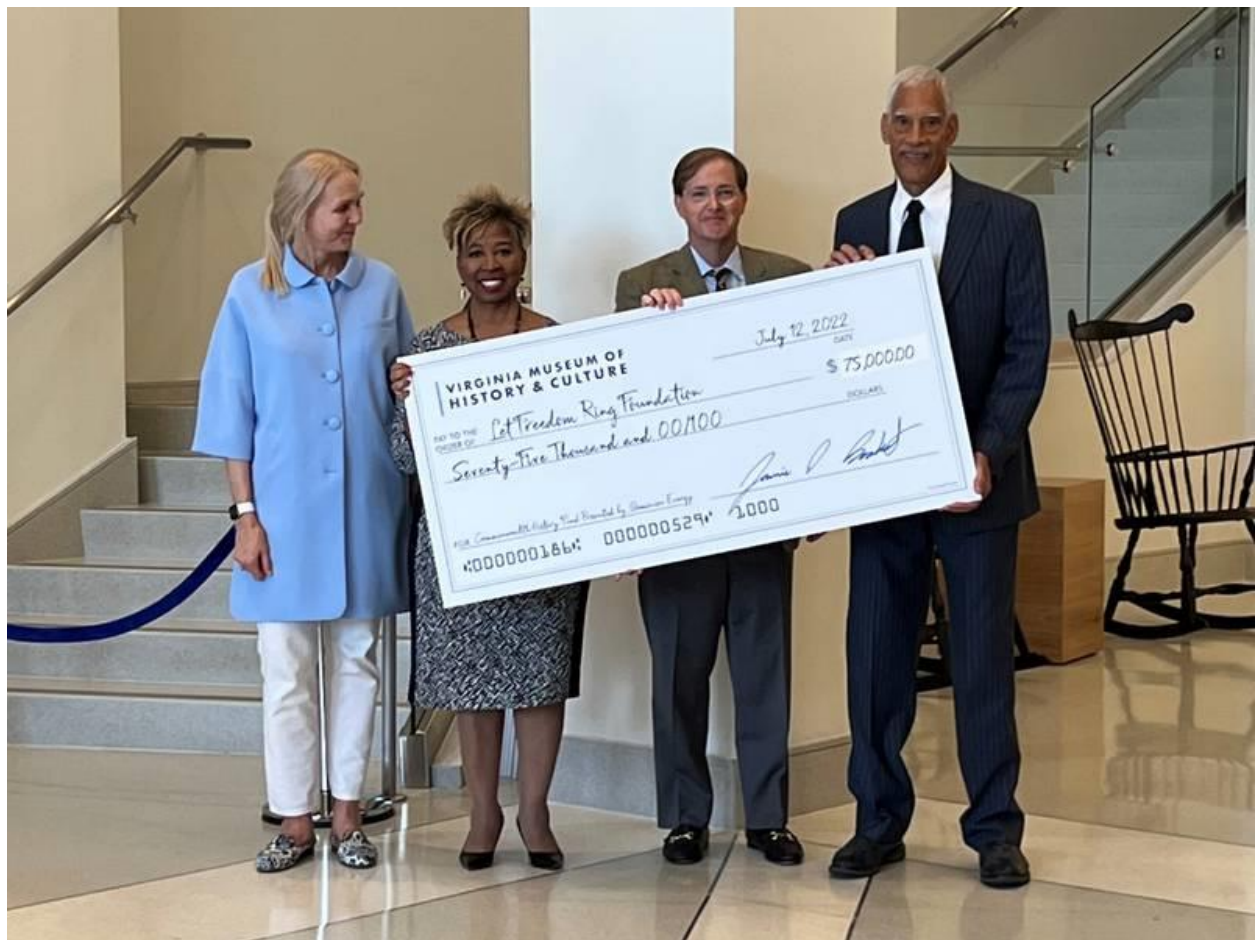


[THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE](#)

Grant will let Williamsburg group keep ‘telling the story’

By [Madison Peek](#) Virginia Gazette

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Williamsburg’s Let Freedom Ring Foundation received a \$75,000 grant to continue its work in preserving and promoting the history of First Baptist Church. Pictured are L-R, Pamela Kiecker Royall, chairman of the board of trustees for the Virginia Museum of History and Culture; Connie Matthews Harshaw, president of Let Freedom Ring Foundation; Hunter Applewhite, president of Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation; and Donald Hill, treasurer of the Let Freedom Ring Foundation. (Courtesy of Let Freedom Ring Foundation)

WILLIAMSBURG — Williamsburg’s Let Freedom Ring Foundation received a \$75,000 grant to continue its work in preserving and promoting the history of First Baptist Church.

The grant, awarded by the Virginia Museum History & Culture’s (VMHC) Commonwealth History Fund, was announced on Monday. The [Let Freedom Ring Foundation](#) was one of 12 recipients of the award. This is the first year the grants have been given.

The grant is funded by donations from Dominion Energy in partnership with Virginia’s Department of Historic Resources. The [Commonwealth History Fund](#) was established to provide grants annually to history organizations and projects across the state of Virginia.

“As the state’s history museum, we are committed to doing everything we can to save and share our collective story,” VMHC President & CEO Jamie Bosket said in a news release. “Through this new endowed fund, we will be able to do more on behalf of the whole Commonwealth through direct financial support of history-related work happening in communities across Virginia now and for many years to come.”

Organizations doing significant projects that have an impact on the community and emphasize historically underrepresented topics and communities were prioritized for the selection of the grant. The need for funding and the urgency of the project was also considered in the award selection. About 60 groups from across the state submitted proposals.

The Let Freedom Ring Foundation [has been working since 2018](#) to preserve Williamsburg’s historic First Baptist Church and artifacts that date to the 18th century. According to the Richmond-based VMHC, the grant will be used by Let Freedom Ring to address urgent repairs to address water penetration issues, safe access and other life-safety and accessibility concerns.



Williamsburg's First Baptist Church (Stephen M. Katz/The Virginian-Pilot)

This year, \$402,500 was awarded to the 12 organizations. The fund plans to give nearly \$2 million over the first five years.

“We are incredibly honored to be one of the 12 compelling projects chosen by the Commonwealth History Fund for its inaugural year,” Connie Matthews Harshaw, President of the Let Freedom Ring Foundation said in a statement. “Through this amazing opportunity, we will be able to give back to our communities by implementing a project that will help us to continue telling the story of Virginia and have a lasting impact on future generations.”

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