

One need not look far in America to encounter the founders' values. They are etched in the souls of contemporary American patriots who quietly honor the framers through their service to our communities and country. To understand how the founders' values live on and thrive in the beliefs and work of Americans today, I interviewed three such patriots—a teacher, a police officer, and a Marine veteran—for whom the founders' principles take on special meaning.

As an educator, Mrs. Custer is a bridge between her students and our 237-year-old Constitution. To express her zeal for our founding document, she hands out pocket Constitutions to her students on the first day of class. She wants us to use these Constitutions for reference, but more significantly, she hopes we will come to cherish the words inside. When I asked her what characteristics of the Constitution inspired her to teach students about government and law, she told me “The Constitution is alive; it's a living document. The genius of the framers' language is that it allowed generations to interpret and reinterpret its meaning.” The Constitution has indeed been amended twenty-seven times, profoundly enriching our democracy. The judiciary branch of our government interprets the Constitution, establishing a precedent with each landmark case. Mrs. Custer celebrates this feature of our democracy by sipping from a coffee mug that lists the names of landmark Supreme Court cases. The framers envisioned a government that would evolve and stay relevant throughout the ages. George Washington said, “A primary object. should be the education of our youth in the science of government”. Teachers like Mrs. Custer carry the founders' vision forward by educating and inspiring the next generation of American citizens.

Mr. Holdsworth worked as a New Hampshire State Trooper for 24 years, eventually becoming a sergeant in the Keene barracks. He described the hard work of responsibly prosecuting citizens after indicting them with misdemeanors or violations. Mr. Holdsworth emphasized that the Constitution protects both citizens and police officers, ensuring a fair legal process even for potential criminals. He believes in due process, one of the founders' core principles enshrined in the 5th Amendment. Mr. Holdsworth has faith in the framework of our democracy. He maintains that, irrespective our hectic political environment, no one can override the checks and balances of the system. Through his commitment to law enforcement and respect for the legal system, Mr. Holdsworth embraces the founders' vision for a nation built on the rule of law and justice for all.

Mr. Fugitt, a Marine veteran, embodies the founding fathers' vision that Americans should serve their country to protect the liberties enshrined in the Constitution. Many of the framers risked their lives during the Revolutionary War to fight against Britain's tyranny. Similarly, Mr. Fugitt made sacrifices to serve on two tours of duty in Iraq. From a young age, Mr. Fugitt wanted to serve in the military. When he was in the 9th grade, he watched the 9/11 terrorist attacks on TV and saw the War on Terror unfold. He enlisted after graduating from high school at eighteen. While in Iraq, he saw the many injustices incubated under the dictatorial government there. This experience deepened his belief in the power of the individual freedoms established by our founders. Mr. Fugitt listed the freedoms protected in the Bill of Rights that are worth fighting for, including freedom of religion, the right to bear arms, and freedom of speech. He believes that these enumerated rights have shielded us from despotism. Mr. Fugitt's sacrifices for the United States mirror the founders' sacrifices and their vision for a nation where individual liberties are protected; not taken for granted.

There is no better testament to the endurance of the founding fathers' principles than those whose work is inspired by them. American founding ideals were tangible, not abstract; we fought the Revolutionary War over them. The founders' principles live on in Mrs. Custer, Mr. Holdsworth, Mr. Fugitt, and numerous other unsung heroes inspired by the framers' values. Today, the United States of America resembles the founders' vision thanks to modern patriots who teach democracy, responsibly enforce the law, and make sacrifices to defend our liberties.