

Colonial Williamsburg

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
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colonialwilliamsburg.org



From left to right: Geoff Bennett, Antonia Hernández and John Charles Thomas

Geoff Bennett, Antonia Hernández and John Charles Thomas join The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Board of Trustees

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Nov. 27, 2023) – The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Board of Trustees welcomes broadcast journalist **Geoff Bennett**, social justice advocate **Antonia Hernández** and retired Virginia Supreme Court Justice **John Charles Thomas** as its newest board members.

“Colonial Williamsburg is fortunate to have Geoff Bennett, Antonia Hernández and John Charles Thomas join its Board of Trustees. As America approaches its 250th anniversary in 2026, their deep expertise and visionary leadership will help position Williamsburg at the epicenter of activity during this historic time in our nation’s history,” said Carly Fiorina, chair of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation’s Board of Trustees.

The appointment of the Foundation’s three new trustees expands the [Board’s membership](#) to 25 leaders who are working to shape the future of the world’s largest U.S. history museum as it prepares to mark its centennial anniversary in 2026.

“Colonial Williamsburg is fortunate to have an engaged Board of Trustees who are deeply committed to the Foundation’s evidence-based approach to telling a more complete story of America’s founding generation,” said Cliff Fleet, president and CEO of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. “Their leadership and support of our mission is preparing the Foundation for its next 100 years as a preeminent educational institution.”

About Geoff Bennett

Geoff Bennett is an award-winning journalist who serves as co-anchor of *PBS NewsHour*. He joined PBS in 2021 from NBC News, where he was a White House correspondent and substitute

anchor for MSNBC. He has reported from the White House under three presidents and has covered five presidential elections. In 2022, Bennett was part of the NBC team that won the prestigious Edward R. Murrow Award for Overall Excellence. Previously, he worked for NPR, first as an editor for *Weekend Edition* and later as a reporter covering Congress and the White House. Bennett has offered political analysis on ABC News and CBS News and has hosted C-SPAN's *Washington Journal* public affairs program. Earlier this year, Bennett established an endowed scholarship at his alma mater, Morehouse College, to support the next generation of journalists. He and his wife, Dr. Beth Perry Bennett, live in Northern Virginia with their son.

About Antonia Hernández

Nationally regarded for her expertise in immigration, civil rights and philanthropy, Antonia Hernández spent more than four decades advocating for social justice and improving the lives of underserved communities in Los Angeles County and beyond. From 2004 through October 2023, she served as President and Chief Executive Officer of California Community Foundation, one of Southern California's largest and most active philanthropic organizations, which has served Angelenos for over a century. Recently retired, Hernández is credited with shepherding a nearly five-fold increase in the California Community Foundation's endowment to its current \$2.3 billion, managing more than 1,900 charitable foundations, funds, and legacies, and distributing grants totaling more than \$3.4 billion in Los Angeles County to address education, health, housing and economic opportunity, immigration, civic engagement, and the arts. Hernández's appointment marks her second term on the board, having previously served from July 2015 to August 2019.

About John Charles Thomas

Virginia Supreme Court Justice John Charles Thomas was the first Black judge and youngest person to ever serve on the Virginia Supreme Court from 1983-1989. A retired senior partner at Richmond-based Hunton & Williams, LLP, he served as chief of the appellate practice group and handled general litigation, mediation, and arbitration. He is a member of the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, which rules on doping violations for all the Olympic sports, Tour de France and FIFA, among others. He also serves as a trustee emeritus of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello, has served multiple terms on William & Mary's Board of Visitors and is the author of "The Poetic Justice," his memoir that was published in October 2022. He and his wife Pearl Walden Thomas live in Richmond Va.

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About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers and 18th-century inspired culinary options from historic taverns situated along historic Duke of Gloucester Street. Colonial Williamsburg Resorts complement the experience, offering guests five unique hotel properties including the iconic Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star, AAA Five Diamond Williamsburg Inn, newly renovated Williamsburg Lodge-Autograph Collection, Williamsburg Woodlands Hotel and Suites, the Griffin Hotel, and authentic 18th-century Colonial Houses. The resort offers a range of events and amenities including four historic taverns, 15 food and beverage outlets providing exquisite culinary experiences from casual to elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 36 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr.

and his son Rees Jones, a world-class full-service spa and fitness center, pools, meeting and flexible event spaces, and scenic gardens providing the perfect venue for weddings and special events. Merchants Square, built alongside the Historic Area in 1935 as one of the first planned shopping districts in the United States, features more than 40 specialty boutiques with products ranging from apparel to fine jewelry, art, specialty foods and gifts. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.

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