

Historic & Contemporary Quotes -
The Need for American Heritage Civic Education
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The Aim of Civic Education – Contemporary Sources

“The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth.” --
John F. Kennedy

“We may now define in a more precise manner the aim of education. It is to guide man in the evolving dynamism through which he shapes himself as a human person--armed with knowledge, strength of judgment, and moral virtues--while at the same time conveying to him the spiritual heritage of the nation and the civilization in which he is involved, and preserving in this way the century-old achievements of generations.” --Jacques Maritain

“I believe that somehow every student in every college of the United States ought to be taught fundamental lessons that say democracy is precious, democracy is perishable, democracy requires active attention and that democracy requires hard work.” -- Roger Wilkins, Robinson Professor of History & American Culture, George Mason University, “Are We Taking Care of Our Democracy?” University of Maryland, March 7, 1996

“I have in mind the Founding Fathers’ idea of an informed citizenry. This is the basic principle that underlies our national system of education in the first place--that people in a democracy can be entrusted to decide all important matters for themselves because they can deliberate and communicate with one another.” --E. D. Hirsch, Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know

“It’s just critical that if we are going to survive as a nation, that all our citizens know and understand the fundamental beliefs that caused the formation of this country and stand at the bottom, the bedrock foundation, for the things in which we most strongly believe. So you have to start at the beginning--and that means the Declaration of Independence.” --Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, U. S Supreme Court

The Importance of Civic Education – Historic Sources

“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” --Thomas Jefferson

“Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.” -- Thomas Jefferson

“The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty.” --James Madison

“A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce, or a tragedy, or perhaps both.” --James Madison

“Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” --James Madison

“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.” --Benjamin Franklin

“The philosophy of the schoolhouse in one generation will be the philosophy of the government in the next.” --Abraham Lincoln

“America’s future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what he is taught; hence we must watch what we teach, and how we live.” --Jane Addams

“Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the people.” --John Adams

“To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.” --Theodore Roosevelt

“Do not separate text from historical background. If you do, you will have perverted and subverted the Constitution, which can only end in a distorted...form of illegitimate government.” --James Madison

“I should like to think that America should stand as a land of opportunity and enthusiasm and riches. By riches I mean not only raw materials, armies, navies, railroads, ships, and cities, but a whole people full of good will toward the world, loyal to its own flag and beautiful continent, ready to work to educate its whole people.” --Mrs. J. Borden Harriman

“Knowing as we do that the foundation of national greatness can be laid only in the industry, the integrity and the spiritual elevation of the people, **are we equally sure that schools are forming the character of the rising generation upon the everlasting principles of duty and humanity?** Are children so educated that when they grow up they will make better leaders or only grander savages? However loftily the intellect of man may have been gifted, however skillfully it may have been trained, if it be not guided by a sense of justice, a love of mankind and a devotion to duty, its possessor is only a more dangerous barbarian.” --Horace Mann

The Importance of Civic Education – Contemporary Sources

“Democracy cannot endure if ignorance prevails.” --Dianne Ravitch, Educator and Author

“Civilization is not inherited; it has to be learned and earned by each generation anew; if the transmission should be interrupted for one century, civilization would die, and we should be savages again.” --Will & Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History*

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.” --Ronald Reagan

“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.” --John F. Kennedy

“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The **real safeguard for democracy, therefore, is education.**” --Franklin D. Roosevelt

“A child miseducated is a child lost.” --John F. Kennedy

“Ignorance is stubborn and prejudice hard.” --Adlai E. Stevenson

“We can chart our future clearly and wisely only when we know the path which has led to the present.” --Adlai E. Stevenson

“We have entered an age in which **education** is not just a luxury permitting some men an advantage over others. It **has become a necessity without which a person is defenseless in this complex, industrialized society.** We have truly entered the century of the educated man.” --Lyndon B. Johnson

“The fifth freedom is freedom from ignorance.” --Lyndon B. Johnson

“Education is not a problem. Education is an opportunity.” --Lyndon B. Johnson

“An ignorance of the past also has political implications. Politicians increasingly rely on an uninformed public to slip through unconstitutional legislation limiting our freedoms. If only for self-preservation we would be wise to reconsider the past.” --Cal Thomas, “Americans Suffering From Bout of Cultural Amnesia,” June 3, 2004.

“People need as much information as possible to make good decisions, Jefferson knew, especially when it came to government. ‘Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositors,’ he wrote. ‘And to render even them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree.’

Jefferson understood that firsthand knowledge is the most accurate, and he strove to gather his own information.” --Michael Mink, “Founding Father’s Right Touch,” Investor’s Business Daily, July 7, 2003

“It is even more **important to pass stories of American courage and character to the next generation.** To capture their imaginations. To raise a monument in their hearts. It is the way our democracy renews its promise, by celebrating American heroes and American values, without hesitation and without apology. Let us resolve to teach America’s story to America’s children.” --Austin Bay, “A Creaking Pulley and An Honored Flag,” Houston Chronicle, June 13, 1999.

“‘In no country,’ wrote Noah Webster, ‘is education so general--in no country, have the body of the people such knowledge of the rights of men and the principles of government. This **knowledge, joined with a keen sense of liberty and a watchful jealousy, will guard our constitutions.**’ Today, America’s children are barely acquainted with their country, or the principles on which it was founded.” --Ben Boychuk, “Without Understanding Civics, Freedom Dies,” Investor’s Business Daily, November 24, 1999.

“So many of the blessings and advantages we have, so many of the reasons why our civilization, our culture, has flourished aren’t understood; they’re not appreciated. And **if you don’t have any appreciation of what people went through to get, to achieve, to build what you are benefiting from, then these things don’t mean very much to you. You just think, well, that’s the way it is. That’s our birthright. That just happened. But it didn’t just happen.... And at what price? What grief? What disappointment? What suffering went on? I mean this. I think that to be ignorant or indifferent to history isn’t just to be uneducated or stupid. It’s to be rude, ungrateful. And ingratitude is an ugly failing in human beings.**” --David McCullough, Historian and President, Society of American Historians, cited respectively in George Archibald, “Ignorance of U. S. History Is Called Threat to Security.” Washington Times, 14-20 April 2003, and George Archibald, “‘Amnesia’ to History Is Called Threat to Liberty,” Washington Times, 21 May 2003.

“The average age of the world’s greatest civilizations from the beginning of history, has been about 200 years. During those 200 years, these nations always progressed through the following sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith, from spiritual faith to great courage; from courage to liberty; from liberty to abundance; from abundance to complacency; from complacency to apathy; from apathy to dependence; from dependence back into bondage.” -- Author Unknown

“We have chosen what is common, established, almost proverbial; what has become indisputably ‘classic,’ what, in brief, every child in the land ought to know, because it is good,

and because other people know it. The educational worth of such materials calls for no defense. **In an age when the need of unifying our people is keenly felt, the value of a common stock of knowledge, a common set of ideas, is obvious.**" E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know

"Our ability to defend intelligently and thoughtfully what we as a nation hold dear depends on the knowledge and understanding of what we hold dear." --Dianne Ravitch, Educator and Author

"If the memories of the past are not passed on, they cease to exist." --John Eccles, Nobel Laureate

"Schools do more than train children's minds. They also help nurture their souls by reinforcing the values they learn at home and in their communities. I believe that one of the best ways we can help out schools to do this is by supporting students' rights to voluntarily practice their religious beliefs, including prayer in schools.... For more than 200 years, the First Amendment has protected our religious freedom and allowed many faiths to flourish in our homes, in our work place and in our schools. Clearly understood and sensibly applied, it works." --Bill Clinton, U. S. President

Decline of Civic Education – Contemporary Sources

"Something's eating away at the national memory, and a nation or a community or a society can suffer as much from the adverse effects of amnesia as can an individual." --David McCullough, historical biographer, (Archibald, 'Amnesia')

"Americans have a sense that something is seriously wrong with education in America. What they do not know is that the situation is far worse than they imagine." --Matthew Robinson, Author and Columnist

"In recent years, educators have lost the conviction that there are certain things citizens should know. Now, they are having second thoughts. There are widespread cries of alarm that **America--a nation founded by men steeped in philosophy and history--has evolved into a land of cultural illiterates.** Waves of best-selling books and scholarly reports are making the case that even as Americans go to school more, they come away knowing less." --Alvin P. Sanoff et al. "What Americans Should Know," U. S. News & World Report, September 28, 1987.

“Schools, in many ways, have lost their civic souls.” --Terry Pickeral, Educator

“America’s roots and heritage have been under attack in recent decades.” --Dr. Judd W. Patton, Educator

“The recently released survey of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (known as the nation’s report card), shows nearly 60 percent of high-school seniors lack even a basic knowledge of U. S. history.” --Don Feder, Conservative Chronicle, May 27, 2002.

“A new study by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) finds that the disease afflicting education reaches the nation’s most elite colleges and universities. ...The danger is that they will be hobbled citizens unable to understand, defend or promote the constitutional principles and framework that make freedom a possibility in the first place.” --Matthew Robinson, “No Knowledge, No Freedom,” American Scene, Human Events, March 30, 2000.

“[The Albert Shanker Institute] report contends students get a distorted account that their country is irredeemably flawed.... The new report says recent studies of text books confirm a ‘strong negative bias’ about the story of America.” --Associated Press, FOX News, “Public Schools Fail to Teach History, Study Charges,” September 9, 2003, www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,96865,00.html

“For the second year in a row, America’s elite universities and colleges have failed to rise above a ‘D plus’ on tests of basic knowledge about civics and American history, maintains a study commissioned by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI).”

“ISI’s final report entitled, ‘The Coming Crisis in Citizenship: Higher Education’s Failure to Teach America’s History and Institutions,’ presented four pivotal findings:

1. The average college senior knows very little about America’s history, government, international relations, and market economy. Their average score on the civic literacy test was 53.2 percent. ‘No class of seniors scored higher than 69 percent, or D plus.’

2. Prestige doesn't pay off. 'An Ivy League education contributes nothing to a student's civic learning. ...There is no relationship between the cost of attending college and the mastery of America's history, politics, and economy.'

3. Students don't learn what colleges don't teach. 'Schools where students took or were required to take more courses related to America's history and institutions,' says the ISI, 'outperformed those schools where fewer courses were completed. **The absence of required courses in American history, political science, philosophy, and economics suggests a negative impact on students' civic literacy.**'

4. **Greater civic learning goes hand-in-hand with more active citizenship.** 'Students who demonstrated greater learning of America's history and its institutions were more engaged in citizenship activities such as voting, volunteer community service, and political campaigns.'"

"In 1777, **John Adams wrote to his son about the importance of education. He said it was necessary to teach the next generation about America's founding principles in order to preserve the freedom and independence so many of his fellow countrymen sacrificed to achieve. Only when we know and embrace those principles can we pass on to a new generation that which we inherited from the past.** The ISI study reveals severe cracks in that foundation; cracks that need immediate attention and repair." --Cal Thomas, Syndicated Columnist, ("Colleges are cheating their own students." 2007)

"Numerous recent surveys point to a common conclusion: **Americans believe that we are economically prosperous but civically impoverished.** If our young people are disengaged from public life, it is not they who are failing our country, **it is we who are failing them by not providing suitable opportunities for civic learning and by not sending clear messages about its importance.**" --Bill Galston, Educator

"**Social studies textbooks** used in elementary and secondary schools are mostly a disgrace that, **in the name of political correctness and multiculturalism, fail to give an honest account of American history.**" --Dianne Ravitch, Educator and Author, in George Archibald, "Textbooks Flunk Test," Washington Times, 4/28/04

"**Most textbooks**, produced by a handful of giant commercial publishers, **are exposing generations of children to cultural and history amnesia that threatens the very basis of**

American free institutions and liberties, warn leading historians who are calling for better-defined, more rigorous state teaching standards.” --George Archibald, Washington Times

“It’s important that students understand not only our flaws and failings, but also the degree to which the United States was really the first modern democracy and the degree to which it has inspired democrats around the world.... It’s a call for balance; it’s not a call for purging from the history books honest criticism of our failings.” --Larry Diamond, Hoover Institution (Fox)

“The story of America’s heroes, accomplishments and ideals is getting surprisingly short shrift in a place of great influence: the nation’s public schools.” --Albert Shanker Institute

“Patriotism is scorned in the college classroom today. As with physical muscles, unexercised cultural and spiritual muscles tend to wither away.” --Chester E. Finn, Jr.

“Secondary and college students, and indeed most of the rest of us, have only a feeble grasp of politics and a vague awareness of history, especially the political history of the United States and the world.” --Paul Gagnon, Emeritus Professor of History, University of Massachusetts (Archibald)

“I believe that our nation’s growing lack of knowledge about our nation’s past could eventually lead to its downfall.” --David Schults, High School Educator

“‘We are raising a generation of people who are historically illiterate’ and ignorant of the basic philosophical foundations of our constitutional free society. ‘We can’t function in a society if we don’t know who we are and where we came from.’” --David McCullough, historian

“I believe the greatest threat facing America—I’ve believed this my entire adult life—is that we have not passed on what it means to be an American to this generation. ... A society does

not survive unless it has a reason to survive. That's true for individuals. Where there is a why, there is a how. I hate to tell you who said it—Nietzsche—but, nevertheless, it remains true. **We have lost the why.** The greatest generation did not teach my generation what Americanism is. It's not its fault. This goes back 100 years to John Dewey, to the importation of European professors, to our universities, to a whole host of issues. **The average American who deeply loves this country and even has conservative values cannot articulate what those values are.** It is no one's fault, but that is the greatest threat. **When we understand this American trinity—In God We Trust, Liberty, E Pluribus Unum—that is uniquely American,** when it is understood what America stands for, when it is understood that there is a moral dimension to a smaller government.... We give far more charity per capita than Europeans do. Why? Are we born better? No. The bigger the government, the worse the citizen. ... **So the goodness that America created was jeopardized by our not knowing what we stand for. That is our greatest threat. We are our problem.**" --Dennis Prager, Author, Radio Host, and Political Commentator, Q & A at U of Denver, May 24 2010, www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNUc8nuo7HI

"We're not conveying to young people forcefully enough the American Heritage, the American way of life.... [The "Education for Democracy" report of the nonpartisan Albert Shanker Institute] **puts strong emphasis on the inadequacy of our civic knowledge and our civic engagement.**" --Lee Hamilton, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

"What is already happening to America is that **we are being neutralized in terms of our effectiveness as a nation.** Perhaps better said, we are neutralizing ourselves. We are at the beginning of a slow-motion breakdown, not unlike, actually, the odd slow-motion disintegration of the Soviet Union. **America's is a disintegration that is political, social, and economic, but above all moral and philosophical. It finds its most ready example in citizenship, since that is the only bond we have that involves every American in a commitment to every other one;** and, as it occurs on every possible level of the national debate, it takes many public forms."

"Americans have allowed themselves to be afraid and often even ashamed to expound their national principles. At the time when the American experience and experiment constitutes the living civics class for mankind, Americans are embarrassed to take pride in their own work. America will not make the simplest moral or even security decision if it involves employing authority against someone, as in the crucial decision of how many new immigrants they want to let in . **At every turn they have divorced morality and ethics from civic life--'made naked the public square,'** as the eloquent Father Neuhaus sadly describes the melancholy emptiness where the American soul once was. All but gone is the very civility that is so essential to

citizenship, what social thinker Charles Murray has described as ‘deference or allegiance to the social order benefitting a citizen.

Above all, **there is the shocking dumbing-down of just about everybody.** A recent Washington Post poll shows that **today’s high school graduates appear to know less about government and politics than their educational equal of five decades ago.”** --Georgie Anne Geyer, Fulbright Scholar, Syndicated Journalist, Author, *Americans No More: The Death of Citizenship*

“Effective, cohesive, and positive **self-government** in a free democratic republic such as America **requires an informed and educated citizenry for the survival of our participatory democracy.”**

“We are in danger of forgetting this lesson. For years, even decades, polls, tests, and studies have shown that **Americans do not know their history**, and cannot remember even the most significant events of the 20th century. We are in danger of having our view of the future obscured by our ignorance of the past. We cannot see clearly ahead if we are blind to history. Unfortunately, **most indicators point to a worsening case of America amnesia.**

I’ll give just a few examples. One study of students at 55 elite universities found that over a third were unable to identify the Constitution as establishing the division of powers in our government, only 29% could identify the term ‘Reconstruction,’ and 40% could not place the Civil War in the correct half-century.

The recent National Assessment of Educational Progress test found that over half of high school seniors couldn’t say who we fought in World War II. And lest you think I’m picking on students--and hey, I’m a former professor--a nation-wide survey recently commissioned by Columbia Law School found that almost two-thirds of all Americans think Karl Marx’s dogma, ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,’ was or may have been written by the founding fathers and was included in the Constitution.

Such **collective amnesia is dangerous. Citizens kept ignorant of their history are robbed of the riches of their heritage, and handicapped in their ability to understand and appreciate other cultures.**

If Americans cannot recall whom we fought, and whom we fought alongside, during World War II, it should not be assumed that they will longer remember what happened here on Sept. 11.

And a nation that does not know why it exists, or what it stands for, cannot be expected to long endure. We must recover from the amnesia that shrouds our history in darkness, our principles in confusion, and our future in uncertainty.” --Dr. Bruce Cole, American Revolution Center, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities

“Our schools are failing our children. We are not teaching the basic information necessary to maintain our democratic society.”

“I spend a lot of time with teen-agers, and frequently conduct focus groups to learn about their attitudes. ...I have not yet found a single student who could tell me the years when the Civil War, World War I, and World War II were fought. Not one could name all the Presidents since World War II. Only one could even place the correct decade in which Dwight Eisenhower was President. Of the teen-agers with whom I work, only two could approximately identify Thomas Jefferson. Only a few could articulate in any way at all why life in a free country is different from life in a non-free country. **In a state of such astonishing ignorance, young Americans may well not be prepared for even the most basic national responsibility--understanding what the society is about and why it must be preserved.**” --Benjamin J. Stein, Writer, Lawyer, Actor in Political Opinion, cited in Readers’ Digest, 1987

“My son is a high school teacher. In one of his classes he mentioned to his students that Latin is a dead language, no longer spoken. One girl raised her hand to challenge my son’s claim. “But what do they speak in Latin America?” she demanded. More and more young people don’t know things we assume they know. What they do know is ephemeral and narrowly confined to their own generation. **Many young people lack the information that writers of American books and newspapers have traditionally taken for granted among their readers.** We have long accepted literacy as a paramount aim of schooling. But only recently have some begun to realize that **literacy is far more than a skill, and that it requires large amounts of specific information.** To grasp the words on a page, we have to know a lot of information that isn’t on the page. Several reading specialists have observed that ‘world knowledge’ is essential to the development of reading and writing skills. **I call this knowledge cultural literacy, the network of information that all competent readers possess. It is background information that enables them to read a book or an article with an adequate level of comprehension, getting the point, grasping the implications. Clearly our schools have failed to fulfill their fundamental responsibility to provide students with this world knowledge.** Cultural literacy lies above the everyday levels of knowledge that everyone possesses and below the expert level known only to specialists. It is that middle ground of cultural knowledge writers assume to be possessed by

the 'common reader.' **It includes information that we have traditionally expected our children to receive in school, but which they no longer do.** It is the American public school's cafeteria-style curriculum, combined with our unwillingness to place demands on students, that has resulted in a steady diminishment of commonly shared information between young people themselves. Those who graduate from the same school have often studied different materials even when their courses have carried the same titles. **It would be hard to invent a better recipe for cultural fragmentation.**" --Dr. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Founder, Core Knowledge Foundation, Author and Distinguished Professor of English, University of Virginia

"The American campus is very different from what it was 15 or 20 years ago--heavily politicized, doctrinaire, obsessed with race and gender, contemptuous of all things white and Western. Do the fresh-faced students and their parents have any inkling of what they are getting into? Or are they chiefly interested in colleges as brand-name credentialing machines that happen to teach a few courses on the side?"

"The college tour is obviously awkward for parents who realize that the modern American university is rooted in a distasteful new value system quite antagonistic to their own. 'We are like a warrior caste that sends its children away to be raised by pacifist monks,' says Norman Podhoretz, the critic and editor.

Why are the warriors paying the monks up to \$36,000 a year to do this? Because they don't know what's going on, or because they don't know what else to do." --John Leo, Author, Syndicated Columnist, former Professor, ("Empty college syndrome." U. S. News & World Report, Apr 19, 1999)

"If you believe in individual freedom--social, economic, political, mental, and spiritual--you are likely to defend the freedom of each and every individual to maintain his cultural heritage, that is, his language, customs, art, history, and religion. You will favor the right of parents to impart their religious values to their children and send them to day schools studying the Gospel or Torah. **Multi-ethnicity is an American ideal which does not in the least demean your American citizenship or diminish your love of America,** the beautiful.

Present day multiculturalism is a different matter. It does not seek the preservation and promotion of many cultures; it is a vicious attack on the Judeo-Christian culture of the West. It elevates race and gender above the basic moral standards that guide Western society. It is a multi-morality, not multi-ethnicity. In fact, **it is a counter-culture which attempts to destroy the moral foundation of American society.**

The basic axiom of Western culture always has been the belief in one God and His moral law. The Ten Commandments serve as complete and reliable guides on all questions of life in society. The second table sets the ethical standards. **It affirms the general principles of justice or righteousness.** It is no command ‘to do good,’ but instead an order ‘to restrain evil.’ In order to avoid the bad, it says: abstain from coercion; do not commit adultery; do not lie; do not steal; do not covet. Aside from these admonishments, you are free to pursue your own interests.”

“Multiculturalism rejects all thought of Judeo-Christian moral law, of right and wrong. Its champions loathe it. The better educated, the more secular they are, the more likely they are to spurn it. **They accept neither one God nor one moral standard; they prefer to be guided by other considerations such as class, race, or gender.**

The American brand of multiculturalism springs from European roots which have given rise to much evil. More than one hundred years ago Marxism launched a powerful assault on Judeo-Christian monotheism and monomorality. It elevated man to the position of God and made the interests of the working class, as seen by the Marxists, the motive power of the moral order.

Countless millions of human beings perished in the labor camps of this moral order. In his novels Alexander Solzhenitsyn described the human tragedy in the vast camp system of the Soviet Union.”

“In the footsteps of Communism, Nazism developed its own brand of multiculturalism. It taught that the races of man are guided by their own principles of morality. Races determine right and wrong. The Aryan race, according to the doctrines of Nazism, was the superior race destined to rule mankind; its morality was to prevail over all others.”

““The American versions of multiculturalism are not guilty of any crimes against humanity, but their reasoning is flawed and potentially harmful as that of the class or Aryan race culturalists. They, too, reject any transcendent source of morality. To them, only that which furthers the cause of the race or gender is moral.”

“All levels of government are adding their weight to the sway of multiculturalism. In the name of separation of state and church, the legislators pass laws, the bureaucrats write regulations, and the judges issue orders that seek to ban Judeo-Christian values from public life. Most public school teachers now believe that the Ten Commandments--and even references to Christian holidays or tradition--are illegal.” --Hans F. Sennholz, Economist, Author, former President, Foundation for Economic Education, (“Multiculturalism is Anticulturalism.” Foundation for Economic Education, Oct 1993.)

“It is difficult, and even dangerous, to talk candidly about ‘multiculturalism’ these days. Such candor is bound to provoke accusations of ‘insensitivity’ at least, ‘racism’ at worst.”

“The [multicultural] agenda, in its educational dimension, has as its explicit purpose to induce in the minds and sensibilities of minority students a ‘Third World consciousness’—that is the very phrase they use. In practice, this means an effort to persuade minority students to be contemptuous of and hostile to America and Western civilization as a whole, interpreted as an age-old system of oppression, colonialism, and exploitation. What these radicals blandly call multiculturalism is as much a ‘war against the West’ as Nazism and Stalinism ever were.”

“There is no doubt that today, **multiculturalism is beclouding and disorienting the minds of tens of thousands of our students--mainly black students. It is not an educational reform. It is an educational--and an American--tragedy.**” --Irving Kristol, Distinguished Fellow, American Enterprise Institute; Historian and Recipient, Presidential Medal of Freedom; President, National Affairs, Inc.; Editor, The Public Interest; (“The Tragedy of Multiculturalism.” Wall Street Journal, Jul 31, 1991)

“To a very large extent, **American universities have fallen down on the job of transmitting values to students.** Other institutions are also falling short, but **the universities’ failure is especially serious because historically they have had the task of imparting the essentials of the Western tradition to the leaders of tomorrow.** Now young people in universities are generally offered a smorgasbord curriculum that fails to convey any sense of their own heritage.

Adding the study of new groups and new traditions to the curriculum and new diversity to the student body have been very healthy phenomena. But there has been a tendency to create courses of study that contain no values whatsoever.”

“All of this occurred because major research universities became dedicated to specialization somewhat in imitation of the industrial process on the assembly line, where everyone has a specialized function. While you can produce a whole car through specialization, you cannot produce a whole person that way. And without whole people who have strong civic involvement and deep personal convictions and commitments, democracy cannot function.”

“The failure of the universities to transmit traditional values has left the field wide open to ideologies and methodologies--those modern substitutes for religion. Certain points of view accepted in academic guilds have become the values transmitted by higher education. Schools

impart values under the guise of imparting none. That is a form of dishonesty corrosive of a healthy democracy, which requires a pluralism of values contesting in an open market rather than the pretense of no values at all."

"Granted that the old restrictions and rules may have been difficult to enforce--and some may have been unduly repressive--but you cannot bring together thousands of adolescents and have neither role models nor the proclamation of standards. With no one publicly defining a norm, the modern university drifts into a kind of conformist nonconformism. As a consequence, universities end up producing, on the whole, very lonely people held together more by animal ritual than by a sense of richer human community."

"Because of all of these developments, we are seeing a growing split between those who are morally concerned but not intellectually trained and those who are highly articulate but morally insensitive. That is very serious for democracy: It may not survive a full generation of that kind of polarization."

"If life is just a matter of style, one style is just as good as another; another is probably better, and one after another is no doubt best of all. But no one can live that way, and **no society will long endure or even cohere without some basic moral standards. Sooner or later, they will be imposed from without if they are not found within.**

That's why it's important to get basic moral standards and commitment back into the highest levels of our intellectual effort. After all, it was the combination of spiritual, moral, and civic concerns with exacting intellectual activity that really built this country and made democracy work on a continental scale." --Dr. James H. Billington, Author, Librarian of Congress; Director, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; former Professor of History, Princeton University ("Universities Have Fallen Down on the Job' of Teaching Values." U. S. News & World Report, Oct 1, 1984)

"I suggested to the freshmen of Yale College that they would be wise to make the study of Western civilization the center of their pursuit of a liberal education. I pointed out the devastating effects of ethnic conflict and disunity around the world and the special problems and opportunities confronting **the U. S., a country that was never a nation in the sense of resting on common ancestry but one that depends on a set of beliefs and institutions deriving from Western traditions.** I argued that **the unity of our country and the defense of its freedom required that its citizens understand the ideas, history, and traditions that created them."** --Dr. Donald Kagan, Bass Professor of Classics, History, and Western Civilization, Yale College

“A core curriculum like Columbia’s is of special value to those of us who immigrated to these shores or whose families were newcomers or have been marginalized here. Indeed, one good reason to preserve Western civilization programs is to benefit and liberate minorities. Columbia teaches us that a student’s religious, racial, or ethnic identity is no barrier to entering the ranks of the educated. Columbia does not define its academic program on the basis of our backgrounds. Those who yield to pressures to reject a Western civilization curriculum do minorities a singular disservice, by depriving us of the great opening to the world represented by this sort of curriculum. We are demeaned by the intimation that we are now and forever alien to the Western heritage. Indeed we are isolated and marginalized even more by being deprived of engagement with the texts that have influenced humanity for centuries. **If relentless cries for relevance and diversity should ever lead to dismantling the program of common studies in Western civilization, then all students—including minority students--will be left ill-prepared for the role we all face as participants in a democratic society. Our system of government under law--itself a triumph of the Western tradition--will inevitably suffer.**”

“What is forgotten in the current date (about Western Civilization) is that one of the original purposes of the Columbia core curriculum was to benefit students from immigrant and less-privileged backgrounds. It was for this socially diverse undergraduate body in the wake of the the Great War (WWI) that Columbia’s faculty required a common course of study for all freshmen introducing all of its students to the culture they would all inherit and share. By effectively placing all of its students on equal footing, the new curriculum made it possible for underprepared public school students to compete with graduates of elite private schools. Indeed, **one good reason to preserve Western Civilization programs is to benefit and liberate minorities. Those who yield to pressure to reject a Western civilization curriculum do minorities a singular disservice by depriving us of the great opening to the world represented by this sort of curriculum.**” --Jose A. Cabranes, Puerto Rico Native, New York Public School Attendee, 1961 Columbia University Graduate, U. S. Circuit Judge for Second Circuit, “Our Common Core,” Wall Street Journal, June 9, 1995

“Schools’ central purpose is the development of children’s knowledge and character. **A school that attended only to its students’ intellectual development without regard to their character would be seriously defective. Nineteenth-century public schools took very seriously their responsibility for character formation; schools in the late twentieth century scarcely know how to think about the problem. If children do not read the great works of world literature in school, they may never make the effort on their own. If they never study Western European history, they will never know where we got the ideals by which we judge ourselves. If they**

never study American history, they will never comprehend what is worth preserving in our system of government. If they are ignorant of the historical development of other societies, the events of the world they inhabit will make little sense. Technicization occurs when teaching emphasizes abstract skills over course content, when children are taught procedure but not a common core knowledge. This tendency has been particularly invidious in the teaching of literature and history and has produced students who have mastered the basic skills but have little knowledge of great literature of the major events, ideas, and individuals that have shaped our history.”

“Technicization and cultural fragmentation will continue to be a serious problem until the school curriculum is reconstructed along lines that are both common and pluralist. **What we need are courses and textbooks incorporating the various strands that have forged the American culture. Students should study the development of Western civilization in order to understand where we got the ideals by which we judge ourselves. They must learn about the development of institutions, the laws, and the democratic values that all Americans share. In studying American political, economic, and social history, they should understand that all of our ancestors, whatever their race, ethnic group, or gender are part of the common story of the nation.**” --Diane Ravitch, Adjunct Professor of History and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, “The Schools We Deserve”

“My wife and I took our 16-year-old daughter and her girlfriend to see some colleges over spring break--10 campuses in five days, all in New England. ... Out of deference to my daughter, I was on my best behavior at the information sessions, suppressing my instinct to ask embarrassing questions. ...

At Yale, I did not ask why the university refused to accept a \$20 million donation from the Bass family of Texas for studies in Western civilization. Yale delayed and delayed until the Bases, sorely provoked, tried to force the issue. Yale took this opportunity to announce it could not be pushed around by contributors and turned down the money. But you can bet that if the \$20 million had been earmarked for courses in ‘queer theory,’ or a new department of gender studies, Yale would have snatched the check from the Bass lawyers before the ink was dry.” --John Leo, Author, syndicated columnist, former professor, “Empty College Syndrome,” U. S. News & World Report, April 19, 1999

“America is losing its national memory. This would be serious enough in any country, but it is deadly for a unique historical entity such as the United States, whose very existence and coherence depend upon the perpetuation of an idea.

As we exhaust ourselves patting our backs over our unprecedented prosperity, we can see the signs and symptoms of national forgetfulness. They are no longer subtle.”

“In this self-congratulatory amnesiac haze that we seem to be living in, it is easy for Americans to slough all this off. But almost without our knowing it, I think we have turned a corner. Those rosy assurances that ‘everything will be all right,’ as our dear mothers would assure us as children, just don’t wash anymore.”

“America never was made up of bloodlines, like most countries. It was a nation based upon the common ideas of personal liberty and responsibility, representative government, equal justice before the law, and the idea mankind can evolve constantly to higher states of prosperity and happiness.

In short, **America is based upon ideas. And the knowledge of those ideas is exactly what we are losing.”**

“And if national memory loss implies a loss of direction, what will be the consequences for our future as a people and as a civilization? Indeed, can any culture have a viable future if it has lost touch with its past?”

“More and more, too, America is becoming a ‘process nation,’ a country obsessed with forms while the substance fades away. That should surprise no one. That is what happens when a nation forgets its history--and it is worst of all when the citizens do this to themselves.

The reasons for the death of history in America are not hard to find. Part of it is due to public culture, part to a wantonness that often takes over peoples at particularly prosperous times. But part of it is also the intellectual fracturing within the history profession as a direct result of the Cold War and of the infiltration of our culture by Marxist and leftist ideologues. Since so many cannot agree on what American history means, they prefer not to teach it at all.” --Georgie Anne Geyer, Author, Historian, (“Time to refresh our national memory.” The Washington Times, May 29-Jun 4, 2000)

“It’s time to admit that public education operates like a planned economy, a bureaucratic system in which everybody’s role is spelled out in advance and there are few incentives for innovation and productivity. It’s no surprise that our school system doesn’t improve: It more resembles the communist economy than our market economy.” --Albert Shanker, former President, American Federation of Teachers

“The history of the world has been in great part the history of the mixing of peoples. Modern communication and transport accelerate mass migrations from one continent to another.

Ethnic and racial diversity is more than ever a salient fact of the age. **But what happens when people of different origins, speaking different languages and professing different religions, inhabit the same locality and live under the same political sovereignty? Ethnic and racial conflict--far more than ideological conflict--is the explosive problem of our times. On every side today, ethnicity is breaking up nations.** The Soviet Union, India, Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Burma, Indonesia, Iraq, Cyprus, Nigeria, Angola, Lebanon, Guyana, Trinidad, you name it--are all in crisis. **Is there any large multi-ethnic state that can be made to work? The answer to that question has been, until recently, the United States. 'No other nation,' Margaret Thatcher has said, 'has so successfully combined people of different races and nations within a single culture.'** How have Americans succeeded in pulling off this almost unprecedented truth? We have always been a multi-ethnic country. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, who came from France in the 18th century, marveled at the astonishing diversity of the settlers. 'What then is the American, this new man?' And he gave a famous answer: 'Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men'--E Pluribus Unum (From Many One). In the 20th century, new immigration laws altered the composition of the American people, and a cult of ethnicity erupted both among non-Anglo whites and among non-white minorities. **Pressed too far, the cult of ethnicity has unhealthy consequences. It gives rise, for example, to the conception of the U. S. as a nation composed not of individuals making their own choices, but of inviolable ethnic and racial groups. It rejects the historic American goals of assimilation and integration. And in an excess of zeal, people seek to transform our system of education from a means of creating 'one people' into a means of promoting, celebrating, and perpetuating separate ethnic origins and identities. The impact of separatist pressure on our public schools is more troubling. If separatist tendencies go unchecked, the result can only be the fragmentation, resegregation, and tribalization of American life."**

"The growing diversity of the American population makes the quest for unifying ideals and a common culture all the more urgent. In a world savagely rent by ethnic and racial antagonisms, the U. S. must continue as an example of how a highly differentiated society holds itself together." --Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Historian, Author, "The Cult of Ethnicity, Good and Bad"