

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hope Blooms

“I steer my bark with Hope in the head, leaving Fear astern.”

—Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, April 1816

Dear Friends,

Spring has arrived at Monticello. As I write to you, I am resisting the temptation to abandon my office for the serpentine pathways of Jefferson’s gardens, now alive with Canterbury bells, foxglove, poppy, larkspur and calendula. Documentary evidence suggests that he grew approximately 105 species of flowers on the mountaintop; members of our talented Gardens and Grounds team suspect that the number was, in fact, much higher.

Of course, we cherish this annual rebirth more keenly this spring, set against the backdrop of a pandemic year that for so many has brought isolation, struggle and sorrow. As an institution, we too have faced challenges. But I am pleased to report, thanks to the resilience and resourcefulness of our staff, we are emerging stronger.

Monticello is many things – a place of natural and architectural beauty, a museum and an International Site of Conscience, an unblinking history lesson. Author and illustrator Maira Kalman put it this way: “If you want to understand this country and its people and what it means to be optimistic and complex and tragic and wrong and courageous, you need to go to Monticello.” In all of its aspects, Monticello continues to be a source of reflection and inspiration.

This issue of the magazine shares the perspectives of just a few of the millions of people who have made that trip. As the world continues to reopen, I invite you to visit us and chart your own journey. While each of us experiences Monticello in our own way, I am confident that you’ll be inspired, challenged and



Gabriel Zakhub

perhaps even moved by what you see and learn.

As a national vaccination effort makes travel possible once again, I would be remiss not to mention Jefferson’s abiding faith in science and progress, and in the American people. His generation also experienced the hardships of an epidemic. Indeed, Jefferson’s first trip out of Virginia was to Philadelphia, in 1766, to receive a smallpox inoculation. That trip would launch a lifetime of travel – back to Philadelphia 10 years later to draft the Declaration of Independence, to France on a diplomatic mission in 1784 and, of course, to Washington in 1801 to assume the presidency.

Then and now, travel breeds optimism. I hope that good health, safe journeys and inspirational experiences find you in the latter part of this very strange year. When you’re ready to visit, Monticello awaits.

Wishing you well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie Greene Bowman".

Leslie Greene Bowman
President

P.S. All of us at Monticello are grateful for the generosity of those who have supported us in so many ways throughout the past year. Despite the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic, more people than ever before made donations to Monticello. Your support allows us to preserve and enhance this national treasure for years to come. Thank you.

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Monticello magazine is published twice yearly by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Inc., the private, nonprofit organization that has owned and operated Monticello since 1923. Its twofold mission is education and preservation. Questions, comments and address changes should be directed to Monticello magazine, P.O. Box 316, Charlottesville, VA 22902; info@monticello.org. View archives at monticello.org/magazine. **Editor:** Robert Viccellio (Viccellio Communications). **Design:** Monica Pedynkowski, John McKee (Calendar). **Artwork and Photography:** Unless marked, images © Thomas Jefferson Foundation. **Photos:** Ian Atkins, Stacey Evans, Natiah Jones, Eric Piasecki, Leah O’Connell, Jack Looney, Walter Smalling. **Contributors:** Rebecca Bowman, Justin Bates, Brandon Dillard, Diane Ehrenpreis, Lily Fox-Bruguiere, Betty Goss, Peter Hatch, Ashley Hollinshead, Jeff Looney, Lucy Macon, Lucy Middelfort, Karen Quillen, Nancy Verrell. © 2021 Thomas Jefferson Foundation