



# SCOTTSDALE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

## A Great Hearts Academy

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### Open Letter to Veterans,

It is truly a privilege to celebrate November 11th and pay tribute to our veterans - those that put their lives, ambitions, and desires on hold to serve the cause of liberty and a purpose higher than themselves. Here at Scottsdale Prep, we recognize that we have the opportunity to pursue our studies and ponder the beauty of our world, only because the soldier, sailor, Marine, airman, and guardsmen have paved that way.

All the way back at the establishment of our great country, John Adams understood this fact. In a letter to his wife, Abigail, he wrote:

“I must study politics and war, that our sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.”

Adams understood this natural hierarchy and progression from that which is base and foundational to that which is beautiful - what was necessary and primary for a civilization, a culture, and a country to then flourish. Our country owes its greatness to the fact we can count among our citizens those that were and are willing to sacrifice their temporal comforts for an enduring set of ideals.

As it was true then, it is true now. Here, on any given day, you can wander through our hallways and step into classrooms and see our students and teachers pondering the splendor of the words of Shakespeare or Austin or Milton. You can see our students producing beautiful works of art and music and dancing gracefully. They contemplate the philosophy of Aristotle and mysteries of science and the complexities of Calculus.

And, as Adams recognized, none of this is possible without veterans who allow us to study under the blanket of their protection. We get to study the true and the good and the beautiful because others, veterans, provide us the freedom to do so.

What we study here are the things that have made Western Civilization and an American nation – the common body of knowledge which makes up our culture.

And none of it is possible without the safety and security provided by you, our veterans, brave men and women, past and present, that subordinated their personal desires for the common good of their fellow citizens and the perpetuation of our way of life.

For this, we thank you today. However, you do not need our recognition, or that of anyone else. Abraham Lincoln, in the Gettysburg Address, expressed the insufficiency of our thanks

in the greatest and most thoroughgoing expression of the honor that you have earned. In dedicating the cemetery there, he stated:

*“It is altogether fitting that we do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract.”*

So, while we thank you for your service, your honor has been secured through your actions and not any ceremony, recognition, or words that we can provide.

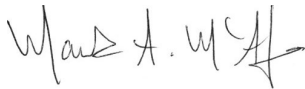
However, it is important for us, as a society, to understand, acknowledge, and honor what is truly worthy of honor lest our posterity lose sight of the importance of showing gratitude to our heroes in uniform. We are, unfortunately, in the process of redefining, as a country, what is good. We admire the wrong people and idolize things of no permanence, and in the process, lose sight of what is of eternal value. C.S. Lewis said it this way:

*“We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful.”*

May we, as a nation, always give our veterans the honor they are due and in so doing, pay homage to the worthiest in our society.

Our debt can never be repaid, but our gratitude and respect must last forever. Veterans, thank you for allowing us to live in the freedom which you have protected and know that you always have an honored place here at Scottsdale Prep. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark McAfee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "McAfee" clearly distinguishable.

Mark McAfee  
Headmaster