



City of Manassas, Virginia
9027 Center Street, Manassas, VA 20110

**For Immediate Release
Feb. 1, 2019**

NR# 002
Contact: Patty Prince
703-257-8456 or 703-895-6535

First Annual Jennie Dean Legacy Awards

City of Manassas, VA . . . Four area women were awarded the first annual Jennie Dean Legacy awards Monday night during a Black History Month event at the Manassas City Council meeting. The award winners also helped unveil a scale model of a Jennie Dean statue that is the centerpiece of a Manassas Industrial School/Jennie Dean Memorial Update.

The four winners were chosen for extraordinary volunteer efforts that embody the community commitment of Jennie Dean, founder of the Manassas Industrial School for Colored Youth (MIS), which educated regional African American youth from 1893 until 1938.



Jennie Dean Legacy Award winners are:

- Sheila Coleman, President of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Prince William County Chapter, Inc., who has spearheaded campaigns that bring awareness to the importance of breast, prostate and colon cancer screenings.
- Rev. Etoria V. Goggins, Pastor, the first woman to lead the First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Manassas, who has established lessons in nutritional and financial discipline, canvassed the community, delivered relief supplies to the indigent, and fed area hungry.
- First Lady Bonita Savage of First Baptist Church of Manassas, who shares her talent as a professional chef by instructing the young women's ministry, serving meals to the community, and ensuring that children in need receive school supplies and food.
- Brenda Lewis, who has served as Chairperson of the Manassas African-American Heritage Festival for the last 25 years and as an educator for over 40 years, and who has committed to strengthening families through positive cultural arts programs.

The statue unveiling marked the kickoff of the MIS/Jennie Dean Memorial Update fundraising campaign to honor Jennie Dean, who despite being born a slave, raised funds tirelessly to establish the MIS, a school that educated more than 6,000 students from across the region at a time when education was out of reach for most African Americans.

The proposed Jennie Dean statue will be the focal point of the Memorial at 9601 Prince William Street, which opened in 1995 and includes replicated school building foundations, an information kiosk, and a model of the original campus. In addition to the installation of the long-planned bronze statue, the update includes a surrounding plaza with enhanced landscaping designed to encourage more of the community to visit, linger, and learn about Jennie Dean's rich legacy.



Bristow artist Christopher Hill, who previously created a bust portrait of Marion Barry, and a seven-foot-tall Harriet Tubman statue at Salisbury University on Maryland's Eastern Shore, faced a particular challenge in creating the Jennie Dean statue because only one photo of Jennie Dean exists, and that photo is a head and shoulders image.

He immersed himself in period research and the Jennie Dean story, and worked with the Update Committee to create a more compelling work. It is his hope that the statue will be an interactive element of the Memorial. "Jennie Dean was, above all, an altruist determined to elevate the welfare of her people through education, faith and tradesmanship. In order to convey this, I have designed Jennie Dean with an outstretched hand reaching towards viewers, as if inviting to lift them up," Hill says. "Over time, I hope that people will take her hand and wear away its patina. When this hand begins to polish and shine, it will

reflect the engagement Jennie Dean continues to inspire in the community."

Future plans call for connected walking paths, an updated interpretive kiosk and signage, and an amphitheater for community use. Visit www.manassascity.org/jenniedean for details on the Memorial Update.

end

Black History Month Photo: (L to R) Sculptor Christopher Hill, Sheila Coleman, Brenda Lewis, First Lady Bonita Savage, Community Development Director Liz Via-Gossman, Rev. Etoria V. Goggins, Parks, Culture & Recreation Manager Kisha Wilson-Sogunro and Mayor Harry J. Parrish II.

Jennie Dean Photo: to scale model of future statue.