



## **Colonial Williamsburg and VA250 Host Second Annual National Planning Event for America's 250th Anniversary**

***Representatives from 37 states will convene March 18-20, to discuss commemoration plans around the nation in 2026***

WILLIAMSBURG, VA (March 15, 2024) – With only two years remaining until America's 250th anniversary in 2026, participants from 37 states and Washington D.C. will gather on Colonial Williamsburg's historic campus from March 18-20 to discuss what the semiquincentennial means for the nation and how Americans can commemorate this historic milestone.

"Virginia's history is America's story," said Carly Fiorina, board chair of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and VA250 national honorary chair. "It is entirely fitting that planning commissions from across the nation, as well as educators, historical institutions and political and civic leaders would gather here in Williamsburg for the second year in a row. Once again, we come together in common cause to continue building collaborative programming and events to commemorate our nation's semiquincentennial. We are committed to educating our fellow Americans about the entirety of the complex but nevertheless inspiring story of our nation's founding, engaging with every community and ultimately inspiring our fellow citizens to continue the work to form a more perfect union."

The event responsible for convening 250th planners from across the country, "[A Common Cause to All](#)," is an annual conference first hosted by the [Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission](#) (VA250) and [The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation](#) in 2023. The gathering provides state and local representatives, including those from 46 Virginia localities, with vital opportunities to discuss local planning efforts, explore new ideas and learn from other attendees and speakers. This year's conference expands on last year's success with session topics including strategies for reaching educators and students, engaging diverse and under-served communities, fundraising best practices, and presenting U.S. history in polarized times.

"The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is honored to host these important discussions about America's 250th anniversary," said Cliff Fleet, Foundation president and CEO. "As 2026 draws closer, we will be working with colleagues throughout the country to honor the courageous stories of America's founding generation – its best-known and lesser-known members, both – and engage more people than ever in the civic life of our nation."

This year's "A Common Cause to All" planning event includes prominent participants and speakers from across history, civics, education, media and politics including, among others (in alphabetical order):

- **Danielle Allen**, Harvard University
- **Sarah Botstein**, award-winning producer and filmmaker
- **Carly Fiorina**, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation board chair and VA250 national honorary chair
- **Kevin Gover**, Smithsonian Institution
- **Woody Holton**, University of South Carolina
- **The Hon. Tim Kaine**, United States Senate
- **Jane Kamensky**, The Thomas Jefferson Foundation Monticello
- **Paula Kerger**, president and CEO of PBS
- **Barbara Oberg**, Princeton University
- **Rosie Rios**, America250 chair
- **Jeffrey Rosen**, National Constitution Center
- **Harry Smith**, NBC news correspondent
- **The Hon. John Charles Thomas**, retired Virginia Supreme Court justice
- **The Hon. Glenn Youngkin**, governor of Virginia

"The VA250 Commission is excited to gather such a distinguished group of civic leaders and scholars for this event," said Virginia Del. Terry L. Austin, chair of the VA250 Commission. "As we look to 2026, we look forward to building an inclusive commemoration and invite constructive discussion from everyone."

"Today we are asking all Virginians, and indeed all Americans, to share with us how they envision a truly meaningful commemoration," said Virginia Sen. Mamie Locke, vice chair of the VA250 Commission. "Together we can reclaim our shared past, share the legacies we want to build for the future, and recommit to the never-ending work begun by our forebears to build a more perfect union."

The three-day gathering will conclude with a [live public history program](#) performed by Colonial Williamsburg historic interpreters that explores events that occurred in May 1774 when Virginians were shocked to learn that the British Parliament had closed the port of Boston. In response, the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg called for a Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer – but Lord Dunmore, the royal governor, had a different opinion. In this special presentation on March 20 at 2:30 p.m., guests will step into a chaotic moment in Virginia's past and discover the voices of a community struggling to find a way forward. The free event is open to the public and begins at the Capitol Circle and moves toward the Raleigh Tavern, in Colonial Williamsburg's Historic District.

Additional information, including a full schedule of events, can be found [here](#).

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*The Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250), established by the General Assembly in 2020, serves to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the independence of the United States in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where much of the nation's history took place. The primary goal of the Commission is to convene and facilitate a Commonwealth-wide commemoration and celebration, multi-faceted and inclusive of hundreds of partners and representatives of the wide array of histories, sites, stories, and communities that define Virginia.*

*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, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 36 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.*

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