

Teaching Students, Teachers, and Citizens What It Means to Be an American.

Contents

Remembering Peter W. Schramm . . . page 2

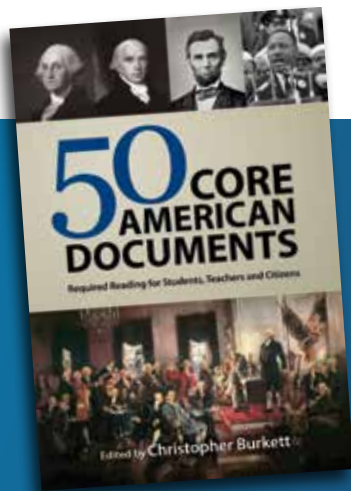
Rediscovering America page 3

Developing Principled Leaders page 4

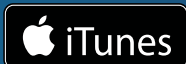
Engaging Students page 5

Inspiring Teachers page 6

Event Highlights page 7



Get the Book
Purchase on Amazon or
download for free on iTunes.



A Message From Roger L. Beckett



Each day, Ashbrook continues its work to educate students, teachers and citizens about what it means to be an American. We focus on teaching with the original documents, letters and speeches of our founders so students can get to know the great American minds and Statesmen that shaped our country and they can become better citizens as a result. One of the major ways we accomplish this is through our **Rediscovering America** Initiative and our movement toward its goal of developing a corps of Ashbrook Teachers in each of the nation’s 35,000 secondary schools. In just over one year, I am pleased to report that we have reached nearly one-third of our goal.

The work we do at Ashbrook is an important effort toward preserving our American freedom. And it is thanks to you, our supporters, that we have the opportunity to make a difference in this country. A man who knew this well was my predecessor, the late Peter W. Schramm who offered these words of reflection on our Ashbrook scholar program:

“When exposed to the minds of Jefferson and Madison and the other founders of our nation, students no longer find the study of American political practice and history boring. It becomes interesting, exciting, thought-provoking. At Ashbrook, we are doing nothing less than breathing new life into the study and appreciation of the American Founding and its principles and creating better citizens as a result. It is one thing to love your country – it is another thing to know *why* you should love it.”

I invite you to read more about our **Rediscovering America** Initiative and the work we do inside the pages of this newsletter. At Ashbrook, we believe America’s best days are ahead. Thank you for your continued support.

Roger Beckett

Roger L. Beckett, Executive Director

50 Core American Documents Required Reading for Students, Teachers, and Citizens

This carefully selected collection of documents reveals both sides of the major issues of American history and government and is meant to provide a kind of American political dialogue to readers, an ongoing conversation about the meaning of freedom and self-government. While reading the Declaration of Independence, questions such as “*consider what is the original purpose of government and why must it derive its powers from the consent of the governed to be just?*” invite readers to join in the dialogue.

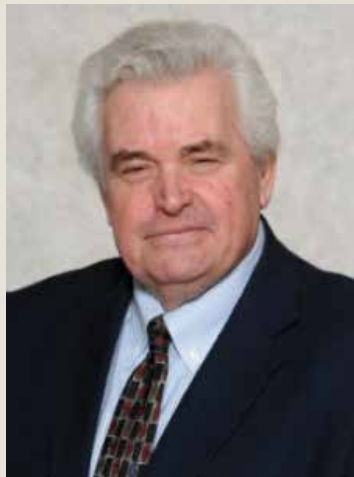
60,000 copies of
50 Core American Documents have been
distributed in print
and e-book versions.

Remembering Peter W. Schramm

12/23/46 - 8/16/15

A Great Souled Man

Peter was born December 23, 1946, in Gyor, Hungary, son of the late William Joseph and Rose Anna Schramm. He and his family risked their lives to flee communist Hungary in 1956 to come to America. Peter's father had always told him, "We were born American, but in the wrong place." So, for his tenth birthday, his father gave him America.



Out of gratitude for the freedom that had been given to him, and love for all that was worthy of love in his adopted country, Peter devoted his life to studying and teaching the principles of American freedom.

Beginning in 1987, he served as Associate Director, Executive Director, and Senior Fellow of the Ashbrook Center at Ashland University in Ohio, whose mission is to restore and strengthen the capacities of the American people for constitutional self-government. As a full professor at Ashland University and Director of the Ashbrook Scholar Program, Peter was a beloved teacher to generations of students, who learned from this immigrant the foundations of American self-government and the virtues required of a free people.

Peter was a great souled man, with a love of life that was contagious. He gathered cherished friends around him wherever he was, including his students, and enlisted them in the joyous pursuit of everything that is good and beautiful and true. His gift for teaching was part of his gift of friendship, and the soul of it was love: love of the inexhaustible goodness of the world, in the light of which Peter sought to live; love of his friends; and love of America. As he wrote to a friend in his last days, "I cannot believe my great good fortune that nearing the end of life I can—with friends and happy allies—employ whatever gifts I have left on behalf of saving our country and making it worthy of the saving."

For Dr. Peter Schramm

The first question he ever asked me was whether I knew why the word "school" derives from the Greek word for "leisure." I didn't, but he spent the next four years teaching me why.

My parents sat with me in orientation when he told us that no student would be given an A in his class.

He is the reason why, the summer I turned seventeen, I argued with a graduate student at another university about Winston Churchill's *My Early Life* and the Boer War.

He once asked a group of us, "What is the whatness of an acorn?" And we were his smirking intelligence when someone finally answered, "A tree."

He is the late nights spent with John Locke, early mornings with Machiavelli, daily life with Plato and Aristotle.

He is the printed report card my freshman year sitting on top of my dad's newspaper — proof that I had, in fact, earned an A- in his class.

He is the way we read, question, wonder, understand, feel in our very marrow what it all means:

to be political (social) animals,
to be men and women,
to be Americans,
to be human beings.

He, in his leather jacket and striped button-up, cowboy boots resting on a desk littered by Xenophon, Ellison, Lincoln, laughing with his entire body and believing with his entire soul.

The last question I'll ever ask him is, Do you know?

Do you know what it meant to me, to us, and to everyone who has ever had the pleasure of meeting you, or of meeting us in turn?

It means everything.

You say you were born American, but in the wrong place.

Thank God for us — the timing of your life has been perfectly right.

Samantha Vajskop '08

“His office was always full of students wanting to tear off a bit of wisdom. Schramm probably missed more than a few meetings to continue these conversations, which ranged from an obscure passage of Plato, to a moving line of poetry, to practical questions of life and happiness. Schramm taught his students how to think and live well, how to be prudent and judge wisely, how to seek the just and the true.”

Jason Stevens
Class of 2008
& Professor of Political Science
at Ashland University

“And this is the legacy of Peter Schramm. Not shelves of books or writings, but his students: walking, breathing legacies that both internalize and externalize the principles of equality, beauty, citizenship, and manliness he taught and demonstrated in his way, American ideas to be constantly on the minds of his students.”

Dantan Wernecke
Class of 2011

“There are no words of thanks I could say to him that would repay adequately his gifts to me. Almost everything that is good in me that came into being in the seven years I have known him can be attributed to him.”

Josh Distel
Class of 2011



Rediscovering America

An Ashbrook Teacher in Every School

The Problem

Recent studies have shown that we are a nation quickly losing touch with our history and our founding principles.

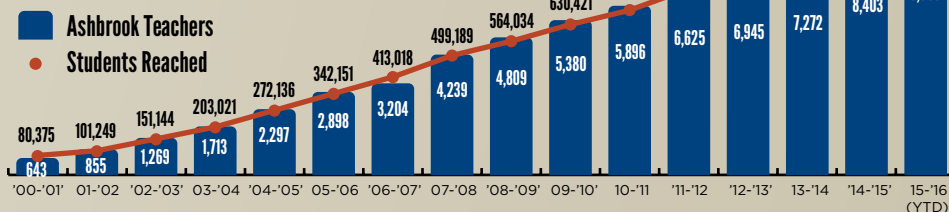
In April, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores were released on the topics of U.S. History and Civics, and the results were abysmal. They also reflect a disturbing trend, as test scores show no statistical improvement over the past four years.

The problem is not our teachers, but how our teachers are trained. Teachers spend too much time learning how to teach and not enough time learning what to teach. Without a major change in how teachers are taught, we will raise yet another generation of students who don't understand what it means to be an American.

The Solution

Ashbrook is transforming the way American history and civics are taught in America's classrooms with the goal of putting an Ashbrook Teacher in every one of the nation's 35,000 secondary schools.

An Ashbrook trained Teacher uses primary source documents to teach their middle and high school students. Original documents are an indispensable path to understanding and affirming the principles of freedom and opportunity essential to being an American. Independent evaluation has shown that Ashbrook Teachers using this method are more effective in increasing student knowledge and an interest in our country.



NAEP Results:

18% of eighth graders score at or above proficient in **HISTORY.**

23% of eighth graders score at or above proficient in **CIVICS.**

“This program is the single greatest thing I've done to improve my teaching ability. Education classes can only take you so far; the less content you know, the less you'll be able to teach to your students. I feel so much more comfortable challenging my students to get deeper into the content because of the confidence I now have in my own knowledge.”

Charles Martindell
Social Studies Teacher
Marion, Ohio

Developing Principled Leaders

Ashbrook Scholar Alumna **Rebecca Heinrichs** is a fellow at the Hudson Institute and a member of the John Hay initiative, and she provides research and commentary on a range of national security issues and specializes in nuclear deterrence, missile defense, and counter-proliferation. Her writing on national security strategy has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, the L.A. Times, National Review Online, The Hill, and other publications, and she has provided commentary on CNN, FoxNews.com, and the Blaze.

After graduating from Ashland University, Heinrichs earned a Masters in National Security and Strategic Studies at the U.S. Naval War College while working as a military legislative assistant for Arizona Congressman Trent Franks. She also graduated with highest distinction from its College of Naval Command and Staff, receiving the Director’s Award for academic excellence.

We recently spoke with Heinrichs about her work:

How did your education as an Ashbrook Scholar prepare you for your work in the highly specialized field of weapons deterrence?

The Scholar program pushed me to think hard about the questions of greatest consequence. Inspiring professors challenged me to examine my opinions and to value thinking properly above winning an argument. They introduced me to Aristotle, Plato, Locke, Xenophon, Thucydides, Lincoln, and the Founders. I was hooked, and I grew to really love our country, not merely because it was mine, but because her Founding principles are right. The September 11th attacks made it clear that America is being attacked from the outside as well as from the inside, and I thought, ‘if we leave her security to relativists, we’re doomed’.

You write remarkably clear, persuasive articles on nuclear strategy and missile defense. Did the Scholar program help you hone your writing skills?

I learned as a Scholar that to write clearly, one must think clearly, and muddled writing is often the result of

muddled thinking. I’m constantly working to improve my writing—and the more I research and read, the better my writing gets, I think.

You are an expert on nuclear deterrence strategy and missile defense, policy concerns less frequently addressed in the years since the end of the Cold War. Should we discuss these issues more often?

Deterrence isn’t a popular subject because it seems outdated, it’s complex, and it doesn’t boil down to a sound-bite very well. Yet we neglect it at our peril. People worried more about a nuclear attack when the United States and Soviet Union threatened each other with mutually assured destruction. Then President Reagan argued in his Strategic Defense Initiative speech that this policy was neither safe nor moral; he challenged industry to build a defensive system to protect against missile attack. We do not have the space-based system President Reagan envisioned, but we have a limited system able to defend against some kinds of missile threats. But the threat landscape today is perhaps more precarious than it was during the Cold War. Russia and China continue to improve their strategic systems. North Korea has nuclear weapons and Iran has an illicit nuclear and missile program. Each regime is unique and requires different calculations for deterrence, so a truly robust defensive system, as well as a credible and flexible nuclear deterrent, has become all the more important.

What is the best reason to pursue a missile defense system?

Our country is exceptional and worth defending. What the Founders said in the Declaration is still true: God created all men with equal value and gave them the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But there are ideologies that are directly opposed to these principles. Those who hold to those ideologies often challenge the U.S. and, in some cases, seek to destroy her. The enemies of the U.S. can inflict the greatest harm on the U.S. with nuclear or other mass casualty weapons, so we must deter and defend against them.



Rebecca Heinrichs is a 2004 graduate of the Ashbrook Scholar program. She currently resides in Arlington, Virginia with her husband and their children.

Engaging Students

Ashbrook Academy

This summer, Ashbrook welcomed 33 high school students from across the country for the week-long Ashbrook Academy. Students studied the American experiment in self-government through examination and discussion of the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and other original documents.

Over the course of one week, students were given a glimpse of what it would look like to be an Ashbrook Scholar. Each day, the students sat in class with some of the best professors at Ashland—the late Peter Schramm, Jeff Sikkenga, and Chris Burkett. Together, they examined documents and speeches that have most shaped the character of our nation. Students had the opportunity to answer and examine questions such as “What makes Americans ‘one people?’”

The students were introduced to a classroom-based discussion rather than lectures in which all the materials used were primary source documents. This method resonated well: *“Reading the original thinkers allowed me to have my own way of thinking and an original path – not a secondhand one.”*

By the end of the last class, students had acquired a deep understanding of the fundamental principles that define and unite us as Americans.

Former U.S. Attorney General John D. Ashcroft came to the campus of Ashland University to participate in the inauguration of Dr. Carlos Campo as Ashland University’s 30th President. Prior to the event, Ashcroft spent time with the Ashbrook Scholars at a breakfast where he spoke about liberty and leadership and hosted a question and answer session with the Ashbrook Scholars.

Ashbrook scholars Kayla Gowdy and Tara Marasco pose for a photo with Presidential Candidate Donald Trump at a recent event in Washington.



Peter W. Schramm Scholarship

A heartfelt thanks to those who have already graciously pledged your support for the Peter W. Schramm Scholarship fund. We have heard many of you say that you recognized some of your own feelings of appreciation in the stories shared by past students. To help us carry on the legacy of Peter W. Schramm and continue to great work of educating the next generation of principled leaders, please consider helping to endow this scholarship by sending in your envelope. You can also give online at www.ashbrook.org/donate



Teacher Programs

Buchwald Summer Fellowships

This Summer, as part of our **Rediscovering America** Initiative, Ashbrook awarded 86 teachers with the competitive Buchwald Summer Fellowship. Middle- and high-school teachers chosen as Buchwald Summer Fellows received the full cost of tuition, room, board and books to participate in a rigorous week-long summer graduate course offered through Ashbrook's Master of Arts in American History and Government (MAHG) program, the nation's only MA degree program developed specifically for history and government teachers. Participants in the course earn two graduate credit hours from Ashland University.

"Ashbrook's Buchwald Summer Fellowship recipients were able to study the ideas that motivated the people who have shaped our nation's history by reading what these individuals said and wrote at the time," said MAHG program Director Chris Pascarella. "The Fellows then engaged in discussion-based seminars, led by nationally prominent faculty members distinguished for their teaching and scholarship, and engaged with other teachers about the meaning and importance of the 'core documents' under discussion."

The courses ran throughout June and July. Course topics included the American Revolution, the Constitution Ratification Debate, the Civil War and Reconstruction, America During the Cold War, and others.

The Buchwald Summer Fellowships are named in honor of Jim Buchwald, founder of the Mount Vernon, OH-based Ariel Corporation, which provided funding for the program in an effort to help the Ashbrook Center educate secondary school teachers in our country's founding principles.



Religion in American History Program held in Newport, Rhode Island

Thanks to generous support from Ambassador John L. Loeb, Jr. and the George Washington Institute for Religious Freedom (GWIRF), Ashbrook was able to conduct a meeting in Newport, Rhode Island on May 1-3, 2015, to discuss religious liberty in American history, which included a session to develop related online educational resources for teachers. Drawing inspiration from George Washington's letter to the Hebrew Congregation and visits to the Loeb Visitor Center and the historic Touro Synagogue, Ashbrook Senior Fellow David Tucker led the program involving 16 teachers from the Ashbrook Center's MAHG degree program. Other participating scholars included Sarah Morgan Smith, a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and a collaborator in the ongoing development of the Ashbrook Center's Religion in American History project. With close collaboration of teachers and scholars, the Newport meeting produced results that will ensure that the website will be as valuable to teachers as possible.

Building on the initial support from Ambassador Loeb, Ashbrook is happy to report that thanks to a grant from the Diehl Family Foundation, some of the teachers who attended the planning meeting in Newport reconvened on the Ashland University campus in June with several other teachers to spend time assembling and creating the materials identified at the Newport planning session. Working with David Tucker and Sarah Morgan Smith, the teachers will create the religious liberty section of the "Religion in American History and Politics" website, with the aim to make the website the authoritative portal for secondary school teachers and students. To bring this program to completion, the William H. Donner Foundation provided a grant to fund the technology cost of programming the site.



"Religion in American History" Website Exhibit

Visit Ashbrook's teacher resource website www.tah.org to view the newly launched Religion in American History website exhibit.

Event Highlights



Live GOP Post-Debate Coverage Show

The Ashbrook Center proudly hosted Cleveland News Station 19 Action News on Thursday, August 6 for a post debate coverage show. The show featured a panel with 10 local panelists and was filmed live from the Ashbrook Center.

◆ Ashbrook scholar Brooke Branson (bottom row, 2nd from R) and Ashbrook alum Sam Mariscal (top L) join community representatives to participate in live post-GOP debate forum.

Ambassador John Bolton

On September 2, Congressman Pat Tiberi hosted a Town Hall Meeting Featuring A Discussion On The Iran Nuclear Deal with special guest Ambassador John Bolton, Former Ambassador to the United Nations. The event was held in conjunction with the Ashbrook Center at Ashland University, with Executive Director Roger Beckett acting as the moderator for the question and answer portion of the meeting.

L-R: Ashland University President Carlos Campo, Congressman Pat Tiberi, Ashbrook Scholar Brooke Branson, Ambassador John Bolton, Ashbrook Scholar Kelly Ranttila, and Ashbrook Executive Director Roger Beckett



Constitution Day

On September 17, 1787, the Constitutional Convention met for the last time to sign the document they had created. They sent it on to the people in the several states for ratification. September 17 has been called, ever since, Constitution Day. The Ashbrook Center at Ashland University celebrates Constitution Day by holding a public lecture commemorating the great charter of our liberties.

◆ Ashbrook Senior Fellow Dr. Gordon Lloyd spoke on the topic of “Madison’s Republic” at Ashbrook’s 17th Annual Robert E. Henderson Constitution Day Lecture held on Thursday, September 17. Lloyd also led the group through the interactive Constitutional Convention exhibit available online at tah.org/convention

 Ashbrook *UPDATE*

Save the Date!



Ashbrook Center will be hosting an evening with best selling author and popular co-host of “Fox and Friends” Brian Kilmeade at Mansfield’s Renaissance Theater on Friday, January 22, 2016.

Kilmeade will speak on his new book *THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE TRIPOLI PIRATES: The Forgotten War That Changed American History*.

Stay tuned to ashbrook.org for more information.

.....

