



# 2023 Harwood Summit

Virginia Museum of History & Culture  
Richmond, VA  
October 12–14, 2023



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“Amid the noise and confusion and fear within our public life, we may want to take cover. We must not. When compressed from all sides, we must break open and step forward. We must build a new trajectory of hope.”

Richard C. Harwood

Reawake  
Recenter  
Reground  
Rejuvenate



# Welcome!

## Welcome to the 15th Annual Harwood Summit.

I started the Summit 15 years ago because leaders said they needed a safe space where they could wrestle with tough challenges without the need to perform. This space was important then. It's even more important now.

More than ever before, I have been hearing from community leaders that they are facing challenges that are piling up and getting harder to address. That it feels impossible to get things done. This is happening amid an unprecedented number of mass shootings, worsening politics, deepening divisions, and an epidemic of loneliness. Understandably, many of us are exhausted, burned out, and on the verge of giving up.

At this year's Summit, we will delve into discussions that will help us better understand the deep challenges before us and how we can move forward. Our very setting for this year's gathering—the Virginia Museum of History & Culture—provides a reminder that we must face the stains of our past and confront their implications for our present. Only then can we explore how to move forward.

The Summit is a safe space to have in-depth, serious, and provocative conversations about what it will take for us to move forward together. There are no speeches, presentations, or PowerPoints at the event. Instead, the Summit is a carefully crafted, rolling conversation intended for you to think hard about current topics and authentically engage with a diverse group of people. Our conversations sit at the nexus of your professional and personal life. Our hope is that you will rejuvenate and return home with a renewed sense of purpose, possibility, and hope. We'll do this through:

## Small Group Discussions

You will find a description of the small group discussion topics on pages 8–9. So that you can participate in more than one of these topics, each session will be held twice. Then, on Saturday morning, our small group discussions will focus on words from Richmond native, athlete, and activist, Arthur Ashe; you can find these on page 12.

## Common Sessions

At different points in the Summit, we'll come together as a large group to discuss key issues and questions. Some topics will emerge from our conversations. Others will be introduced, such as in our opening session on Thursday evening and then again on Friday afternoon.

## Personal Reflections

At each meal, a different group of Summit participants will be asked to offer one or two minutes of personal reflection (the topics are listed in the agenda under "Personal Reflections"). In years past, these comments have run the gamut from serious to funny, deeply moving to satirical—but in all cases, they always add to the depth and spirit of our time together.

We have a wonderful group of people coming to the Summit this year. Some of you are new to the Summit, while others are returning once more. As with previous Summits, we have limited the number of participants to ensure that a good and robust conversation takes place and that each of you has the opportunity to get to know one another.

I'm delighted that you are here with us.



**Richard C. Harwood**

President and Founder  
The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation

"Our current moment calls for us to be agents of hope—nothing less. Creating a new trajectory of hope is possible."

Richard C. Harwood

# Agenda

## Thursday, October 12

5:30–6:30 PM	<b>Reception</b>
6:30–9 PM	<b>Dinner</b> Personal Reflections: <i>"I am here because..."</i>  Discussion: Grief

## Friday, October 13

8–9 AM	<b>Breakfast and Reflections</b>
9–10 AM	<b>Small Group Discussions</b>
10–10:30 AM	<b>Break</b>
10:30–11:30 AM	<b>Small Group Discussions</b>
11:30 AM–12:30 PM	<b>Common Session</b>
12:30–1:30 PM	<b>Lunch</b> Personal Reflections: <i>"To be whole means..."</i>
1:30–3 PM	<b>Special Common Session</b> <i>The Space We Need</i>  Reflections from Rich Harwood

# Ground Rules

*To have a productive conversation we need a few ground rules for our conversations.*

**Have a "kitchen table" conversation.** Everyone participates; no one dominates.

**There are no "right" answers.** Draw on your own experiences, views, and beliefs. You do not need to be an expert.

**Keep an open mind.** Listen carefully and try hard to understand the views of those who disagree with you.

**Focus on constructive ideas and solutions,** not on complaining or placing blame on others.

**Help keep the discussions on track.** Stick to the issue at hand; try not to ramble.

**It is okay to disagree, but don't be disagreeable.** Respond to others how you would like them to respond to you.

**Have fun!**

3–6 PM	<b>Free Time</b>
3:30–4:30 PM	<b>Private Tour of Virginia Museum of History &amp; Culture</b>
6–9 PM	<b>Dinner</b> Personal Reflections: <i>"My most important memory is..."</i>

## Saturday, October 14

8–9 AM	<b>Breakfast and Reflections</b>
9–10:15 AM	<b>Arthur Ashe Entreaty</b>
10:15–10:45 AM	<b>Personal Covenant</b>
10:45–11:30 AM	<b>On Our Way Home</b> Personal Reflections: <i>"It's time to..."</i>
11:30 AM–12:30 PM	<b>Time with Colleagues &amp; Boxed Lunch</b>



# Small Group Discussions

## Weaponized Agendas

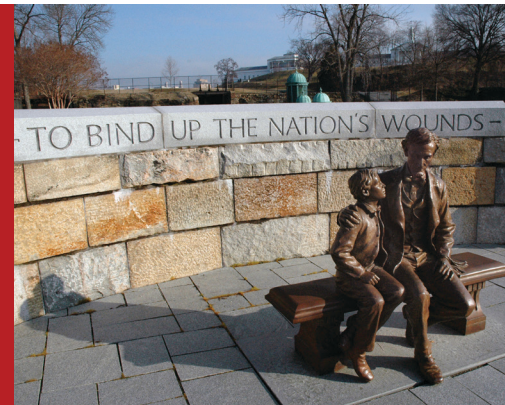
Our public discourse is often divisive and harsh. Some people have responded by retreating from public life altogether. Others have come out fighting, seeking to win at any cost. There's talk nowadays about how people and groups are 'weaponizing' their agendas. How do you deal with agendas that seem to be at the extreme? Do you push back? Fight fire with fire? Listen attentively? How do you get things done?

## Public Trust

People have lost trust in so many groups, organizations, and institutions. Indeed, it's not just about the loss of trust, but pervasive distrust. So what does it take to rebuild—or simply build anew—trust nowadays? What's required? What must people see, perhaps experience? What factors do you think are most essential? And is it even possible for public trust to exist in today's environment?

## Beyond Coping to Rebuilding

So many communities are simply trying to cope and survive. They have been battered by chronic and acute crises and mired in near-constant stress, anxiety, and trauma. Despair can set in. Shared hopelessness can grow. People can take great pride in being "resilient," which is important to acknowledge. But what is the difference between a community that is resilient versus a community that is rebuilding? What kind of mindset and behavior shifts do communities need in order to thrive, and not merely survive?



## Rootedness

The challenges of the last few years can leave many of us feeling knocked off balance, isolated, frustrated, even angry. When trees are hit by storms, they often sway back and forth and rely on their rootedness to stay grounded. How are these times trying for you? How do you stay grounded in what's most important and valuable to you? What rootedness do you rely on?

## Can Someone Tell Me the News?

Local news media are dying or being bought by corporate entities. Our larger local information ecosystems are fragmenting and becoming hyperlocal. Meanwhile, much of national news and information can seem distant from our daily lives, even irrelevant. What local news and information do people need—and, in particular, what do they need to better inform and engage citizens when so many of us are pulling back from one another?

## Finding Civic Joy

People in communities often tell us that they are thinking about giving up. The civic work they do has become too difficult and combative. They're tired. They've lost a sense of joy. But civic work—the work we do together—can release within us a profound sense of joy. Where do you find 'civic joy' in these times and what does it release in you? And why is it so important to *name* it today?



# Activities



## Our Summit Venue

### VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY & CULTURE

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture, headquartered in the Museum District in Richmond, is a history museum, research library, and educational facility all wrapped in one. The 184-year-old museum features award-winning museum exhibitions about all kinds of Virginia-related topics and is the only museum in the world with all of Virginia's history under one roof.



## What's Near Your Hotel

There is history along every block of historic Downtown Richmond and its growing list of attractions allows you to explore the city's past, present, and future. Choose from museums, trails and tours, eight historic neighborhoods, and nationally-recognized historic sites to discover all there is to learn about the history of Richmond, Virginia.

## Historical Sites and Museums

Many museums and sites of historical significance are within walking distance of the Homewood Suites Downtown Richmond, including the Virginia State Capitol, Old City Hall, the American Civil War Museum, the White House of the Confederacy, the Library of Virginia, the Poe Museum, and the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia.



## Riverfront Canal Walk

The Canal Walk has been a staple of Richmond for decades, entertaining visitors and residents alike. Located along downtown's riverfront, the Canal Walk stretches 1.25 miles along the James River and Kanawha and Haxall Canals.

There is so much to learn about Richmond's history along the Canal Walk. On your walk you'll see public art, statues, and exhibits.



## Richmond Folk Festival

The Richmond Folk Festival will celebrate its 19th anniversary the same weekend as the Summit, from October 13-15, 2023. The festival has become one of Virginia's largest, drawing fans each year to downtown Richmond's riverfront to celebrate the roots, richness, and variety of American culture through music, dance, traditional crafts, storytelling, and food.

Featuring six stages and showcasing music and dance from more than 30 performing groups from around the nation and the world, the Richmond Folk Festival artists will once again make up a culturally diverse and artistically excellent program. Learn more about the free event at [richmondfolkfestival.org](https://richmondfolkfestival.org).

*This information was published by Venture Richmond and Richmond Region Tourism. Find more attractions and things to do at [venturerichmond.com](https://venturerichmond.com) and [visitrichmondva.com](https://visitrichmondva.com).*

# Arthur Ashe

Arthur Ashe, a Richmond native, was a world-renowned tennis player, civic rights activist, and humanitarian. He makes an entreaty to us below, asking us to consider our purpose, our focus, and our common efforts. While at the Summit, I ask you to consider his words. Better yet, my hope is that you will open yourself up and allow them to touch you.

“I know I could never forgive myself if I elected to live without humane purpose, without trying to help the poor and unfortunate, without recognizing that perhaps the purest joy in life comes with trying to help others.”

Arthur Ashe



On Saturday morning, we'll come together to talk about Arthur Ashe's words and their meaning for each of us. We'll focus on these three excerpts from Ashe's words and the questions they raise.

**“I know I could never forgive myself if I elected to live without humane purpose...”**

We live in a world in which we face enormous pressure to deliver results, meet metrics, raise dollars, and move fast. Amid all this activity, we can lose sight of a deeper purpose. What does it mean for you to live with a “humane purpose”? And what could you never forgive about yourself if you lived without it?

**“...without trying to help the poor and unfortunate...”**

What kind of impact do you seek to achieve—and why? What does it mean, and take, to work to improve the lives of everyone in your line of sight and those who aren't, especially those who can be left out and left behind?

**“...without recognizing that perhaps the purest joy in life comes with trying to help others.”**

Life can be filled with accolades, awards, and achievements. Such personal accomplishments often bring a special joy to us. But to what end, really? What does it mean for you to truly “try to help others” and why might that be the “purest” form of joy in life?

– Richard C. Harwood



# Engage With Us

**The Harwood Institute equips people, organizations, communities, and networks with the tools to bridge divides, build capacity, and tackle shared challenges. By Turning Outward, we enable communities to become a collective force for change.**

We exist in a long tradition of catalytic organizations throughout American history that have worked to strengthen and advance our society to create a more hopeful future for all. For nearly 35 years, we have created breakthroughs on how to address the hardest and most vital societal challenges and strengthen our civic culture.

Our work is both a philosophy and a practice. Real, lasting change occurs only when people and communities help lead the solutions. We bring people on the front lines of creating change in communities to challenge conventional assumptions, learn together, inspire one another, and strengthen our collective ability to be a force for good.

*Our task is to get on a more equitable, fair, just, inclusive, and hopeful path forward. Join us.*

## Fault Line Communities

We are working deeply with a select group of communities to demonstrate that Americans have the public will—and the ability—to bridge divides and come together to address real challenges. These communities, including Reading, PA; Jackson, MS; Alamance County, NC; Clarksville, TN; Lexington, KY; and Union and Logan Counties in Ohio each have unique demographics, histories, and challenges. Individually, they represent the different fault lines plaguing society today. As a whole, they demonstrate our innate capacities to change how we work together and create a new trajectory of hope by applying the Harwood approach. Join us in discovering how you can help your community address its fault lines.



## The Harwood School

Through the Harwood School, we are scaling our efforts to make our road-tested practices available to everyone, everywhere. The Virtual Public Innovators Labs teach community leaders the practice of Turning Outward so they can take action, create meaningful change, and unleash their community's potential. The Catalytic Community Guide Program trains individuals to use catalytic mindsets and tools to guide others in using the Harwood approach. The CIRCLE of Catalytic Funders is an intimately-connected group of local, regional, and national funders, all of whom are using the Harwood approach and are committed to collectively discovering, developing, and spreading new ways to accelerate and deepen impact in communities and people's lives. Talk to us about how to get your community involved in the Harwood School's offerings.

## A New National Campaign

Enough. Time to build. That's the message of our new campaign to bring Americans back to public life. Rich isn't running for office, but he will be traveling the country during the campaign season, calling on people to tap into the innate spirit we share as Americans for being builders and doers. *We can* build a strong civic culture. *We can* build communities that work for all of us, not just some of us. *We can* make sure nobody gets left behind. Bring Rich to your community to inspire and mobilize people to get involved, take action, and *build together*. The number of tour stops will be limited; act now to secure your visit.

## The Harwood Studio On Community

The Harwood Studio on Community was established to explore new ideas and innovate around complex civic challenges. It serves as the Institute's engine for innovation, writing, special research projects, and new thinking. It is a space where individuals from throughout the country and beyond can spend time at the Institute developing their own ideas and skills. Contact us to become a Studio Associate.

## A Growing Network Of Public Innovators

The Institute is committed to growing and supporting our national network of public innovators to take greater action in your networks and communities. We're constantly innovating and refining resources to help you be effective and impactful in your work to grow civic faith in your community. Share and spread our tools, webinars, and newsletters to unleash the potential in yourself and your community.



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