



JAMES MADISON
MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP
FOUNDATION

James Madison Jr.

Madison Memo For all those teaching the Constitution in America's classrooms

Issue: # 3

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From the President, Lewis Larsen

Madison Fellows often describe themselves, proudly, as "government geeks." And what time of year could be more exciting for Fellows than the presidential election season? That season, formally confined to the time between August conventions and November elections, now stretches over an eighteen month period filled with debates, straw polls, caucuses, primaries, and campaign events. How are you preparing students to understand (and perhaps to vote) in the 2012 election? Send your ideas and strategies (to cgriffin@jamesmadison.com), and we will feature them in the September issue of the *Madison Memo*.

How would *you* assess the presidents of the past? Participate in our on-line poll, *Who Was the Greatest President?*, by clicking [here](#). (We could only provide five options, so some of your personal favorites may not have made this list.)

Finally, the upcoming holidays provide an opportunity for potential Fellows to work on their applications and Madison Fellows consistently identify, mentor, and recommend outstanding applicants. Do you know someone who would be a good candidate? Send them to the [website](#) to get started, and then consider how you might guide them through the application process. The deadline is March 1 annually.



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Focus on the Fellows

Chris Elnicki, '95 (CO)

It's been 17 years since I became a James Madison Fellow. As a result, I became a better writer, a better



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leader, a better thinker, a better teacher and a better citizen. One could say I was mentored by Madison. Through his model, I came to understand the power of agenda setting, the bigger purposes for keeping minutes, the importance of coalition building, and the significance of a deep awareness for civic life.

After completing my masters, I become a national trainer and district coordinator for the We the People and Project Citizen Programs. I became more active in the Colorado Council for the Social Studies (CCSS), eventually serving as President. I wrote curriculum and trained teachers with the Colorado Bar and Lawyers Committees, the National Conference of State Legislature, and the Center for Education in Law and Democracy.

I worked closely with others in the state to create stronger ties among leaders and organizations. Soon, the Colorado Geographic Alliance was partnering routinely with the Colorado Economic Council, and groups like History Colorado, Facing History, Colorado Humanities, Colorado Preservation, and the Denver Museum of Science were working together.

As a result of this teaming, more teachers have been reached and greater numbers of students have been impacted. With CCSS, these groups have lobbied state policymakers, reminding them that citizenship readiness is vital. As a result, the Colorado Department of Education established a state level Social Studies Specialist in 2008, and three grades will be assessed in social studies in 2015.

My local experiences have increasingly become connected with national organizations. Last year, I served as the Local Arrangements Chair for the NCSS Conference. I'm now on the Board for the National Social Studies Supervisors Association. In all cases, my Madison experience continues to inspire and inform my efforts.

Let us hear what you have been up to since receiving your Fellowship. Submit a brief article (150-200 words) along with a high-resolution photo to cgriffin@jamesmadison.com for possible inclusion in future newsletters.

Constitution Corner



Dr. Daniel Dreisbach, American University

Chief among the tenets of the American constitutional tradition is a commitment to the rule of law. The term "rule of law" is bandied about but often without a clear sense of what it means. What are the features and characteristics of a political society committed to the rule of law?

A useful starting point is to ask: What is the opposite of rule of law? A regime in which government authorities exercise absolute discretion is the opposite, as captured in the familiar maxim, "a nation of men, not of laws."

In *Common Sense* (1776), Thomas Paine concisely expressed the American conception of rule of law: "But where, say some, is the king of America?... [I]n America the law is king."

Rule of law means that law, not the discretion of an individual or some governing elite, is the supreme legal authority in the polity; the power of civil government is limited by law; and the limits imposed by law must be enforced through established procedures. All citizens, regardless of class or standing, are subject to the same law and the same courts--legal equality.

The rule of law has both a substantive and a procedural dimension. It is expressed substantively through duly enacted laws. The highest expression of written law in our legal system is the U.S. Constitution, the "supreme law of the land." The substantive expression of law, however, is also expressed through duly enacted codes, statutes, ordinances, and the like.

Teaching Tips

Anne Kelsey-Zibert, '07 (SC)



When teaching middle school students about the Bill of Rights, incorporating high-interest Supreme Court cases offers a pathway to understanding. Give each small group a case (e.g., *Tinker v. Des Moines*, *Gideon v. Wainwright*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, or a case currently before the Court), but do not provide the Court's ruling. Each group should present the facts of the case and lead a class discussion (with teacher scaffolding) to identify each sides' arguments. Once students have examined all the cases, provide the Court's ruling and explanation. Students then use critical thinking skills to write about whether or not they agree with the Court's ruling and to justify their opinion. Middle school students enjoy seeing replicas of Founding documents, so as they discuss cases, students should label the corresponding part of the Constitution or Bill of Rights - either digitally on a smart board, or with sticky notes on copies posted in the classroom. ([Street Law](#) provides outstanding case summaries.)

Do you have a favorite pedagogical approach for teaching about the Constitution? Submit a brief article (150-200 words) to cgriffin@jamesmadison.com for possible inclusion in future newsletters.

Opportunities



additional details.

Laura Wakefield, '00 (FL) invites Fellows to attend the annual conference of the National Council for History Education, held March 22-24, 2012 in Louisville, KY. The Foundation will have a booth in the Exhibit Hall. Click [here](#) for



Street Law conducts an annual Summer Institute on the Supreme Court.

Next summer's Institutes will be held June 14-19 and June 21-26, 2012 in Washington, DC. Click [here](#) for more information.



The National Endowment for the Humanities offers a wide variety of [summer seminars](#) and [institutes](#). Application deadlines are generally in early March.

Let us know about professional opportunities that would be of interest to Fellows. We plan to include 3-4 timely notifications in each edition of the newsletter. Information can be sent to cgriffin@jamesmadison.com

From the Foundation

Payments: Payment requests received December 15-30 will be held for processing until January 3 due to 1099 tax reporting requirements.

1099's: The Foundation is required by the IRS to report payments made to Fellows on IRS Form 1099-Misc. This form will be mailed directly from the General Services Administration (GSA) to Fellows in late January. Additional information can be found on pgs. 5-6 of the "Payment and Financial Obligations" section of the Fellows' Handbook.



Congressional Fellow: Applications for the 2012 Congressional Fellowship are available in the Fellows Only section of the website and are due January 8. Only Fellows who have completed both their degree and their teaching requirement are eligible for the fellowship.

Survey: Thank you to the nearly 300 Fellows who participated in our first on-line survey in November. 25 of you will receive a set of all three Foundation posters by the end of the year. Information from the survey will be posted on the website next month, and will help the Foundation to continue meeting your needs as teachers of the Constitution.

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