

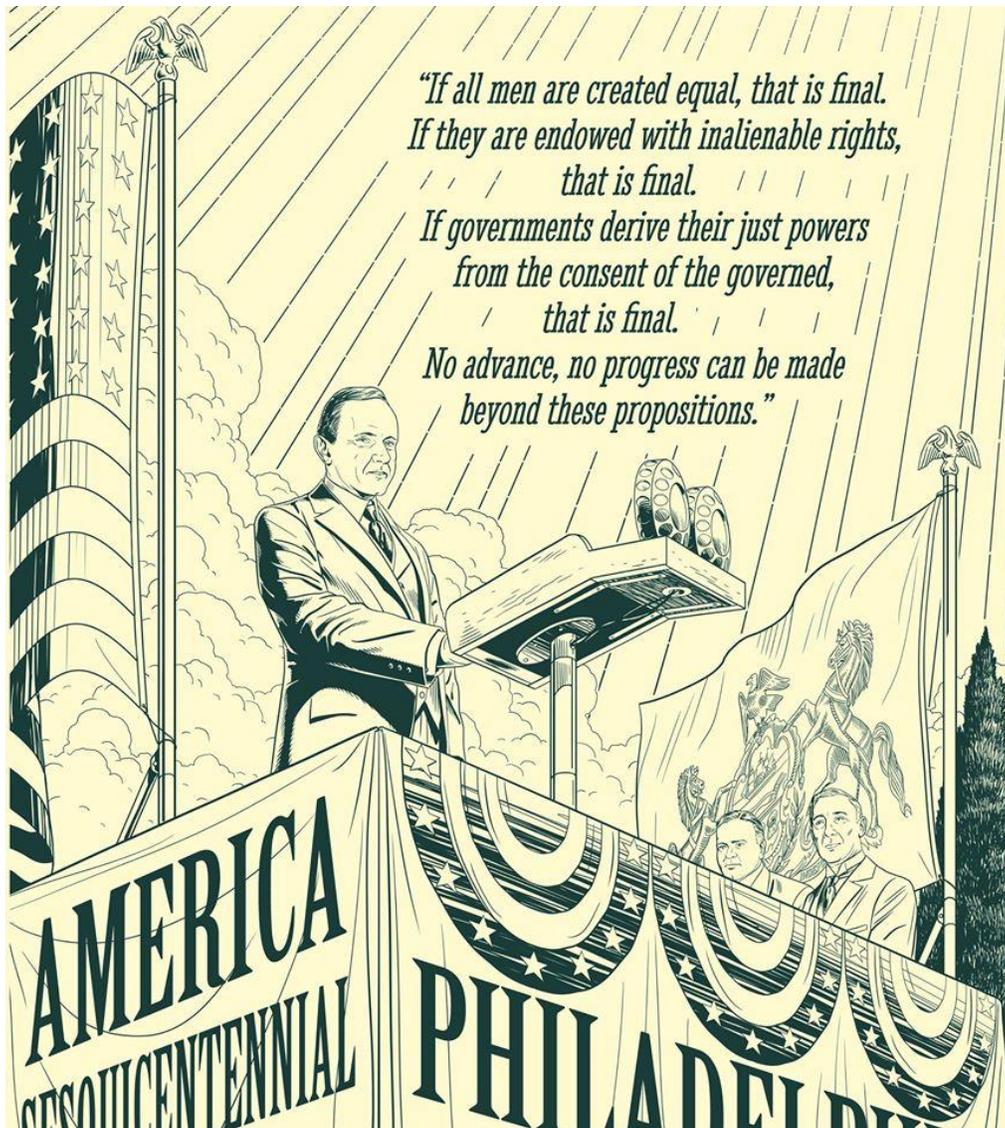


Calvin Coolidge
CALVIN COOLIDGE PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION

Chairman's Report

Annual Meeting

July 3, 2020



"If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth and their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people." – Calvin Coolidge in "Inspiration of the Declaration," a speech given July 5, 1926 at Philadelphia

"Our greatest need is to live in harmony, in friendship, and in good-will, not seeking an advantage over each other but all trying to serve each other." – Vice President Calvin Coolidge, speech at Tuskegee, February 12, 1923

This year finds America contemplating the meaning of civil rights and our country's history. President Coolidge believed strongly in the principle of equality of individuals. Meanwhile, recognizing that America had not always fully lived up to the promise of its ideals, Coolidge worked to advance the cause of civil rights and opportunity in America. Coolidge is known, with good reason, as a thrifty president. He did not believe the government could or should do everything, and twice vetoed, for example, federal pensions for veterans. Coolidge did however believe the federal government should fund veterans' hospitals when it could. And he took especial care to see that black veterans received quality treatment. While vice president, Coolidge spoke of, and supported, a new veterans hospital at Tuskegee, Alabama, reminding the public that black veterans of World War I deserved America's gratitude and care. As president, Coolidge, breaking his own stereotype as Scrooge, backed federal funding for a medical school at Howard University. Coolidge spoke at Howard, the last president to do so until President Lyndon Johnson.

Coolidge said that "education should be the handmaid of citizenship." He believed citizens must be well educated, knowing the success of self-government hinged on citizens' ability to make informed decisions. Coolidge saw that educated citizens – even in the most divided of periods – have much in common, and urged Americans to come together in common citizenship. That is why the Coolidge Foundation has made it a priority for many years to educate young Americans, not only on the topic of Calvin Coolidge, but also on the rights and obligations of citizenship. In short, our work aims to illuminate what one could call Coolidge citizenship.

The education in Coolidge citizenship starts at Plymouth Notch, where throughout the year Vermont classes come to visit the President's boyhood home. There is no better way to understand President Coolidge than to visit the Notch. On their visits, students see the rooms where Coolidge himself first learned about the responsibilities of citizenship while attending town meetings with his father. They tour the general store, the barns, and the cheese factory where young Calvin learned about hard work, thrift, and enterprise. They get a glimpse at the room in the Homestead where Coolidge assumed the most powerful office in the land in the humblest of settings. And of course they trek down to the Plymouth town cemetery to see the nondescript grave of the thirtieth president. To visit Plymouth Notch is truly to understand the meaning of service.

Our volunteer docents support the state of Vermont in its work at the Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site. Our two educators, debate director Jared Rhoads and John Ferrell, lead and organize tours and work with the state of Vermont. In addition, in every year but this one, the Foundation brings high school debaters, coaches, and judges from across the nation to compete at the Notch for the Coolidge Cup, a prestigious national debate prize. The Foundation believes so much in the educational power of physical place that we support the travel of all these youth to Vermont, as well as their accommodation when they arrive. In other years, the students get a full experience: they attend a naturalization ceremony of new Americans, enjoy fireworks, debate under elegant tents and compete in a Coolidge trivia contest. Those who attended the Coolidge Cup and Fourth of July events in Plymouth last year will remember that in 2019 we joined the state of Vermont in hosting one of the largest crowds ever, and that youth and adults mixed in a wonderful jamboree-like atmosphere.

When it comes to events in the year of Covid-19, we follow the lead of local authorities, whether in the state of Vermont or elsewhere. We expect that readers will understand that many of the plans listed below are subject to the changing conditions and rules relating to the virus. This year, unfortunately, our

Fourth will be mostly virtual. The White House will still be sending a wreath that will be laid upon President Coolidge's grave in a small ceremony with the Vermont National Guard, members of the Coolidge family, and representatives from the Coolidge Foundation and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. The public is welcome to witness the wreath-laying ceremony from an adequate distance. The Foundation also will be providing roses at the cemetery and invites the public to come and pay their respects and lay a rose on the President's grave throughout the day.

While Plymouth Notch provides the base for the Coolidge Cup, our debate program is of course national. Our Coolidge League is ably overseen by debate director Jared Rhoads. Thanks to the support of the Luddy Schools of North Carolina, a string of independent, charter and parochial secondary schools founded by Coolidge Foundation trustee Robert Luddy and his wife Maria, we host Coolidge debate preliminaries for the Coolidge Cup throughout the year at these institutions. We also work with numerous other leagues around the country to identify qualifiers for the Coolidge Cup.

Our debaters always argue timely topics. This year, Coolidge Cup debaters will weigh the merits and demerits of quarantine shutdowns. In past school years students have debated topics including: how to address the national debt, the carbon tax, universal basic income, school vouchers, universal single-payer health insurance, immigration, free trade, the capital gains tax, the value of higher education, forgiveness of student loan debt, and the reform of Social Security. Another Coolidge Foundation investment when it comes to debate is that we bring in adult experts, often professors or policy leaders, to teach the debaters and help them prepare for their tournaments. Among our teachers this year is the world's leading expert in the economics of cities, Professor Edward Glaeser of Harvard. Past speakers, among others, include Professor Douglas Irwin of Dartmouth (on trade); Professor Alicia Munnell (former Federal Reserve official, and an expert on the economics of retirement), Professor Mike Munger of Duke University, William Beach, current U.S. Labor Commissioner at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Professor Richard Vedder of Ohio University.

Foundation members and Coolidge friends play a critical role in the debate program by serving as judges. Over the past eight years, many members of the Vermont community have honored us by serving as citizen judges at our tournaments. Coolidge debate programs have over time acquainted more than 2,000 youngsters from across the nation with New England and Calvin Coolidge, as well as Coolidge principles. In the past half-decade the Coolidge Foundation has invested significant resources in debate sponsorships, debate prizes, and scholarships to Coolidge Debate Camp or for attendance at the Coolidge Cup. Thank you to all who have supported this most worthwhile program. An impact sheet highlighting debate program accomplishments is included in the appendix to this report.

The Foundation's second major national initiative is the Coolidge Scholarship. The Coolidge Scholarship is a four-year full ride college scholarship for academic merit. The competitors enter the contest in the fall of their junior years of high school and receive word of the outcome in spring of their junior year. Coolidge scholarship candidates may attend any U.S. college to which they are admitted. Each student candidate must write two essays on Calvin Coolidge, one on Coolidge values and one on a special topic. (They also write a third essay, a personal statement.) This year 3,400+ candidates competed for three prizes. When those prizes are awarded, there will be 16 Coolidge Scholars. Ten semifinal-round juries led the selection of the Coolidge Scholarship finalists, and the winners of this year's contest will be announced in mid-July. Thousands of teachers, coaches and mentors provided recommendations for these candidates. Each one receives a voucher to claim a free ticket to tour the

Notch. The finals session of our scholarship competition, which normally takes place at the Notch, must likewise take place online this year.

Every year the Foundation also names 100 Coolidge Senators, selecting them from among the top students who compete for the Coolidge Scholarship. The Foundation hosts the Senators in two separate weekends at Coolidge House in Washington, where they tour all three branches of government and learn about Coolidge values, with a special emphasis placed on the importance of the private sector. Each year Governor Jim Douglas, Coolidge Foundation vice-chair, joins the Coolidge Senators in Washington to share his experience of the Vermont Way with the students.

Our new Washington perch, Coolidge House, is a work in progress. Many friends of Coolidge have donated furniture and other gifts to furnish the house, located at 3425 Prospect Street, NW, in Washington's Georgetown neighborhood. Some hundred families contributed folding seats for students in our "Endow a Chair" campaign. A series of drawings chronicling Coolidge's life by artist Paul Rivoche, now near complete, hangs on the wall on the second floor. A sample of Mr. Rivoche's work, at the top of this document, is a drawing of "The Inspiration of the Declaration" speech at Philadelphia. Jim and Elizabeth Fisher of Kindel, a fine furniture company, have supplied quality reproductions in the House's Georgian style at generous discount, and Coolidge donors have purchased multiple pieces through our "Make a House a Home" campaign. Donor Gibboney Huske and trustees Jennifer McCain and Sandra Gale have given numerous quality items. Garland and Greyson Tucker funded the expansion of our patio so that Coolidge House may host sizeable outdoor events in future. In 2019, Coolidge House was host to a few events, including one on the intellectual background upon which Coolidge drew to build his own philosophy (speaker: Coolidge Foundation trustee Ambassador C. Boyden Gray). When events are possible again, seminars and lectures on Coolidge-related topics will continue at Coolidge House. One of the purposes of Coolidge House will be to introduce Americans who have never travelled to New England to Coolidge. We are confident that Coolidge House in Washington will inspire tourists to head to Plymouth Notch.

The 2023 centennial of the Coolidge presidency approaches. In the quarantine period the Foundation continued its 2023 preparation work, signing a contract with a publisher for a new centennial edition of the Coolidge autobiography. In addition, we mounted two new initiatives. The first is the popular "Setting the Record Straight" Coolidge history webinar series, which features knowledgeable speakers in one-hour Zoom seminars. One of our more memorable webinars featured a Coolidge Foundation trustee, the Honorable Kurt Schmoke, former mayor of Baltimore and president of the University of Baltimore. President Schmoke spoke on Coolidge's civil rights record. Another timely webinar featured Coolidge debate director Jared Rhoads, also a health policy scholar, on Coolidge, and the 1918 Influenza Pandemic (Coolidge serving as lieutenant governor at the time, led a drive to recruit nurses and orderlies). Finally, this year we have launched a Coolidge Virtual Library Project. The aim is to digitize and offer all that is available of Coolidge's speeches and key papers on our website. For this project we have recruited volunteer editors, "Coolidge Scribes," who sub edit and also supply their own comment on any Coolidge text they edit. We are gratified by the strong response to our call for volunteers. Nearly 100 "Coolidge Scribes" have contributed to this project. Building the digital library demands many resources. A gift of any amount, no matter the size, will help the Coolidge Virtual Library. Those interested in making a gift to support this project will find our Coolidge Virtual Library campaign on the fundraising website GoFundMe.

On August 1 we will celebrate the anniversary Coolidge's 1923 "Homestead Inauguration," reenacting the famous event. We hope to host this reenactment on the porch of the Homestead in Plymouth Notch, though it may have to take place virtually this year.

At this writing we still expect that the third annual Calvin Coolidge 5k and "I Do not Choose to Run" one-mile walk, set for October 10, to take place in Plymouth Notch.

We plan close out the year with our annual New York Gala, which takes place this year on December 9 at the Union League Club in New York City. Please consider joining us. Our guest speaker will be Anthony Kronman, a law professor at Yale and a former law dean, author of the recent book, "The Assault on American Excellence." Also featured will be Coolidge supporter Mike Keiser, entrepreneur, and founder of the legendary golf center at Bandon Dunes. Mr. Keiser will speak at the reception on entrepreneurship, excellence, and golf.

Our staff members are key to high-quality work. President Matt Denhart, with the Foundation now close to a decade, leads a tremendous team. We employ staff with a record of demonstrated excellence in program and policy. Program director Rob Hammer ably stewards our scholarship process, handling a work load that four or five others might do at a college admissions office, while also overseeing other programming. Jared Rhoads is typical of the high caliber of talent that honors the Foundation by joining us. Mr. Rhoads, who joined us in 2018 as debate director, also serves as lecturer at the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice. Mr. Rhoads serves as director and capstone project advisor at the MPH graduate program. We'd also like to single out our debate fellow, Professor Ben Voth of Southern Methodist University, who has traveled to the Notch for the past seven summers to instruct students and judges in the art of debate. We are grateful to the dedication of John Ferrell who assists all programs and has taken a lead in organizing education visits to the Notch. C.C. Borzilleri and Mr. Ferrell have done a superb job coordinating our new "Coolidge Scribe" volunteer effort. Later this summer William Pettinger will be joining our staff.

As our programs continue to grow around the country, Plymouth Notch remains the heart of our Coolidge education efforts. The state of Vermont maintains this historic site beautifully, enabling our guests, and thousands of others, to learn about Coolidge. We deeply value our strong relationship with the State of Vermont, and thank especially site administrator Bill Jenney along with State Historic Preservation Officer Laura Trieschmann, and Historic Sites Section Chief Tracy Martin.

Thank you, most especially, to our members and supporters who sustain our work and make it all possible.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amity Shlaes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amity" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Shlaes".

Amity Shlaes
Chairman

Appendix A: Debate Program Impact

COOLIDGE DEBATE IMPACT

- SINCE 2013 -

 **>43,000**
 **STUDENTS**
debating Coolidge Foundation topics

 **\$232,000**
INVESTED to bring
1,165 DEBATERS
to Coolidge's Homestead

 Approximately
\$53,000
awarded in **PRIZES**

 nearly
2,100
rounds of **DEBATE**


65+
TOPIC
EXPERTS
have
briefed
debaters

 **390 JUDGES**
have volunteered over **2,200 HOURS**

277 **ROUNDS OF DEBATE** 
on unilateral free trade in 2019

 **4** **COOLIDGE CUP**
NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

All Coolidge Debaters receive briefs on their debate topics detailing the most important arguments for both sides.

15

BRIEFS

100+

AFFIRMATIVE
ARGUMENTS

100+

NEGATIVE
ARGUMENTS

250

PAGES

312

ACADEMIC LEVEL
CITATIONS

Appendix B: Scholarship Program Impact

COOLIDGE SCHOLARSHIP IMPACT

- SINCE 2016 -



Nearly

\$4,200,000

awarded in **SCHOLARSHIPS**



Over

675,000
VISITORS

to coolidgescholars.org

21,816

ESSAYS



written about Calvin Coolidge



Almost

33,000

REFERENCE LETTERS SUBMITTED



216

Coolidge Senators Summit
PARTICIPANTS



13

COOLIDGE
SCHOLARS

169 **\$\$**

STUDENTS

awarded scholarships
at some level



Applicants from all
50 STATES

4

YEARS

13

SCHOLARS

44

FINALISTS

240

SENATORS