



# 74 Take Oath of Citizenship at Monticello

Though he had been living in the United States for more than 20 years, Carlos Ramos had never visited Monticello. The native of Mexico was waiting for a special occasion.

It came on the Fourth of July.

Ramos, a Charlottesville resident who owns a landscaping business, was one of 74 adults from 35 different countries who took the oath of U.S. citizenship July 4 during the 41st annual Independence Day Celebration and Naturalization Ceremony on the West Lawn of Thomas Jefferson's home. Three young children, already citizens by virtue of being adopted by American parents, received certificates of citizenship during the proceedings.



Allen H. Neuharth

Prior to the naturalization ceremony – an official session of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia – the assembled crowd of more than 1,500 heard remarks by Allen H. Neuharth, former chairman and chief executive officer of Gannett Co., Inc., and the founder of USA Today and The Freedom Forum.

“It’s a cliché, but it’s still appropriate to say ‘only in America,’” said Neuharth, who traced his own path from boyhood in rural South Dakota to the top position at one of the nation’s largest media companies.

“It doesn’t matter where you are born. What matters is that you are a citizen of the United States of America.”

Neuharth also quoted the Declaration of Independence and told the prospective citizens that its words “should encourage all of us to dream, to dare, to do, as Thomas Jefferson did.”

## *This Issue's Other Stories*

- 🐣 ARCHAEOLOGY
- 🐣 BIRTHDAY BOOK
- 🐣 DEPENDENCIES
- 🐣 EDUCATION GIFT
- 🐣 JEFFERSON CLOTHING
- 🐣 KITCHEN PROJECT
- 🐣 LEWIS & CLARK GIFT
- 🐣 MONTICELLO NICKEL
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- 🐣 PRESIDENT'S LETTER
- 🐣 TRAIL DAMAGE
- 🐣 TUNISIAN ENVOY
- 🐣 WINTER TOUR

# MONTICELLO