of Russell and Buford to the Virginia Women’s Monument.



The museum was represented at the dedication and several members of the Russell Family attended the event. From left to right are: Angela J. Russell, Henry P. Russell, Jr., Dr. Laurantt Lee, The Honorable Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk of the Virginia Senate, John S. Russell, Sr. and Carmela Hamm. Hamm’s mother, Dorothy Hamm is also included on the Wall of Honor.

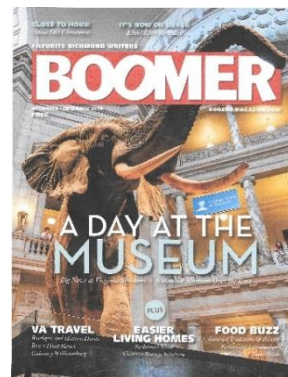
**2020 Wall of Fame Inductees**

The museum selected its second class of inductees into the James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul’s College Museum and Archives Wall of Fame. The 2020 Wall of Fame Inductees are: Dr. Christine Mann Darden, Aerospace Engineer; Rev. Dr. Grady W. Powell, Religion/Civil Rights; Mrs. Nellie Pratt Russell, Educator/AKA Incorporator; Mr. Antwain Smith, Basketball Player/CIAA Hall of Fame and Dr. James Stith, Educator/Colonel – West Point Military Academy.

A Wall of Fame luncheon was planned for April 2020, however, that was postponed until August 2020, due to the COVID – 19 pandemic. Because of the ongoing virus situation, the August event was postponed indefinitely. The museum plans to hold a 2020 and 2021 combined Wall of Fame Induction Luncheon sometime in the later part of 2021. A date will be announced after we understand better the COVID-19 situation going into 2021. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2021 Wall Fame Inductees.

**Museum Included in Richmond’s Boomer Magazine “A Day at the Museum” feature**

The museum was recognized in the November – December 2019 issue of Richmond’s Boomer Magazine as a new and upcoming museum, with a feature in a special section providing information about the museum and a photograph of James Solomon Russell.



Solomon Russell.

**Senator Louise Lucas makes presentation to Museum.**

Senator Louise Lucas presented the James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul’s college Museum and Archives with a piece of history related to the college in November, 2019. She gave a framed copy of a resolution she introduced and was passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 1999 honoring Dr. Edward I. Long, Sr. During his 50 years of serve to the college, Long served as Dean of Men, Dean of Students, professor in the Department of Education and Psychology, Administrative Assistant to the President, Acting President and Vice President for Development.



Pictured left to right are: Jonathan Freeman, Chief of Staff for Senator Lucas; Teya Whitehead, Secretary, Museum Board; Senator Louise Lucas, James Grimstead, Chairman, Museum Board; Sylvia Allen, Board member and Gloria W. Menyweather-Woods, Museum Board.

## **Virginia Budget**

Through the support of Delegate Roslyn Tyler and Senator Louise Lucas during the 2020 regular session of the Virginia General Assembly, the museum was able to secure \$ 50,000 in the 2020-2021 Virginia State Budget, for use in the restoration and digitization of materials in the museum's collection. The budget was signed by Governor Ralph Northam in November 2020. Senator Frank Ruff also supported those efforts. The museum board would like to thank, Senator Lucas, Delegate Tyler, Senator Ruff and other members of the General Assembly who helped secure this funding. Governor Northam also supported the effort and signed the budget bill into law in November 2020. The museum will begin the restoration projects in early 2021.

## **James Solomon Russell Day Resolution**

During the 2020 regular session of the Virginia General Assembly, Delegate Roslyn Tyler and Senator Louise Lucas worked with the museum to introduce legislation creating James Solomon Russell day on March 28<sup>th</sup> of each year in the Commonwealth of Virginia



## **State Representatives Visit Museum.**

Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Betina Ring, Former House of Delegates member and current Judge Onzlee Ware from Roanoke and President and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Rita McClenny visited the James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives in March, 2020. Judge Ware, who grew up in the Greensboro, North Carolina area, attended summer camp at Saint Paul's College when he was a teenager. All three were very impressed with size of the museum and variety of items on display and talked about ways the museum could be promoted in the future.



Pictured left to right are: Carthan Currin, former Brunswick County Director of Economic Development, Secretary Ring, Judge Ware and McClenny.

## **Showcase Donation**

In February 2020, museum board member Dion Walker worked with Peebles Department Store in Emporia in securing the donation of a number of showcases and other items to be used to display artifacts in the museum. Supervisor Bernard Jones and Randy Allen helped museum volunteers move the cases from the store to the museum in March 2020.



## **Computer and Television Donation**

In March 2020, the family of Jean McCarter, a resident of Brunswick County, who passed away in January of 2020, donated a 55 inch flat screen television, DVD player and Dell Computer with printer to the museum. The television will be used to show Saint Paul's Basketball and Football games and graduations that will be converted

from video tape to digital. The museum board appreciates the support of the McCarter family.

### **Virginia Department of Education**

In August 2020, with the help of Anne Holton, wife of Senator Tim Kaine, the museum was able to establish a dialog with the Virginia Department of Education on having the history of James Solomon Russell, Saint Paul's College and Brunswick County African American history included in the revisions of Virginia's African American Curriculum.

An Education Committee was formed by the museum to work with the Department of Education. Members of the Education Committee are: Rachele Hawkins Wesson; Dr. Angela Parker, Title I Reading Specialist and museum board member; Pamela Pearson Simmons, Civics Teacher/Middle School WTP Coordinator; Linwood Swann, English Teacher/Project-Based Learning Coordinator and James Grimstead, Chairman, museum board.

The committee will be working with Christonya Brown, History and Social Science Coordinator with the Virginia Department of Education.

According to Hawkins the created instructional plan would be accessible to school divisions across the Commonwealth and the nation. Our plan would incorporate the Virginia 5Cs, project-based learning activities, created lesson plans, and a virtual field trip of St. Paul's College.

### **COVID-19 Cares Act**

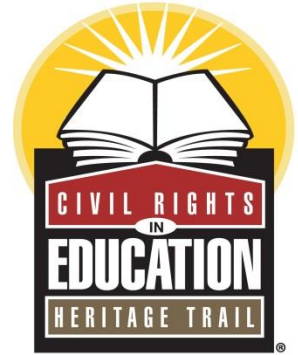
The museum, with the help of Board of Supervisors, Dr. Charlette Woolridge, County Administrator and Leslie Weddington, Assistant County Administrator, was able to purchase, through CARES Act funding, hand sanitation stations to be used at the museum



to help protect volunteers and visitors from COVID-19.

### **Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail**

In September 2020, the newly designed James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul's College Civil Rights in Education Trail Marker was installed at the edge of the parking lot of the Brunswick County Conference Center. The marker is part of the trail that includes 10 counties and the city of Petersburg. As part of the marketing effort for the new sites added to the Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail, the James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives and Brunswick County were mentioned in many news articles.



The Richmond Times Dispatch printed a story by Bill Lohmann that was also published in the Roanoke Times and several other newspapers. Virginia Capitol News Service at Virginia Commonwealth University also had a student



write an article that was picked up by the AP Wire news service that was published across the

country including Newsweek Magazine, the Dallas Times and Washington Times.

### **Financial Audit**

In September 2020, the museum board of directors engaged the services of Robinson, Farmer and Cox to do an audit of the financial records for the museum to show accountability

to our donors, supporters and for use when applying for grants during 2021. The Audit will be for the years 2018, 2019 and 2020.

### **Hosted Congressional Candidate Webb**

In October 2020, the museum hosted Congressional Candidate Dr. B. Cameron Webb when he made a visit to the county. Webb was the Democratic candidate for the 5<sup>th</sup> District Congressional Seat.

### **Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax visits museum**

In November 2020, the museum hosted a visit from Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax. The Lt. Governor was impressed with the amount of items in the collection and talked with museum board members about the digitization of records that are in the archives.



From left to right are Lt. Governor Fairfax; Regina Gordon, Museum Board Treasurer; Bobby Conner, Museum Board Vice-Chair and Teya Whitehead, Museum Board Secretary.

### **“Adventure in Faith” Republished**

In January 2021, through financial support from the Dominion Energy and the Dominion Foundation, the museum republished James Solomon Russell’s Autobiography “Adventure in Faith”. The introduction to the reprinting was written by Xavier Kendrick



Russell, the 16 year old great- great grandson of James Solomon Russell.

### **Looking forward 2021**

### **2021 Virginia Travel Guide**



The museum will have an updated listing in the 2021 Official Virginia Travel Guide (print and online). Also, in two sections of the guide James Solomon Russell and the museum will be mentioned in two short articles.

### **College Scholarships**



**SOUTHSIDE VIRGINIA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

The museum is in the process of establishing in collaboration with Southside Virginia Community College, two college scholarships. The scholarships are being established as part of the museum’s outreach into the community and follow James Solomon Russell’s mission of helping educate those who are underserved or do not have resources available to seek a higher education.



Through the Virginia Foundation for Humanities, the Smithsonian has expressed an interest in having staff visit the museum to examine and help organize the hundreds of black and white photographs in the museum’s collection. Depending on the COVID-19 situation, we anticipate this will happen sometime in the later part of 2021.

### **Museum Cookbook**

The museum will be developing a James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul’s College Museum and Archives Alumni and Friends Cookbook to be published in the spring of 2021.

### **Museum Brochure**

The museum board will be working on obtaining a grant to create and print a brochure for the museum. The brochure will provide information to potential visitors to the museum and will be available at visitor’s centers across the region and the Virginia Welcome Centers at Skippers on Interstate 95 and Bracey on Interstate 85.

### **Other Grant Opportunities**

There are several grant opportunities that the Museum board will be pursuing in 2021 to help improve that current displays and increase the user friendliness of the museum.

## **Thank You!**

The James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul’s College Museum and Archives, Inc. is appreciative of the support we receive from the Brunswick County Board of Supervisors: The Honorable Dr. Barbara Jarrett Harris, Chair; The Honorable John Zubrod, Vice-Chair; The Honorable Bernard Jones; The Honorable Dr. Alfonzo Seward and The Honorable Welton Tyler. Dr. Charlette Woolridge, County Administrator; Leslie Weddington, Assistant County Administrator; County Staff, Alumni, Volunteers, Donors and all others who assist and help with the continued success of the museum. We look forward to a successful 2021.

### **Supporting our Community**

In December 2020, the museum board of directors collected personal funds and made a donation to the Brunswick County Department of Social Services to be used to help fund projects for Christmas. The museum board of directors also collected items such as coloring books, toothpaste, lotion, etc. that were donated for use by residents of ENVOY.



The museum board of directors also collected items such as coloring books, crayons, socks, etc. that were donated to Envoy to help provide activities to resident. Also, each resident received a Christmas card from the museum.



### **James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul’s College Museum and Archives Mission Statement**

The mission of the James Solomon Russell-Saint Paul’s College Museum and Archives is to collect, organize, preserve and promote access to its collection of archival records, books, printed materials, photographs, artifacts and other items pertaining to the life of James Solomon Russell and the history of James Solomon Russell High School and Saint Paul’s College for the use by researchers, students, professionals, alumni and the general public.

### **James Solomon Russell – Saint Paul’s College Museum and Archives, Inc.**

#### **Board of Directors**

James Grimstead, Chairman; Bobby Conner, Vice-Chairman; Teya Whitehead, Secretary; Regina Gordon, Treasurer; Sylvia Allen; Gloria Menyweather-Woods; Shirley Grimstead; Dr. Angela Parker Larry D. Walker; Cleo Goodwyn; Barbara W. Malone; Rachele Hawkins-Wesson; Nastelle Graves