



The KEETER REPORT

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Citizenship is Deeper than Just Being a Good Politician



The Honorable Kenneth W. Starr

The John N. and Ella C. Marsh Citizenship Forum 2001 events culminated on April 6th with The Honorable Kenneth W. Starr, former Independent Counsel, sharing his message entitled "Character in Politics." This is the second Citizenship Forum hosted by the College's Keeter Center for Character Education and gave College of the Ozarks students, invited students and representatives from visiting institutions a chance to ask Judge Starr questions.

Participants were selected via nomination or application and prepared for the Forum by reading a compilation of essays relating to citizenship and attending meetings to discuss various topics such as the origins of self-government, philosophical development, and the judicial definition of citizenship.

On April 5th and 6th, representatives from Bluffton College, Central Methodist College, Evangel University, Southwest Missouri State University, the United States Air Force Academy, and Vanderbilt University joined C of O's participants for small and large group discussions relating to citizenship.

Forum participants also attended a private discussion with Judge Starr prior to a press confer-

ence. At the press conference, which preceded the evening's events, Starr said, "I find that at some campuses, the questions naturally tend to be more narrowly focused on the investigations; here however, we talked about a whole range of subjects—other constitutional issues, education policy and the like."

The students expressed how they were tired of hearing only about Judge Starr being linked to the investigations. Therefore, students searched deeper and tried to understand and learn from Judge Starr's experience, what it is that makes him the strong person he is. This type of setting gave students an opportunity to examine those issues that are relevant to good citizenship. Many realized that citizenship goes much deeper than just being a good politician.

Before the question-and-answer session, Judge Starr spoke briefly, stating that politicians must restore faith in the value of citizenship and moral character before the nation will recover from what he called "a culture of scandal." Starr emphasized that a current trend in politics is "consumer-driven policy." He said politicians are more apt to set policy based on results of polls than deliberations over principles.

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During his time as Independent Counsel, Starr's decisions were often unpopular. However, he realized character does count. Following his appointment to the position, he said to his colleagues, "We've been given a terribly nasty job to do, and we have to do it to the best of our ability."

During the question and answer session College of the Ozarks student, Barry Henderson asked, "How independent is the Independent Counsel?"



Cadet Brian Smolensky from the United States Air Force Academy poses a question to Judge Starr during the Forum.

Judge Starr briefly responded, "Too independent!" He explained that the position maintains independence from the executive branch, but is also separated from the structure of government. Being separated from government gives freedom, but also leaves a person unsupported when not-so-popular decisions are made.

Cadet Brian Smolensky from the United States Air Force Academy asked, "If you identify a declining moral state in the United States, how do you propose we fix this problem?"

"Families, churches, and neighborhoods must each establish priority," declared Starr. He referred to a "grassroots" movement as being necessary. The turnabout must take place beginning on the home front. Judge Starr touched on the great division between the church structure and government. It will take more than just government to make the changes, "Faith based communities are necessary when dealing with these social issues," explained Judge Starr.

Vanderbilt University's Matthew Smith asked, "What was your most difficult case as the United States Circuit Judge for the D.C. Circuit?" Judge

Starr's response, "It concerned the Environmental Law and the Clean Water Act. It turned out to be very complex and served as a wonderful exercise in humility."

These students were just a few who had the opportunity to direct questions at Judge Starr during the Forum. After the Forum the participants assembled to fill out an evaluation form about the Forum experience. The following excerpts are quotes from these evaluations.

"I enjoyed the exchange of ideas over the various topics. It was very interesting because it made me see things from another's perspective, but their perspectives were not forced upon me."

"This Forum gave me great insight into the world of politics, beneficial interaction with students from C of O and other colleges, and I now have a growing conviction that strong character and personal integrity are invaluable qualities of a leader."

"I gained a further understanding of the concept of citizenship, as well as a strong appreciation for Judge Starr. He has incredible wisdom and knowledge of a variety of topics."



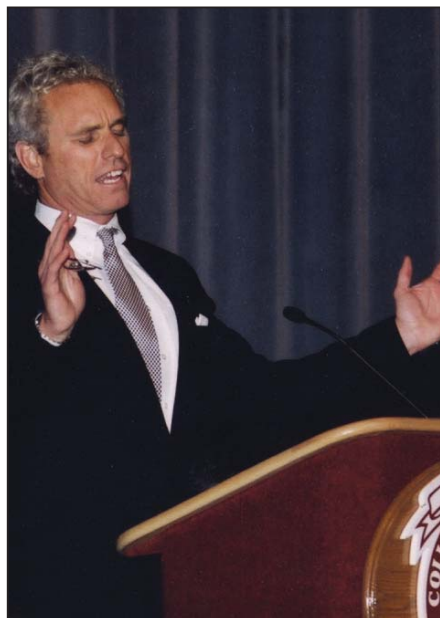
Forum participants with Judge Kenneth W. Starr

"I have gained a more in-depth understanding of the principles that have defined our current comprehension of 'citizenship,' as well as learned how to formulate questions to continue my education on this subject."

"I have a new found appreciation for C of O, encouragement for moral, ethical, living (citizenship), as well as ideas to bolster moral, ethical living."

Kennedy-Keyes Debate Produces Thought-Provoking Evening

The John N. and Ella C. Marsh Citizenship Academy enabled College of the Ozarks to provide a new initiative for the Spring 2001 semester. A Left-Right Debate was held on January 22. Two political rivals, Joseph P. Kennedy and Alan Lee Keyes, were the guest speakers for the evening. The for-



Joseph P. Kennedy

mat of the debate was much like that of the recent “town-hall” Presidential Debate. First, an individual would direct a question toward one of the men and he would have three minutes to respond. Then the opponent would have an opportunity for a two-minute rebuttal.

The intensity of the recent election and timing of the new “debate” program helped lure in a large audience. To top it off, Mr. Kennedy and Dr. Keyes knew how to use their charisma to engage the crowd.

Phi Alpha Theta, the College of the Ozarks’ history honor society, helped to coordinate the debate by preparing and asking the questions. Some of the questions addressed were as follows: What reforms, if any, are necessary to improve the (moral) state of America? Would President Bush’s school voucher program make schools more accountable for achievement? What is America’s role in foreign policy—



Dr. Alan Keyes

should we be isolationists or interventionists? What can be done to reduce our dependence on foreign oil?

The variety of questions, combined with the very different opinions of Mr. Kennedy and Dr. Keyes, made for an interesting, entertaining, and unforgettable night.

Leonard and Edith Gittinger Community Convocation Series Presents...

The Honorable James A. Baker III, one of the world’s leading statesmen, will be the guest speaker for the Leonard and Edith Gittinger Community Convocation October 4, 2001. Baker draws upon his unique background and gift for straightforward speaking in analyzing today’s global and national challenges.

Upcoming Events

Camp Lookout	July 4 - August 10
Honor America	July 1
Character Camp	August 17 - August 26
Honor Induction/Etiquette Banquet	August 26
The Honorable James A. Baker III Convocation	October 4
Veterans’ Day Celebration and Convocation.	November 11



James A. Baker III

Coloring the Ozarks with Green

College of the Ozarks students roll-up their sleeves and work, not only at their jobs on campus, but also in the surrounding community. C of O has an entire workstation devoted to doing community service year around. The Bonner Scholars Program supports the notion that given the opportunity, young people will become active and involved in their local community. Allowing students to serve and receive work credit not only meets their work-study needs, but also helps them make positive differences in the lives of others.

One particular project the Bonner Scholars have been actively involved in is the *Gift of Green*. Mr. Jack Herschend, one of the two founders of Silver Dollar City, inaugurated the *Gift of Green* in 1992; however, the roots grow much deeper. Herschend's inspiration actually came from his parents, Hugo and Mary Herschend. Mr. Hugo Herschend, parent of Jack and Pete Herschend, came to the Ozarks from Denmark at age eighteen. Hugo had a compassion for nature and at a young age influenced his sons to appreciate nature as well. Eventually, Jack and Pete were planting so many trees, they could not keep up and properly tend to every tree that was planted. Jack became inspired by a friend, the late Stewart Henslee, through his Tree America program, to get others involved. Sharing the watering responsibilities by "gifting trees" to others will make *Gift of Green's* vision of planting one million trees in the Ozarks area a reality.

Bordering on Bull Creek, the *Gift of Green* acreage is host to thousands of two-to four-year-old



Jack Herschend is seated in the foreground along with C of O Bonner students.

trees set within individual planters. Each year approximately 100 volunteers help pot, fertilize, winterize by covering with sawdust, and relocate the trees to a permanent home.

Gift of Green is solely a volunteer program. The trees are always given, or "gifted" as Jack would say, free of charge. Financial support for the materials comes from Ozark Mountain Bank, Bass Pro Shops, Empire District Electric and Silver Dollar City.

The Bonners look forward to their annual "sawdust parties," when 12 to 15 students volunteer and help tend to the trees. Last October, 20 Bonners contributed five hours each to the *Gift of Green*.

The KEETER CENTER



James P. Keeter (second from left) and family

A **special thanks** is due James P. Keeter, a member of the Board of Trustees, College of the Ozarks. Mr. Keeter is a distinguished business entrepreneur and Chairman of the Board and CEO of Royal Oak Enterprises of Atlanta, Georgia. He and his family have provided an endowment gift to start The Keeter Center for Character Education. The Center is named in honor of Mr. Keeter's parents, the late Vester and Ruby Keeter of Bradleyville, Missouri. It is the intent of the Keeter family to take a leadership role with College of the Ozarks in promoting character education on a national level.

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