

JAMES BRANCH CABELL LIBRARY – ENTRYWAY SCULPTURE & BENCH

FALL LINE

“Respect yourself, respect others, respect the world you live in, and everything else will fall into place.” -Anonymous student from the James River Ecology School’s anonymous drop box-

Dropping 105’ in approximately seven miles, the James River cascades around rocks and down a series of large rapids, while flowing directly through Richmond, Virginia’s, city limits. This is the Fall Line; a geological feature with historic and cultural relevance. Home to a prominent Native American village during the Powhatan Confederacy (approximately 1590’s-1640’s), the fall line also prevented any further up-river shipping during colonial times, dramatically dictating the geographic positioning and layout of the City of Richmond, in 1737.

The James River is just as dynamic a feature of Richmond now, as in the past. The oxygen rich water supports robust ecosystems, the James River Park System provides jungle-like trails and green space along the banks, and the river and rocks yield ample recreation opportunities. One of the most engaging aspects of the river is how it unifies the city. An entire cross section of Richmond’s diverse population will be seen enjoying the river on any given day, bringing together people of all ages, races, socio-economic classes, genders, ethnicities, religions and sexual orientations. The river is inclusive. Enjoyed by all, the James sees no distinctions and breathes an undeniable and definitive vitality into Richmond.

Virginia Commonwealth University, located minutes from the James, sees many of its’ students, faculty and staff frequenting the river. Similar to the river the James Branch Cabell Library also brings people together from all walks of life. “*Fall Line*” is a 27 ft. long bench positioned in the entryway of the new addition of the James Branch Cabell Library. Inspired by the James River, the Fall Line and the City of Richmond, the bench brings a key feature of the city (the river) into the library. Constructed primarily of white oak wood with aluminum accents, and divided where bridges cross the James River, the bench consists of four sections, allowing a flow of students to pass through and around it, similar to the flow of water. Each pass-through offers an abstracted representation of the corresponding bridge, as well as industrial materials synonymous with Richmond, including historic sandstone brick, historic Richmond cobblestones and patinated-steel concrete forms that were used to create many of Richmond’s sidewalks. ‘*Fall Line*’ connects outside with inside, natural with urban, past with present and the community of Richmond with the community of VCU. Acting as a beacon of VCU’s School of the Arts and positioned prominently in the library ‘*Fall Line*’ provides a well-designed and finely wrought object for visitors to experience as they walk through the front doors, as they meet with friends, peers and colleagues and then again as they leave, helping to create a lasting impression of the Cabell Library, of Virginia Commonwealth University and of Richmond.

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