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Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission



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PROMOTIONAL RELEASE

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Hold Public Hearing in Wicomico County on October 22, 2022

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly enacted, and Governor Larry Hogan signed into law, legislation establishing the [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (MLTRC) as the first Commission dedicated to investigating racial terror lynchings in the United States. Sponsored by Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk, [House Bill 307](#) tasks the Commission with researching cases of lynching, holding public hearings in communities where racial terror lynchings took place and developing recommendations for addressing the legacy of lynching that are rooted in restorative justice.

The MLTRC's hearing process will allow members of the public, including the descendants of victims, witnesses, and perpetrators, the opportunity to offer testimony about how these murders have impacted their lives and their communities in addition to allowing them the opportunity to make recommendations for achieving racial healing. The hearings will also provide an opportunity to identify and bring to light possible cases of racial terror lynching that are remembered in families and communities but for which there is little or no documentation.

The October 22nd hearing will focus on the tragic lynchings of **Garfield King** (death, 1898) and **Matthew Williams** (death, 1931). Participants may include descendants of the lynching victims, expert witnesses, community members, archivists, and scholars of the community.

“Through these hearings, we not only are able to gain proximity to the truth but also to promote greater understanding as to how later generations were shaped by these atrocities in interpreting history and their own place in contemporary American society”, **said Dr. Charles Chavis, Commission Vice-Chair and Director of African and African American Studies at George Mason University**. Although initial plans were slowed by the pandemic, to date, public hearings have been held in Allegany, Baltimore, and Anne Arundel Counties.

Throughout 2023, MLTRC plans to continue holding public hearings in each county with documented cases of racial terror lynching.

HEARING DETAILS

When: Saturday, October 22, 2022

Time (in person and streaming): 9 am to 1 pm; with a 10-minute break

Where: Salisbury University, Wicomico Room at the Guerrieri University Center Building, 1101 Camden Avenue Salisbury, MD 21801

How You Can Attend:

IN PERSON: [Pre-registration is required](#) to help us manage attendance. At this time there are no mask requirements but you will be asked to adhere to any other safety protocols that are required.

STREAMING: A link to stream the hearing will be posted on MLTRC's [website](#) one day before the hearing.

How You Can Share Your Story:

Members of the public are encouraged to submit written testimony concerning how the lynching of the victims (or other unidentified County victims) has impacted their lives and their communities or making recommendations to address the legacy of lynching in Maryland and promote racial healing. Submit your testimony to mltrc@maryland.gov or bring your written testimony if you attend in-person and it will be collected.

The Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission can be reached at <https://msa.maryland.gov/lynching-truth-reconciliation/> or via email at mltrc@maryland.gov.