

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FRANKLIN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY UNVEILS BOOK COLLECTION ON BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

*Collection features nearly 400 books available to scholars, students,
genealogists, and the general public*

ROCKY MOUNT, VA (Aug. 4, 2020). The Franklin County Public Library has unveiled a collection of books about the life and times of Booker T. Washington, the pioneering educator and orator who hailed from Franklin County. Containing more than 385 books, the collection was donated by the Booker T. Washington National Monument (BTWNM) of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Said Timothy Sims, Chief of Interpretation & Resource Management for the BTWNM, “This collaboration with the Franklin County Public Library has resulted in a positive outcome for the local community, and most likely beyond, through the sharing of knowledge. There is a myriad of great African-American subject matter within the collection and to have it available for citizens to study and the books properly cared for by professional librarian staff lend meaningful tribute to the life and legacy of Dr. Booker Taliaferro Washington.”

Booker T. Washington was born a slave in April 1856 on the 207-acre farm of James Burroughs. After the Civil War, Washington became the first principal of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial School, which later became Tuskegee University. As an author, orator, and adviser to two U.S. presidents, Washington’s past would influence his philosophies as the most influential African American of his era.

The new collection covers a vast array of topics from the 1800s through present day, including the history and implications of slavery in the U.S., the civil rights movement, the role of Black men and women in our nation’s military, literary, and cultural history, and works of fiction and non-fiction, including “Walking the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement,” the 1998 book co-authored by Michael D’orso and John Lewis, the former U.S. Representative and civil rights leader who died on July 17, 2020.

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“Unveiling this collection now is timely as our nation confronts its history of injustice and works to bridge the racial divide that Washington explored in his lectures and writings. We hope the collection will inspire people to learn about the past, look ahead, and contribute to writing the next chapter in history,” said Christine Arena, Coordinator of Marketing, Programming & Outreach for the Franklin County Public Library.

The Booker T. Washington collection is on permanent display at the Library’s Rocky Mount location. “We’re proud to offer this rich repository of materials,” said Alison Barry, Library Director. “It extends the incredible learning opportunities available at the Booker T. Washington National Monument, which is a mere 15 miles from us. We invite everyone, from scholars and students to the general public, to browse the collection along with the local history and genealogy archives housed in our Mann Room.”

To request photos of the collection, please email Christine.Arena@FranklinCountyVA.Gov

The Booker T. Washington National Monument in Hardy, Va. is dedicated to preserving Washington’s birthplace and childhood home and promoting public awareness and appreciation for his legacy. It is located at 12130 Booker T. Washington Hwy., Hardy, VA 24101.

Franklin County Public Library—Rocky Mount
355 Franklin St., Rocky Mount, VA 24151
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library.franklincountyva.gov

