

JMU Campus History Committee Annual Report, 2024-25

Charge:

- Develop the Campus Commemorative Landscape mapping project to inform and make recommendations with regard to naming plans and commemorative opportunities moving forward.
- Examine the JMU story that is told by or in various publications, offices and groups (e.g., the Student Ambassadors) about the history of campus and develop ways the story being told to our various constituents (including current and prospective students, parents, alumni, the community, etc.) can be more inclusive and complete.

2024-25 Members:

- **Meg Mulrooney, Department of History; Faculty Affairs and Curriculum, Chair**
- Rebecca Barge, Center for Multicultural Student Services
- Ruthie Bosch, Department of Educational Foundations and Exceptionalities; Hispanic Faculty Caucus
- Tiffany Cole ('10M), Libraries
- Monyette Martin ('93, '96M), Enrollment Management
- Carole Nash ('83), School of Integrated Sciences
- Leonard Richards ('13, '14M) College of Education
- Karen Risch Mott ('20M), University Advancement
- Craig Short ('13M), Administration and Finance
- Lexy Stover ('23), Annual Giving
- Grace Trembl, Student Representative
- Ryan Sauer, Student Representative
- Leigh Ayers, JMU Communications

Summary of Committee Work for 2024-25

The committee met 8 times this year (once a month). We welcomed new members Rebecca Barge from CMSS, Lexy Stover from Annual Giving, Grace Trembl and Ryan Sauer, students affiliated with SGA and admissions ambassadors, and Leigh Ayers from University Communications.

The year began with a successful public program sponsored jointly by the committee and the College of Education. Titled “Knocking Down Walls: A Film and Panel

Discussion,” the event took place on Sept. 30, 2024, in the auditorium at Memorial Hall, formerly Harrisonburg High School. Developed from an idea posed by Carole Nash, committee members Leonard Richards and Ruthie Bosch coordinated the program, which focused on the pivotal 1958 school desegregation case, *Kilby v. Warren County*, which was adjudicated here in Harrisonburg by US District Court Judge John Paul. The program showcased an 8 min. video about the case made by local Spotswood High School students under the direction of their US history teachers, Beau Dickinson and Owen Longacre. It also featured a Q&A with four of the original plaintiffs in the *Kilby v. Warren County* case. Audience members learned about the impact of the Paul’s decision, which ordered Warren County schools to desegregate and led directly to Virginia’s policy of “massive resistance.” Having the program at Memorial Hall also sparked consideration of resistance locally, including at Madison College, which did not admit the first Black students, Sheary Darcus and another still unidentified woman, until 1966.

Other projects undertaken this year included the following:

- The development of a “walking tour” training guide and program to expand the number of people with ability to offer the popular Quad history tours. This project involved Sauer, Mulrooney, Cole, and Stover.
- Additions to the Vintage JMU Instagram account that showcases historic images from yearbooks and similar sources. The Insta account is managed by Tremel and Sauer.
- Collaborating with Ayers in creating a new institutional history website that will replace the outdated and nostalgic Centennial series that JMU Marketing created in 2008.
- Attending programs by and supporting the work of JMU Native American and Indigenous Working Group; Nash serves a crucial liaison between this group and the committee.
- Effecting repairs to some damage inside A Sense of Place exhibit in Wilson Hall, arranging for the purchase of a display case for the exhibit, and collaborating with Madison Art Collection, Special Collections, and the History Department to consider future installations that can feature student research. Mulrooney led this effort.
- Offering an in-person walking tour and discussion session for the Midlevel Management Institute (thanks to Jennifer Testa and Derron Allen for inviting us), as well as offering tours to YSEALI fellows (thanks to CGE and President’s Office) and to alumni during the Women for Madison Summit (thanks to Advancement).
- Visiting Johnston Hall to see the historic structure prior to its renovation; this event was generously arranged by Craig Short and colleagues in FM and that gave members an opportunity to understand JMU’s approach to maintaining the historic integrity of Bluestone buildings while meeting the needs of a modern university.
- Submitting a proposal for the annual March Diversity Conference, which was accepted but canceled due to the President Schmidt announcement. Titled “How an Inclusive Past Creates an Inclusive Future: The Role of JMU’s Campus

History Committee, 2016-present,” the session took place instead at May Symposium on May 21.

- Finally, the committee began to partner with JMU’s VA 250 Working Group, led by Kara Dillard (Madison Center for Civic Engagement), to plan programs that connect JMU’s institutional history and associations with James Madison to local efforts to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the Independence of the United States in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Mulrooney serves on the JMU VA 250 group.