

Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO

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Naturalized on the Fourth of July



BECOMING AN AMERICAN CITIZEN MAY NOT HAVE BEEN EASY. In fact, for Ladislava “Ladi” Carr it was a lot of work. Between filling out paperwork and making trips to Northern Virginia, the process was tedious and time-consuming. Plus, Carr had specifics in mind for her naturalization ceremony.

“I knew I wanted to get naturalized at Monticello on the Fourth of July,” said Carr.

But it didn't look like her visions of red, white and blue on the West Lawn were going to come true. Carr's naturalization ceremony was set for May 8 at the courthouse. She decided to reject her first citizenship date.

“My husband was worried about me risking it. He didn't want me to have to go through the process again. You only get three tries,” said Carr.

Taking action into her own hands, Carr wrote to Congressman Tom Perriello.

“I wrote him a long note about how much I am in love with Monticello, Charlottesville and Albemarle County,” said Carr. “Two weeks later I got a letter saying I would be naturalized at Monticello.”



**New American citizen
Ladi Carr with her family
on July 4, 2009**

At the time she wrote the letter, Carr had no idea that Perriello was the scheduled Independence Day and Naturalization Ceremony speaker at Monticello. She was just excited to be one of the few dozen scheduled to say their citizenship vows on the stairs outside Monticello.

Born in the small village of Velkay Ujezd in former Czechoslovakia, Carr first came to America in 1993. She lived in New York for a while, before moving with her husband to

Charlottesville. During her time in Charlottesville, Carr became interested in Thomas Jefferson and his ideas. When she decided to apply for citizenship, she knew there was no other place she would rather be naturalized.

“Being one of the people who was naturalized here, it makes you feel like a special citizen, because it's very few people who can go through that experience. It's pretty amazing,” said Carr.

Thomas Jefferson and Monticello have become such an important part in her life, Carr returns each year to watch new citizens take the oath. Even her son's name has a Jefferson tie. Carr and her husband named him Sebastian Dabney Carr, after Jefferson's childhood best friend, Dabney Carr.

When asked what it means to her to be an American citizen, Carr says, “You are feeling very responsible, like the leader of the free world, in one person. As one person I am representing all these ideas, these thoughts. My first thought is that if people know I'm American, they need to know, feel and believe how good we are, how helpful we can be.”