

NEWSROOM

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VIRGINIANS

HONOR GIVEN TO THREE EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

by [Kelli Caplan](#) | August 15, 2025*Above: Lisa Surles-Law, Dr. Raymond L. Haynes and Carol Minter**Read time: about 1 min*

Three community leaders who strive to elevate the educational experience for local students have been named as the [Wason Center for Civic Leadership's](#) next cohort of Distinguished Virginians.

The three honorees are highly regarded civic leaders in Hampton Roads who share a commitment to providing dynamic opportunities to young students in the region. They will share their stories and passions with Christopher Newport students throughout the year by participating in small discussion groups with Captains who are members of the Wason Scholars Program.

In addition, the three will be introduced to students in the [President's Leadership Program \(PLP\)](#) event on Oct. 29. The PLP students will have a chance to engage with them about their career paths and the role leadership has played.

The hope is that the trio will inspire and inform CNU students and contribute to the Wason Center's goal of advancing leadership on campus and in the community.

"We are truly excited about our newest cohort of Distinguished Virginians," said Cami Castleberry, Wason Center Director. "They bring incredible expertise and wide-ranging and meaningful experiences to campus, allowing our students to learn directly from civic leaders who have risen to the top and made a huge impact on the local community."

The three newest Distinguished Virginians are:

- **Dr. Raymond L. Haynes** is Superintendent of Hampton City Schools. Haynes' career began 30 years ago in Hampton City Schools, and he has since served as educational enrichment specialist, elementary assistant principal, and principal at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Haynes is a Captain for Life, having graduated from CNU in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Also a proud graduate of Hampton City Schools, Haynes said that, "Having the privilege to lead the very school division that helped shape my life and career is truly a full-circle moment for me."
- **Carol Minter** is Executive Director of Soundscapes, a nonprofit organization based in Newport News that helps hundreds of students each year develop critical life skills through music education and performance opportunities. Before joining Soundscapes, Minter worked as a consultant for seven years providing expertise in successful fundraising strategy, grant writing and event planning for a variety of nonprofits across Virginia. She has also served as assistant director of the Annual Fund at CNU and development director of Peake Childhood Center.
- **Lisa Surles-Law** is the STEM Workforce Development Manager at Jefferson Lab in Newport News. Since 2018, she has also been a member of the Newport News School Board, having just completed her term as School Board Chairwoman. Surles-Law is a member of numerous professional and community organizations and is a strong proponent of STEM education and teacher professional development.

This is the fifth cohort of Distinguished Virginians. Previous Distinguished Virginians include state Sen. Mamie Locke, Film producer BK Fulton, Virginia Supreme Court Justice Bill Mims, former Governor Bob McDonnell, and former Congresswoman Barbara Comstock.
