

Department of Historic Resources

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Contact:

Randy Jones

Department of Historic Resources

540.578-3031 (cell)

Randy.Jones@dhr.virginia.gov.

STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKER "PAULINE CAUTHORNE MORTON" TO BE DEDICATED IN CITY OF FRANKLIN ON SATURDAY

—New marker recalls educator Pauline C. Morton, who served as Mid-Atlantic Regional Director of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; helped organize the Franklin NAACP, chaired Franklin's public school board and the board of Paul D. Camp Community College, among other civic leadership roles—

—The marker text is reproduced below—

RICHMOND – A state historical marker issued by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources will be dedicated this weekend to commemorate the career of Pauline C. Morton, an educator and civic leader who worked for the Virginia Department of Education beginning in the late 1940s, served as a regional director of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the first Greek-letter organization for African American women, and later chaired the boards of Franklin City Public Schools and Paul D. Camp Community College.

The ceremony to dedicate and unveil the marker will be held at 10 a.m., this Saturday, March 10, at Paul D. Camp Community College, Workforce Development Center, located at 100 North College Drive, Franklin (Southampton County) and is open to the public. A pre-ceremony reception, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Workforce Development Center, will be hosted by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and the Lambda Psi Omega and Zeta Epsilon Omega chapters.

Speakers at the ceremony will include Congressman Bobby Scott; Franklin City Council member Mary Hilliard; June Fleming, chair of the Paul D. Camp Community College Board; Aubrey

Morton Smith, daughter of Pauline C. Morton; Dr. Dwight Shawrod Riddick, Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church in Franklin; Dr. Colita Nichols Fairfax, a member of the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; other speakers also affiliated with Alpha Kappa Alpha's mid-Atlantic region division will include Clara Hines, Joyce Henderson, Dr. Linda Henry Gilliam, and Dr. Cynthia Salley Nicholson, among other regional and chapter sorority officers and members.

Born in 1912, Morton graduated from what is now Virginia State University in 1933. In 1947, during the era of segregation, she began working for the Virginia Department of Education. During her time there, she supervised home economics education across the southeastern Virginia and implemented the federal school lunch program for the region. She was also a mid-Atlantic regional director of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

During her career, Morton served on more than 20 civic committees in addition to the boards of Franklin public schools and Paul D. Camp Community College.

The marker commemorating Pauline C. Morton was approved for manufacture and installation in 2017 by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources, which has the authority to designate new historical markers. The manufacturing cost of the sign has been covered by its sponsor the Lambda Psi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Virginia's historical highway marker program, which began in 1927 with the installation of the first historical markers along U.S. Route 1, is considered the oldest such program in the nation. Currently there are more than 2,500 official state markers, most maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation, as well as by local partners in jurisdictions outside of VDOT's authority.

Text of marker:

Pauline Cauthorne Morton (1912-2004)

Pauline C. Morton, civic leader, graduated from what is now Virginia State University in 1933. She began working for the Virginia Department of Education in 1947, during the segregation era. Before retiring in 1974, she supervised home economics education across southeastern Virginia and implemented the federal school lunch program in her region. Morton was Mid-Atlantic Regional Director of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the first Greek-letter organization for African American women. She helped organize the Franklin NAACP chapter in 1943, chaired the Franklin City Public School Board and the board of Paul D. Camp Community College, and served on more than 20 other civic committees.

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