



# Colonial Williamsburg News

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG'S PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS

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## History Unearthed: First Baptist Church Dig Raises Tantalizing Questions

By Jack Gary,  
Director of Archaeology



*Joseph Feaster, who portrays the young Gowan Pamphlet, gives a big thumbs up for some of the artifacts on display at a community open house held Oct. 10.*



*Archaeological Field Technicians Victoria Gum (foreground) and DèShondra Dandridge excavate two units that have started to uncover the foundations of the 1856 church and an earlier structure.*

It's amazing the things that get hidden by parking lots. Since the 1960s, one of Colonial Williamsburg's Merchants Square parking lots, at the intersection of Nassau and Francis streets, has hidden the archaeological site of one of the nation's earliest Black churches – the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg.

The Department of Archaeology recently began a project that promises to greatly expand our understanding of the church's earliest days. The project, in collaboration with the extant First Baptist Church, is being conducted in two phases; the first started Sept. 8 and will conclude Nov. 6.

One of our primary questions has been, what kind of building did the congregation worship in and does anything remain of it below ground? The earliest documentary evidence from 1818 refers to a "Baptist Meeting house," but little is known about what this structure looked like. It was almost certainly a more humble structure than the brick church that replaced it in 1856, and it is possible it was a repurposed outbuilding given to the church by the landowner, Jesse Cole. The archaeological excavations are designed to uncover whatever remains of any structures on the property.

So far, the team has started to uncover building foundations, artifacts and features dating to the late 18th through the 20th century, the time frame during which the church occupied the lot. Most significantly we have found that the foundation of the 1856 brick church is still intact, as is a smaller, earlier brick foundation. We are tantalized by the possibility that the earlier foundation is associated with the meeting-house referred to in 1818. However, we will need to do more work in our second phase of research to fully answer that question. We are particularly excited about the discovery of postholes that appear to date to the late 18th century and may be parts of fences or even other buildings on the property that may be related to the church. Details like these help us reconstruct all aspects of the landscape.

While understanding the different structures that once stood here may allow us to re-create the church and the landscape surrounding it, we also hope to better understand how the church served as a center for the Black community throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The church's history is one of resilience, and we want to make sure we are also telling that story. One way we are already doing that is through the voice of Gowan Pamphlet. James Ingram and Joe Feaster have been portraying the founder of the church at the site, talking with our guests about the early days of the congregation and the importance of religion in the lives of





*A contractor removes the asphalt parking lot that has covered the site of First Baptist Church since the 1960s.*

Blacks, enslaved and free.

In the coming weeks and months, we will turn to the congregation and the descendants of those who attended the church while it was on Nassau Street and ask for their guidance on the questions we should be asking in our next phase of work. This second phase will be much more intensive and larger in scale than our beginning phase, and we intend to spend at minimum one year excavating at the site.

Stay tuned for a new timeline of work for the second phase by the end of 2020, and keep up to date at: <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/learn/research-and-education/archaeology/first-baptist-church/>.



*The brick foundation of the 1856 church is visible on the left. In the center is the brick foundation of an earlier building. The yellow patches of soil on the far right indicate the location of a posthole dating to the late 18th or early 19th century.*



*Layers of rubble from when the 1856 church was demolished in 1956.*



*James Ingram portrays Gowan Pamphlet to guests while Archaeological Field Technician Kyle Brubaker excavates in the background.*





# Personifying the Palace: A Story of the Building and the People Who Bring It to Life

By Erikka Clarke and Christopher Glick, Historic Interpreters

*In this ongoing series, Historic Interpreters Erikka Clarke and Christopher Glick offer perspectives, insights and tips as they explore the Historic Area's rich resources to help employees across the Foundation share America's enduring story with guests.*

From its grand interior to its gardens and impressive ornamentation, the Governor's Palace is a unique place. The buildings and grounds are also a very human place and serve as one of the Foundation's premier interpretive spaces for guests and employees alike. Offering what is perhaps the most expansive and diverse view of the interpretive experiences at Colonial Williamsburg, the Palace encompasses actors, Historic Foodways and American Indian delegations as well as our orientation and site interpreters.

As David Catanese, one of our actor interpreters, states, "It takes a city to run the governor's house." While this is true in 2020, it was especially true in the 1700s. Seven British governors made their home in the original Palace, and each one of them brought a unique approach to the job, the town and the house itself. As such, bringing the building to life today requires us to be flexible in how we present the building to reflect those who worked and resided within its walls.

Master of Historic Foodways Frank Clark sums up the Palace experience by explaining that while the buildings and grounds represent the power and majesty of Great Britain, they also capture all levels of society present in 18th-century Williamsburg from the upper echelons of society to the middling sort to the working class and the enslaved population. As a result, the Palace can offer a wide range of narratives to tell the complete story of the era we interpret. Clark states that for these British governors, and their paid staffs, it is likely that life in the Palace may have been their first interaction with enslaved people. This dynamic likely created a very interesting work environment. Consider that a paid staff could be fired for poor performance while enslaved people got sold. This dynamic existed within the everyday working and domestic life of the Palace and is one of the important narratives we explore at the site.

Something as simple as an evening meal would have brought this dynamic to life with the enslaved likely preparing the meals and removing the plates from the dining room while paid staff plated the food. And it was not just the people in the Palace itself making a meal possible. The meal also encompassed the working people of the



*Master of Foodways Frank Clark prepares meals fit for a governor in the Governor's Palace Kitchen.*



city. From the butchers providing meats to bakers baking bread to the wigmakers and tailors and milliners adorning the governor and his guests, the entirety of the town made a dinner possible.

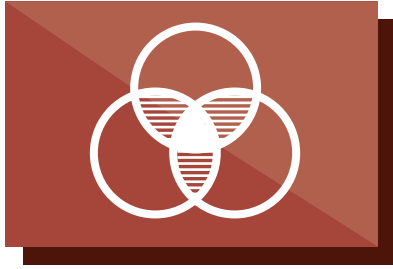
Site Interpreter Mike Pfeifer explains that this was not just a space of government. It was also the home to a family who experienced many of the same delights and frustrations that we do today. During their residence, Lord and Lady Dunmore and their family experienced the joy of childbirth and watched their children grow into young adults and learn about government, the Enlightenment and indeed their very role within society. Many of these conversations, particularly with their daughters while their sons attended William & Mary, happened during their meals amidst the backdrop of the enslaved and paid staff tending to their needs. These conversations also happened at a historic moment for Williamsburg as turmoil grew into rebellion and independency.

Taking a holistic view of these interactions, the people who bring this building to life today demonstrate a much deeper story than simply Loyalists versus patriots. This building is the story of people placed in extraordinary circumstances and represents how an individual, a people and indeed several interconnected societies interacted with these circumstances, a lesson vital to the world we face today.



*A view from behind the Governor's Palace, one of Colonial Williamsburg's premier interpretive sites.*





# Workforce Fusion

By Sharon Dorsey,  
Executive Director of Diversity  
and Inclusion

*CW News is introducing a new column to explore the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. The column title “Workforce Fusion” represents the merging of these separate elements into a unified whole. Executive Director Sharon Dorsey oversees this initiative and will use this column to examine these ideas and help us incorporate their principles into our daily work.*

In December 2015, I was asked to add diversity and inclusion initiatives to my job responsibilities. My role has since expanded and now also includes equity. Some of you may be asking what these terms mean and why are they important to the continued success of Colonial Williamsburg.

Let’s start with a short history lesson to help define these nebulous terms.

**Diversity**, in and of itself, is not a new phenomenon. It started in the 1780s with the metaphor “melting pot,” used to describe the merging of nationalities, cultures and ethnicities immigrating to the United States.

President Harry Truman took a firm stance on **equity** in 1948 when he issued Executive Order No. 9981 making it illegal to discriminate in the armed forces based on race, color, religion or national origin. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy introduced affirmative action, later enforced by President Lyndon Johnson, to redress discrimination that existed despite civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees.

**Inclusion** creates an environment in which differences are respected. This historical perspective provides a common reference as we explore the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion present in Colonial Williamsburg’s work culture.

The face of the American workforce has changed significantly over the past century. Colonial Williamsburg, like many organizations, is reflective of the society in which it exists and operates. What makes us unique is our mission—To feed the human spirit by sharing America’s enduring story—and our core values of courage, inclusion, relevance and craftsmanship. Colonial Williamsburg is the ideal stage to increase understanding through civil discourse.

Diversity and inclusion work together. Diversity is differences and similarities, including but not limited to cultural background, nationality, age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation and identity, generational differences, values and interests. Inclusion exists when differences are respected and everyone’s talents are fully leveraged.

My goal with this ongoing column is to humanize these terms to help the Foundation transform into a place where diversity, equity and inclusion are celebrated. I’d like to start by challenging every employee to begin with a self-reflection exercise. What are you willing to do to foster an environment where everyone you engage with feels the energy and support to do his or her best work?

Feel free to reach out to me with your thoughts and ideas so we can walk together on this journey to incorporate these principles into our work life. My email address is [sdorsey@cwf.org](mailto:sdorsey@cwf.org). I look forward to hearing your perspectives.



# Your Story: Sharon Dorsey

*For each issue of CW News, volunteer Chuck Reusing interviews one of our many talented staff members to give us a sense, in their own words, of who they are, what they do and why their work is important.*



Sharon Dorsey

**YOUR STORY:** Sharon A. Dorsey

**JOB TITLE:** Executive Director of Diversity and Inclusion

**YEARS OF SERVICE:** I am a longtime employee of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation with more than 47 years of service. I started my career in August 1973 as a reservationist at what is now the Call Center. I transferred to Human Resources as a benefits clerk in 1979 and have since served in various management positions under the leadership of six Foundation presidents. I have been in my present position for four years.

**JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:** My job responsibilities are many and varied, including directing six staff members. Together, we manage the Foundation’s volunteer program, components of Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, compensation and benefits, the Human Resources Information System and administration and retirement benefits.

Colonial Williamsburg’s approximately 1,850 employees represent a large and diverse workforce. It’s because of this diversity that former President Mitchell Reiss created my position in 2016. My role has expanded under the leadership of President Cliff Fleet, who established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee that is co-chaired by Vice Presidents Beth Kelly and Earl Granger, led by me and comprised of colleagues from all levels across the Foundation to evaluate and train and recommend changes to policies and practices to foster a more diverse, inclusive and equitable workplace.

**WHAT I DO TO IMPROVE THE GUEST EXPERIENCE:** I have no direct contact with Colonial Williamsburg visitors in my current position. I do, however, interact daily with our employee-facing staff and work every day to foster a safe and healthy work environment so they can perform at their best. Our employees’ satisfaction with their work environment and conditions should be reflected in the experiences that our guests receive in the Historic Area, in our museums and in our hotels and restaurants.

**MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES:** When I received my silver bowl in recognition of my 25 years of service to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation many years ago, I invited my mother, now deceased, to the dinner that was held for all of the honorees. My mother was so proud of me when she heard all the nice tributes that were made about me. It was a very special evening for me and my mother, who was so important in my life.

Having reached the executive level with Colonial Williamsburg, I am able to attend some of the meetings of our board of trustees. Being able to meet and converse with some of the trustees, including Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, retired Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy and Carly Fiorina, who chairs the Colonial Williamsburg Human Resources Committee, has been a special honor and privilege for me.▶





**BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** I am most appreciative of the many cards and letters that I have received through the years from our employees letting me know that I was helpful to them and have made a difference in their careers and in their experiences with Colonial Williamsburg. It is always nice to feel appreciated in one's work environment. The letters that I have received, and continue to receive, have always been very special to me.

In the past, I also visited Magruder Elementary School in York County and discussed with a third-grade class the importance of inclusion and diversity in their daily lives. Later, I received letters from the school thanking me for my attendance and sharing my experiences with them.

**INTERESTS/HOBBIES:** I love to read books on all subjects. I grew up in a family that enjoyed reading books, and I still do so today. I also do volunteer work in my church, where I currently serve as treasurer.

*“The freedom of the press  
is one of the great bulwarks of liberty,  
and can never be restrained  
but by despotic governments.”*

— GEORGE MASON



# A Deliberate Omission

## Constitution Day Conference Reflects on America's Founding Document and Its Effect on the Enslaved

### Want to learn more?

The following books and websites were referenced during the conference.

- *Dark Bargain: Slavery, Profits, and the Struggle for the Constitution* by Lawrence Goldstone
- *In the Matter of Color: Race and the American Legal Process: The Colonial Period* by A. Leon Higginbotham Jr.
- *Slavery, the Constitution, and a Lasting Legacy* at [www.montpelier.org](http://www.montpelier.org)

Through dramatic interpretations and a scholarly panel discussion, Colonial Williamsburg and William & Mary explored the institution of slavery and its conspicuous absence in America's founding document during the Foundation's capstone Constitution Day program, **"So Important an Interest: Slavery and the United States Constitution."**

The one-hour live, virtual discussion aired Sept. 19 on Facebook Live and is available online for viewing on [Colonial Williamsburg's YouTube](#) channel.

"So Important an Interest" was moderated by actor interpreter Deirdre Jones who together with actor interpreter Hope Wright and Allison Orr Larsen, a law professor at William & Mary and director of the university's Institute of Bill of Rights Law, discussed the motivations and the consequences of decisions made by the 55 delegates who convened in Philadelphia in 1787 to draft the Constitution.

"The word 'slavery' is never used in the Constitution," Larsen said. "They used euphemisms like 'other persons,' and I think that omission is telling," adding that Constitutional Convention delegates viewed the enslaved as property and deliberately avoided direct references to the institution of slavery in the document to gain support for its ratification.

The property classification had considerable legal implications for the enslaved community.

"Being described as property, just that classification alone, cuts you off from so many things," Wright said, citing examples such as laws prohibiting the enslaved from legally marrying and a property owner's right to sell an enslaved mother's children.

"That classification alone reverberates through history," she said.

In separate segments, actor interpreters Katrinah Lewis and Willie Wright each performed a period-specific interpretation to represent perspectives of the enslaved. Their performances humanized the discussion and lent a voice to those left out of the conversation more than 230 years ago.

The panelists acknowledged the Constitution as a flawed document that allowed people to own other people. Still, Larsen said, it also serves as a mission statement that lays out the values of equality, liberty, government by the people and freedom of expression.

"This is worth celebrating," she said. "At least it's something that will inspire us all to be better people who are worthy of the words written in that document."

*From left to right. Programming Lead Deirdre Jones, Artistic Director Katrinah Lewis and actor interpreters Jeremy Morris and Jamar Jones perform in Created Equal, a museum theater program that explores Black perspectives on the Declaration of Independence, the revolutions it inspired, and the ongoing struggle for equality and freedom in America. On Sept. 19, Jones moderated Colonial Williamsburg's lead Constitution Day program "So Important an Interest: Slavery and the United States Constitution."*







## Lighting the Inn for the Holidays

A partnership with the Virginia Arts Festival offers Colonial Williamsburg Resorts guests an exclusive event and early start to a bright holiday season at 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 28 with the Lighting of the Williamsburg Inn ceremony.

This year's ceremony will feature performances by award-winning soprano Aundi Marie Moore of Chesapeake and artists from the Virginia Arts Festival, all from atop the Inn's front balcony.

"Traditionally we open the event to the public, present musical performances and count down to the illumination of our historic Inn," said Meredith Sprinkle, director of marketing and e-commerce. "Because of COVID-19, this year we must reduce access and are restricting it to resort guests only."

Colonial Williamsburg has formally lit the iconic Williamsburg Inn since 2017 and hosted its first Lighting ceremony in 2019. This year's installation will feature approximately 25,000 lights.

"This will be an elegant family-friendly performance," said Bill Schermerhorn, creative director of signature events, who will serve as master of ceremonies. "It really kicks off the season for the resort and encourages guests to stay over through the Thanksgiving weekend."

2019's performance was presented on a temporary stage outside the Inn and featured a performance by Soundscapes.

Plans call for limited access to the Inn's front circle starting around 5 p.m. with the event scheduled to wrap up by 6:30 p.m.

Access to the event is limited (invitation only), and social-distancing and use of face coverings will be required.



*Williamsburg Inn during the holiday season.*



# New Book Offers New Look at Williamsburg History



Colonial Williamsburg has just published *Colonial Williamsburg: The Story, From the Colonial Era to the Restoration*, a history of the town from its origins to today. The book was written by Edward G. Lengel, a former Revolutionary in Residence for the Foundation. The Revolutionary in Residence program is sponsored by the Grainger Foundation.

*Colonial Williamsburg: The Story* includes chapters titled “Middle Plantation, 1632–1699;” “A Capital City, 1699–1724;” “Changes Afoot, 1725–1763;” “The Road to Revolution, 1763–1775;” “Revolution, 1775–1783;” “Conflict and Decay, 1784–1925” and “Restoration, 1926–Today.” It includes the stories of familiar figures, such as Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and George and Martha Washington. But it also highlights lesser-known figures, including the enslaved preacher Gowan Pamphlet and the printer Clementina Rind.

The book also includes a section on “How We Know What We Know,” with pieces on historical research by Peter Inker, Theresa A. and Lawrence C. Salameno Director of Historical Research and Digital History; architectural history by Jeffrey E. Klee, former Shirley and Richard Roberts Architectural Historian; archaeology by Jack Gary, director of Archaeology; museum curating by Ronald L. Hurst, vice president for Museums, Preservation and Historic Resources and Carlisle H. Humelsine Chief Curator; and conservation by Patricia Silence, director of Conservation Operations. The foreword is by Beth Kelly, vice president for Education, Research and Historical Interpretation. The book’s illustrations are drawn from the collections of Colonial Williamsburg’s museums and library.

This book is a companion to *Colonial Williamsburg: The Guide*. The publication of *Colonial Williamsburg: The Story* was made possible by a gift from an anonymous donor.

# If These Walls Could Talk: New Wallpaper Findings at the Everard House

By Emily Campbell,  
Architectural Preservation and  
Research Associate

The Thomas Everard House retains an incredible amount of original paint and wallpaper finishes. Two wallpaper patterns have been reproduced from original fragments discovered during the restoration of the house: a yellow damask paper in the dining room and a blue scroll and floral in the first-floor bedchamber. Both were discovered behind later architectural features in the room. When the pieces were uncovered, they had been remarkably well protected and are now housed in the architectural collections, and we continue to learn from them.

The dining room and first-floor bedchamber were fashionable for the period, the wallpapers being an integral part of this high-status scheme. Considering this, we had questions about the finishes in the rest of the house, particularly in the parlor with its luminous verdigris treatment of the woodwork. While research shows that in the 1770s Everard painted the woodwork in this room with an expensive, high-status green finish, his treatment of the plaster walls, until recently, was a mystery. Analyzing the plaster walls is considerably more challenging because it was common practice during the restoration to remove all the plaster, so this is a familiar struggle for us as we try to interpret the interior finishes.

In another attempt to find answers, Conservator and Materials Analyst Kirsten Moffitt took samples from the top surfaces of door and window architraves. She hoped to find microscopic traces of the original plaster and early finishes that perhaps the craftsmen did not clean off, especially over the windows where less care may have been taken because they are less visible from the floor. ▶

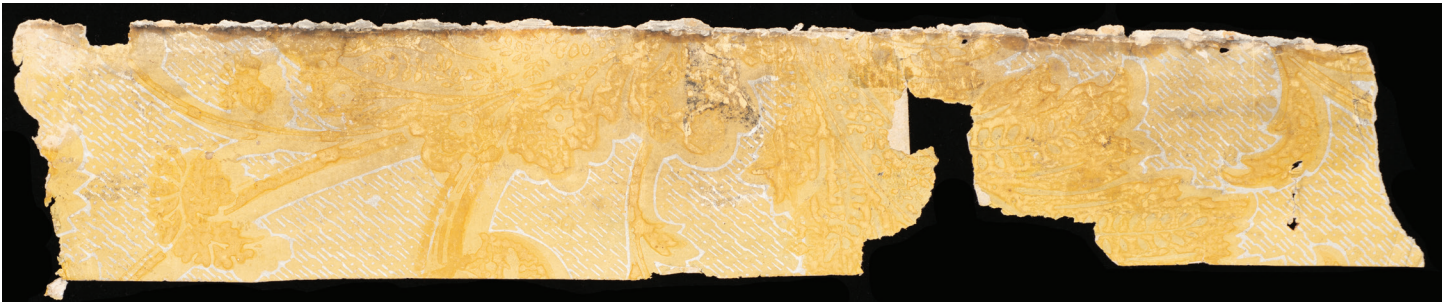


*Thomas Everard Parlor*

Using various instruments in the Materials Analysis Laboratory, Moffitt found traces of what appear to be historic wallpaper above a window in the parlor. The fragment was analyzed with a polarizing light microscope and it was identified as a rag-based paper made from linen or flax. On the back of the paper, using a technique called Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), she found a thin layer of wheat starch, a paste commonly used to adhere wallpapers. This evidence is consistent with early wallpapers and proves that the room was papered at one time.

Unfortunately, the sample was too small to provide any information about color or pattern, and we do not have a concrete date for the paper. The case for wallpaper in the parlor is bolstered by the fact that similar spaces in the George Wythe and Robert Carter Houses across Palace Green were papered at the same time. Thomas Everard's house sat prominently adjacent to the Governor's Palace, so it is reasonable to think that he would have finished the interiors in the most fashionable manner.

At this point we have more questions than answers, but we look forward to where this exciting discovery will lead.

*Yellow Mock Flock Wallpaper, English, ca. 1770. Found in Everard dining room.**Blue Wallpaper, English, ca. 1770. Found in Everard first-floor bed chamber.*



# The Mary and Donald Gonzales Field Experience Fund

## The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Fall 2020 Recipients

In April 2006, Colonial Williamsburg received a major gift from Deborah Pulliam of Castine, Maine. This established The Mary and Donald Gonzales Field Experience Fund, an endowment that generates annual proceeds to enable non-management employees in Education, Research, and Historic Interpretation; Museum Preservation and Historic Resources; and Landscaping to pursue educational opportunities to mutually benefit the employee and the Foundation.

### *Congratulations*

#### **Shelley Svoboda**

(Senior Conservator, Paintings – MPHR)  
Conserving Our Painted Past / Conservation and Philosophy Symposium

#### **Mike Romero**

(Orientation Interpreter - ERHI)  
Celestial Navigation in the Age of Sail / Longitude by Lunar Distances

#### **Melissa Mead**

(Accessories Team Leader, Costume Design Center - ERHI)  
Skills Enrichment with the Royal School of Needlework

#### **Christopher Hartman and Corrine Dame**

(Theatrical Performer and Interpreter - ERHI)  
NAI National Conference 2020

#### **Deirdre Jones and Jamar Jones**

(Actor Interpreters - ERHI)  
41st Annual North American Drama Therapy Association Conference and  
the NAI National Conference 2020

#### **Tracey Gulden**

(Media Collections Manager, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library - ERHI)  
Digital Access Management Certificate Program, Rutgers University





# Meet the Senior Leadership Team

*This column of CW News will continue to introduce members of Colonial Williamsburg's senior leadership team in their own words. The senior leadership team is responsible for directing the Foundation's overall strategy to share America's enduring story*



**Robert Underwood**  
*Vice President of Operations*

I have 36 years of experience in construction, facilities, operations, project management and strategic planning. My career started as a project engineer performing proprietary work for the white pigments division of the DuPont Company. I was responsible for multimillion-dollar projects for domestic titanium dioxide plants and a plant in Tampico, Mexico. As a member of the company's strategic planning committee, I played a key role in developing the mission and vision for the regional engineering office. As a young

developing professional, I participated in a three-year program that focused on quality, business cultures, and developing and aligning business goals.

I went on to spend 17 years at Longwood Gardens, Pierre du Pont's estate near Philadelphia, as a project manager and the director of facilities. In addition to overseeing facility operations, I led the garden's capital master plan and executed more than \$100 million in renovations and new facilities. I expanded my experience by joining the University System of Maryland as director of facilities at Coppin State University. There I led the struggling facilities department to become the top performing group at the university.

Prior to joining Colonial Williamsburg, I was senior director of operations at the Barnes Foundation, accountable for three campuses and overseeing security, facilities, landscape, housekeeping, parking, food services and a 12-acre arboretum. I led the move of the Barnes Foundation's operation from the Merion campus to the new Avenue of the Arts building in Philadelphia and successfully completed the new facilities' operation start-up.

Today, as the vice president of operations at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, I oversee the following departments: Architecture, Engineering and Construction; Bus Operations; Custodial Services; Environmental, Health and Safety; Facilities; Landscaping; Public Safety; and Material Management. This team is the best in the industry, and I learn something new from them daily.

My wife, Cyndy, volunteers painting fences, making Christmas decorations, and at the nursery. Our two daughters graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University and now live in Delaware.

***“Then join hand in hand,  
brave Americans all!***

***By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall!”***

— JOHN DICKINSON, The Liberty Song, 1768



# Meet the Senior Leadership Team



**John Jimenez**  
*Vice President of Hospitality*

I started my journey leading the Hospitality team at Colonial Williamsburg in September 2019. It has been a year of unique experiences—many more than I ever imagined—starting with the move from New Orleans, understanding and negotiating the relationship between our profit and nonprofit business units, working with a new CEO, learning about a new team and then, of course, COVID-19.

I came here having worked in the hospitality industry for more than 35 years. Prior to my hotel career, I was interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement. Once I graduated from college, the police test was 18 months away, so a friend encouraged me to work security with him at a Chicago hotel. That started my passion for the service industry. I have been blessed with a career where people and experiences have shaped who I am today as a leader. I have always found it rewarding to help others reach their potential and to do great things. I bring that purpose and my style for success to Colonial Williamsburg.

During my career I have worked in the Starwood Hotels corporate office and with entrepreneurs, hotel owners, operators, management companies and a wide range of internal stakeholders on strategic business plans. I enjoy navigating and executing in times of crisis, downturn, growth and transformation. I have opened 26 Starwood franchise hotels in North America and managed luxury boutique hotels as well as large convention hotels. I enjoy planning and executing large major events. I have had the good fortune to work the Democratic and Republican national conventions, Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest, a papal visit, the Super Bowl, a FIFA World Cup match, the NCAA Final Four, an NBA All-Star Game and a college football championship.

In my role at Colonial Williamsburg, I am responsible for business strategy, financial success, sales and marketing, revenue generation, operations, the Foundation’s franchise relationship, negotiating and maintaining an effective relationship with the union, capital needs assessments, dispute resolution, consensus development and building highly effective teams.

Today, I work with a dedicated, resilient and professional hospitality team. I am grateful every day for their hard work and their efforts to take care of our guests and enhance our brand reputation at Colonial Williamsburg.

On a personal note, my wife, Caroline, and I have been married for 32 years. We have two adult children, Nicholas and Damaris. Our family home of 21 years is in Charlottesville.

In conclusion, I once interviewed with the president of ITT Sheraton’s franchise division. He asked me a question that pretty much sums up my daily approach: “When you wake up in the morning, what do you think about?” My reply, “Getting into the game.”





# Meet the Senior Leadership Team



**Sam Rucker**  
*Chief Information Officer*

During my job interview with Colonial Williamsburg for a technical support specialist position, I was asked where I saw myself in 10 years. At that time, I didn't really understand what Colonial Williamsburg could offer long term, but my response was "somewhere in management." I never imagined that 20 years later I'd become the Foundation's first chief information officer. Over the years, I have been fortunate to work in several information technology roles, including as a systems engineer and as a soft-

ware developer, and I have served in all levels of management. As CIO, I am responsible for ensuring that the Foundation's computing technology supports the execution of our mission.

A native of Virginia Beach, I am a graduate of James Madison University. I have earned numerous technical certifications from Microsoft, CompTIA and Axelos and have business foundations certificates from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

There has never been a dull moment with the ever-evolving technology landscape of the Foundation. Operating in numerous industries requires a diverse and broad set of technology requirements that makes IT work at the Foundation challenging and exciting. That said, it is the connection with the mission and the quality of the staff that motivates me every day. It is a pleasure to work for such a noble, patriotic and socially relevant cause. And to be able to do it with the quality of individuals who we have on our staff makes me proud to be a part of Colonial Williamsburg.

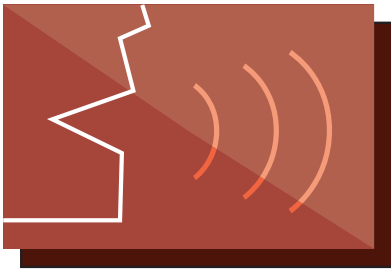
When I'm not working, you can find me on concert stages and wherever you listen to music. A sax player and recording artist, I've been blessed to have my music played worldwide and land on smooth jazz charts like Billboard. Check me out at [www.samrucker.com](http://www.samrucker.com).

*"Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish,*

*I am with my country from this day on.*

*You may depend on it."*

— JOHN ADAMS, Letter to a friend, 1774



## Guest Feedback!

Guest comments are unsolicited and received via CW's online comment card.

**Laura G.** (October 2020)

“We are leaving Williamsburg today and had a wonderful stay. I’m not sure who to send this to but we had **Lonnie (Sandifer)**, one of the re-enactors, yesterday at the Capitol and then had the pleasure of having him again at the ghost tour last night. He was absolutely wonderful at both. We left the Capitol stating what a wonderful guide and storyteller he was and then to have him again at night for the ghost stories was such a treat. He was wonderful with my children, answering one’s questions and managing the squirming of the other. He told the Ghost stories with such heart. I felt it was worth mentioning because it’s experiences like this that make people want to come back. If there is a way, he should be praised (especially with how hard life can be these days) for making our experience extra special.”

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**Claudine W.** (September 2020)

“In early 2019, my teens and I took a final educational roadtrip as we transitioned from homeschooling to public high school. We drove from our home in Arizona and spent weeks visiting historical sites in the SE. It was a trip of a lifetime, but one of the highlights was spending part of Black History Month in Colonial Williamsburg. During our stay, we went to every BHM event you offered. We had initially only planned to attend 1-2, but they were so amazing we went nearly every day of our weeklong visit. I apologize for the delay in telling you what a phenomenal job your actors did, but it was one of the best parts of a *truly life-changing trip!* During this pandemic, I encourage you to broadcast such events via the internet. I watched a similar event that Monticello livestreamed on Facebook today. It was powerful and made me want to visit Monticello again once the pandemic is over and we can venture farther from home.”

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**Larry L.** (October 2020)

“My wife and I are annual passholders and visited Colonial Williamsburg on Wednesday Sept. 16. My wife, Stephanie, has knee issues and uses a cane to assist in walking. We were taking the bus from the Tavern Stop to the Museum Stop to get back to our car. We were picked up at the Tavern Stop by driver **Mr. Isaacs**. When he saw that my wife would struggle to get in the back entrance he motioned for us to come to the front of the bus so that he could lower the front step. Once we entered the front of the bus he helped us to find a seat. Once we reached the Museum Stop he again lowered the bus so that we could exit through the front. We were extremely impressed with Mr. Isaacs’ kindness and warmth as he went out of his way to assist my wife with her physical limitations. Again please thank Mr. Isaacs for his efforts.”





Due to the continued health risks associated with COVID-19, Colonial Williamsburg will not be hosting the annual Benefits Fair or on-site flu clinics this year.

Employees and dependents covered by a CW health plan will be covered at 100% for the vaccine. Please contact your primary healthcare provider (PCP) to make an appointment or visit a local pharmacy that provides this service.

If you need assistance, please send correspondence to [benefits@cwf.org](mailto:benefits@cwf.org).

SAVE  
THE  
DATES

It's that time ...  
Benefits  
OPEN  
ENROLLMENT



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# HR ANNOUNCES NEW EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE VERIFICATION PROCESS



CW has partnered with EmplInfo, an online system used by banks/mortgage lenders, creditors, apartment managers, social service agencies and other requestors, to verify an individual's employment status and earnings history. Follow these steps for employment and income verification:

- Tell the requestor that CW uses EmplInfo to verify employment and wages.
- Provide the requestor with the following information:
  - Your Employer Name
  - Your Social Security Number (SSN)
  - Authorization Code (required only for income verification)
    - The Authorization Code is a six (6) digit numeric code. By providing this code, you are legally authorizing the release your income information.
    - Authorization Codes can be generated by:
      - Visiting [www.EmplInfo.com](http://www.EmplInfo.com) and registering OR
      - By phone at phone 1.888.800.8190. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- Instruct the requestor to reach out to EmplInfo directly for verification at [www.EmplInfo.com](http://www.EmplInfo.com).

Questions? Contact your HR Manager for assistance.

*Colonial Williamsburg News* is published by the Office of Internal Communications for Colonial Williamsburg employees. Send email correspondence to Kevin Crossett at [kcrossett@cwf.org](mailto:kcrossett@cwf.org).

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