



For immediate release – April 30, 2019

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CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia — Thomas Jefferson returns to Monticello.

Veteran historical actor-interpreter Bill Barker is widely recognized as the nation's foremost interpreter of Thomas Jefferson. Now, after portraying Thomas Jefferson at Colonial Williamsburg for the last 26 years, Barker will join the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello starting on June 14.

"Portraying Thomas Jefferson – in all his genius and complexity – is a daunting challenge, yet Bill Barker has succeeded where some of Hollywood's finest have failed," said Monticello President Leslie Greene Bowman. "Bill's knowledge, experience, and passion for his subject are unparalleled. We are proud that he will bring Thomas Jefferson home to enliven and deepen the experience of our visitors with Jefferson's immense contributions to the new nation. He will also assist us in conveying an honest, complicated, and inclusive history of freedom and slavery at Monticello."

Barker's move to the mountaintop is reminiscent of Jefferson's own return to Monticello after completing his duties as president in March 1809. Barker, like Jefferson, has no intention of slowing down. "Retirement has never been a word in my vocabulary, any more than it was a word in Thomas Jefferson's vocabulary," Barker said. "Jefferson continued to work on his goals of furthering education and Enlightenment thinking, and I intend to do the same."

Barker began interpreting Jefferson in 1984—fittingly, at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. He joined Colonial Williamsburg in the spring of 1993. Barker founded Colonial Williamsburg's [Nation Builder](#) program, composed of elite actor-interpreters who portray real figures associated with 18th-century Williamsburg—male and female, black and white, free and enslaved—who made significant contributions to the American story. He has been featured as Jefferson in magazines including Time, People, Reader's Digest, Southern Living, Virginia Living and Philadelphia, and has appeared as Jefferson on ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, CNN, C-SPAN and Comedy Central's Colbert Report.

“At sites like Colonial Williamsburg and Monticello, learning and civil discourse thrive in public history, and Bill Barker is an unsurpassed practitioner,” said Colonial Williamsburg President and CEO Mitchell B. Reiss. “We could never adequately express our community’s gratitude for Bill’s work, grace and friendship over the years. We wish Bill and Monticello all the best in this new chapter of their story, and we hope Mr. Jefferson will return to visit us in the old capital as often as he can.”

Monticello guests will encounter Barker as Mr. Jefferson in regularly-scheduled programming beginning in summer 2019. He will also contribute to educational outreach efforts including electronic field trips, represent Monticello at special events around the country, and assist in the development of dramatic programming that will become part of Monticello’s engagement, both on and off the mountaintop.

Barker’s first public appearance in his new role at Monticello will be on Friday, June 14. He will portray Jefferson at the inaugural Pursuit of Happiness Hour, a new social gathering and wine tasting event on the West Lawn.

For those wishing to see Barker on Duke of Gloucester Street, he will appear in Colonial Williamsburg programming through June 7, including Mr. Jefferson’s Palace Garden Party on May 3. [Kurt Smith](#), who has portrayed Young Thomas Jefferson since 2016, continues in that role. For more information concerning Barker’s performances at Colonial Williamsburg, visit colonialwilliamsburg.com.

Barker’s new book, *Becoming Jefferson: My Life as a Founding Father*, will be available for purchase this spring at Colonial Williamsburg and Monticello.

About The Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation was incorporated in 1923 to preserve Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, in Charlottesville, Virginia. Today, the foundation seeks to bring history forward into national and global dialogues by engaging audiences with Jefferson’s world and ideas and inviting them to experience the power of place at Monticello. Monticello is recognized as a National Historic Landmark, a United Nations World Heritage Site and a Site of Conscience. As a private, nonprofit organization, the foundation’s regular operating budget does not receive ongoing government support to fund its twofold mission of preservation and education. For information, visit Monticello.org.

About Colonial Williamsburg

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia’s 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry.

The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.