

# HONORABLE JUSTIN M. WILSON, MAYOR

As Mayor, Justin represents the City regionally on the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors. Within the City, Justin leads the City-Schools Subcommittee, the ARHA Redevelopment Committee, the Quality of Life Committee, Legislative Subcommittee, the Audit Committee, the Employee Pension/Compensation Committee, the Potomac Yard Metro Implementation Advisory Group and the Combined Sewer Outfall Project Review Team Workgroup.

An experienced community leader, Justin previously served 8 years on the City Council prior to his election as Mayor, including service from 2016 – 2019 as Alexandria’s Vice Mayor. Justin’s leadership has led to new investments in schools, transportation and environmental infrastructure. He has worked to expand early childhood education, address growing student enrollment, accelerate economic growth, advance climate policy as well as protecting and expanding housing affordability.

Prior to his election to the City Council, Justin served as the Chair of the Alexandria Transit Company Board of Directors, which operates the City’s DASH bus service, and served on the Budget & Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee. His neighbors recognized his leadership and twice elected him president of the Del Ray Citizens Association.

Justin chaired the City’s effort to promote participation in the 2010 decennial Census, and he represented Alexandria on the Board of Directors of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority—preserving and managing 11,000 acres of open space and 24 regional parks.

He was an appointee of Governor Mark Warner to the state’s Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and later to the Board of Juvenile Justice—a position he was re-appointed to by Governor Tim Kaine.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Information Systems from Virginia Commonwealth University and is a Fellow of the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia.

Justin is employed by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) as a Senior Director.

An avid runner, Justin has completed eight marathons, and he lives in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria with his wife, Alex, a life-long Alexandrian, and their son, Eli and daughter Lena, both Alexandria City Public School students.



# SEMONE BYRD

## MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES

Semone Byrd is an active member of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Planning Committee, serving as the Committee Vice Chair since 2020 and performing as this year's Mistress of Ceremonies.

Since moving to Alexandria with her native Alexandrian husband of 30 years, Julious, she began her volunteer journey in the City of Alexandria serving several terms as Cora Kelly's PTA President and working various Voter Drives. Semone has served as a City of Alexandria Election Official for 20+ years. When she's not actively advocating for voting rights, Semone coaches youth basketball, serves as a TC Williams Booster, and is a member of the Northern Virginia Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Inc. Out of all of her achievements, Semone is the proudest of the role of mother to her two young adult sons, Jordan and Jalen.



# SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH MALE CHORUS

The Shiloh Baptist Church of Alexandria Male Chorus (Shiloh Male Chorus) is a distinct group of men who have come together through the years to give praise unto God by sharing their musical gifts and talents. The Male Chorus has a long-standing tradition reaching back to 1980 when it was formally organized. The idea of the Shiloh Male Chorus originated after two well received ministry presentations by a group of men from the congregation for Men's Day and the Pastor's annual Anniversary Dinner in 1979. The outpouring of encouragement and the warm response led the men to form what is known today as the Shiloh Baptist Church Male Chorus.

The group sings a variety of music such as traditional gospel music, spirituals, hymns, and "quartet" style gospel. The Male Chorus has ministered at several other churches and community events through the decades.

The Male Chorus is a vital part of the music ministry at Shiloh and is greatly loved and appreciated by its membership.



# ALFRED STREET BAPTIST CHURCH LITURGICAL DANCE MINISTRY

The Alfred Street Baptist Church Liturgical Dance Ministry serves as an integral part of the Performing Arts Ministry and is instrumental in interpreting the Word through movement with a focus on praise and worship, deliverance, edification, and healing.

The liturgical dance team is comprised of members from the church, many of whom are classically trained in jazz, tap and ballet.

The Liturgical Dance Ministry has ministered for several worship services and performs at special events nationwide, most notably, The Kennedy Center.



# YELLOW DOOR CONCERT SERIES ENSEMBLE

The Yellow Door Concert Series was founded in 2018, by Alexandria musicians, Robyn and Vaughn Ambrose. Their mission is to bring communities together to experience live music in a way that looks back in time, to the parlor concerts of the early 20th century. They recognized a clear need to create small intimate listening opportunities for musicians and audiences to gather and share.

The Yellow Door Concert Series Ensemble is well known amongst Alexandrians and performs for special events throughout the City.



# ARIANA SINGLETON

Ariana Singleton is a Sophomore at Alexandria City High School. Currently, she is enrolled in the Governor's Health Sciences Academy, a program for high school students who aspire to pursue careers in the medical field. Furthermore, she is a member of HOSA, a globally-recognized organization for future healthcare professionals. Ariana enjoys participating in the performing arts. This year, she joined the 2nd Alto Section of ACHS's Advanced Choir and starred as Simone in the Titan Theatre Department's production of *Chicken and Biscuits*. After high school, Ariana plans to pursue a degree in health sciences and a career that allows her to help people live happy and healthy lives. Ariana is honored to serve on the MLK Day City-Wide discussion panel. Everyday, Ariana strives to live her life according to her favorite Ruby Bridges quote: "Don't follow the path. Go where there is no path and begin the trail."



# DELVIN JALON REED

Delvin Jalon Reed, was born in Prince George's County Maryland, but lived during his childhood in Alabama. He has taken the pilgrimage annually as far back as he can remember. As a Black man, Delvin seeks to uplift his people and inspire future generations of Black men and women to take pride in their culture and to chase any dream they want, and not to let anyone tell them they should be ashamed of who they are, because they come from strong roots.



ALEXANDRIA SEEKS TO BUILD THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

**PANEL**



# DARNELLA MCGUIRE-NELSON

## MODERATOR

Darnella McGuire-Nelson is a life long resident of the City of Alexandria. She matriculated through the Alexandria City Public School system where she graduated from T.C. Williams High School, now Alexandria City High School. Mrs. McGuire-Nelson has been a member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Planning Committee since 2013. Whether serving on Committees to address youth engagement within the city or advocating for equity and inclusion of minority residents and businesses in Alexandria, she is adamant about serving her community. Mrs. McGuire-Nelson's philosophy is that people can lead and expand their horizons from any position. She is intentional about teaching others to give back to their community. Mrs. McGuire-Nelson is a certified trainer for Advocacy and Implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. She is a subject matter expert in conflict resolution; diversity, equity, inclusion & accessibility; and race relations. Her niche is leading and facilitating authentic discussions on topics that many people may find uncomfortable.

Ms. McGuire-Nelson also serves as a leadership and organizational coach. She is an Associate Certified Coach (ACC) through the International Coaching Federation. Currently a Candidate for her Ph.D. in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University, she holds a M.S. in Human Resource Development from Trinity University, and a B.S. in International Business from Howard University.

Ms. McGuire-Nelson is an avid reader, loves to travel, and ride rollercoasters with her grandson. Ms. McGuire-Nelson is the mother of three grown children and lives on the West End with her husband Steven Nelson, Retired United States Marine Corps.



# AUDREY DAVIS, DIRECTOR ALEXANDRIA BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM PANELIST

Audrey P. Davis is the Director of the Alexandria Black History Museum in Alexandria, Virginia. Ms. Davis is a past President of the Virginia Association of Museums Council (VAM). She is one of the founders and the current President of Virginia Africana Associates Inc. In 2016, The Washington Business Journal listed Ms. Davis on their top 100 list of Washington Power players. In 2021, Ms. Davis was appointed to the Board of Directors for the American Civil War Museum. Ms. Davis is a former gubernatorial appointee to the Board of Directors for Virginia Humanities. In 2018, Ms. Davis was appointed by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe to the Task Force for the Identification of the History of Formerly Enslaved African Americans in Virginia.

In 2016, Ms. Davis also was appointed by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, to the State Historical Records Advisory Board. She was reappointed to this board in 2018 and 2021 by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam. It is her sixth gubernatorial appointment. Ms. Davis is featured on the WETA Documentaries, Discovering Alexandria parts I and II, and Martyrs, Mayhem and Martial Law: Life in Civil War Alexandria. She was an on-set historical consultant for the PBS drama Mercy Street which premiered nationally in January 2016 and ran for two seasons. In January 2022, Ms. Davis was a recipient of the City of Alexandria's Martin Luther King, Jr. Spirit Award for her work on the preservation of Freedom House (now a museum on Alexandria's role in the domestic slave trade), City equity initiatives and for promoting and preserving Africa American history in Alexandria, Virginia.



# SHERIFF SEAN CASEY

## CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

### PANELIST

Sean Casey began his first term as Sheriff of the City of Alexandria on January 1, 2022, following his election to the office in November 2021. Sheriff Casey initially joined the Alexandria Sheriff's Office in 2017 as a sergeant after a highly distinguished career with the Alexandria Police Department where he had served as a patrol officer, detective, and sergeant. In his first four years with the Sheriff's Office, he earned promotions to lieutenant and then captain and served as the Assistant Commander of Administrative Services for the Sheriff's Office. In this position, he managed Human Resources and Training, Fiscal Management, Investigations and Policy, Information Technology, Public Information, and Community Relations. He also organized implicit bias training for all employees, developed and launched the Sheriff's Office Community Academy, implemented Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement training and policies, and expanded public safety and crime prevention services. Beginning in spring 2020, then-Captain Casey oversaw the Sheriff's Office's planning and response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this capacity, he worked with the Detention Center staff and medical personnel, the health department, and fellow commanders to identify issues; develop, implement and, when necessary, modify protocols; find safe and secure options for attorney-client visits and social visitation; and manage personnel and other resources to ensure adequate staffing while prioritizing their health and safety. As Sheriff, he has strengthened his excellent relationships with community members and his commitment to those he serves with as well as to those in custody. In his first year, Sheriff Casey expanded recruiting efforts and established a partnership with the U.S. Army to facilitate employment for former service members; ensured that the Office was re-accredited with distinction by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies; relaunched the Sheriff's Community Academy and implemented measures to safely reopen public visitation at the jail as the pandemic eased; established new employee wellness initiatives; and expanded programming and partnerships with faith-based and community organizations including Concerned Citizens Network of Alexandria.

Since becoming Sheriff, Sheriff Casey has been honored by community and public safety partners alike, mostly recently receiving recognition from Shiloh Baptist Church, the Del Ray Business Association and the U.S. Marshals Service. A graduate of Virginia Tech, Sheriff Casey continued his professional and leadership development, successfully completing the Leadership in Police Organizations program with the International Association of Chiefs of Police in 2019 and earning his Certified Public Management® designation from the George Washington University in 2020. Sheriff Casey is a lifelong Alexandrian and a graduate of T.C. Williams High School, now Alexandria City High. He lives in the West End with his wife and their young children.



# REVEREND JOSEPH DOWNING THOMPSON, JR VIRGINIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY PANELIST

The Rev. Joseph Downing Thompson, Jr. is Associate Dean of Multicultural Ministries at Virginia Theological Seminary, where he helps to ensure that seminarians engage with issues of race, justice, and intercultural awareness as part of their theological education. His teaching and research interests include the theological and spiritual dimensions of racial ideology in the USA, as well as the moral and ethical implications of the reparations movement.

He is a primary architect of the reparations program for descendants of persons enslaved at the seminary and of African Americans who were employed by the seminary during the segregation era. He holds an H.B.A. from the University of Delaware, an M.A. from Virginia Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from Yale University.



# ROSA BYRD, CHAIR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Rosa Byrd is a Living Legend of Alexandria. Mrs. Byrd and her husband Jack have lived in Alexandria for more than 50 years and for much of that time she has been a community leader and champion for causes to make her Lynhaven neighborhood a safe place to live. They are the proud parents of Patricia Yancey (Alex) and Julious Byrd (Semone) and grandparents of Chanel Yancey, Jordan Byrd and Jalen Byrd.

For more than 35 years, Byrd and her friends inspected alleyways of Lynhaven for code enforcement violations, sanitation problems and lighting outages. Byrd developed a working relationship with the Mayor, members of City Council and the City Manager that helped to solve many of the neighborhood's problems. She and her neighbors were successful in transforming a vacant lot into a playground for their children. One former business owner was so appreciative of Byrd's volunteer efforts in her community that he established the Lynhaven/Byrd scholarship at T.C. Williams High School. Del Pepper, Alexandria City Council Member, stated, "In many ways, large and small, Rosa has truly made a positive difference in the neighborhood and community. She has shown courage when that was needed as well as determination, commitment and perseverance. It's caring people like Rosa that have made Alexandria such a wonderful place to live."

Rosa has passionately fought for the civil rights of the citizens in Alexandria and beyond. Rosa has served on the city's Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Planning Committee for years under the tutelage of Mabel T. Lyles. Rosa graciously assumed the position of Chair in 2016 and works extensively with the other Committee members planning the Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Program throughout the year.

Rosa has been recognized consistently for her commitment to service. In 1991, The Alexandria Commission on the Status of Women awarded Rosa with the "Woman to Woman" award. In 2008, she received the DPC Black History 2008 Champion of Equality & Justice Award, in 2013 she was named a Living Legend of Alexandria, in 2015 the Departmental Progressive Club Inc. honored Rosa with the Community Service Award and in 2020, Rosa was awarded Rev. Benjamin A. Lynt Distinguish Service Award. This year will mark the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial program's 50th year, and Rosa is proud not only to lead the Committee, but to witness all that its accomplished.

