

Washington's Birthday Salute

On February 22nd, we honor the Father of our Country, George Washington, by celebrating his birth. George Washington clearly defined what it means to be an American, and through his actions, exemplified the meaning of the words, ideals, devotion, and love of country.

Washington's exemplary character and strong leadership as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army held him in good stead as he led his troops to victory. He stated in his General orders in July 1776, "Our own Country's Honor, all call upon us... Let us therefore rely upon the goodness of the Cause, and the aid of the supreme Being, in whose hands Victory is, to animate and encourage us to great and noble Actions."

As President of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, realizing the difficult task ahead he said to the delegates "If, to please the people, we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can, we afterwards defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair. The event is in the hand of God."

Washington's honesty, integrity, and loyalty, set the moral tone of our new nation and made him the most beloved and respected man in America. In 1788, he wrote in a letter, "The first transactions of a Nation, like those of an individual upon his first entrance into life, make the deepest impression, and are to form the leading traits in its character."

In his inaugural address on April 30, 1789, the First President of the United States proclaimed, "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered deeply, perhaps as finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people."

After two terms he voluntarily stepped down. In his Farewell Address in 1796, he fortuitously said, "The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government. But the Constitution which at all times exists, 'till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole People, is sacredly obligatory upon all."

George Washington died December 14, 1799. Upon his death, President John Adams offered these prophetic words in praise of his predecessor, “His example is now complete, and it will teach wisdom and virtue to magistrates, citizens, and men, not only in the present age, but in future generations, as long as our history shall be read.”

Sadly, over the past 45 years much of this history has been removed from our children’s history books. Washington’s portrait has been removed from the classroom walls. His lessons of wisdom and virtue have been lost to “Revisionist” history, and today, we wonder where Honor, Honesty, loyalty, integrity and character have gone in our society.

Let us raise our glass in honor of George’s birthday, and challenge each other to live by the principals on which, our great nation was founded, and to teach by example.

In a speech given by Lt. Col. U.S. Grant III in 1930, he said, “ Teach your pupils to know and admire George Washington, to carry his example and companionship in their hearts, and the country’s destinies will be safe in the hands of the next generation.”

It only takes two generations of ignorance for our history to be forgotten.

Happy Birthday George... Long live your wisdom and virtue.

William M. Sanders
Mountainside, NJ