



OUR GREAT VIRGINIA

Arrangement: **Jim Papoulis** – www.jimpapoulis.com

Lyrics: **Mike Greenly** – www.mikegreenly.com

For Immediate Release

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Noted Virginia Historian James Robertson, Jr. Inspires Musical Tribute to State Stirring New Song Blends Old and New

Summer, 2014, New York, NY: A new song, “Our Great Virginia” -- set to the historic melody of “Shenandoah,” arranged by composer Jim Papoulis, with lyrics by Mike Greenly -- is a loving tribute to Virginia and could, some day, even become its new state song. It was inspired and commissioned by award-winning professor and author Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. With his wife Betty, he has been on a six-year mission to find a fitting anthem for the state.

“Our Great Virginia” is now available on iTunes, featuring vocals by Sophia Miller. It was recorded in Virginia by the Fairfax Choral Society Concert Choir (www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org) under the leadership of Director Patrick F. Vaughn. The song will be available as sheet music this summer. You can hear and see it via a music video on youtube: <http://bit.ly/1jzQgUt>

Dr. Robertson, a native of Danville, VA, and one of the nation’s leading Civil War historians, sought to rectify the lack of a song for his beloved state. “I wanted a musical tribute,” he said. “It had to be inspirational enough to become Virginia's state song. Getting my wonderful state its own official and moving anthem was my goal from the start. Mike and Jim have exceeded my hopes. Thus far, every Virginian who’s heard this beautiful song has responded very positively to it and to its message of appreciation for our state.”

Virginia has gone for many years without an anthem of its own. In 1940 "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia," composed as “Virginnny” by James A. Bland (1854-1911), an African-American minstrel, was designated the official state song. However, it was retired from official use in 1997 because its lyrics were deemed offensive to many Virginians.

Dr. Robertson's quest for a new anthem began in 2008, when he conferred with key members of the Virginia legislature about pursuing the creation of a new state song to the melody of "Shenandoah." The idea was enthusiastically received. Since then, according to Dr. Robertson, he has been an avid one-man committee in trying to get a worthy song produced.

"In talks and lectures to all types of Virginia audiences," he said, "I would always ask at the end for assistance from anyone who could help. Several stepped forward, but nothing of real substance emerged until I got a lead to contact Chris Keaton, a native Virginian who is a respected song plugger and artist's manager in Nashville. The rest is history."

Mr. Keaton recommended Mike Greenly who, in turn, immediately involved a songwriting partner, Jim Papoulis, a highly acclaimed composer, conductor and arranger of choral music. The song was developed in consultation with local Virginians, thanks to the unwavering energy of the Robertsons.

To be designated the new official state song, "Our Great Virginia" will need to be approved by the Virginia General Assembly during its 2015 legislative session.

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ABOUT THE SONGWRITERS & PROFESSOR ROBERTSON

Jim Papoulis

Jim Papoulis's work focuses on combining the music of his roots – classical and jazz – with the rhythms and influence of worldbeat, folk, and multi-ethnic sounds. His compositions for choirs, orchestras, string quartets and chamber ensembles have been performed worldwide. He composes music for films, classical ensembles, rhythm and blues, hip hop, and spends much of his time in songwriting workshops throughout the world with children from all walks of life. His work fuses styles of music that gracefully cross cultural and stylistic boundaries. An advocate for children, Jim firmly believes that music can be a bridge to awaken, inspire and enrich humanity.

Mike Greenly

Mike Greenly began writing poems at age four, but wrote his first songs as a marketing and communications VP for Avon Products, Inc. Today he's a corporate speechwriter and speech coach, and he has partnered with Jim Papoulis on numerous songs for corporate events. Mike is especially excited by their work for the public, including "With You" by Kimberly Davis (#4 BILLBOARD Dance Club Hit) and "Get Up" (#12), along with their choral collaborations -- "How Many Christmases," "We Can Plant a Forest," "I Know," and now "Our Great Virginia." Mike is the lyricist for several songs recorded by artist Shara Strand, including "I Will Carry You," also BILLBOARD charted -- for which Jim produced radio and dance versions with his collaborator, DJ Tony Smith under their "SoulBeats NYC" brand name. (www.djtonysmith.com)

DR. JAMES ROBERTSON: Dr. Robertson is Executive Director of the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission and worked with Presidents Truman, Kennedy and Johnson in marking the war's 100th anniversary. In 2011 he was named Virginia Tech Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History, ending his 44-year tenure after teaching Civil War history to an estimated 22,000 students

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