

# Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO

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## Teach for America Founder **Wendy Kopp** Shares Thoughts for the Future of Education during Jefferson's 270<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

In 1786 Jefferson wrote from Paris to George Wythe, urging him to work with James Madison to ensure that a plan for public education would succeed. "I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised, for the preservation of freedom and happiness."

The next year, while still in Paris, he wrote to Madison: "Above all things I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty."

Addressing a crowd at Monticello's celebration of Jefferson's 270th birthday, Wendy Kopp, the founder and

CEO of Teach for America, evoked Jefferson's vision for universal education.

"Today young leaders are stepping up, driven by their conviction that education is this generation's revolution," said Kopp. "Today the kind of thriving, equitable society Jefferson could only dream of is within our grasp. He might not have fully lived up to the ideals he espoused in his lifetime, but if we recommit ourselves to those principles and invest in the leadership of our rising generation, we can."

Each year, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and the University of Virginia present their highest honors, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation medals in Architecture, Law, and Citizen Leadership,

three areas in which Thomas Jefferson himself excelled.

Kopp received the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medal in Citizen Leadership for her work to inspire a movement to ensure educational opportunity for all.

Kopp accepted this award along with Laurie Olin and Robert S. Mueller III, winners of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation medals in Architecture and Law, respectively.



**Wendy Kopp, Teach For America founder and board chair and Teach For All co-founder and CEO, gave remarks during Monticello's celebration of Jefferson's 270th birthday.**



**Laurie Olin, recipient of the TJF Medal in Architecture; Leslie Greene Bowman, president and CEO of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation; Don King, chairman of the Board of Trustees; and Wendy Kopp, recipient of TJF Medal in Leadership.**

