



Secretary of State Speaks at Naturalization Ceremony

The sun burst through an overcast sky just before the oath of citizenship was administered to 84 new Americans at Monticello's 38th annual Independence Day Celebration and Naturalization Ceremony.

At this year's July 4 event, Monticello was honored to have U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright as the featured speaker. Albright joined the immigrants – 75 adults and nine children from 27 countries – as they were sworn in as new citizens and presented them with their certificates of U.S. citizenship.

In her remarks to the audience of more than 2,000 on Monticello's West Lawn, Albright recalled her own experience as an 11-year-old immigrant from Czechoslovakia.

"I remember being very excited, but also a little scared. Because I did not know whether I would be accepted in this new land," she said. "I did not know whether the differences in the way I spoke and acted would leave me in America, but not really part of it. I did not know whether, after leaving my old home, I could truly find another. I should not have worried.

"At its best, America's embrace is as vast as this continent is broad. We were welcomed, given refuge and provided the chance to make new friends and build new lives in freedom. For this priceless opportunity and all that has since come with it, I will forever be grateful."

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Secretary of State

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Albright is the 64th secretary of state and first woman to serve in the position, which was first held by Thomas Jefferson. On what Jefferson, may have thought of her, Albright said, "I'm not sure he could have visualized a secretary with a skirt."



Peggy Harrison

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright welcomes a new citizen of the United States at Monticello.

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org