Sabato Pledges $1 Million to University

Encourages all alumni to participate in capital campaign; fulfills 1974 promise to former U.Va. President Edgar Shannon

Politics professor and Center Director Larry J. Sabato is giving the University a donation of $1 million in support of the University's effort to "become a national leader in youth and adult civic education and participation." Sabato's gift, the largest ever given by an active faculty member to U.Va., fulfills a promise he made thirty years ago to former University President Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., who served as president of the University from 1959 to 1974.

"From his time as an undergraduate activist in the College during the 1970s to his years as a distinguished University professor, Larry Sabato has enriched the University," University President John T. Casteen said. "In his teaching, research and public service, Larry has built the University's intellectual capital.

"With his financial gift, a great personal sacrifice, Larry has demonstrated an abiding devotion to the University, a devotion well known to all who know him. True to form, Larry's gift is eloquent in what it signifies. It speaks of his love of the University, his belief in the power of knowledge and his hopes for the future of humankind. In this latest act of generosity, Larry offers us all an example many of us aspire to follow."

"For over 35 years I have had the incomparable privilege to be associated with Thomas Jefferson's proudest legacy," Sabato said. "It is time to repay my beloved University – the best public University in the country – for giving me so many wonderful opportunities over the years. No one succeeds without a lot of help, and U.Va. has always been there for me."

Joined at the announcement by Bess, Eleanor, Susan, and Virginia Shannon, daughters of former U.Va. President Shannon and Mrs. Eleanor Shannon, Sabato said that his donation fulfills a promise he made to then – U.Va. President Shannon in 1974. It was Mr. Shannon who encouraged Sabato to apply for a Rhodes Scholarship – which he ultimately won – launching his academic career. Sabato also served as U.Va. Student Council President during Shannon's last year as University President, and the two formed a lifelong friendship.

"How lucky I was to have had such a humane and brilliant mentor," Sabato said. "Inspired by his example, I first promised him some thirty years ago that I would try to make a substantial gift to the University, should life give me the opportunity. I'm delighted to fulfill that promise."
“If a teacher can save and donate a large gift, thousands of other University alumni can do the same, whether in life or by means of an estate bequest,” Sabato said. “Every University alumnus has favorite causes. The capital campaign gives each of us the opportunity to create a legacy somewhere within this wonderfully diverse University.

President Casteen seeks to raise over $5 billion to take the University to the next level. It is vital that all of us who love the University step up to the plate.”

Sabato designated his gift to be used as support for the University’s effort to “become a national leader in youth and adult civic education” by strengthening the U.Va. Center for Politics and providing it a permanent home at a restored Birdwood Pavilion. Today more than one million students and over 14,000 primary and secondary school teachers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories and Department of Defense Schools abroad participate in the Center for Politics’ signature civic education program, the national Youth Leadership Initiative.

As part of the gift, the University will restore the historic Birdwood estate, located off U.S. 250 just west of Charlottesville, adjacent to the University’s Birdwood golf course. Built for William Garth in 1819 by many of the same craftsmen who constructed Jefferson’s academical village, the University purchased Birdwood in 1974 from the estate of its last private owner, Cornelius Middleton. The structure has not been occupied since 1996.

Sabato noted that the renovated estate will also serve as classroom and meeting space for University students and faculty, and thus will represent “a major, new extension of Mr. Jefferson’s academical village for the enjoyment and education of all.”

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**Facing America’s Political Challenges**

In the second round of the American Political Challenges series with Rowman and Littlefield publishers, Larry J. Sabato and the Center for Politics tap leading political authors to write cogent diagnoses and prescriptions for improving both politics and government. The books are short, to the point, and easy to understand. They take a stand while showing how to overcome obstacles to change in the American political system.

**Freedom is Not Enough:**
Black Voters, Black Candidates, and American Presidential Politics

RONALD W. WALTERS
Professor of Afro-American Studies and Government and Politics, and Senior Fellow at the Academy of Leadership, University of Maryland, College Park

*In Freedom is Not Enough, Ron Walters traces the history of the Black vote since 1965, celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2005, and shows why passing a law is not the same as ensuring its enforcement, legitimacy, and opportunity.*

**Attack the Messenger**

CRAIG CRAWFORD
Political analyst and frequent media commentator

*Politicians and the media are natural enemies, but in recent times, the relationship has exploded into all-out war. Without a free press, there is no democracy. When politicians turn the public against the media, everyone loses—at the peril of unbiased and courageous news reporting. That, says Craig Crawford, is where we find ourselves today: if you don’t like the news, attack the messenger.*
American Democracy Conference

A House Divided? Polarized America and the 2004 Election

W

ith an all-star lineup of journalists and political operatives from both sides of the aisle, the seventh annual American Democracy Conference sponsored by the Center for Politics took aim at the good, bad – and yes, the sometimes ugly – moments of the 2004 election season last November.

The conference, titled “A House Divided? Polarized America and the 2004 Election,” was the seventh joint venture between the Center and The Hotline, the National Journal Group’s daily political briefing. Each of the three panels aimed to deconstruct the candidates and the voters in an attempt to further explain the ideological divisions in the electorate.

Moderated by Center for Politics Director Larry J. Sabato, the first panel focused on the ins and outs of the election. After giving each panelist an opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Bush and Kerry campaigns, Sabato encouraged a lively discussion of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth advertising campaign aimed at Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry’s military service in Vietnam. While many – including Chris LaCivita, the Swift Boat Veterans’ political adviser – saw the ads as fair game in the blood sport that politics has become, others – such as senior Kerry strategist Mike McCurry – were apt to call them “the most dishonorable thing I have seen in my career in politics.”

To explain the media’s role, Hotline Editor Vaughn Ververs assembled a panel of experienced journalists – including Mike Allen of the Washington Post, and Dotty Lynch of CBS News – and peppered in their midst a staffer from each of the presidential campaigns. The result was a comprehensive look at the feeding frenzies that dominated campaign 2004: Howard Dean’s “scream” after his loss in the Iowa caucuses, the bulge in the back of George W. Bush’s suit during his first presidential debate, and allegations of an affair between Senator Kerry and one of his campaign staffers.

The final panel took aim at the future of the Democratic Party. Hotline Editor-in-Chief Chuck Todd assembled a familiar cast of Democratic standard-bearers: Donna Brazile, Al Gore’s presidential campaign manager; Rep. Brad Carson (D-OK), candidate for an open Senate seat in Oklahoma; and Jim Jordan, former Kerry campaign manager and current head of America Coming Together, a Democratic 527 group. While each panelist had their own vision of the party, each saw the need to expand the party’s appeal to southern and rural voters, instead of focusing on the “left” and east coasts.

According to Joshua Scott, director of programs for the Center for Politics, the purpose of the American Democracy Conference “is to bring together the nation’s top political minds to reconstruct the year’s political cycle and then deconstruct the results.”

“The success of ‘A House Divided?’ was not just its ability to give us insight into this election year and beyond. It also showed us how the Center’s events have been able to attract more and more people to the political process, helping them to find their own voice in government.”
The Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI) marked an exciting milestone in 2004: the first YLI Internet Mock Election to be held nation-wide during a presidential election year. YLI rose to the challenge, conducting the largest secure student-only online mock election in the country.

The 2004 YLI Mock Election included not only the presidential race but all congressional and gubernatorial races as well – 481 contests in all. More than 800,000 students from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and American schools abroad cast over two million votes, most of them using YLI’s electronic “cyber-ballots” to yield automatically tabulated results that could be viewed on the YLI website the day after polls closed.

The YLI Mock Election earned praise from teachers and students around the nation. “I’ve never seen my kids so excited and knowledgeable at election time,” said one participating teacher. Another teacher commented, “My students understand their voting rights and responsibilities and are looking forward to turning 18 years old to make their voice count in a real election.” We were pleased that 96% of teachers who responded to a YLI post-election survey said their students learned more about the electoral process from participating in the Mock Election than they would have had they not participated.

To help teachers generate interest in the elections, YLI provided a Mock Election Toolkit containing balloons, stickers, and other materials. Several teachers commented that the items added a surprising amount of excitement to the process. “You can’t believe how excited the voters were to receive a sticker, tattoo, or beads!” said Ohio teacher Barbara Boyle. Christopher Judge of Rhode Island, a longtime YLI participant, e-mailed to say, “I just got my election package today and … getting your ‘box-o-tricks’ totally re-energized me! The students love what you make possible for them.” Teachers’ enthusiasm for the Mock Election was widespread: 100% of survey respondents said they would recommend the use of YLI’s Mock Election to other teachers.

Educational partners around the country provided key opportunities to integrate the YLI Mock Election into ongoing civic engagement efforts. Through a close working relationship with the Georgia Secretary of State’s office, YLI supplied electronic voting for Georgia’s long-standing statewide mock election as part of the state’s Civics Month. YLI staff were delighted to work with other organizations as well, including the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York and the Utica, Michigan, school system. Many teachers have become active, enthusiastic participants in YLI as a result of their involvement in the Mock Election, boosting the energy and diversity of the program to new levels.

“I have done many mock elections in the past, but this one was magic,” said New York teacher Joan Larkin. “The materials you sent were great, the online voting went off without a hitch, and to top it all our local cable channel covered the event.”

Many teachers reported positive
media coverage generated by their schools’ participation in the YLI Mock Election. The Mock Election was mentioned or covered in-depth by newspapers around the country – including the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the Dallas Morning News, and the Wall Street Journal Online – along with numerous local and regional TV outlets.

“Our school received local coverage from the media for running the election in a ‘real-life’ manner,” said one teacher. “We created polling places in our school... students could vote before or after school, during study hall or during lunch. Much like the citizenship in our country, they had to choose to be a part of the process. Unlike the citizenship in our country, they chose [to participate] at the rate of 76% – amazing.”

The flexibility to set up realistic polling situations was just one benefit the YLI Mock Election provided in contrast to more traditional mock elections. YLI also offered participating teachers access to an extensive bank of online lesson plans and other supporting resources. This year’s election-specific resources included lesson titles such as A Guide to Watching the 2004 Debates and Comparing Bush and Kerry on the Issues.

Georgia teacher Anna McClannahan reported, “My eighth grade students used [the debate watching guide] to watch the debates last night; they couldn’t wait to get to class today to talk about all the nuances they noticed. My students are teaching their parents to be more politically astute as well.”

Many of the lesson plans offered this fall were linked to Sabato’s Crystal Ball. Perhaps some of the Crystal Ball’s predictive power (99% accuracy in forecasting 2004 races) spread to YLI student voters this year: although the YLI Mock Election is not a scientific survey and is not designed to predict election outcomes, YLI winners matched the actual winners in 82% of Senate and gubernatorial contests. House results matched real outcomes even more closely, with 392 of 435 races – that’s 90% – yielding accurate results. Student voters in the YLI presidential contest chose George W. Bush over John F. Kerry at a rate of 50.9% to 45.59%.

YLI joined with several civic organizations to provide students with information about important issues as they prepared to cast their votes. YLI classrooms received copies of the “Voter Issues Paper” produced by World Wrestling Entertainment’s Smackdown Your Vote!, along with a corresponding lesson plan developed by YLI. For teachers whose students would be voting in real elections for the first time, YLI provided the League of Women Voters’ pamphlet “5 Things You Need to Know on Election Day” and encouraged participation in the Close Up Foundation’s First Vote program.

Membership in the Youth Vote Coalition provided an excellent platform for forming new connections in the national civic education community during the Mock Election. YLI has recently been honored to join the YVC board and looks forward to new opportunities for working with organizations that share the mission of civic education.

Teachers in some states will get their next chance to use the YLI Mock Election in 2005, with gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey as well as Virginia’s House of Delegates contests. The YLI Mock Election will again serve a nationwide audience in 2006 with congressional races and gubernatorial contests. In the meantime, teachers around the country can appreciate the fact that YLI offers more than just a day of student voting – YLI’s free civic education resources are available all year, every year! ★

The Youth Leadership Initiative at the Center for Politics offers an exciting resource to civics and government teachers across the nation, changing the way American politics is taught in the classroom. A More Perfect Union is an interactive political campaign CD-ROM featuring cutting edge technology that brings the political campaign process to life. Students have the unique opportunity run a Senate campaign in the fictitious state of Franklin, making all of the decisions that carry them through the simulation’s “Election Day.” Students learn about political ideology, polling, demographics, ethics, media, fiscal responsibility, and much more. The game has been integrated with YLI lessons and has been introduced to nearly 9,000 classrooms nationwide.

To learn more about this unique resource or to purchase your own copy, please visit www.centerforpolitics.org.

The More Perfect Union simulation has been a great activity for students. I even have kids who come up from study hall to run a campaign. Thanks again!

Seth Koch, Teacher
South Tama County HS
Tama, IA
There is no better way for America’s youth to learn about the legislative process than by experiencing it! That is exactly what the Youth Leadership Initiative’s e-Congress is designed to do for students. e-Congress is an on-line legislative simulation that provides teachers an opportunity to facilitate learning about the American legislative process by immersing participants in the intricacies of a Congressional session. This engaging and academically rigorous program for middle and high school students generates interest in the law-making process while supporting core learning standards for civics and government courses.

In the 2005 session of e-Congress students will research policy issues, write to legislators, and draft original legislation. Additionally, e-legislators will learn about the committee process first-hand as they work in their own classroom committees to debate and amend bills from their peers around the country. Skills such as consensus building and prioritizing are emphasized throughout the committee process. Finally, the simulation culminates on the virtual House Floor, where participants respond to amended legislation and vote as individual representatives.

e-Congress provides in-depth coverage of the workings of Congress. Students are challenged to learn about political ideology and the importance of compromise. The simulation incorporates valuable tools for teachers, including downloadable student handouts and research guides, a complete teacher records section, and detailed calendar and planning guides for assisting in classroom implementation.

The high level of activity and creativity involved in implementing e-Congress draws rave reviews from students and educators. Teachers report that their students are extremely motivated by the authenticity of the simulation. Students report a sense of self-fulfillment and deeper understanding of the legislative process. Greek philosopher Aristotle once wrote, “If liberty and equality are chiefly to be found in a democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.” YLI’s e-Congress promotes civic engagement and gives students a sense of empowerment about their government.
The Youth Vote Coalition is a national organization with a primary goal of youth civic engagement, specifically, raising the percentage of 18-29 year old voters in the 2004 Presidential election. I learned about the coalition while I was an intern at the Center for Politics in the fall semester of 2003, and was selected to serve as the local Youth Vote Coalition Coordinator. Under the banner of "2,004 in 2004," Molly Clancy, The Center for Politics Deputy Director of Programs, Sam Silverberg and I registered voters at local supermarkets, on the U.Va. Corner District and at Piedmont Virginia Community College throughout the summer of 2004. We felt that reaching out to the Charlottesville community was imperative, and this goal was advanced with ease because students were not in session at the time. Thus, the community was our only focus.

During late August, Molly and I held meetings with student leaders of University groups such as Student Council, University Programs Council, College Republicans and the University Democrats. All of these groups had tremendous volunteer resources, and we were able to set up a table and register students to vote at every major University event in August, September and October 2004. By October 1, we had surpassed our goal. The total number of registration and absentee applications we submitted to the registrar surpassed 2,100. The month of October was spent creating advertisements and reminders for students to vote on November 2.

I value the time spent getting to know everyone in the 2004 organization tremendously and the experience was certainly a great deal of fun! While I do not know exactly what I want to do in the future, I am sure that some aspect of my life will always be devoted to politics and my experiences at the Center for Politics and with the Youth Vote Coalition have only reinforced this feeling. I believe that it is immensely important for young people to maintain an awareness of how the government is affecting their lives; thus, I am so glad that our coalition was able to bring enthusiasm about voting, regardless of candidate choice, to the University of Virginia and the Charlottesville community.
Produced by PBS affiliate WHTJ-Charlottesville in collaboration with the University of Virginia Center for Politics, "WILDER: An American First" premiered in February of 2005.

This one-hour program traces the moving and turbulent path of Wilder’s journey from his segregated past into the doors of Virginia’s state capitol and onto the national political scene. Fiercely independent and known as a shrewd politician, Wilder, who worked his way through college by waiting tables at segregated country clubs and hotels in Depression-era Richmond, was unafraid to champion controversial positions he believed in, even if it meant losing support within his own Democratic Party. Despite this contentious streak, Wilder’s charisma warmed audiences. He became Virginia’s first African-American state senator since Reconstruction, the state’s first African-American elected lieutenant governor, and the nation’s first, and to date only, elected African-American governor.

“WILDER: An American First” explores how this independent, controversial leader became one of the world’s most powerful black politicians without ever embracing the evangelical messages popular among other African-American leaders. Combining narration, interviews, archival footage, news clips and photographs, this compelling historical biography looks closely at Wilder’s early years, his rise in state government, and the narrow, and heated, 1989 race for governor. “WILDER: An American First” also addresses his failed campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination and his newest role in public service as the first popularly-elected mayor of Richmond in 50 years.

“Wilder’s rise to Virginia’s state capitol is an historic journey, and it’s unique in this country. As Virginians, we’re especially proud to be the first state to elect an African-American governor, and as the local public television station, we’re proud to be able to share this story,” said Conni Lombardo, vice president and general manager of WHTJ and executive producer of "WILDER: An American First". Ms. Lombardo is also the executive producer of the Community Idea Stations’ series "NO HIGHER HONOR" which includes programs on former Virginia governors John Dalton, Linwood Holton, Mills Godwin, Chuck Robb and Gerald Baliles. ★
Hailed by journalists and political insiders as “indispensable” and a “must-read” site, Sabato’s Crystal Ball is the latest publication from the Center for Politics. Completely redesigned for 2004, the Crystal Ball is a comprehensive elections forecast and analysis website. Throughout the fall, Larry J. Sabato, the Center’s director, published his weekly election projections on the Crystal Ball.

The website is provided as a free public service to help increase public awareness of national politics. Starting from literally nowhere, the site has quickly grown into one of the top election analysis resources on the web. In addition to the presidential contest, last fall the CB tracked every gubernatorial and Senate race, and also made predictions on each of the “Dirty 50” most competitive House races in the country.

For the 2004 election cycle, the site produced some of the most accurate election predictions and analysis in the business, correctly forecasting 99.8 percent of House races (434 out of 435), 97 percent of Senate races (33 out of 34) and 91 percent of gubernatorial contests (10 out of 11).

The Crystal Ball was also featured prominently by several national media outlets, including the Washington Post, the New York Times, and Fox News Channel. By Election Day, over 12,000 individuals across the country had signed up for the Crystal Ball’s regular email updates.

But, the Crystal Ball was created as much for students as for journalists and political junkies; as such, there are a slew of resources for academics and educators. The CB Classroom includes several lesson plans that compliment the Crystal Ball, created by the Center’s Youth Leadership Initiative, to help teachers bring the CB to their students. The CB also has various charts, maps, and essays to pique student interest in politics and campaigns.

Be sure to visit it on the web, but remember, as Larry Sabato is fond of saying: “He who lives by the crystal ball ends up eating ground glass!” ★

Crystal Ball Website

Redesign increases success rate
www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball
Jamestown 2007

The Birthplace of the United States gets ready to celebrate its 400th anniversary

In less than two years Virginia, and indeed the entire nation, will mark the 400th Anniversary of the 1607 landing at Jamestown. A primary focus of the Jamestown 400th anniversary commemoration is to call attention to Jamestown’s distinctive importance as the birthplace of the United States of America. Another major goal for the commemoration will be to establish Jamestown as the point of origin for representative government and other principles that have become synonymous with the American system of ordered liberty. Commemoration planners seek to tell the story, not only of the Jamestown founding, but also of the 400-year journey of American democracy that has ensued and the continuing effort to make the promise of democracy real for all Americans and for other peoples around the world.

To that end, the Center for Politics has been engaged by the Jamestown 2007 Federal Commission to coordinate with various educational groups a unified and user-friendly collection of interdisciplinary academic resources to be disseminated to teachers across the country via the Internet. Meg Heubeck, Deputy Director of Instruction of the YLI, will lead the effort to design a series civics related Jamestown lesson plans. Daman Irby, Center Director of Operations, is the Coordinator of the Jamestown Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) and is recruiting education partners to contribute Jamestown lesson plans on related subjects such as religion, economics, history, and others. The task of the CAC is to set lesson plan standards, and approve lesson plans to be submitted to the Federal Commission. “The Jamestown curriculum will be available for use in classrooms across America beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year, and our goal is to showcase Virginia’s role in the founding of our nation while also helping to build a lasting legacy for its future,” said Irby.

“The civics curriculum will have the distinctive feature of combining historical lessons with contemporary practical applications and will be a resource to be utilized far beyond the completion of 2007 commemoration,” said Heubeck. The Center’s efforts will culminate with the national distribution of the curriculum materials and an international Youth Democracy Summit scheduled for the summer of 2006, which will assemble hundreds of high school students from across the United States and democracies around the world on the Grounds of U.Va. and Monticello. The multi-day event will highlight Jamestown as the birthplace of representative government in America and showcase the efforts of young people who are actively building and strengthening democratic ideals around the world. ★
The Leadership List

The Center for Politics relies on the support of U.Va. graduates, friends, corporations, foundations, and organizations to provide excellent programming and research. We would like to express our gratitude to the following individuals and organizations that have made our programs excel. The Leadership List includes donors to the Center for Politics who have made particularly generous contributions from the inception of the Center through December 31, 2004.

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