

9526 Nassington Court
Henrico, Virginia 23229

October 21, 2020

TO: Members of the U.S. Capitol Commission

Congratulations on being chosen as a member of this important commission. For the statue, I would like to nominate an exceptional Virginia Founding Father who honored and defended the rights of African Americans, Native Americans, and ordinary white citizens, at the risk of his own reputation and career. He meets all important criteria as a person of great consequence to the people of Virginia and America.

GEORGE WYTHE (1726-1806):

- . America's most influential teacher—judged by student achievement in high public office
- . Mentor to Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, Henry Clay, and the nation's first generation of leaders
- . America's first law professor
- . Role model for ethical servant leadership
- . Abolitionist—first judge to rule slavery illegal, based on Virginia's bill of rights:
Hudgins v. Wright (1806), a case that also involved protecting the rights of Native Americans
- . Freed his own slaves, paid them wages, and provided for them in his will
- . Taught African American youth in his own home, during a time when education was denied them
- . Signer and "Godfather" of the Declaration of Independence
- . Champion (and possibly savior) of the Constitution
- . Co-originator, with Jefferson, of America's first religious freedom law
- . Groundbreaking judge—set precedents for judicial review and separation of powers two decades before his student, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, ruled in *Marbury v. Madison*
- . Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates
- . Clerk of the Virginia House of Burgesses
- . Workhorse member of the Second Continental Congress in support of the Revolution
- . Prophet of the American Revolution

All of these contributions to Virginia and America are outlined in the George Wythe biography, *Jefferson's Godfather: The Man Behind the Man*. I devoted four years to researching the life of this great individual. A copy of the book has been provided to the Department of Historic Resources. The bust on the cover overlooks the old House of Delegates chamber in the state capitol building, honoring Wythe's service as Speaker of the House.

Sometimes called the "Forgotten Founding Father," Wythe and his important legacy need to be revisited and honored in the 21st century. He is an ideal representative for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Best regards,



Suzanne Munson

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