



SCOTTSDALE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

A Great Hearts Academy

16537 North 92nd Street | Scottsdale, AZ 85260 | Office: (480) 776-1970 | Fax: (480) 476-1975 | www.scottsdaleprep.org

November 14, 2024

Parents have long lamented, and rightly so, a society seemingly unconcerned with the condition of our national ethos and the degradation of culture that has followed. Many do not know their history and thus cannot appreciate all that has been bequeathed to them through the sacrifices of those who came before us. More concerning is the lack of understanding of the characteristics which animated our Founders and have made our country great. What follows is a citizenry that is ignorant of its rights and responsibilities as Americans and thus easily become targets of manipulation and misinformation. Properly educated people are not the prime consumers of propaganda as they are able to see through lies, hyperbole, and twisted logic because they have been taught to recognize truth and charlatans alike. Thomas Jefferson's words ring even truer today than when he spoke to them over 200 years ago, "Those that would like to be both ignorant and free, hope for what never has been and what never will be."

The source of this decline has been traced, by many, to the public school system which falls horribly short in requiring much of its students not just in content, but in character.

Furthermore, an education that includes an emphasis on virtue is life-giving and essential. Aristotle said, "Happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue." If the lofty goal of education is to create human happiness, then we cannot ignore the role of virtue in our schools. However, we all know that nothing worth having comes easily – the law of the harvest states that we will reap only what we have sown. Here at Scottsdale Prep, we have a family of families that understands this and choose to give their children the type of education that will enhance their lives, our country, and our culture. A proper education is one of the greatest blessings that we, as parents, can provide for our children. If we truly believe that education is one of the avenues of escape from the ignorance and shallowness of modern society, then we must stand up and demand that our children not be counted among the miseducated.

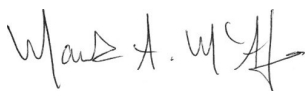
To the extent that we fill a child's head without cultivating the heart and refining the habits of our students, we do them a grave disservice. The good life which we are endeavoring to promote cannot be accomplished simply by an increase in knowledge. It must be accompanied by a dedication to the pursuit of virtue. C.S. Lewis eloquently expresses this understanding of a proper education in his seminal work *The Abolition of Man*, stating, "The

heart never takes the place of the head: but it can, and should, obey it.” The heart and the head must work together if we are to be fully human.

One of the ways we accomplish this noble task is through paying homage to that which molded the minds and hearts of those who founded our great nation and helped mold Western Tradition – namely the history and literature that was studied by those we so revere. So, to answer the question that you have heard from your child or have asked yourself; “Why do we study old things?” Our Founders knew the value of studying the greatest minds and writings of all time. The architects of our country knew their literature, history, and philosophy; it shaped their minds and informed their hearts; they let great thoughts and writing calibrate their moral compasses. Our Founders studied ancient cultures, literature, and governments to understand human nature and its pitfalls, as well as the protective measures that must be put in place to guard our hearts and minds against untruth. It is impossible to read our Founders and not be struck by their sense of moral obligation and adherence to virtue. We study the stories that created these men and women to whom we look upon as examples to be emulated. This is the course of study which formed our Founders, our heroes, and our culture.

Many schools simply substitute the idea of patriotism for virtue. It is not enough to merely be patriotic. Faux patriotism does not give a reason for its fervor - it asks no questions and has no justification for its belief. Patriotism is not virtue, rather it is the result of virtues properly applied. As citizens we must know our history and understand that our virtue and principles are what make us a great nation. We must be ready to give a defense for our way of life in the face of those that would want to destroy it. We must learn to act with the same character we want to see passed down to our posterity. It is through a proper education – one that recognizes the importance of virtue - that our culture and nation might be saved. As educators at SPA, it is our great passion, honor, and purpose to partner with our families to make sure that we do our part in this struggle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. McAfee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M" and "A".

Mark McAfee
Headmaster