

Coolidge and the American Project

Conference Agenda

Day I: The Making of a President, 1872 - 1923

February 16, 2023

Conference Registration, Breakfast

8:00 AM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

Opening Remarks

9:00 AM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

Session I: The Ideas and Ideals that Made Coolidge

9:45 AM - 11:00 AM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

Coolidge grew up in the America of the Founders and of Alexis de Tocqueville. Coolidge's upbringing in Plymouth Notch, Vermont, as well as his work as a town attorney and local politician, helped the future President to understand the power of the American ideal and the limits of government. In this session, speakers will reflect on the American philosophies, laws, rhetoric, faith traditions, and rural village life that made the man.

Session II: The Progressive Challenge of the Early 1900s

11:15 AM - 12:30 PM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, Progressives were on the march. Many Republicans were abandoning the Grand Old Party to team up with advocates of stronger unionism, benefits for disadvantaged groups, or government entry into new sectors of the economy. At the state level, administrative government ballooned. New constitutional amendments altered our national government. As mayor, state senator, lieutenant governor, and then governor, Coolidge confronted the progressive wave. This session examines the challenges Coolidge confronted.

Lunch and Featured Address

12:30 PM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

Session III: Confronting Crisis and Change: State and Local Politics

3:15 PM - 4:30 PM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

State and local politics are often an important training ground for future national leaders. This was certainly true for Calvin Coolidge who served in more elected offices than any other president in American history. Coolidge's years as mayor, state lawmaker, and governor forced him to confront the issues of the day, including in-the-weeds details, budget management, civil rights challenges, and labor unrest – most dramatically during the 1919 Boston Police Strike. This panel will highlight the experience that former mayors and governors bring to policy.

Evening Reception

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM | Room L. J. 119, Thomas Jefferson Building

Featured Toast: The Reign of Law

Special Exhibit: Calvin Coolidge and the 1920s: Where History Met Modern

Curated Exhibit by the Library of Congress

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM | Great Hall, Thomas Jefferson Building

Premiere: *Coolidge: Rediscovering an American President*

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM | Members Room, Thomas Jefferson Building

Documentary Panel

8:00 PM | Members Room, Thomas Jefferson Building

Day II: Coolidge Presidency, Coolidge Achievements

February 17, 2023

Conference Registration, Breakfast

8:45 AM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

Session IV: Holding the Line: Harding-Coolidge Budgeting and Regulation

9:45 AM - 11:00 AM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

The 1920 Republican Party platform supplied a playbook to both President Warren Harding and President Calvin Coolidge. That playbook included budget cuts and tax cuts. Important too was a commitment to ending "persecution of honest business," this last, a complaint about preceding presidencies. This panel concentrates on how first Harding, and then Coolidge, made good on the budget and regulatory promises of their party.

Session V: A Historic Tax Cut Campaign

11:15 AM - 12:30 PM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

Between 1923 and 1929, President Coolidge, Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon, and Congress cut taxes repeatedly, effectively halving the top marginal rate. Coolidge and Mellon's remarkable partnership made such dramatic work possible. So did Mellon's theory of scientific taxation, a 1920s version of supply-side economics. Coolidge's commitment to the moral case for tax cutting was likewise crucial: men deserved to keep what they earned.

Lunch and Featured Address

12:30 PM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

Session VI: The Results of Coolidge Policy: The Roar of the 1920s Economy

2:15 PM - 3:30 PM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

Coolidge economic policy led to an intense surge in innovation. From appliances to electricity and their first automobile, Americans saw life improve in the 1920s. What lessons can we take away from the 1920s record? How do the policies of the 1920s compare with those of the 1930s, and how do the results compare?

Session VII: Mount Rushmore and the Presidency

4:00 PM - 5:15 PM | Montpelier Room, James Madison Building

The Coolidge presidency succeeded so well that Coolidge easily could have won a new term in 1928. Yet while in South Dakota in the summer of 1927, Coolidge announced he would not run, saying later that the country needed to change leaders "from time to time." What are the limits of the presidency?

Closing Reception: Coolidge and the Future

6:30 PM | Great Hall, Thomas Jefferson Building

A Toast to President Coolidge

Conference Speakers

Dr. Eric Adler

John Allison IV

Dr. William Beach

John W. Childs

Dr. John H. Cochrane

The Honorable Christopher Cox

The Honorable Mitchell E. Daniels Jr.

Christopher DeMuth

Matthew Denhart

Craig Fehrman

Steve Forbes

Diana Furchtgott-Roth

Ambassador Richard Graber

Ambassador C. Boyden Gray

Warren Harding III

Dr. Steven F. Hayward

Elizabeth Jane Hemenway

The Honorable French Hill

Richard R. Hough III

Christopher Coolidge Jeter

The Honorable Edith Jones

Seth Lipsky

James Lucier

Dr. Margaret McAleer

The Honorable Jason Miyares

Dr. George H. Nash

The Honorable Kristi Noem

The Honorable Michael R. Pence

The Honorable Art Pope

The Honorable Kurt Schmoke

Amity Shlaes

Dr. Matthew Spalding

The Honorable John H. Sununu

Cal Thomas

Garland S. Tucker III

The Honorable Peter Francis Welch

Kenneth Whyte