JMC
Constitution Day
Media Coverage
2013
MEDIA STRATEGY

GOAL
Leverage JMC’s impressive list of educational programs and activities to draw attention to CDI and reinforce the Center as the “go-to” source for CDI information and resources.

TACTICS
Support CDI programs in selected partner program regional media markets by securing placement for editorials written by Miller fellows.

Issue a comprehensive media release on the JMC CDI effort through PR Web.

Support CDI programs with media advice, media release template and other communications and promotional assistance requested.

Engage the services of a proven publicity firm to execute media strategy.
JMC engaged the services of Bailiwick, Inc., a public relations firm in New Jersey with national publicity experience to develop media interest in selected regional markets for essays written by Miller Fellows.

11 essays were published on opinion/editorial pages in the following media markets:

- Phoenix, Arizona
- Boise, Idaho
- Memphis, Tennessee
- Richmond, Virginia
- Charlottesville, Virginia
- Miami, Florida
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Nashville, Tennessee
- Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

National placement:

- Huffington Post
- Real Clear Politics
Celebrating Madison in Jefferson Country

September 17 is designated by federal statute as “Constitution Day” in commemoration of the official signing of the document at the close of the Philadelphia Convention in 1787. The law further mandates that all colleges and universities receiving federal funds must observe this day by holding an educational program or event focused on the Constitution. There is, of course, special reason for us at the University of Virginia to take this charge seriously. James Madison, the co-founder of this institution along with Jefferson and the university’s first rector, is widely considered to be the “father” of the Constitution. Madison designed the first working plan submitted at the Convention (the Virginia Plan), played a leading role throughout the whole summer in the debates, kept a record of the proceedings of the Convention (Madison’s Notes), and wrote some of the greatest explanatory commentaries on the Constitution in The Federalist Papers. One could add that he was also the principal author of the Bill of Rights.

Most people today fail to recognize what a great innovation it was for a nation to adopt and be governed by a written constitution. No other political order anywhere or at any time had tried or succeeded in sketching its form of government by an actual law that subsequently could be consulted by the public and by members of the judiciary. The precedents here were the American state constitutions. As Thomas Jefferson observed in a letter to his friend John Cartwright in 1824: “Virginia, of which I am myself a native and resident, was not only the first of the States, but, I believe I may say, the first of the nations of the earth, which assembled its wise men peaceably together to form a fundamental constitution, to commit it to writing, and place it among their archives, where every one should be free to appeal to its text.” Historians of constitutionalism may dispute whether South Carolina, rather than Virginia, was actually first, but the claim about a written constitution being first devised in America seems sound.

The apparently simple discovery of a written constitution contained within it a revolution in the theory of governing. It meant that the government itself, including all of its officials, was now conceived to operate under a supreme law, a law that could be read and understood by all citizens. Few ideas have done more to humble government, reminding its leaders that they are not sovereign, but subject to a greater authority. Another effect was in the promotion of popular government. The spirit of any government is often fixed by its first acts. Had the Constitution been somehow imposed from on high rather than ratified under a process that, for its time, was remarkably democratic, it is questionable how quickly America would have evolved into a democratic state.

While Madison and Jefferson both believed that the Constitution was a remarkable achievement, Madison expressed more concern than his friend about the fragility of this experiment in self-government. In a well-known exchange of letters, Madison criticized Jefferson’s proposal that the Constitution be revised every 19 years. Such frequent revisions, argued Madison, would undermine the authority of a written constitution, which was enhanced by the “prejudices…which antiquity inspires.”

This year the University will be celebrating the Constitution—and James Madison—by revisiting a critical constitutional moment: the first presidency. The Program on Constitutionalism and Democracy in conjunction with the Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy is sponsoring a lecture by one of the nation’s leading scholars of the presidency, Professor Michael Nelson of Rhodes College. Professor Nelson will be speaking on the topic of "George Washington and the Constitutional Presidency" at 3:30 p.m. in the “Great Hall” of the Batten School (Garrett Hall). The sponsors, including the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History, which is funding the UVA Constitution Day activities, warmly encourage attendance by members of the Charlottesville community as well as by students at the University.

James Ceaser is the Harry F. Byrd Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia
Constitution Day, which we observe every September 17, is a singularly American holiday, even more unique than the Fourth of July. Many countries celebrate independence days great leaders, war heroes, and national landmarks. But only one nation can claim a 226-year-old written Constitution, that authoritatively shapes its national life.

The Constitution is both our weightiest legal document and an expression of who we are. Other countries, such as France, have lived under many different constitutions over the centuries, so that for them the nation is something distinct from the merely current form of government. Not so for Americans, who have lived since the 1780s under one regime, a remarkable fact whose significance seems to escape us. We revere our Constitution blandly and automatically, without troubling ourselves to know very much about it, and without reflecting much about what it says about our national identity.

We will probably never agree every element that identity, but ties of race, religion and ethnicity are not what bind Americans, and never have been. We think of “diversity” as a recent issue, but the conduct of American life has always involved the negotiation of profound differences. We are forever about the business of e pluribus unum, of producing harmony out of our unruly variety. Our Constitution assumed that our inherent differences and human imperfections would generate conflicts. Ambitious and power-hungry individuals would always be among us, and their dangerous energies needed to be properly channeled.

Our Constitution is, accordingly, short on soaring rhetoric, and long on sober, minimalist, functionalism, laying out the complex rules of political engagement. Yet there is a powerful idea behind the familiar slogans of checks and. Rather than try to prevent conflict, this Constitution presumes conflict and even institutionalizes it, seeking to predict and thereby direct its effects to the general good. Like an internal combustion engine the Constitution uses the explosions within its chambers to drive the effort of American governance. But for that very reason it is not conducive to smooth or unanimous action coming from centralized power. Indeed, the craving for centralized unanimity is precisely what it most distrusts.

This aspect of the American system is ill-understood at home and abroad. After lecturing in Ankara at the height of the Iraq War, a Turkish questioner offered that the intense conflicts going on in Washington at that time proved the American system was falling apart. When I responded, “This is how the system is supposed to work,” and that Congressional resistance to the President can be entirely proper and legitimate, the audience was incredulous. I would tell that audience precisely the same thing today, about Republican Congressional resistance to President Obama on various policy fronts. It would be good if more Americans understood the ways in which the corrective energies of their system actually operate, instead of seeing endemic conflict in Washington in despairing terms.

But for conflict to be constructive, there has to be one point of agreement: prior acceptance by all parties of the Constitution’s overriding authority. And when push comes to shove, the Constitution has functioned well as the umpire of last appeal in contentious public debates. Its authority remains remains vital; and the Constitution deserves to be celebrated.

Wilfred M. McClay holds the G. T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma, and is one of the founding board members of the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History.
The Constitution: Rules of Engagement

Constitution Day on September 17 is a uniquely American holiday, far more unique than the Fourth of July. Many countries celebrate an independence day. But only the United States has a 226-year-old written Constitution that authoritatively shapes its national life.

Other countries, such as France, have lived under many different regimes, so that for them the nation is something distinct from its form of government. Not so for Americans, who have lived since the 1780s under the same regime, a remarkable fact the significance of which seems to escape us. We revere our Constitution blandly, without troubling ourselves to know very much about it, and without reflecting much about what it says about our national identity.

Ties of race, religion and ethnicity have never been what bound Americans. We think of “diversity” as a recent issue, but the conduct of American life has always involved the negotiation of profound differences. Our Constitution took it as given that such differences and our human imperfections would generate conflicts. Ambitious individuals and power-hungry interests would always be among us, and their dangerous energies had to be properly channeled.

Our Constitution is, accordingly, short on soaring rhetoric, and long on procedure, laying out the complex rules of political engagement. Behind the familiar formula of “checks and balances” is a powerful idea: rather than trying to prevent conflict, this Constitution would presume conflict and even institutionalize it, thereby directing its effects to the general good. Like an internal combustion engine the Constitution uses the explosions within its chambers to drive the effort of American governance. But for that very reason it is not conducive to smooth or unanimous action flowing from centralized power. Indeed, the craving for centralized unanimity is precisely what it most distrusts.

This aspect of the American system is ill-understood at home and abroad. When I gave a lecture in Ankara at the height of the Iraq War, a Turkish questioner wondered whether the intense conflict then going on in Washington meant that the American system was falling apart. When I responded, “But this is how the system is supposed to work,” and that Congressional resistance to the President can be entirely proper and legitimate, the audience was incredulous. I would tell that audience precisely the same thing today, about Republican Congressional resistance to President Obama on various policy fronts. Such conflict can be a sign of health rather than weakness. It would be good if more Americans understood the ways in which the corrective energies of their system actually operate, instead of seeing endemic conflict in Washington in despairing terms.

But for conflict to be constructive, there has to be one point of agreement: prior acceptance by all parties of the Constitution’s overarching authority. There can be no successful game without durable rules. And when push comes to shove, our Constitution has functioned remarkably well as the umpire of last appeal in contentious public debates. Its authority remains indispensable. It deserves to be celebrated...and to be better understood.

Wilfred M. McClay holds the G. T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma, and is one of the founding board members of the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History.
Celebrate Constitution Day with Debate

Controversy over the sanctity of U.S. citizens’ free speech and privacy has ensued ever since Edward Snowden, a government contractor, leaked details about huge National Security Agency (NSA) telephone and computer surveillance programs to the press in early June. The telephone surveillance program was authorized by a secret court ruling, and required Verizon to turn over data about all of its customers’ phone calls to the NSA. The computer surveillance program, code-named PRISM, forced well-known IT companies like Google, Microsoft, and Facebook to hand over information about their users to the NSA, as well.

These revelations have led commentators on the left and right to become unusual bedfellows in their unified attacks on the Obama Administration’s NSA directives. Libertarians, liberals, and conservatives challenge the NSA’s surveillance policies as too invasive, lacking adequate oversight, and of questionable constitutionality.

Oddly, defenders of the NSA’s telephone and computer surveillance programs also come from both sides of the political aisle. The Obama administration echoes former President George W Bush’s argument, that these measures disrupt terrorist plots and are therefore essential security measures. Still other commentators, like University of Chicago Law professor Eric Posner in a recent New York Times forum, have argued that they “don’t see the problem” with such use of Presidential War Powers.

One thing is clear: the debate over whether our government has legitimate authority to comb through citizens’ cell phone records and social media postings has rightly aroused constitutional, political, and moral concerns regarding the sanctity of individual rights in the United States. While many ordinary citizens recognize the importance of national security measures, they are not convinced that this security is worth the trade off in their loss of privacy.

James Madison, the father of the U.S. Constitution, would see the public’s concern as a good sign. It is both proper and necessary, Madison argued, for citizens of a free republic to “take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties.” Only through the exercise of this “prudent jealousy” could citizens safeguard themselves against an encroaching leadership class. While government officials will claim that they only act in the public interest, government fiat often conflicts with the rule of law embedded in the U.S. Constitution.

Every year on September 17th, federally funded educational institutions are required by law to offer activities that commemorate the signing of the U.S. Constitution. Critics of the holiday claim it is blindly patriotic, or even illegal. Americans are more distrustful of their leaders than ever and are increasingly ambivalent about the Constitution. As a recent study conducted by the Center for the Constitution at James Madison’s Montpelier found that 38.4 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 think the Constitution should be replaced, even though only 27.8 percent have actually read it!

However, as the recent controversy over the NSA’s domestic surveillance demonstrates, American citizens have good reason to acquaint themselves with the content and meaning of the Constitution. On Constitution Day, we should return to the foundational principles upon which our nation was built—the rule of law, republican governing principles, and basic individual liberties—and remind ourselves that these beloved rights remain intact only if ordinary citizens dedicate themselves to being vigilant defenders of them.
You are forgiven for not knowing that September 17th is Constitution Day. There is no long weekend, and you really should have bought that appliance on Labor Day. Nonetheless, in 2004 Congress mandated that colleges and universities receiving federal funds do something educational to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution in 1787. Mandates aren’t popular at the moment, but this one was free of compliance monitoring. One might think it was redundant to require universities to educate students in the political theory of their society. One would be wrong. The typical college curriculum pays scant attention to the making of American democracy, and too many institutions have responded to the Constitution Day mandate with a shrug, essentially inviting students to Google the text. At least it’s a start.

The Constitution is less than 5,000 words and takes 20 or 30 minutes to read, depending on whether you include the amendments. Most Americans think only of the amendments, and only of the first ten, when they think about their Constitution. Truth be told, the text of the Constitution does not make for inspiring reading. Compared to the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, which waxes eloquent about the purposes of government and the rights of citizens, the Constitution of the United States might remind you of reading your lease. Apart from the Preamble, which was added at the last minute and never debated at the Philadelphia Convention, the Constitution is a dry account of political structures and their sources of power. But following Article VII comes a surprise. The signers who witness the creation of the Constitution note that 1787 is also the twelfth year of Independence, indicating that the document has from start to finish been inspired by the principles of the American Revolution.

Governments, the Declaration of Independence says, exist to secure rights. Structures matter because without them, principles have no effect. The Constitution’s architecture follows a democratic design, while reinforcing against democratic instabilities. James Madison described the Constitution as a “remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government,” emphasizing that in the new political order, the people who control must also be controlled. Constitutional government thus means limited government, and the greatness of the American Constitution consists precisely in a sovereign people exercising self-restraint. Today, the issue of limited government roils our politics as we argue the propriety of health care mandates, marriage laws, surveillance programs, gun control measures and, once again, the war power. Such debates are a permanent (and anticipated) feature of American government. Reflecting on the theoretical and practical difficulties facing the Constitutional Convention, Madison remarked that no one had yet found the skill to “discriminate and define, with sufficient certainty” the boundaries of legislative, executive and judicial powers. Americans are still looking. An added difficulty is that the complex constitutional scheme the Founders thought necessary to simultaneously empower and restrict popular government must be applied by each generation, and that app is not immediately or cheaply available for download.

We need a continuing education program in the theory and practice of free government because the ideas that make us a people are not transmitted automatically by our genes or our culture.

Americans know that their original Constitution was flawed, but most think it has stood the test of time. By contrast, many scholars doubt the Constitution’s evolutionary fitness, arguing that the theory of limited government is inadequate to the circumstances of a modern society. Such criticism should not be dismissed out of mere piety toward the Founders who, let’s remember, hotly disputed the merits of the plan they bequeathed. But let’s also remember, it was the big bang of 1787.
It's (Almost) September 17 -- Do You Know Where Your Constitution Is?

Posted: 09/16/2013 5:54 pm

Laura Beth Nielsen
Northwestern University

On this Constitution Day, ordinary people may not think they have any say or stake in lofty constitutional matters when we talk about constitutional questions using these terms. And yet, Americans have strongly held opinions about whether the president can or should engage in war (or at least war-like behavior) with Syria without congressional authorization (separation of powers), whether the states or should determine their own marijuana, abortion, and gun laws (federalism), and whether Obamacare is legal (taxes).

The Constitution is probably the last thing on a person's mind when he grabes his gun and calls his dog to head out to the field for a day of hunting, when she makes the difficult decision to obtain an abortion, or when a same-sex couple is lawfully exchange vows to be legally married. And yet, none of these everyday activities that give our lives meaning would be possible without the constitutional protections that give us these rights. Americans’ lived experience touches on constitutional law every day.

The average life span of constitutions around the globe adopted after 1789 is a mere 17 years and yet tomorrow, Sept. 17, 2013, marks the 226th anniversary of the day that the United States' founders signed the Constitution and it became the governing document for these United States of America. Our Constitution provides all Americans a framework in which we conduct our culture wars. Just this year, the Supreme Court decided cases on affirmative action, gay marriage, and voting rights. The peaceful transfer of power and the (relatively) peaceful expression of even abhorrent ideas further demonstrate the power and importance of this founding document.

Very few people are likely to agree with every Supreme Court decision about how these difficult political matters are constitutionally resolved, but we should be united in our appreciation of the constitutional framework which allows us to make these decisions, carry out this transfer of power, and tolerate free speech.

To be sure, there have been constitutional mistakes in the drafting and interpretation of the United States Constitution. Considering human beings to be three-fifths of a person and depriving Americans their freedom on the basis of race are significant and shameful events in U.S. history. And yet, with time, we have learned from our constitutional errors. And they shed new light as we consider new challenges today. Of course, the United States is not the only successful constitutional democracy in the world and there are many great nations who change or redraft the constitution. In fact, an old joke tells of a French citizen asking for a copy of the French Constitution at the library and he is informed that they do not carry periodicals.

Today is Constitution Day; spend some time with it. Whether it is reading it online, watching a cartoon with your young children, something more serious for your older children, ordering your own free copy of the constitution, or attending a Constitution Day event, take a moment to think about the Constitution. In Chicago, at least seven universities are celebrating Constitution Day with events free and open to the public with other terrific events in Washington DC, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Houston, t name just a few. Your local college, university, or library likely is sponsoring a Constitution Day event.

It's September 17, and I can tell you where your constitution is. It is all around you.

Follow Laura Beth Nielsen on Twitter: www.twitter.com/ProflB Nielsen
Knowing our Constitution over the Kardashians

Everyone knows the important fall holidays. Labor Day celebrates the labor movement, kicks off the school year and for many, the fall shopping season. Veteran's Day rightly celebrates the courage of our fellow citizens who have served in the military. No one misses Halloween, or if you do, a young or sometimes older child will remind you with a knock at the door. But there is another fall holiday that I bet you do forget.

Thanks to the late Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, who always carried a copy of the Constitution, Congress in 2004 mandated that all educational institutions receiving federal funding hold an educational program celebrating the United States Constitution. As a result, each September 17, we commemorate the signing of one of the most remarkable political documents ever written.

Unfortunately, there is little done, even at many educational institutions, to observe the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution. Retailers do not even use it to sell merchandise. There are no Constitution Day sales. Few people get the day off. There are no parades with giant floats featuring James Madison or Alexander Hamilton. No one gets commemorative candy, or even a tricorn hat.

However, this day is more important than it appears. The U.S. Constitution is the blueprint for our society and for modern democracies everywhere. Yet, study after study shows the American people have a surprisingly poor knowledge of the Constitution. In a poll conducted by Newsweek in 2011, 7 out of 10 Americans did not know that the Constitution was the supreme law of the land. Large majorities could not name the length of a Senate term or the number of members of the House or even the three branches of our federal government.

It’s not just disappointing that Americans know more about the social life of the Kardashians than the political genius of the founding fathers or the odds they overcame to draft, approve and ratify a magnificent reimagining of our democratic state in a document that lives on to this day. It is not just a sad absence of knowledge concerning American history. This ignorance is a very real threat to the heart of our democracy. Our system is designed so that the power and legitimacy of our state lies not in the anointing of kings or aristocrats, but in the will of the people.

If the people lack the basic skills of citizenship, if they do not know the rights and duties of a citizen of the United States, then the very foundation of our democracy is vulnerable. Citizens need to know the Constitution, not just to honor the great Americans who came before us, but to exercise the sovereignty and authority that the Constitution vests within them.

The good news is that Americans are hearing the call. Groups from all over the United States are leading efforts to commemorate Constitution Day. The National Constitution Center, the Bill of Rights Institute, ConstitutionFacts.com, ConstitutionDay.com and many others have stepped in to make Constitution Day a significant part of the calendar. The Philadelphia-based Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History (with which I am affiliated) has led efforts to support Constitution Day events and programs on college campuses throughout the nation.

Here at Florida Atlantic University, the Jack Miller Forum for Civic Education, New Student and Owl Family Programs, the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters and the School of Communications have worked to make FAU’s Constitution Day commemoration a three-day celebration.

Our events this year include the unveiling of the Bailyn First Amendment Monument and a panel of experts on the First Amendment in the modern media. We have faculty lectures on the Constitution and the reading of the winning student essays on the role of the Constitution today. Constitution Day at FAU is open to the university and the community. (www.fau.edu/jackmillerforum).

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Reader’s View: Does the U.S. need a color-blind Constitution?

Published September 6, 2013

BY SCOTT YENOR

America’s original sin was establishing a liberal democracy without abolishing chattel slavery. Penance for that original sin continues today. Even the election of America’s first African-American president seems to coincide with a deterioration of race relations, in some sense. Under what circumstances can America ever exit the purgatory of race? Closely connected to this question are pressing constitutional and policy questions. Does the U.S. Constitution require a “color-blind” Constitution? Would wise public policy be “color-blind,” even if color-blindness were not mandated by the Constitution?

The words “color-blind” Constitution enter the American lexicon via Justice John Marshall Harlan’s famous dissent in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). Plessy’s majority allowed “separate but equal” Jim Crow laws to stand. Jim Crow laws had not been color-blind. They were remnants of slavery and the racial subordination freedmen suffered through in post-Reconstruction America. African-Americans were consigned separate train cars, public restrooms, sections of restaurants and so on.

At the very least, Harlan’s vision would find Jim Crow laws in violation of the Constitution. It is not clear, however, what his color-blind Constitution would demand. Would it accommodate corrective measures for racial injustices or for African-American self-protection?

Imagine a law requiring that certain jurisdictions must have at least 25 percent African-American jurors. In 1870 South Carolina, for instance, such a law might be essential to making sure that freedmen would not be railroaded. Jury selection processes could be rigged. Local judges might share the community’s commitment to racial subordination. Prosecutors might seek easy targets. Corrective measures that take race into account might be essential to protect freedmen in such cases.

How to distinguish legitimate “corrective measures” from those reflecting racial subordination? Harlan’s principle seems to rule out corrective or protective measures.

Brown v. Board of Education (1953), the famed de-segregation case where the Supreme Court held that “separate was inherently unequal,” does not seem to require a color-blind Constitution. Nor have the civil rights laws passed in the wake of Brown consistently applied the color-blind principle. Nor have the Supreme Court’s confusing affirmative action cases and voting rights cases required the color-blind principles.

There have been feints in the direction of an expiration date for the non-color-blind Constitution. Most famously, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor allowed affirmative action plans to survive but said that she expected “that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary” to further higher education’s interest in promoting diversity. This suggests that, perhaps, the Constitution requires color-blind principles but that an exception to color-blind principles may be permissible under circumstances where self-protection or corrective justice require them.

Thus has Supreme Court jurisprudence on race given us the idea that the Constitution allows different things at different times – perhaps. In conjunction with the Jack Miller Center’s national Constitution Day Initiative, we at the American Founding Initiative are bringing Prof. Peter C. Myers from University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, to campus on Constitution Day, September 17, to address these difficult issues.

(Prof. Myers speaks at BSU’s on September 17th at 7:00 p.m. in the Student Union Building. Parking in the Lincoln garage is free).

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Recalling the ‘miracle’ made here

COLLEEN A. SHEEHAN

Posted: Tuesday, September 17, 2013, 3:01 AM

IT WAS a crisp and cool Monday in the City of Brotherly Love, with temperatures hovering around 50 degrees. A bit chilly for mid-September in Philadelphia, but, despite the overcast sky, at least no rain threatened to muddy the streets and dampen the burgeoning celebrations. About noon at 5th and Chestnut streets, 41 men in ruffled shirts and leggings mulled about the Pennsylvania statehouse, laughing, strategizing, telling stories.

Thirty-eight of them took turns signing the proposed Constitution that they had finally, and not without considerable difficulty, drafted over the long, hot summer of 1787. Three of the men hung back from the table where the papers lay, having come to the decision not to add their names to the document. One can imagine their palpable discomfort that cloudy afternoon.

One of the three was Edmund Randolph, the young, affable governor of Virginia who introduced the Virginia Plan. The other two nonsigners were George Mason, of Virginia, and Elbridge Gerry, of Massachusetts. All three dissenters claimed that the national government was given too much power, and that a bill of rights was needed to protect the liberties of the people.

The signers of the Constitution included George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, James Wilson, Roger Sherman, William Paterson, Charles Pinckney and Gunning Bedford. The new Constitution, however, was not yet the law of the American land; that would not occur until the people of at least nine of the 13 American states ratified it. But on this autumnlike afternoon, the framing of the U.S. Constitution - or what has oft been called “the Miracle at Philadelphia” - was complete.

The delegates departed the statehouse. Many of them strolled east three blocks to their favorite haunt, City Tavern, where they “dined together and took a cordial leave of each other.” My guess is that the three nonsigners did not join the others for happy hour that fateful day, the 17th of September 1787.

The Anti-Federalists were American patriots whose foresight still serves us today as a warning against overgrown government and the abuse of political power. They deserve much more recognition and credit than they have received over the past 200-plus years of our nation’s history.

And what about the Federalists? Do they and the Constitution they drafted deserve our respect? Are the fundamental principles that inform the Constitution ones that we still cherish and choose for ourselves?

The quintessentially American poet Robert Frost once took up the theme of the meaning and purpose of the American Constitution, which he believed was synonymous with the American dream. Frost believed that the true meaning of the American dream, which the Founders envisioned but did not live long enough to see fulfilled, was encapsulated in the idea of self-government. It was the dream of a new land filled with people in control not only of their government but also in control of themselves and of how they treat each other. As the Founders were well-aware, in 1787 there was much more to be done for the American dream to “materialize” and for the grand experiment in self-government to be realized.

George Washington summarized the task ahead as the work of forming a “national character.” Americans, he said, are actors on a most conspicuous theater, whose character in every generation is formed anew by the principles we hold dear and by the way of life we choose. Washington reminds us, too, that the “preservation of the sacred fire of liberty” is still today staked on the great experiment entrusted to our hands.

Colleen A. Sheehan is a professor of politics at Villanova University and director of its Matthew J. Ryan Center for the Study of Free Institutions and the Public Good. She is also a Fellow of the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History.
Political Gridlock and Education at ASU

Most Americans appear fed-up with gridlock, partisan divide, and ideological intransigency in our nation’s capital. President Obama’s approval ratings have fallen, and voters rate Congress even lower. Standing for political principle seems to have given way to posturing; political compromise is apparently a lost art.

On this Constitution Day, intended to celebrate the founding document in our nation’s unique experiment in republican government, we should step back and ask ourselves if the problems in Washington, D.C. are exclusively the fault the politicians we elect. National organizations like the Jack Miller Center have suggested that we revisit the original debates at the time of the Constitution’s drafting. In doing so, we may rediscover that high principle and political compromise can go-hand-in-hand, and that the Constitution itself is an act of principled political compromise.” We should remind ourselves that our national heroes such as Abraham Lincoln understood that principle and practical politics were not contradictory. To speak of political polarization during the Civil War is an understatement. As president during a Civil War with horrific casualties, Lincoln faced political opposition within his own party and growing Democratic Party opposition in the North. His sole aim as commander-in-chief was to win the war, but he was an anti-slave Republican who increasingly understood that the war itself was about abolishing slavery. Here he stood on high principle. As a politician he realized that he needed to navigate carefully to reach this goal.

In late 1862, as the war continued to go poorly for Union forces, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves of rebels. This limited measure served military purposes and expressed Lincoln’s deep belief that the war was about freeing the slaves. Press notices about the forthcoming proclamation aroused Democratic opponents and cheered the radical wing of Lincoln’s own party. The proclamation cost Lincoln votes in the midterm elections of 1862, when Democrats won thirty-five congressional seats, including Lincoln’s home district in Illinois.

Elected to a second term in 1864 (much to his surprise), Lincoln feared that his Emancipation Proclamation might be overturned by a hostile judiciary, he sought passage of a constitutional amendment guaranteeing African Americans permanent freedom. As the war concluded, Lincoln brought before Congress the thirteenth amendment to formally abolish slavery throughout the United States. Radical Republicans led by wanted a more expansive amendment, but were defeated in committee. Working with friendly congressmen, Lincoln instructed that all stops be pulled out to ensure passage of the amendment. All stops meant patronage, political pressure, deals and direct appeals by Lincoln to reticent House members. Two months before his assassination, Lincoln, a man of high principle and an astute politician, achieved his ultimate goal: the end of slavery and the realization that the Union would not endure half slave and half free.

Are today’s youth learning about such lessons about Lincoln, and about constitutional democracy? A frequent complaint is that our schools and universities are no longer teaching civics. Instead they have become hotbeds of political indoctrination, often around identity politics.

As a professor of History at Arizona State University, I have a different perspective. My colleagues in History work hard in the classroom to ensure that students learn the most important lesson of the past: That while people and societies are not perfect, social, political, and cultural changes do occur through human struggle and a desire to make their world better.
This does not mean that September 17th should be a day to indoctrinate, but rather a day to reflect and discuss. On this day we ought to encourage rational discourse, amongst thoughtful individuals who may disagree with one another, over the meaning of the Constitution and the rights it purports to guarantee to all citizens. The hope is that such solid reflection will spill over into our daily lives so that we can begin to appreciate the blessings of liberty and learn to secure them to the greatest degree possible. Indeed, the Bill of Rights itself only emerged out of such thoughtful, passionate debate between Federalists and anti-Federalists.

Christopher Newport University’s Center for American Studies, a non-partisan center dedicated to education in America’s founding principles, history, economics, and security, annually commemorates Constitution Day by holding a debate on a controversial issue of contemporary importance. The goal is to restore Americans’ faith in the possibility and power of honest debate in our country. Students, faculty, and local community members who participate in the debate not only embody the “prudent jealousy” Madison urged, but also enjoy the essential liberties for which the founding generation risked their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor.

This year’s debate, entitled “The Limits of Executive Power: Is the NSA’s Domestic Surveillance Constitutional?” will pit University of Chicago Law Professor Eric Posner against David Cole of the Georgetown University Law Center. CNU’s Center for American Studies is partnering with the Jack Miller Center and the Alexander Hamilton Society to present this year’s event. The debate takes place on September 26, 2013 at 6:00 pm in CNU’s David Student Union Ballroom. The event is free and open to the public.

Elizabeth Kaufer Busch teaches American Studies at Christopher Newport University. Her research interests include American political thought, civic education, and the evolution of women’s movements in America. She is a Fellow of the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History, which co-sponsors CNU’s Constitution Day program.

Memphis Commercial Appeal, Cullen Essay

Continued from page 8

generated our political institutions and our national identity, and that creative event remains unparalleled in human history. We honor the Founders properly by resuming the critical study of their theory as we continue their debate over what government should be permitted to do for, or against, its citizens.

Rhodes College will celebrate Constitution Day with a free public lecture on “The Making of the Constitution” by the leading historian of the Founding, Gordon Wood. You are warmly invited to attend. McCallum Ballroom, Bryan Campus Life Center, Tuesday, September 17th, 7:00 PM.

Daniel Cullen teaches political science at Rhodes College. He is also a member of the Academic Council of The Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History and coordinator of its Constitution Day Initiative.

Arizona Republic, Critchow Essay

Continued from page 14

This commitment to education is most evident in an undergraduate program in Political Thought and Leadership recently established at Arizona State University with the enthusiastic support of President Michael Crow and the Board of Regents. Support for the program has come from many outside donors such as the Jack Miller Center The program’s purpose is to train a new generation of state and national leaders in the principles of constitutional government. This is accomplished by introducing students to major political thinkers, including the Founders and Lincoln.

In celebrating Constitution Day, we—the American voters and citizens of our great state of Arizona—acknowledge the continuing presence of the past.

Donald T. Critchlow is a professor in History at Arizona State University and a native of Arizona.
The JMC media release was distributed through PRWeb and was picked up by more than 30 online media outlets, including television and radio, and other news Web sites.

Jack Miller Center Supporting Constitution Day Programs at 35 Colleges and Universities

Philadelphia, PA, September 10, 2013 – A total of 35 colleges and universities, including Yale, Emory, Notre Dame, Duke, Columbia, Villanova, and Brown, will receive support from the Jack Miller Center to conduct Constitution Day educational programs on a wide-range of topics to commemorate the federally mandated Constitution Day observance on September 17th.

The programs mark the third year the Jack Miller Center (JMC), a Philadelphia-based non-profit, has provided funds to institutions of higher learning for Constitution Day programs. With a nationwide network of more than 600 professors, many of whom specialize in the study and teaching of the American constitutional tradition, the Jack Miller Center embarked on this project to increase awareness of the Constitution Day mandate and assist campuses in developing substantive educational programs.

With a lead gift from the Andrea Waitt Carlton Family Foundation (Nashville, TN), JMC launched its Constitution Day initiative in 2011, and during the course of the past three years has supported more than 100 programs throughout the country, providing thousands of students with new opportunities to explore the centrality of constitutionalism to a better understanding of the American experience, past and present. In addition to an impressive roster of political scientists, historians and legal scholars from some of the nation’s most prestigious universities, past programs have included participation by Supreme Court Justices John Paul Stevens, Stephen Breyer and Antonin Scalia.

2013 Constitution Day Programs
This year, some of America’s leading historical, legal and political thinkers, including Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Gordon Wood, Harvard Professor Lawrence Lessig and Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, will examine the meaning of the Constitution in lectures and debates across the country.

“What is so exciting and valuable about the JMC Constitution Day Initiative is that it helps support programs of real substance for the campus community,” said Dr. Michael Andrews, executive officer and vice president for academic programs at the Jack Miller Center. “The program offers students a unique opportunity to discuss with some of our nation’s leading thinkers the fundamental questions animating a free society. The long-term goal of our initiative is to bring back to the curriculum the critical study of American constitutionalism.”

About the Jack Miller Center
The Jack Miller Center (JMC) is a nonpartisan 501 (C) (3) public foundation dedicated to reinvigorating education in America’s Founding Principles and history. The foundation works with college faculty, administrators, and donors to improve this essential education for students. The JMC’s community of professors currently totals more than 600 on more than 190 campuses across the United States and includes many of our nation’s leading scholars in American history and political theory. In addition, since its founding, JMC has invested in partner programs on 52 campuses, including Ivy League institutions, flagship state universities and leading liberal arts colleges. JMC is led by its founder and chairman, Jack Miller, a prominent Chicago philanthropist, and its president, Mike Ratliff (Rear Admiral, USN ret.), the former chief of Naval Intelligence. Mr. Miller and Admiral Ratliff began their efforts in higher education in 2004 and incorporated the JMC as an independent foundation in 2007 with headquarters in Philadelphia.

About Constitution Day
In 2004, Congress passed legislation requiring that every institution of higher education receiving federal funds hold an educational program on the Constitution on September 17, the day delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia in 1787 to sign the completed Constitution. While campus administrators are generally aware of the federal mandate to hold Constitution Day programs, they often lack the resources to mount successful events.
Release picked up by:

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Virtual Strategy.com
TMCNet
KnoxPages.com (Ohio)
WatchListNews
Traders Huddle
Hawaii News Now
One Page News
In addition, partner programs posted stories promoting their CDI events on campus Web sites, with media releases and with posters and flyers.

Some examples...
IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law to celebrate Constitution Day October 10

Support Provided by Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History

September 9, 2013

IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law will celebrate Constitution Day with a panel discussion that will focus on issues related to same-sex marriages. The panel discussion "When Did It Become Unconstitutional for States to Ban Same Sex Marriage?: Constitutional Interpretation in the 21st Century" will be held October 10 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the law school’s Governor Richard B. Ogilvie Auditorium, 565 West Adams Street (between Clinton and Jefferson streets) in Chicago.

IIT Chicago-Kent Distinguished Professor Sheldon H. Nahmod will moderate a discussion of Hollingsworth v. Perry, a challenge to California’s Proposition 8, and United States v. Windsor, a challenge to the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Panelists will discuss the decisions and what they signify about recent trends in judicial interpretation of the Constitution. George Mason University School of Law Professor Ilya Somin will join IIT Chicago-Kent Professors Katherine Baker and Carolyn Shapiro on the panel.

In 2004, Congress passed legislation requiring that every institution of higher education receiving federal funds hold an educational program on the Constitution on September 17, the day delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia in 1787 to sign the completed Constitution. While campus administrators are generally aware of the federal mandate to hold Constitution Day programs, they often lack the resources to mount successful events.

The program, which is free and open to the public, is co-sponsored by the Jack Miller Center (JMC) and IIT Chicago-Kent’s Institute on the Supreme Court of the United States (ISCOTUS). For more information or to R.S.V.P., please contact Professor Christopher Schmidt at ccschmidt@kentlaw.iit.edu or (312) 906-5389.

With a lead gift from the Andrea Waitt Carlton Family Foundation (Nashville, TN), the Jack Miller Center launched its Constitution Day initiative (CDI) in 2011 to increase awareness of the Constitution Day mandate and assist campuses in developing substantive educational programs. With a nationwide network of more than 600 professors, many of whom specialize in the study and teaching of the American constitutional tradition, the Jack Miller Center is ideally suited to play an important role in building awareness of Constitution Day.

During the course of the past three years, the CDI has supported more than 100 programs throughout the country, providing thousands of students with new opportunities to explore the centrality of constitutionalism to a better understanding of the American experience, past and present.

"What is so exciting and valuable about the JMC Constitution Day Initiative is that it helps support programs of real substance for the campus community," said Dr. Michael Andrews, executive officer and vice president for academic programs at the Jack Miller Center. "The program offers students a unique opportunity to engage in a civil discussion of the fundamental questions animating a free society with some of our nation’s leading scholars, jurists and officials. We are very pleased to support the Constitution Day program at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law."
Constitution Day is an American federal observance that recognizes the adoption of the United States Constitution and those who have become U.S. citizens. It is observed on September 17th, the day the delegates from the U.S. Constitutional Convention signed the Constitution in 1787.

In observance of Constitution Day and to celebrate the principles enshrined in America’s founding document, the Jack Miller Forum at FAU hosts an annual series of events during the week of September 17th. Participants include FAU faculty and students, as well as members of the general public. Events include guest lectures, teach-ins, an undergraduate essay contest and discussion sessions. In addition, the Jack Miller Forum works with university faculty to incorporate Constitution themes into their courses during the week of September 17th.

2013 Constitution Day Events
2013 Constitution Day Essay Contest
2013 Constitution Brain Bowl

Previous Constitution Day Events
2011 Constitution Day
2012 Constitution Week Events
Essay Contest
Ohio Justice talks Constitution on 226th anniversary

Eric Miller
Social Media Director

Kentucky celebrated the 226th birthday of the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17 with a visit from Ohio Supreme Court Justice Judith L. French, who discussed the document's enduring importance and quizzed her audience on its history.

The question that stuck in the audience's mind was, "What did the founders initially want to call the president?" The answer: "His Highness, the President of the United States, and Protector of their Liberties."

French's talk in the Great Gallery Community Foundation Luncheon, "Our Modern Constitution: What's in it for us?" was held in honor of Constitution Day, a federal holiday commemorating the signing of the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787.

In 2004, latex Democrat Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia created Constitution Day to mark the 226th anniversary of the signing.

Reading the document, French said, "It is not more than the original document to give every citizen in this country the freedoms that we all think of as fundamental rights."

During her talk, French discussed the inner workings of the Ohio Supreme Court, including how the justices decide cases and the importance of diversity on the court. She also talked about the role of the Supreme Court in protecting the rights of citizens.

The audience enjoyed French's engaging presentation, which included humorous anecdotes and thoughtful insights into the workings of the court.

French said, "I look forward to my role as a judge in Ohio and to the opportunity to hear from the community here in Kentucky."

Constitution Day is on the Fourth of July; it is the anniversary of the adoption of the U.S. Constitution.

French served as a judge on the Ohio 10th District Court of Appeals for six years, from 2004 to 2010. In December 2012, Governor John Kasich appointed her to the state Supreme Court to replace retiring Justice Edlison. She has been serving on the court since the beginning of this year.

The event was a success, with attendees leaving inspired and enlightened by the discussions and questions posed by the audience.

Constitution Day is not only a celebration of the birthday of the U.S. Constitution, but also a opportunity for citizens to reflect on the principles that it was founded on.

In her closing remarks, French said, "The Constitution is a living document that continues to evolve and adapt to the needs of our society. It is our duty to understand and uphold its principles in order to ensure a free and just society for all Americans."

Author, Author

Book signings and author appearances in the Mid-South

On Campus: Talk ponders religious liberty

John Nance
The Daily Progress

Religious liberty advocates may yet win their legal fight to block controversial federal rules that will soon require most employers to provide insurance coverage for birth control, but Bill McGurn '80 worries that such victories may further undermine religiously motivated acts of conscience.

"Even with the Constitution firmly on our side, even if we are upheld in the courts, religious liberty will become increasingly fragile because the understandings of religion upon which they rest are no longer as advanced as the legal" the journalist told a packed Patrick M. McCartan C Law on September 19.

McGurn's talk, "God's on the Public Square: Religious Liberty in America," examined whether for-profit businesses should seek exemptions from birth control rules and whether for-profit businesses should be able to discriminate based on religious beliefs.

The alumna, who studied philosophy as a Notre Dame and "principled stand" in using U.S. Health and Human Services That lawsuit was dismissed the following December on pro
2013 Notre Dame Symposium

Religious Freedom Under Obamacare: Can and Should For-Profit Businesses Claim Conscientious Objector Status?

Thursday, September 19 - Notre Dame Law School

1:00-2:30 pm - New Book Panel: The Public Square, McCourtney Courtyard, Law School Hall of Law

William M. Connolley, Jr.

2:30-5:00 pm - Reception, Eck Commons (2nd Floor)

Friday, September 20 - South Dining Hall Oak Room

8:30 AM - Book Panel: Early Quakerism, Atlantic Avenue Court (Lower Level of Engineering)

8:45 AM - Jack Miller Center for Law and Religion

Richard Cohen, Law

Catherine Sack, Law

10:30 AM - The HIU Mandate and the Biblical Responsibility of the Business Owner

Paul Ingersoll, Law

6:00 PM - The Position of Government

Emily Banks, Catholic University

9:00 PM - The Position of Multiple Religious Affiliation

Complimentary lunch will be served.

The Jack Miller Center

The New School for Religion and Political Science

The University Program on Law and Religion

The University Program on Constitutional Studies

All students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of Notre Dame welcome. For more information: jmc@nd.edu or 574-631-6366.