

{Guest Editor's Note}

Without Madison?



The highlight of my recent visit to James Madison University was speaking one-on-one with students about their personal interest in President and Founding Father James Madison. While their enthusiasm for Madison inspired me, I am keenly aware of just how little people know about the fourth president. Frankly, for most people, Madison and his Montpelier home seem only vaguely familiar.

At Montpelier, Madison's legacy as Father of the Constitution is clear and ever present. Even today, the struggles of emerging democracies continue to remind us that declaring independence and winning a war do not create a nation. While our fight for freedom may have begun in 1776, our liberty was not truly secured until Philadelphia Convention delegates signed the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787, assuring a system of constitutional self-governing. As historian Mark Carnes notes, "Institutions and ideas endure long after the guns and cannon have fallen silent."

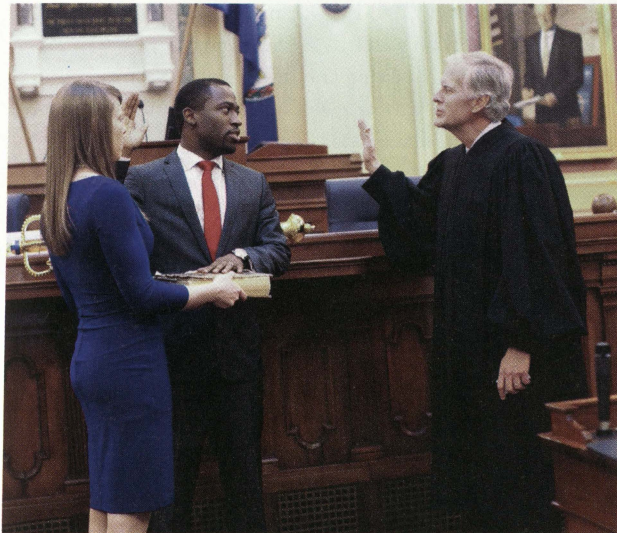
Without Madison, our nation might have traversed an entirely different course. Had we continued as 13 independent states loosely bound as a confederation, more disorganized states might have been gobbled up by other nations. Or we might need a passport to cross over the Mississippi. Absent Madison, our taxes might support a state-established religion and our homes might be subject to war-rantless searches.

When JMU students come to Montpelier on Constitution Day each September they wear "Thanks Jemmy" T-shirts recognizing Madison's leadership during our founding era. As the place where Madison was inspired with an idea that affects all of us, every day, it is appropriate that Montpelier is where JMU students celebrate Constitution Day. I hope you will visit Madison's home and let Montpelier inspire you as well.

— KAT IMHOFF, *president, Montpelier*

EDITOR'S NOTE: In opening JMU's March conference, "Intelligence and the Transition from War to Peace," President Jonathan R. Alger lauded the event as "the sort of convening that should take place as often as possible on the campus named for fourth U.S. President James Madison. Alger traced the parallel challenges and decisions that both Presidents James Madison and Bill Clinton faced, respectively, during the War of 1812 and the Bosnian Crisis of the 1990s. James Madison's brand of developed thinking is what Alger challenged conference attendees to aspire "to understand how ethical reasoning might have led decision-makers to act in the Bosnian conflict."

➔ **LEARN MORE** about the conference and the online link to President Alger's remarks on Page 30.



Former JMU Student Government Association President Levar Stoney ('04) is sworn in as Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia in January.

CONGRATULATIONS SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH LEVAR STONEY ('04)

Levar Stoney ('04) was JMU's Student Government Association president when the university just began elevating its connections to our eponym, James Madison. The reverence with which Levar treated our effort to honor the Father of the U.S. Constitution was striking for a person his age. Levar was destined for public service, it was clear, and possibly at a very high level. Well, now when I see Levar — as I did in late March when he visited campus to speak to a political science class — it is decorous to greet him as Secretary Stoney rather than Levar. Less than 10 years after graduating Levar was sworn in as Secretary of the Commonwealth Virginia this January. Since I knew you when, I will dispense with decorum and say, Congratulations Levar. Your accomplishment and dedication to public service bring great pride to your alma mater.

ANDY PERRINE ('86)

JMU Associate Vice President for Communication and Marketing

KEEP THOSE LETTERS AND STORY IDEAS COMING!

Madison welcomes letters in response to magazine content. The staff reserves the right to edit for clarity, length and style. Anonymous letters will not be published. Send to "22807" *Madison*, 127 West Bruce St., MSC 3610, JMU, Harrisonburg, VA 22807, or email madisonmag@jmu.edu.