



## **A LEGAL REVOLUTION: *Virginia Leads in Liberty, 1776 / 2026***

**Virginia's inspiration in our Nation's founding was essential. Free of Royal control by the end of 1775, Virginians took the leading role in the concepts and documents which are the foundations of our Republic.**

VA-250, in conjunction with VBA and VLF will organize a trio of convocations at the public law schools across Virginia exploring these founding fathers as leaders and lawyers and who enabled America to become the greatest example of individual liberty and opportunity in the world.

Modelled after the Civil Rights Institute at Monticello, the convocations will feature public seminars by distinguished law professors, legal practitioners, judges and historians on the vital contributions of these Founding Father to the cause of American liberty, and their continuing essential relevance to modern America. These discussions will include an acknowledgement and exploration of the wealth and privilege of these men and the inherent hypocrisies of a flawed historical era.

Speakers and panelists will be invited after consultation between the sponsors and the respective law schools.

### ***The goals of these convocations are:***

- 1. Confirm Virginia's role as the Nation's Revolutionary intellectual leader, in both 1776 and 2026.**
- 2. Celebrate the achievements of Virginia's Founding Fathers.**
- 3. Acknowledge the flaws and hypocrisies of the Founding Era, but note the enduring character of Revolutionary ideas.**
- 4. Highlight Virginia's public law schools and historic sites of the Founders.**

## AN ENDURING LEGACY:

Convocation proceedings will be recorded and made available for media distribution, reporting in legal and historical publications of national interest, as well as being featured in the schools' respective law reviews.

Each convocation will be paired with a commemorative event at the home of its respective Founding Father.

Each commemorative event will be accompanied by a celebratory and ceremonial plaque dedication, coordinated with the Virginia Sons of the American Revolutions, Sons of the Revolution in Virginia, and Virginia Daughters of the American Revolution.

Each plaque will be augmented by a Road to Revolution installation, with a QR code linking the visitor to the AV-250 website and law school, highlighting the convocation topics.

The events and plaques will be linked to interpretative text describing the importance of Virginia's "legal revolution" to the Nation's founding. Interpretative panels will also be available for display at public schools, municipal sites and local museums across the Commonwealth.





**Autumn, 2025:**

**George Wythe & Patrick Henry-- *Fathers of Freedom.***

The Revolution could not have occurred without these men.

**George Wythe** educated and influenced the Virginians who became our Founding Fathers. Jefferson, Washington, Peyton and Edmund Randolph, all benefitted from Wythe’s brilliant mind, and quiet pursuit of power derived from the people, freedom of conscience. His greatest goal was the importance of an independent judiciary-- cemented By John Marshall as the concept of judicial review-- which has extended the promise of individual liberty to all Americans, ranging from Brown v Board of Education to Loving V. Virginia, and Obergefell v. Hodges.

**Patrick Henry** was the original activist attorney. A decade before the Revolution he courageously put career and life at risk by speaking against the established church, taxation without representation, and the tyranny of unrepresentative government. Culminating in his immortal “*Liberty or Death*” speech, he became the “Voice of the Revolution.” Henry made the cause of independence popular, speaking to, and for, the common people who became the future citizens of our Republic.



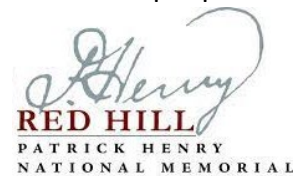
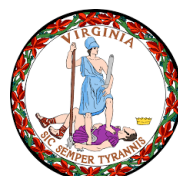
VHMC’s *John Marshall Center for Constitutional History and Civics*, and the *National Center for State Courts*, will be invited to co-sponsor.



The *U.S. Attorney General* will be invited to deliver the keynote address.

Two commemorative events are proposed: the Wythe House in Colonial Williamsburg concurrently with the convocation, and at *Patrick Henry’s Red Hill*, on a convenient date.

The Governor of the Commonwealth will be invited to dedicate the commemorative plaques.



**Spring, 2026:**



UNIVERSITY  
of VIRGINIA

SCHOOL of LAW

## **Thomas Jefferson-- *Author of Equality.***

The many conflicting theories of the Continental Congress were distilled into an immortal document by Thomas Jefferson, and the complex nature of Jefferson's life is reflected both in the Declaration of Independence and the nation it created. A call to liberty, which at the time did not apply to two-thirds of the nation. A bold assertion of equality, from the pen of man who owned others and dismissed Native Americans as savage. Unresolved issues which led to civil war-- yet also to civil rights.

Jefferson's words in the ensuing 250 years have been relied upon time and again—to bring liberty to the enslaved, equality to women, and freedom in everything from the choice of drinking fountains, to whom one can marry. It is Jefferson who brought to us soaring principles, shackled with gnawing hypocrisies, that have inspired and motivated ensuing generations to make his words true for all, and applicable to all.



The *Old Dominion Bar Association* will be invited to co-sponsor.



The *Chief Justice of the Commonwealth* will be invited to deliver the keynote address.

The commemorative event will occur at *Monticello*.

The *Vice President of the United States* or alternatively the *Secretary of State* will be invited to dedicate the commemorative plaque.



**Autumn, 2026:**



## **George Mason-- *First Citizen.***

Mason is the cornerstone of our constitutional Republic. Distilling the Enlightenment concepts of liberty and individual rights and power into clear and strong words, he authored the Virginia Declaration of Rights—preceding and inspiring the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights. Mason confirmed the rights of private citizens to disagree with, protest against, and change their government as they wish—enabling the 1776 *promise* of freedom to be extended to all Americans in the ensuing 250 years. Mason’s principles have found their way into the founding concepts of almost all democracies since, beginning with France’s 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.



*A Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court* will be invited to deliver the keynote address.

The commemorative event will occur at *Gunston Hall*.

The *Ambassador of France* will be invited to dedicate the commemorative plaque.



## **FUNDING REQUEST:**

**VA-250 is respectfully requested to fund this project as a Signature Event, in the amount of \$272,000.**

**VBA and VLF will provide all planning, staffing and logistical services, in conjunction with the respective law schools and any co-sponsors.**

**In addition, VBA and VLF will solicit private sector sponsorships.**

The grant request to VA-250 is divided as follows:

Convocations:	\$225,000 (3@\$75,000) <sup>1</sup>
Historic Site Events:	\$24,000 (4@\$6000) <sup>2</sup>
Commemorative Plaques:	\$8,000 (4@\$2000) <sup>3</sup>
Interpretative Links & Panels:	\$15,000

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<sup>1</sup> Per VLF, the cost of the Civil Rights Institute is \$75,000. It is anticipated additional revenue will be derived from sponsorships.

<sup>2</sup> Additional revenue is anticipated from sponsorships.

<sup>3</sup> Additional funding is anticipated from the Commonwealth's Revolutionary War Graves and Memorial Fund, administered by the SAR.