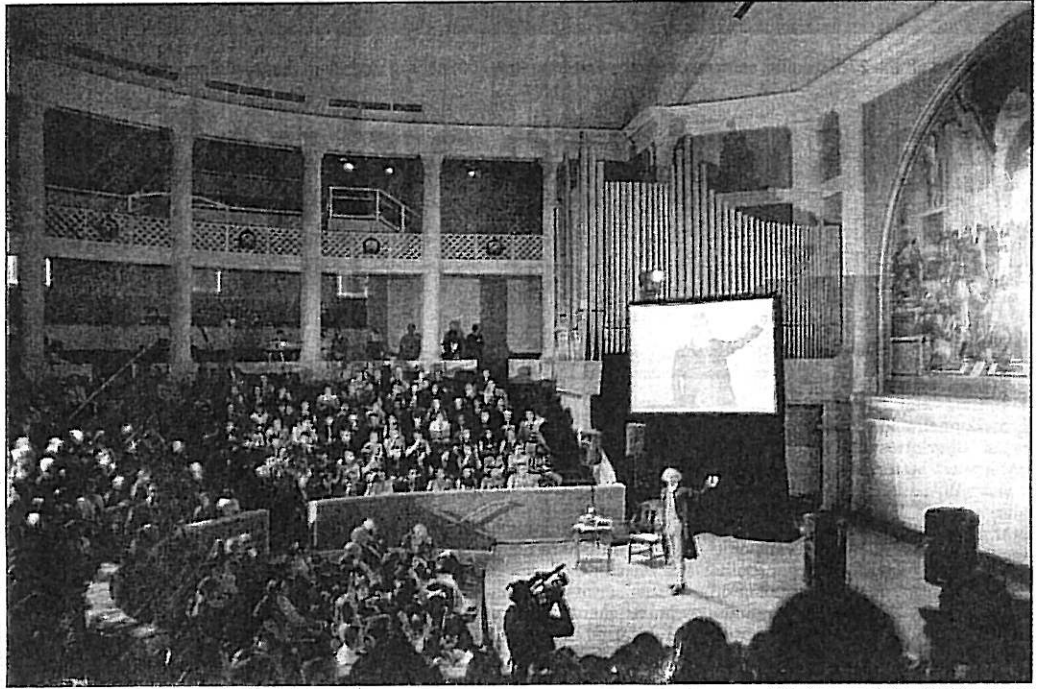


## Teaching foundation



Daily Progress photos/Matt Rosenberg

Bill Barker plays the role of Thomas Jefferson at a ceremony during the International Youth Democracy Summit.

# Hundreds of students gather at UVa for democracy summit

BY MATT DEEGAN  
Daily Progress staff writer

A parade of 301 high school students from 42 states and 23 countries walked to the chemistry building on University of Virginia's campus Tuesday afternoon.

The montage of teenagers from as close as Gordonsville and as far away as Kazakhstan were in town to listen to a lecture on the history of Jamestown by Dan Roberts, the host of the National Public Radio show "A Moment in Time."

The students were visiting Charlottesville as delegates from the International Youth Democracy Summit, a four-day conference during which they will learn about the history of democracy and discuss how their generation can help encourage self-government.

The summit is the opening event in a yearlong series commemorating the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in the New World. Former presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher will serve as honorary chairs of the series, which is



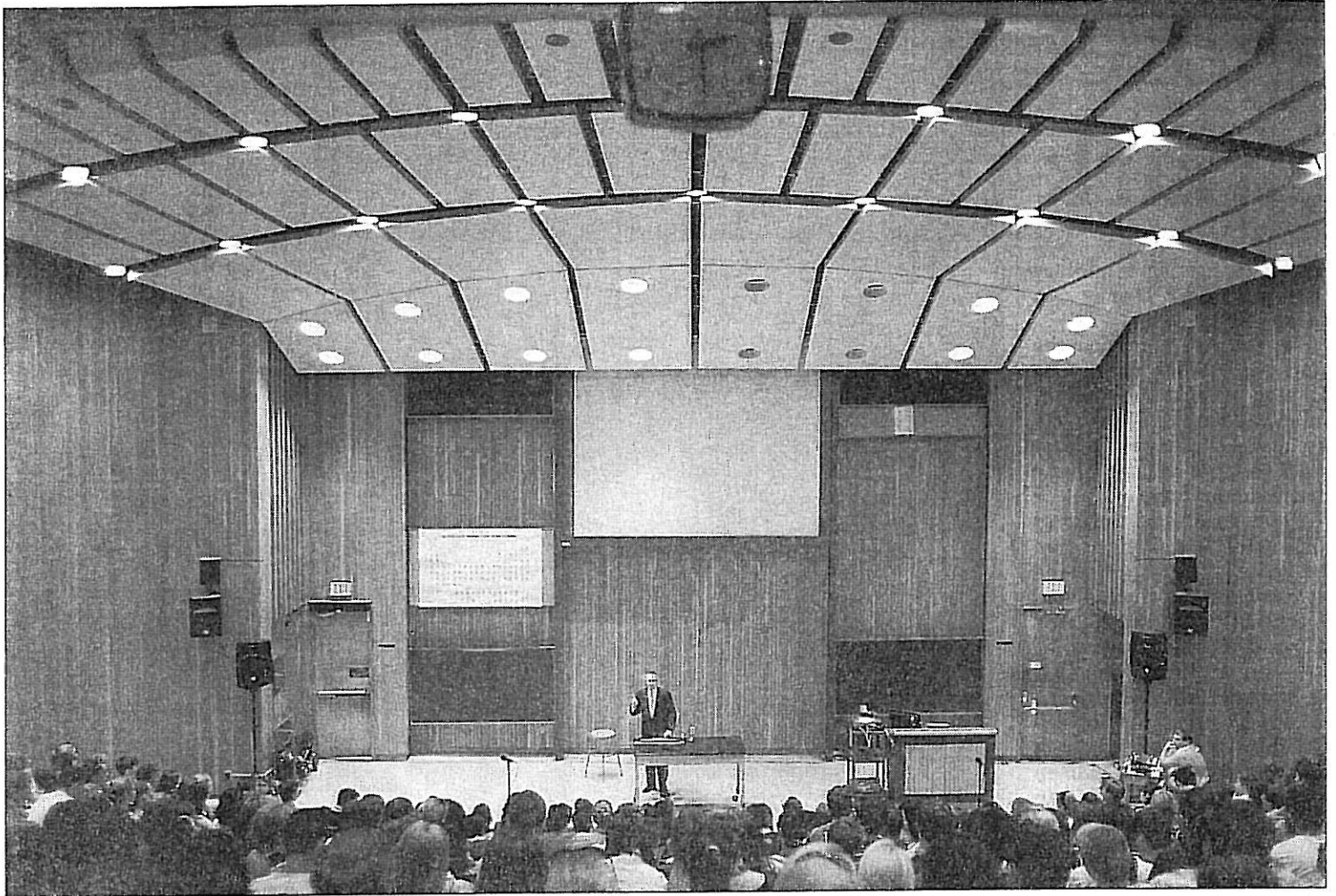
Dan Roberts, an associate professor of liberal arts and history at the University of Richmond, tries to answer a question from Allison Walsh of Newtown, Pa.

sponsored by the Jamestown 400th Federal Commission.

"The founding of Jamestown was more important to the history of democratic institutions than you have ever heard about in your textbooks," said Roberts, who received a Ph.D. in British and American Colonial History at UVa.

Although more emphasis has been placed on the settlement in Plymouth Rock, "Virginia was not just a subtropical sideshow starring Colin Farrell," said Roberts, referring to the 2005 film "The New World," in which Farrell played the role of John Smith, one of the colony's founders.

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The Daily Progress/Matt Rosenberg

Dan Roberts talks with students at the democracy summit, which is one of several events marking Jamestown's 400th anniversary.

# Summit

Continued from A1

The room burst into applause when Roberts mentioned Disney's "Pocahontas," a movie that distorted historical truths about Jamestown and the relationship between Smith and the daughter of a local Native American chief.

"You could tell when that movie came out, historians in Jamestown were shaking their heads," Roberts said.

Jade Pernell, a delegate from California and a rising high school sophomore, said she chose to participate in the summit because she is interested in political systems and has ambitions of being a

## On the Web

**Jamestown's 400th anniversary:**  
<http://americas400thanniversary.com>

lawyer.

Pernell talked with a fellow delegate from Bulgaria and was impressed with how well she grasped the role of democracy in America.

"I said that democracy starts in the home, but she said it starts as a nation," Pernell said. "She changed my views."

Zishan Jiwani moved from India to Florida when she was in seventh grade, and was urged to attend the summit by a Model UN adviser. She wanted to meet

diverse teens and listen to their different perspectives on democracy.

Derrick Seaver, a summit counselor who in 2000 was the youngest member ever elected to Ohio's state legislature at 18, said the conference is a chance for international teens to realize that the history of U.S. democracy is deeply rooted in the history of Virginia.

"They will gain respect for what [democracy] did for a lot of their countries," said Seaver, explaining what he thought foreign students could gain from the summit.

Delegates will tour Monticello today before traveling to Jamestown and Williamsburg on Thursday.

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