



Calvin Coolidge
CALVIN COOLIDGE PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION

Chairman's Report

Annual Meeting

July 4, 2016

Report of the Chairman to the Members, Annual Meeting 2016

“We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once.” –Calvin Coolidge

A few years ago, the board and members of the Calvin Coolidge Foundation undertook to go national. That is, to task our Foundation, which had so long served the memory of President Coolidge in Vermont, with the additional work of elevating the name and policies President Coolidge across the nation. “Going national” is a challenging assignment, especially for a Foundation committed to staying independent of party or government. Unlike the great presidential libraries, the Coolidge Foundation gets no annual stipend to fund its work. And like the thirtieth President, this growing foundation is aware it can’t do everything at once. But we are doing a few things at once to move towards our goal of serving as Coolidge’s national Foundation. All aim to create a community of Coolidge for the next era. We’d like to tell you about our undertakings because there are multiple ways for you to give key support.

This year marks the fourth summer of Coolidge economic debate, and the third of debate solely under the auspices of this Foundation. For years now, debaters have come from Dartmouth Debate Institutes to get to know Coolidge at the Notch and debate topics from protectionism to income inequality. Increasingly, our debate projects are also our own. This year, for the second time, the Foundation and the state play host to the Manhood Initiative’s Provision School, a school based in Houston. While at the Notch, these Texans will acquaint themselves with the basics debate, as well as some history and economics. As part of the trip we also show the young men around the region, with side trips to Dartmouth, a hike in the Presidentials and a ride Mount Washington’s Cog Train. For the second year as well we are hosting Team USA camp, a camp to train high schoolers to compete for slots on the national debate team, Team USA. We at the Notch specialize in imparting information in areas of political economy to these young debaters. One of campers from last year, Joshua May, did make the cut and win one of the coveted slots on Team USA. Thanks to our success and some serious recruitment effort from Matt and Rushad, some 35 campers are joining us for this specialized camp.

Debate inspires us all. Even if you haven’t participated in a debate you may have noticed the hopeful white tents on the Notch hillside throughout the summer. Those are debate chambers for our teens. Over the winter we also continued our work educating young Vermonters about their president. Educator Diane Kemble hosted 366 pupils and their teachers over the course of the school year. Our History Exploration program uses observation and stories to intrigue. Many thanks to volunteer docents Nick Cassone, Susan Foster, Pat Graves, Terry Gulick, Kathy Jacob, Kathy Lynds, as well as Rushad Thomas, Rob Hammer, and Matt Denhart who joined Diane in taking small groups around. An additional 110 students saw an Outreach Program in their schools, including Derby Line School for Diane’s annual Coolidge visit. There are 94 lower and middle schoolers from four different camp programs scheduled over the summer. Docents Jay Closterman, Marie Hasson, and Norm Vanasse, as well as some of the above volunteers, open the Schoolhouse and its hands-on exhibits on summer and fall Thursdays and Saturdays from 1 to 3 p.m. Let me know if you’d like to join our terrific docent group.

An even newer venture is the Coolidge Scholarship, launched this year. The Coolidge Scholarship is a full-ride four-year scholarship for academic merit to any accredited American college or university a candidate chooses. The logic behind such a scholarship is, again, twofold. The first goal is to introduce Coolidge to young people in a way they will remember it. The second intention is to highlight the importance of merit, a principle dear to the President. In addition, the scholarship honors Coolidge values, especially an interest in debate, as well as humility. We consider this Coolidge to be on par with Oxford's Rhodes Scholarship when it comes to prestige. Sticklers will be pleased to note the Coolidge is purely academic- and policy-oriented. Coolidge himself held back when it came to athletic pursuits. "I held the stakes," he said wryly once describing to someone how he participated in sports as a youngster.

In the fall of 2015 we announced our plan to commence the program with two Coolidge scholarships, to be awarded to high school juniors in the spring of 2016. The Foundation was not sure how many candidates would apply in our pioneer year, or of what caliber the candidates would be. We poured what resources we had into the scholarship itself, rather than marketing or market research. The bar was high: each candidate had to submit an essay about Calvin Coolidge's values, a personal essay, two recommendations, a transcript – in other words, the full complement. Gratifyingly, 12,500 registered to apply for the Coolidge. Some 2,360 pupils, hailing from 48 states, completed the full application, dotting all the "i's" and crossing all the "t's". A full 221 of these students ranked first in their high school class, and often, these classes were well over 500 pupils. Twenty one reported a perfect ACT score. On the SAT, 89 applicants reported scores higher than 2300, which is the 97th percentile and above. Of the 100 finalists competing for the prize, the average ACT was 35, the average SAT score was 2300, and the average PSAT was 1484 out of 1520. Furthermore, among the Coolidge Senators, as we call the top 100, the lowest reported Grade Point Average was 3.91. This is a crop of candidates any college would envy.

It was clear from the start that not only the money but also the Coolidge connection attracted the students. Wrote one candidate: "My current teacher refers to Coolidge as an insignificant president, but for me, a president willing to uphold America's moral principles is unforgettable." Wrote another: "Calling this opportunity the Coolidge 'Scholarship' is quite humble, as it carries not only the financing of college education but real world values that cannot be obtained anywhere else."

Handling this many candidates well and respectfully took incredible work. Two pairs of eyes reviewed each application: executive director Matt Denhart hired outside readers experienced in university admission to rate the candidates. After Matt and his staff reviewed the 2360, they were able to bring the number down to 1,400 — then a hundred. Nine semifinals juries in Houston, Raleigh, New York, Boston, Rutland, Los Angeles, Hanover, and Washington, D.C. met to evaluate the top 100 candidates. These juries and the Foundation then recommended one finalist each to the finals committee. That committee was led by former National Endowment for the Humanities chair Bruce Cole, who was joined by Baltimore's former mayor Kurt Schmoke, former congressman J.C. Watts, former governors Jim Douglas, Mitch Daniels and Bobby Jindal, Professor Wilfred McClay of the University of Oklahoma, Judge Edith Jones of the Fifth Circuit, investor Richard Chilton, and Coolidge trustees JW Childs and Milt Valera.

For years the Coolidge Foundation has spoken of "going national," but has lacked the resources to do so. Now we are preparing to do so. Raising funds for major scholarships is a national project, and one which will require significant support from donors across the nation. It's important to point out why these

expansions and endeavors are possible. The first is our excellent partnership with the state of Vermont, and its Division for Historic Preservation. Especially key to this partnership is Laura Trieschmann, Vermont's State Historic Preservation Officer. Year round the curator at the site, William Jenney and his team collaborate with us in planning and executing complex events. We appreciate this support and are eager to continue to strengthen this already-substantial partnership.

The second reason we can expand is the work of executive director Mathew Denhart. Along with program associate Rushad Thomas and the rest of the Foundation team, Matt has launched a number of new projects. For three summers now Matt's team has hosted any number of camps and events, stabilizing the Foundation and establishing new traditions that will abide for years to come. This year Matt welcomes a newcomer Rob Hammer, a graduating senior at Matt's own Ohio University commences as an associate in January. Our board and membership cannot thank this group enough, especially Matt and Rushad, who moved to New England from New York and Florida because of their admiration of President Coolidge. The Foundation features a new stability now that will enable us to fulfill our old ambition of scaling up and establishing a firm national presence for Coolidge. In seven years the nation will celebrate the centennial of Coolidge's presidency. The Coolidge Foundation needs to be national if it is going to take the lead in that project.

Three winners were in the end selected – the last coming thanks to last minute financing for a third “Coolidge.” The first is Regan Brady of Shaker Heights, Ohio. Ms. Brady has become a star student despite a serious handicap: she was born profoundly deaf. An advocate for the deaf, Ms. Brady is an especially appropriate winner because of First Lady Grace Coolidge's lifelong work with the deaf, both in the White House and at the Clark School for the deaf, where she was first a teacher and then later, with the President, a major donor. The second winner is, as the president was, a debater: Josh Moriarty, nationally ranked, attends a public magnet school in New York City, Hunter College High School. The third winner prizes classical languages, just as the president did: Samuel Reddick of Bartlett, Tennessee. Reddick attends Tennessee's Evangelical Christian School.

As much standouts as Regan, Josh, and Sam were, the other top 97 were highly impressive too. Our Foundation therefore aims to keep contact with these Senators. The first step: we have invited the top 45 to fly in from across the country to spend a weekend this August in Washington, D.C. learning about the presidency and leadership as guests of the Coolidge Foundation and our cohost, the White House Historical Association. For this project, we have received a grant from the JM Foundation in New Jersey. However, it turns out demand has far outstripped supply. We invite you to sponsor a Coolidge senator from your region – the cost for one student is \$1500. Your connection with your senator will last far longer than his or her summer trip. You will have the gratification of knowing you have given a youth a lifelong appreciation of the President.

Representing Coolidge ourselves is also part of our work. In the past two years, on your behalf, I have spoken in many places across the nation on Coolidge, including Grand Rapids, Michigan, Charlotte, North Carolina, and Houston. Especially gratifying was the chance to give the National Heritage lecture at the White House Historical Association, an institution with whom we will also be able to work with in future. Staffers Rushad Thomas and Rob Hammer brought Coolidge to the Dallas Urban Debate League and the Connecticut Debate Association for two of our preliminary Coolidge Cup tournaments. Rushad has also represented the Foundation at Salt Lake City and here in Vermont at St Johnsbury Academy to promote the Calvin Prize for Vermont Youth. Rushad made several appearances on Vermont local

access TV programs to share President Coolidge's story with the greater Vermont community. Our sense is that the country is only waiting for this president, and many more Americans are beginning to consider trips to the Notch. This very summer, through our debate programs, students from every region visited.

This annual report finds us bidding farewell to two long time trustees: Christopher Coolidge Jeter and Roby Harrington. Through their professionalism both have elevated our board: we could not have even attempted “going national” without these trustees. Several new trustees have joined the Foundation in the past year. Recently we inaugurated J.W. Childs of Boston and Norfolk, Ct., who has contributed 1.5 Coolidge Scholarship pilots. In addition, Robert Luddy of Wake Forest and Raleigh has joined our board: you may see Robert and his wife Maria at the Notch if you are here for the Fourth. These new trustees and old friends will all be working very hard in the coming year to bring the world to Coolidge and to take Coolidge to the world. All these changes were not easy, and I would like to thank not only members but this board, as well as the town of Plymouth and the state of Vermont, for their tremendous support. We are confident that the Coolidge Scholarship and Coolidge debate will raise the president’s name to new heights. The current election year only highlights the need for Coolidge values such as respect, civility, and debt reduction. Thank you for enabling us to advance those values and elevate the President from Vermont.

Sincerely,



Amity Shlaes, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Upcoming programs and activities:

- August 3-6, 2016 – Debate with Houston’s Pro Vision Charter School at the Notch. Twenty students from Houston will join us for a multi-night program with debate instruction at the Notch.
- August 6, 2016 -- Old Home Day in Plymouth Notch. Events include a naturalization ceremony and a re-enactment of the 1923 Homestead Inauguration.
- August 19-21, 2016 – Coolidge “Senators” weekend in Washington, D.C.
- October 5, 2016 – “The Logic of Markets and the Chief Business of America” –Yei Wing Zhang, leading Chinese economist. Cohost: Marketfield Asset Management.
- December 14, 2016 – Fourth Annual Coolidge Gala. This year’s theme: a Coolidge Christmas. Featured singer, Jenny Sayles Harville. Speaker: Steve Forbes.