



Jamestown Rediscovery

HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE

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President of Jamestown Rediscovery to Retire After a Decade of Service

JAMESTOWN, VA (July 1, 2025) – Dr. James Horn, President and Chief Officer of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation will retire later this summer. An internationally-recognized expert in the early history of Virginia and colonial America, Dr. Horn brought deep knowledge of Jamestown's important place in history but also expertise in the administration of teaching and research institutions in the U.S. and U.K to the position. He was instrumental in establishing the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation and pushed for the expansion of the permanent archaeology and collections staff, and improvements to the visitor experience with new programs and activities. His impact on the Foundation and site will be felt for generations.

Dr. Horn's work at Jamestown began while he was still at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. There, as Vice President of Research and Historical Interpretation, he managed programs and education at Historic Jamestowne under a cooperating agreement with Preservation Virginia beginning in 2010. In 2015, Preservation Virginia appointed Dr. Horn the founding President of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation and Chief Officer. In this role, he worked to establish the new nonprofit under the auspices of Preservation Virginia and develop and expand field archaeology, collections and conservation programs, new exhibits at the Voorhees Archaearium Archaeology Museum, education programs onsite and online, and research.

"Dr. Horn's leadership has had an incredible impact on this organization," said Jim Reagan, chair of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation Board of Trustees. "Today, Jamestown is internationally recognized for its remarkable archaeological discoveries, collections, and historical research. Additionally, he has transformed the visitor experience by adding a wide variety of year-round education programs to enhance the core archaeological work, overseen a series of outstanding exhibits in the museum, and significantly improved the Jamestown Memorial Church and its historic tower. His expert leadership will have a lasting impact."

"For over a decade, Jim Horn's leadership has resulted in remarkable and highly significant discoveries at Jamestown. His work has helped us better understand the singular events that occurred as Indigenous, European, and African peoples first interacted on these shores," said Ronald L. Hurst, Chair of Preservation Virginia's Board of Trustees. "The foundation he laid will allow us to continue this important work for many years to come."

Dr. Horn joined the team at Jamestown at a pivotal moment. Jamestown Rediscovery founder Dr. William "Bill" Kelso and his team had just uncovered the site of the 1608 Church, followed shortly thereafter by the discoveries of the skull of a young woman, marred by butcher marks – the evidence of survival cannibalism. Then, just a few months after he was appointed President & Chief Officer, Dr. Horn appeared on PBS NewsHour, All Things Considered on NPR, and was quoted in front-page stories in the New York Times, Washington Post, and The Wall Street

Journal when the foundation shared the discovery of four individuals buried in the chancel of the 1608 church. As an expert in 17th-century migration patterns, Dr. Horn's knowledge has bolstered Jamestown Rediscovery's ever-growing bioarchaeology program, which seeks to identify those who are buried here when possible and better understand those who chose to leave their homeland for this swampy shore more than 400 years ago.

In preparation for the 400th anniversary of one of Jamestown's most notable years, 1619, the Jamestown Rediscovery archaeology team collaborated with the National Park Service to excavate a site associated with Angela, an Angolan woman forcibly brought to North America and one of "twenty-and-odd" first Africans brought to Jamestown that year. Across the site, a years-long excavation inside the Memorial Church revealed the precise location of Virginia's first General Assembly, held inside the 1617/18 church, also in the summer of 1619. The juxtaposition of these two events – the first inklings of democracy alongside the beginning of race-based enslavement – was illuminated in Dr. Horn's authoritative book, *1619: Jamestown and the Forging of American Democracy*.

In 2022, the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced that Jamestown was one of that year's Most Endangered Historic Places, because of the imminent and existential threat posed by rising sea levels and increased flooding. This announcement marked the beginning of Jamestown Rediscovery's largest campaign ever, to Save Jamestown. Since that time, Preservation Virginia and Jamestown Rediscovery have raised more than \$16 million, completed repairs on and bolstered the century-old sea wall, and begun the long process of hydrological studies required to find the best solution to mitigate rising waters. Dr. Horn's leadership on this issue has been vital, as flooding affects not only visitor access but also impedes excavations and destroys the fragile artifacts still below the surface.

In 2024, Dr. Horn oversaw the completion of a project that started ten years earlier, when he was still in his role at Colonial Williamsburg. Last spring, a glass and steel roof was installed on the 17th-century Church Tower at Jamestown, the first roof on the structure in more than two centuries. This decade-long preservation effort will ensure that the tower, the only 17th-century structure above ground at Jamestown, will stand for generations to witness.

"I have been incredibly fortunate in having the opportunity to serve at this remarkable place alongside an extraordinary group of colleagues. It has been without question the highlight of my career," said Dr. Horn. "When I first arrived in 2010, Dr. Kelso and his team had changed the history books with their discoveries. It's been a privilege to be able to work in the place where history happened and to play a role in the accomplishments this team has made since I arrived. I am most grateful to my colleagues at Jamestown and Preservation Virginia, board members past and present of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation, and to our many supporters and friends who like me treasure this remarkable place."

An accomplished historian, Dr. Horn has a D.Phil. from the University of Sussex, England and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He has held fellowships at Johns Hopkins University, William & Mary, and the Warren Center at Harvard University. Prior to joining the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, he taught history at the University of Brighton for 20 years, was visiting editor of publications at the Williamsburg-based Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, and was the Saunders Director of the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at The Thomas Jefferson Foundation. Dr. Horn also taught courses at the

University of Virginia and William & Mary. He is the author and editor of nine books on colonial America, including *A Land as God Made It* and *1619: Jamestown and the Forging of American Democracy*. After he retires at the end of August, Dr. Horn plans to spend his time continuing to research early America at his home in Brighton, England, alongside his wife, Sally, daughter, Liz, and their two pugs.

Preservation Virginia and Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation are in the process of conducting a search for the organization's next leader. Gifts in honor of Dr. Horn can be made to the *Jim Horn Fund for History, Law, and Democracy* at historicjamestowne.org/support.

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About Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation

The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation, under the auspices of Preservation Virginia, preserves and shares the original site of James Fort and Jamestown, established in 1607. The Foundation is dedicated to uncovering, preserving, and sharing Jamestown's diverse history, and highlighting its major contribution to the foundations of modern American society. For more information, please visit www.historicjamestowne.org.

About Preservation Virginia

Preservation Virginia is a private, nonprofit organization seeking to inspire and engage the public in fostering, supporting and sustaining Virginia's historic places through leadership in advocacy, education, revitalization and stewardship. Learn more at preservationvirginia.org.