Mount Vernon Recognizes Excellence in History Teaching
Hayfield Secondary Teacher Honored

By Mike Salmon
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George Washington’s Mount Vernon has awarded the 2023 History Teacher of the Year to Ariel Alford, a high school history teacher from Hayfield Secondary School. According to George Washington's Mount Vernon, Alford teaches United States History and African American History at Hayfield Secondary School southern Fairfax County and is in her eighth year of teaching. In addition to teaching, Alford serves as a key member of her district's curriculum and professional development teams, including work with Instructional Services to develop a high school curriculum that includes culturally responsive approaches to U.S. History and professional development facilitation to teachers in the county teaching African American history and culture courses, Mount Vernon said.

Her dedication to furthering the development of a strong and inclusive curriculum is reflected in her work as a curriculum writer with the National Women's History Museum and as a content developer for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture Digital Learning Initiative, Smithsonian Learning Lab Program. She is also an active member of Teaching for Change's D.C. Area Educators for Social Justice.

The Mount Vernon History Teacher of the Year award is presented annually to one teacher in the Washington D.C. Metropolitan area who brings creativity and passion to their teaching, generates a love of learning, and deepens their students’ understanding and appreciation of history. The award winner receives a cash award of $5000 and a fully funded field trip to Mount Vernon for their students.

This year’s runner-up, Leila Matta, is an eighth-grade teacher at Kenmore Middle School in Arlington County, Va. She will receive a cash award of $500 and distance learning programs for her students.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the Mount Vernon History Teacher of the Year award provided through generous support from the Robertson Foundation. Last year the History Teacher of the Year was Nellie Beaman from Loudon County. Mount Vernon Director of Learning, Tramia Jackson, will present the award to Ms. Alford at 7 p.m. ET on June 13 during The George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon’s 2023 Annual Martha Washington Lecture.

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