



Red Hill

Patrick Henry National Memorial

To Whom It May Concern,

There are some speakers who have a natural gift for speaking to and connecting with their audience and I am not one of them. But I have witnessed on several occasions this gift through Shawn Barksdale.

Shawn's first speaking engagement at Patrick Henry's Red Hill was a unique experience for him; our first annual tribute to the Quarter Place community. Quarter Place at Red Hill is the area of this historic site where the enslaved lived and are buried. Red Hill has embraced the contributions of the enslaved to Patrick Henry, Red Hill, and to the founding of America. In doing so, we have made a concerted effort to tell their stories, to locate their descendants, and to bring the community together to celebrate their lives.

We asked Shawn to speak to this group of descendants and the community at large. It didn't matter that he had only known the staff at Red Hill a short time. It didn't matter that he had only studied Patrick Henry and the history here a short time. He was able to engage with the audience in a way that captured every person's interest. But he didn't stop with just speaking to the group. Afterwards, he personally connected with many of the audience on a one on one level.

Since that day, Shawn has become more than just a speaker to our organization. He has also become a friend and an ambassador for our mission. When asked to speak, he does not just speak. He immerses himself into the organization, the topic, and the mission. And he connects in a way that not many people are able to do – it becomes personal.

I would highly recommend Shawn Barksdale to speak to any audience. He understands people, and he genuinely cares about how his words reach people.

Sincerely,

Hope E. Marstin
Chief Executive Officer

1250 Red Hill Road, Brookneal, VA 24528 434-376-2044 www.redhill.org