Colonial Williamsburg

Colonial Williamsburg raises record $600 million, creates five-year investment plan that expands founding era interpretation and establishes new national institute

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WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Nov. 16, 2026) — The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation today announced the success of "Power of Place — The Centennial Campaign for Colonial Williamsburg." The campaign has raised a record $600 million eight months ahead of schedule, reflecting the generous support of nearly 180,000 donors. Its scale reflects a remarkable commitment to public history and the enduring value of learning together from America's past. As the Foundation marks its centennial, this support provides momentum for its second century of service to the nation.

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the world's largest US history museum, now launches a new five-year investment plan. The plan expands its interpretative programming from the call for independence through the ratification of the US Constitution and Bill of Rights. As a key part of this plan, it will establish the National Institute for the Constitution and Civic Virtue led by constitutional scholar Jeffrey Rosen. Colonial Williamsburg is now uniquely capable of connecting the place where much of our founding chapter happened, to the people and ideas that built a new nation — and with the knowledge and character Americans must bring to the work of self-government.

"As we mark 250 years of American independence and look ahead to the 250th anniversaries of victory over the British at the Battle of Yorktown and the ratification of the Constitution, Colonial Williamsburg is expanding how Americans experience and understand our nation's founding," said Carly Fiorina, chief executive officer of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. "Here in the crucible city of that founding, historic places, human stories and extraordinary scholarship bring our founding principles to life for every generation. With Jeff Rosen, one of the world's foremost constitutional scholars, leading our new Institute, we will help Americans connect those principles with the habits and values that sustain self-government."

Through living history, historic trades, archaeology and digital resources, audiences will investigate essential themes of America's story: the struggle for independence, the practice of self-government, the development of an entrepreneurial economy, enslavement and the paradox of American freedom and Indigenous cultural preservation and sovereignty. The plan revitalizes Colonial Williamsburg's living history program through investment in historic interpretation and trades apprenticeships. Programs and resources for teachers and students, children and parents will build multigenerational engagement. Colonial Williamsburg's expertise across a breadth of disciplines, including horticulture and landscape, archaeology, food and historic trades, will offer compelling entry points for new audiences to explore early American history. Annual on-site programming and online resources will draw on Colonial Williamsburg's historical scholarship and Virginians' central role in shaping the nation's founding documents.

The Colonial Williamsburg National Institute for the Constitution and Civic Virtue will be a public history initiative that illuminates the Constitution's creation and the civic virtues required to put its principles into practice. As founding director, Jeff Rosen will build on his recent research and

writing to establish programs that explore the importance and qualities of responsible citizenship in the American experiment of self-government.

“The Founders believed the pursuit of happiness means the pursuit of civic virtue and lifelong learning,” Rosen said. “By telling the human stories behind the Founders’ daily struggles to live up to their own ideals, we will inspire Americans to learn about our history and live up to our responsibilities as citizens.”

The Institute’s centerpiece will be a national lecture series moderated by Rosen, bringing scholars with differing perspectives into conversation with audiences in Williamsburg, Washington, D.C., at partner institutions across the country and online. Programs will also feature Colonial Williamsburg’s Nation Builders, interpreters who bring historical figures to life through deeply researched portrayals, to connect questions about liberty, power and citizenship with the experiences and decisions of the people who helped shape the nation.

Working closely with Mia Nagawiecki, Colonial Williamsburg’s Royce R. and Kathryn M. Baker Chief Education and Engagement Officer, the Institute will draw on the Foundation’s programs and national partnerships. Educational resources, digital tools and publications will extend its reach. Through history.org, a free digital platform for K-12 teachers in development led by Colonial Williamsburg, the Institute’s scholarship will become accessible classroom materials connecting teachers and students with primary sources, compelling stories and the expertise of museums and civic education organizations.

The Honorable J. Michael and Elizabeth Luttig have made the Institute’s founding commitment with a generous $10 million gift. Their leadership and generosity support a lasting initiative dedicated to helping future generations understand the nation’s constitutional ideals and their responsibilities in carrying them forward.

"Elizabeth and I are honored beyond words, and we will be eternally grateful to Colonial Williamsburg for this celebration of America’s renewal,” Judge Luttig said.

About Jeffrey Rosen

Jeffrey Rosen is a constitutional scholar, Henry St. George Tucker III Research Professor of Law at the George Washington University Law School, senior fellow at FIRE, and contributing editor of *The Atlantic*. He hosts the weekly podcast *The Blessings of Liberty*. He served for 12 years as president and CEO of the National Constitution Center and was the legal affairs editor of *The New Republic* and a staff writer at *The New Yorker*. His books include the New York Times bestseller *The Pursuit of Happiness*, *The Pursuit of Liberty*, and the forthcoming *The Pursuit of Union*.

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About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Founded in 1926, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation stewards the world’s largest U.S. history museum where visitors explore America’s founding chapter from the road to Revolution to the principles of self-government. Guests walk the same streets and explore the same buildings where America's founding generation convened 250 years ago to debate the call for independence. Eighty-nine original buildings and more than 500 reconstructed structures comprise Colonial Williamsburg's Historic Area where evidence-based research underpins the Foundation’s onsite and online programming. State-of-the-art facilities at the Colin G. and Nancy N. Campbell Archaeology Center, the John D. Rockefeller Library and two world-class art museums are trusted sources used by programming teams and history enthusiasts interested in connecting the past to issues of today. Colonial Williamsburg resorts complement the museum experience, offering hotel and dining options, golf and spa amenities. Merchants Square, built alongside the Historic Area in 1935, features a

variety of shopping and dining options while maintaining the community's 18th-century charm. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products, resort and retail operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.

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