

# Th. Jefferson

# MONTICELLO

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## From the President

Dear Friends,

As I think about the influence of social networks in our society today, it strikes me that what's old is new again. Born in 1743 on the edge of the wilderness, Thomas Jefferson became part of an influential network over a lifetime of public service and intellectual pursuits. Exercising his passion for politics, science, and philosophy, Jefferson participated in the Republic of Letters—a long-distance community in the late 17th and 18th centuries in which European and American writers and intellectuals aimed to cut across national boundaries. In many ways, Jefferson's network inspires the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's global programs today. Our vision is to engage a global audience in a dialogue with Jefferson's ideas.

The historian Joseph Ellis writes that the unlikely achievements of the early republic were due in large part to the "founding brothers" *personal* relationships. While he was serving in Paris as American minister, Jefferson's friendships expanded as he was introduced by the urbane Benjamin Franklin to the French intelligentsia. As president, Jefferson conceived the Lewis and Clark expedition and purchased Louisiana from France to further his vision of an "empire for liberty" across the continent. When it



came time to prepare Meriwether Lewis for the exploration of the West, Jefferson turned to his learned colleagues in the American Philosophical Society.

Jefferson's legacy continues to draw statesmen and scholars from around the world to Monticello. The Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello plays a central role in the ongoing study of Thomas Jefferson internationally by building a global network of scholars, teachers, and resources. Since 1995, the Center has hosted nearly 300 scholars from around the globe through a program of residential fellowships and travel grants. The Center has organized and sponsored conferences and seminars at Monticello and with universities in the U.S., France, Germany, Britain, Poland, Austria, Russia, Czech Republic, China, Cuba, Australia, and Italy. On page 5 of this issue I hope you'll read about Monticello's November 2012 conference in China, where more than 60 scholars from 12 universities convened to discuss democracy in the age of Jefferson.

Monticello annually sponsors a joint conference with the American Academy of Diplomacy to discuss the importance of diplomacy amid 21st-century national security challenges. The October 26, 2013, conference at Monticello features keynote speaker Lord Paddy Ashdown, with the theme of "Diplomacy and Transition." The proceedings will discuss the requirements of American diplomats in times of foreign political transition—such as the massive transitions that are reshaping governments in the Arab world today.



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Jefferson kept his closest political allies, James Madison and James Monroe, close to Monticello. All three U.S. presidents were present at the laying of the cornerstone of the University of Virginia in 1817. Today, Monticello is part of the Presidential Precinct, a new partnership that draws inspiration from the lives and work of Jefferson, Monroe, and Madison and upon the resources of two world-class universities—the University of Virginia and William and Mary. Through the Precinct we are working with the U.S. State Department to host delegations of international leaders in our region. Amid the power of place of Monticello, Montpelier, and Monroe’s Highlands, we are becoming a destination for dialogue, critical thinking, and collaborative problem solving. The aim is to create a network that fosters democracy and civil society and to develop 21st-century solutions that put core democratic values into political practice in diverse global settings.

What’s old is new again. Monticello’s expanding international programs seek to revive in the 21st century the power of friendship and intellectual exchange among a global network of thought leaders and statesmen.

Sincerely,



*Leslie Greene Bowman, President and CEO*



**A delegation of civil society leaders from 25 countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, visited Monticello and the Presidential Precinct as part of a U.S. State Department International Visitor Leadership Program exchange.**