

DESCENDANTS OF THE SIGNERS OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania General Meeting - July 4, 2014

The General Meeting of the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence was held on Friday, July 4, 2014 at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Laurie Croft President-General of the Society called the meeting to order at 4:55 PM. Hope Middleton Wood led everyone with the society prayer. Jim Alexander led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Laurie asked anyone attending the General meeting for the first time to stand introduce themselves along with their signer. Members of the board then stood and introduce themselves along with their signer.

Laurie introduced guest speaker BJ Dunn Deputy Superintendent of the Independence National Historical Park. BJ talked about various activities and updates to the National Park as well as a new book about the Signers, which will be available in the visitors' center. BJ also mentioned that 2016 will be the centennial year for the National Park service and thanked everyone for coming to Philadelphia for the 4th of July.

Donald Ward Sr. Governor of Pennsylvania welcomed everyone to Philadelphia and outlined the evening's activities. He asked the bell tappers to come up and receive a replica copy of the Declaration of Independence along with a print of John Trumbull's painting Declaration of Independence. He also congratulated the bell tappers for a great job at the bell tapping ceremony earlier that day.

Minutes: A motion was made and 2nd to dispense the reading of the April 25, 2014 Lexington and Concord, MA minutes and these minutes were approved at the board meeting. Laurie mentioned that a copy of the minutes will be listed on our website in the members' only section for anyone that is interested in reviewing them.

Future Meetings: Hope Middleton Wood discussed the upcoming events and activities for the fall meeting in Charleston, South Carolina October 10-12, 2014. Laurie Croft talked about the upcoming spring meeting at Mount Vernon, VA April 10-12, 2015 and mentioned they will open up the gates to Washington's tomb so we can lay a wreath. Details for the meeting will be listed on the DSDI website.

Registrar's Report: Jim Alexander reported and read the names of the 13 new Senior Members and 5 new Junior Members. Jim also read the names of 5 deceased members followed by a prayer for the deceased.

Treasurer's Report: Dan McNamara reported that the Treasury of the Society is in great shape. Dan noted that the remaining balance of \$9,000.00 from the Yearbook fund will be transferred back into the sustainable fund. As Treasure for the past 10 years Dan said that this will be his last report, for now, and is passing his duties over to Johnny Alexander. Laurie thanked Dan for his service and mentioned when Dan took

this position, the Treasury was in not in the best shape. Dan along with help from others has done an outstanding job getting the Treasury to where it is today. Dan also received an award from Laurie thanking him for his 10 years of service.

Historian-General: In the absences of Johnny Alexander, Laurie Croft read Johnny's report. The 100th anniversary book/CD is almost complete. Johnny has sent out the CD to select board members for review and final input. He also wanted to note that since this yearbook is a snap shot in time, changes in membership status that happened after the Williamsburg meeting are not included.

Annual Giving: Hope Middleton Wood reported that this year has been very successful and there were a total of 77 donors contributed this year. The Annual Giving program has become an important part of the DSDI in aiding support for outside programs including a contribution to the renovation of the Bell Tower at Independence Hall, a grant for an University of Pennsylvania graduate student doing historical research at Independence Hall and a donation to help repair St. Johns Church the site of the "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech in Richmond, Virginia.

Merchandise Report: Laurie Croft passed around a DSDI Jefferson Cup and let everyone know that pins and DSDI badges are also available for purchase through Ruth Hagan. He also mentioned that there was an article in the last issue of the Spirit describing how the DSDI Jefferson Cup is handcrafted.

Plaque Report: Laurie Croft note there are still three plaques needing to be hung. There was discussion about hanging these plaques at the Signer's homesteads instead of their gravesites since Thomas Lynch Jr. had died at sea and Pastor's at George Read and Lewis Morris burial sites are reluctant to hang the plaques. The board thought this would be a viable solution. Grace Staller wants to give it one more go on the Read and Morris burial sites. A plaque for Thomas Lynch, Jr. will be dedicated at his birthplace, Hopsewee Plantation, near Georgetown, SC on July 15, 2014.

Scholarship Report: Jill Haimes said that the online registration has been going well. She discussed the process that the applicants went through and the scholarship committee selected the top 56 applicants based on a point and merit system. Jill read the names of the recipients and noted that the names will be posted on the website.

Remarks by the President General: Laurie talked about his experience getting involved in the DSDI and how he did not get involved until later in life and is honored to now be the President General of the society. He discussed past and future activities of the society and encourages everyone to get other family members involved because it is such a unique society that offers more than just pride for being a Signer descendant. There is an opportunity to do good works in honor of the Signers.

Nominating Committee: Laurie read the names of the new officers that were selected by the nominating committee. There was a motion to accept the new slate of officers it was 2nd and the society voted in the new slate of officers.

Reading the Declaration of Independence: Laurie Croft gave an invigorating reading of The Declaration of Independence as he walked up the aisle of The Long Room in Independence Hall.

Roll Call: Hope Middleton Wood and David Haines read the names of the Signers for roll call.

Josiah Bartlett	1	John Witherspoon	3
John Hart	22	John Morton	3
George Read	3	William Hooper	1
Thomas Heyward, Jr.	1	Arthur Middleton	1

Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm

Evening Activities: After dinner at the Omni Hotel our guest speaker was Thorny Lockwood who spoke about The Great Debate of 1775-1776. Thorny gave a very informative presentation about the events leading up to The Signing of the Declaration of Independence. Thorny talked about how divided the colonies were and that The Olive Branch Petition offered some compromise before King George III refused the petition. This in turn created a widespread surge for independence and The Virginia Resolution. Two weeks prior to the Signing only 7 colonies were in favor of independence and after great debate, all of the members from the 13 colonies came to an agreement and signed the Declaration of Independence. Thorny's presentation was very enlightening as not much is publicized of the events leading up to the Signing. It truly was a huge decision for the Signers in pledging their lives, fortunes and sacred honor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald Ward Jr. Secretary-General of the DSDI
July 28, 2014