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Historic Markers honoring the ‘Hidden Figures’ to be Unveiled

Hampton, VA - Hampton, Va. - The Gamma Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, with support from Hampton Convention & Visitor Bureau and the City of Hampton, will host a Historic Marker Unveiling honoring the “Hidden Figures” on Wednesday, March 23 at 11 a.m. at the Virginia Air & Space Science Center, 600 Settlers Landing Rd., Hampton, Va. The markers will pay tribute to Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson and Dorothy Vaughan for their contributions to the U.S. space program.

The Historic Marker Unveiling will take place on the eve of the 69th Annual Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated which will be held at the Hampton Roads Convention Center on March 24-27. Jackson, Johnson, and Vaughan were all members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

“It is our honor to pay tribute to Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson and Dorothy Vaughan,” said Pamela B. Ponton, Historian of the Gamma Upsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. “The historic markers share the stories of these incredible ladies who from behind the scenes made invaluable contributions to NASA.”

Mary Jackson was a mathematician and aerospace engineer who in 1958 became the first African American female engineer to work at NASA. She was born and raised in Hampton, Virginia. After graduating from high school with highest honors, she earned a dual degree in mathematics and physical science at the Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in 1942.

Katherine Johnson was a mathematician who calculated and analyzed the flight paths of many spacecraft during her more than three decades with the U.S. space program. Her work helped send astronauts to the Moon. In 1961 she calculated the path for Freedom 7, the spacecraft that put the first U.S. astronaut in space, Alan B. Shepard, Jr. The following year, at the request of John Glenn, Johnson verified that the electronic computer had planned his flight correctly.

Dorothy Vaughan was a mathematician and computer programmer who made important contributions to the early years of the U.S. space program and who was the first African American manager at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), which later became part of NASA.

The Historic Marker Unveiling is free and open to the public. The event will also be livestreamed on [Visit Hampton, VA Youtube page](#). For more information about the Historic Marker Unveiling, send an email to historicmarkersguo@gmail.com.

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Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with the 344,000 sq. ft. Hampton Roads Convention Center and the award-winning Hampton Coliseum, is located in the center of Coastal Virginia and the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Hampton is the site of America's first continuous English-speaking settlement, the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America, and is home to such visitor attractions as the Virginia Air & Space Science Center, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton History Museum, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others.