



## July 2022 Newsletter



2021–2022 was a great year for our chapter, as you will see in this newsletter! It was wonderful getting to see members and guests at our in-person events. The 2022–2023 events are currently being planned, and the first one will be the Awards Banquet on **November 10**. We hope to see you there.

A new board was elected at our annual membership meeting held in conjunction with our Student/Teacher Night and, as you can see on page 4, many of us were asked (and agreed) to serve another term. We would like to welcome new board members Sam Bonney, Trasa Cobern, Caroline Keeland and Lynn Hidell.

This fall, FFVF will resume holding its annual Chapters and Partners Conference at Valley Forge (see page 4). If you have not yet visited the beautiful campus, we hope that you will consider attending. And while you're there, be sure and see the new Museum of the American Revolution.

On the national front, in order to better fulfill its mission to provide high-quality civic education opportunities for students and teachers, Freedoms Foundation is exploring the possibility of merging with The Union League Legacy Foundation, a charitable organization in Philadelphia whose mission is to inspire and educate students and the greater community to be engaged and responsible citizens, guided by the United States Constitution. Freedoms Foundation has worked closely with the Legacy Foundation for decades, and we have provided mutual support to each other's civic education programs. We'll keep you informed as discussions continue.

Especially important this time of year is **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**. Please return the membership renewal form; and if the spirit moves you, add a donation! The more students and teachers that we send to Valley Forge, the better we fulfill our mission to **Educate**. While we have made significant accomplishments over our first 51 years, we can do much more.

I think that we are about to enter a new and exciting time for our organization, and I will need your continued help and support. I would love to hear any suggestions or comments that you may have.

Phil John, President

C: 214-802-4226

E: Phil@JohnDFW.com



### A Banner Year for the Dallas Area Chapter!

After our '20-'21 year of improvising to fulfill our mission, the near-return to normalcy allowed the Dallas Area Chapter to resume sending students and teachers to Valley Forge (**page 2**). In addition, the chapter held a joint awards banquet in Dallas with the national FFVF organization (a first) honoring our DAC award recipients and the Dallas Distinguished Citizen awardees (**page 3**). And once again, the George Washington birthday celebration, our annual fund raiser, was held at SMU and was a big success. The evening highlights were a tribute to Wally Funk and the keynote presentation by Scott Stephenson, President and CEO of the Museum of the American Revolution (**page 4** and below).

Thanks for your help in making the **Member Get A Member** campaign successful. In order to increase the chapter's ability to fulfill its mission, the focus on recruiting new members needs to be maintained by sharing our story with family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. Consider inviting them to come to one of the events this year as your guest to find out what we're all about.

### Sponsor Reception

On April 28, a cocktail reception sponsored by Lynn and Bill Hidell was held at the home of Sue and Phil John to thank our birthday celebration sponsors and to meet and talk with Scott Stephenson. Shown below is Scott, flanked by FFVF board members Steve Cotton and Larry Brasher (left) and DAC Programs VP Dennis D'Amico and DAC President Phil John (right).



## 2022 Youth Leadership Conference

Due to lingering parental concerns regarding COVID, the chapter only sponsored six high school students this year to attend the March 10-13 Youth Leadership Conference. Chaperoned by Julie Grigsby (VP Education) and Caroline Keeland, the students worked in groups on various projects, had tours of the campus and historical Philadelphia, and enjoyed the snow. Selected for awards were: Hope Ehlers, Aldo Lomas, Alexander Medina, Raul Lopez and Madison Howell.



Shown above with Thomas Jefferson and John Adams are (L to R) Hope Ehlers (Abeka Academy, Nevada), Nyomi Franklin (Forney HS), Alexander Medina (Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy), Aldo Lomas (BOMLA), Raul Lopez (BOMLA), and Madison Howell (North Forney HS)



## Summer Graduate Teacher Programs

Last summer, three teachers that were sponsored by the Dallas Area Chapter were able to attend FFVF graduate teacher programs on the American Revolution – Philadelphia Campaign. Those 2021 attendees were Matt Collins (Western Hills HS, Benbrook), Rebecca Farr (Nelson MS, McKinney), and Margie Fitzgerald (Walter MS, Little Elm). This summer the chapter is sponsoring ten teachers. Attending the *American Revolution North* program are Margie Fitzgerald (Little Elm), Kathy Ramirez (Fort Worth), and Lisa Smith (Euless); attending the *MOH Legacy: War on Terror* are Samantha Keaton (Arlington), Matt Collins (Benbrook), and Gabrielle Fletcher (Gainesville); attending the *Constitutional Convention and Ratification* program are Thomas McLaughlin (Forney) and Ashley Sweatt (Waxahachie); and attending the *MOH Legacy: World War II* program is Kyle Norwood (Hurst).

## 2022 Student Teacher Night

The Student/Teacher Night meeting was held at the University Park Library on April 7. The evening began with a box supper and welcome by Teacher Education Chairman Wes Poynor, followed by a brief Dallas Area Chapter business meeting for the election of 2022-2024 officers which was conducted by President Phil John. (See page 4 for the new board.) Five of the students attending this year's youth leadership conference and two of the teachers attending last summer's graduate programs (Matt Collins and Rebecca Farr) made excellent presentations about the impact of their FFVF experiences.





## 50<sup>th</sup> Dallas Area Chapter Awards Banquet

On November 8, 2021, The Dallas Area Chapter and the national Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge held a joint awards banquet at the Museum of Biblical Arts to present the prestigious George Washington Honor Medals to seventeen Dallas Area recipients, and the Distinguished Citizen Award to two Dallas area recipients.

George Washington Honor Medals are given to those selected for a National Award for going "above and beyond the call of duty" on local, regional, or national level projects to serve their communities and are selected by a national FFVF awards committee. In 2020, five Dallas area honorees were selected, but the award presentations were delayed a year due to COVID. In 2021, twelve Dallas area recipients were selected for the award.



**Student Essay Honorees (L to R):** T.L. Holden (SAR), Julie Grigsby (DAC VP Education), Andrew Martinelli (GWHM), Matthew Martinelli (GWHM), Rebecca Stanwood (GWHM), Sophie Gobriel (GWHM), Brooke Myers (GWHM), Allie Vandermosten (GWHM), Kay Poynor (VP Awards), Jordan Laurie (GWHM), Katrina Hallman (Highland Park Teacher), Bo Brady (GWHM), and Drake Peddy (SAR).

The 2020 and 2021 National Award honorees were selected in five different categories. Honored in the Adult Community category were Bev Darling for the Veterans Helping Veterans program, Judy Sullivan for "tirelessly serving her neighborhood," Abigail Williams for founding "United to Learn," and the Cochran Heights Neighborhood Association (CHNA) for its "Living Alley Project;" honored in the Youth Community category was high school student Luke Blazek for creating Speak4America; honored in the Teacher category were the Mirza brothers, Faizan and Rizwan, for founding the DiscoverSTEM Academy; honored in the Communication category was Bill Murchison for "A Lifetime of Journalism;" and honored in the student essay category for their essays on *What happens when a community no longer respects private property?* were Bo Brady, Sophie Ghobriel, Laurie Jordan, Andrew Martinelli, Matthew Martinelli, Brooke Myers, Rebecca Stanwood, Allie Vandermosten, and Pasha Zahedi.

The Freedoms Foundation Distinguished Citizen Awards are given to individuals or organizations that demonstrate responsible citizenship and a lifetime of service to their community. Selected by the FFVF Board of Directors in 2021 for the honor were William P. Benac, Sr. and Mark W. Romney who are Co-Founders of the DFW Alliance for Religious Freedom. Their awards were presented by FFVF CEO David Harmer and board member Steve Cotton.

Special thanks to the Dallas Area Chapter volunteers and donors, the national FFVF staff, event sponsor Steve Cotton and Cotton Wealth Management Associates, LLC, and the Museum of Biblical Arts who helped make the event a big success.

The 2022 honorees will be announced in September and will receive their awards at the 51<sup>st</sup> Awards Banquet on 10 November. **Please mark your calendar.**



**Front row (Left to Right):** Abigail Williams (GWHM), Judy Sullivan (GWHM), William Murchison (GWHM), Kay Poynor (DAC VP Awards), and Phil John (DAC President). **Middle Row:** Mark Romney (DCA), Meg Moschetto (accepting GWHM for CHNA), Bill Benac (DCA recipient), Bev Darling (GWHM), Phil Blazek (accepting GWHM for son Luke Blazek), and T.L. Holden (SAR). **Back Row:** Drake Peddy (SAR), Steve Lobo (accepting GWHM for CHNA), David Harmer (FFVF CEO), and Mirza Faizan (GWHM).

**Know of potential National Award candidates?  
Please notify Lynn Hidell (VP Awards).**





**... and challenge all to serve a cause greater than themselves.**

## **The George Washington Birthday Celebration Dinner**

Cancelled in 2021 and then delayed in 2022 due to COVID-19, the Dallas Area Chapter of Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge held its George Washington Birthday Celebration Dinner on April 29, 2022 at the Martha Proctor Mack Ballroom on the SMU campus.

The dinner and program were a big success thanks to Dennis D'Amico (VP Programs), all the members that helped with the event, and especially the program participants: the SAR Color Guard, the Highland Park High School Quartet, Jack Wyman (A Brief Tribute to our American Presidents), Steve Cotton (Presentation of the President's Special Service Award presented virtually to Wally Funk), and Dr. R. Scott Stephenson, President/CEO of the new Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia (the keynote presentation "Deeds, not Words" including pictures of several memorable pieces in the museum, especially George Washington's headquarters tent).

The money raised, thanks to our generous donors and sponsors, goes into the Dallas Area Chapter Scholarship Fund to help increase the number of students and teachers sent to Valley Forge.



### **2022–2023 Dallas Area Chapter Executive Board**

FFVFDallas@gmail.com

#### **Officers**

President	Phil John
First VP, Programs	Dennis D'Amico
VP, Awards	Lynn Hidell
VP, Education	Trasa Cobern
	Caroline Keeland
VP, Membership	Sam Bonney
Recording Secretary	Carolyn Willard
Treasurer	Pierce Noble
Immediate Past President	Wes Poynor

#### **At Large Members**

FFVF Board Liaison	Steve Cotton
Chapter Advisors	Sue John
	Julie Noble
	Shirley & Jack Smith

### **52nd Annual Chapters & Partners Conference**

*Looking Towards 75 With Renewed Purpose*

**Freedoms Foundation Valley Forge Campus  
October 6-9, 2022**

Highlights include....

- ★ The State of the Foundation Address by CEO David Harmer
- ★ Saturday Excursion to Gettysburg Visitor Center and Battlefield
- ★ Collaboration with fellow chapters
- ★ Exciting and topical speakers
- ★ Learn the latest news on programs, events, and future plans
- ★ Working sessions to assist chapters
- ★ Sunday service at Washington Memorial Chapel

To register or for more info: [freedomsfoundation.org/chapters/annual-chapter-conference/](https://freedomsfoundation.org/chapters/annual-chapter-conference/)