



## THE HAUENSTEIN CENTER FOR PRESIDENTIAL STUDIES

AT GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY



# What's

# Inside

## Common Ground 2019-2020 Review

The 2019-2020 academic year was incredibly successful for our Common Ground Initiative. Our events continued to fill auditoriums and engage our West Michigan audience with thought-provoking and timely content.

We kicked off our programming in September with *New York Times* best-selling author, Lynne Olson, discussing the importance of international alliances. On Constitution Day, the president of the National Constitution Center, Jeffrey Rosen, gave us a keynote address. In October, the fifth installment of our biennial "Character and the Presidency" series featured NBC News presidential historian Michael Beschloss. Danielle Allen (featured), joined us in November to discuss the Declaration of Independence. Our fall 2019 season wrapped up in December, with Hank Meijer and David Roll speaking on the relationship between two titans, General George Marshall and Senator Arthur Vandenberg.

During MLK Jr. Week in January, we hosted author and associate editor of the *Washington Post*, Steve Luxenberg, to discuss his book, *Separate*. In February, we hosted a panel debate on the merits of the Green New Deal and public v. private sector solutions to climate change. We also hosted C-SPAN's American History TV when they covered "Total War: American and Japanese Perspectives on WWII," an event that featured Pia Korusu White and Brian Hauenstein in conversation with Gleaves. In early March, Amity Shlaes joined us to discuss her most recent work, *Great Society: A New History*. Our last event of the season was a sponsorship of the documentary, "Bring It to the Table." The screening and discussion with the filmmaker that followed served as a vital reminder of working together across partisan lines.

2	WHAT'S INSIDE
3	DIRECT FROM THE DIRECTOR
4	DANIELLE ALLEN SPEAKS
9	FEDERALIST PAPER #70
10	COOK LEADERSHIP ACADEMY SPOTLIGHT
11	LUNCH & LEARN - SUPPORT RALPH'S MISSION

The message opening our inaugural newsletter from Director Gleaves Whitney discusses COVID-19 and how the staff at the Hauenstein Center is responding to these challenging times.

Reflecting back on the November 6 Common Ground event, we recall how powerfully Danielle Allen spoke in defense of liberty and equality. From the Q&A section of Danielle Allen's lecture, select questions are highlighted.

Federalist #70 underscores Alexander Hamilton's argument that there must be "energy in the executive"—i.e., in the presidency and government.

We conclude with our Cook Leadership Academy fellow candidate and alumni spotlight.



# Direct from the Director

Dear Members of the Hauenstein Center Community:

What a time to inaugurate the Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies newsletter. I had planned to focus my message on Ralph Hauenstein. March 20 would have been his 108th birthday and there is much we can learn from him regarding citizenship, leadership, and friendship. We are paying tribute to our beloved benefactor on our Website, and I urge you to visit the page set up in his honor to learn more about his remarkable life ([www.gvsu.edu/hc](http://www.gvsu.edu/hc)). Ralph will always be our inspiration—our North Star at the center that bears his name.

As of this writing (April 9), I am most concerned about the health of our Laker family and broader community. The coronavirus continues to hold the nation in a relentless grip. In a pandemic it is easy to feel helpless, hapless, and hopeless. Hundreds of thousands of cases have been confirmed in the US, resulting in more than sixteen thousand deaths. Large sectors of the economy are decelerating to a halt. The stock market has lost one-third of its value since the day Donald Trump was elected President in 2016.

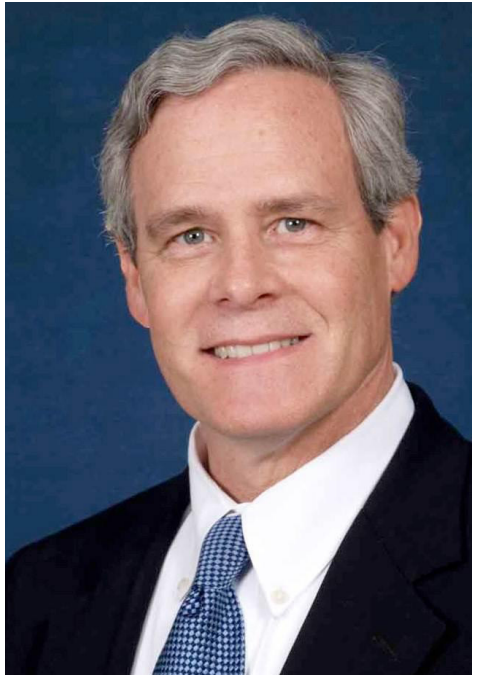
Here at Grand Valley, the campus is now in our living rooms instead of in our offices. Because of the need for social distancing, Grand Valley switched to online platforms to deliver classes, and here at the Hauenstein Center we cancelled the remainder of our winter and spring events. But it's no holiday. My staff and I continue the important work of the Center and are in constant contact by cell phone, email, Slack, and Zoom. We are introducing online programs such as Lunch & Learn with Gleaves and also Journeys. Meanwhile, we are restoring events for the fall 2020 and winter 2021 semesters, wrapping up instruction, and mentoring to the current class of candidates in our Peter C. Cook Leadership Academy. Hauenstein Center staff are determined to help graduating seniors and graduate students finish their work up on time and in good standing.

So there are silver linings amid the storm clouds. The number of people who have recovered from COVID-19 far exceeds those who have died from the virus. Leaders in both parties are showing signs of cooperating across the aisle. (It's as though they had participated in one of our recent Common Ground programs!) Private sector and social entrepreneurs are rising to the challenge to meet the needs of their communities, and neighbors are helping neighbors. It remains axiomatic that, in times of crisis, most Americans temper their partisanship and seek to find common ground for the common good.

While you are spending more time at home, check out some of our online resources. Perhaps you will tune in to C-SPAN 3 to enjoy our recent program featuring Pia Kurusu White and Brian Hauenstein on different perspectives of World War II. Perhaps you will revisit the debate that was referenced on 60 Minutes, "Hitchens versus Hitchens," which has been watched by millions of viewers on all six inhabited continents. Perhaps you will want to find inspiration in the lives of our 70 Cook Leadership Academy candidates—remarkable individuals all. Visit our enormous online library of YouTube programs that enlighten as much as they entertain. You can also follow our frequent updates on Facebook and Twitter. All our resources are designed to bring leading thinkers and thinking leaders to you.

Until we meet again, face-to-face, I and my colleagues at the Hauenstein Center send our best wishes for your continued health. If, heaven forbid, you or a loved one has contracted COVID-19, we wish you a speedy recovery. I am confident that we can pull through this pandemic together and stronger than ever.

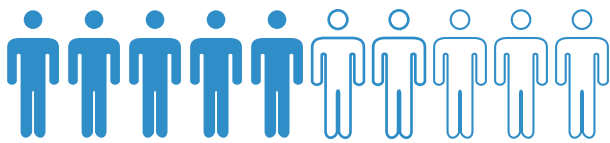
All my best,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gleaves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

# Danielle Allen Speaks Powerfully in Defense of Liberty and Equality

Coming to us from Harvard University, Danielle Allen spoke at our Common Ground event on November 6, 2019, when she argued for the continuing relevance of the Declaration of Independence and its importance as a statement of principle for our country. To give you a glimpse into the event, we are providing a transcript of some of the questions asked of her throughout the day.



**Question:** You make the bold assertion that both political parties have abandoned the Declaration. What are some examples you've seen of that?

**Answer:** It's true that you wouldn't really find a politician who says "Oh, I'm for inequality." But what you do find is politicians who either don't, in fact, invoke equality, or don't know how to think about equality in particularly subtle or careful ways. So as an example of the former, I remember watching an interview with Paul Ryan during the 2016 Republican Convention when he was asked to name his core principles, and he sort of held his fingers up and started ticking things off and said, liberty, freedom, free

enterprise, self-determination. Four different synonyms for liberty, right? And then government by consent, the Constitution, and upward mobility. So that was his cluster. No equality at all. But again, several ways of saying freedom. On the Democratic side of the balance, it's there. Certainly, I'm likely to exhort against inequality but then have a very hard time articulating what we should be for. The reason they then have a hard time articulating what we should be for is because I think on the Democratic side of the picture, the concept of equality has narrowed over time to focus primarily on material questions and economic distribution. The really important thing about the concept of equality is that it has

many variants. There's basic human moral equality, a question of human dignity and how we respect that. There is a question about political equality and how we actually build a society where all citizens experience egalitarian empowerment in relation to collective decision making. There's social equality, there is a question of economic egalitarianism, and so forth. So I've been trying to spend my time getting people to remember that equality and freedom work together, like hand and glove. If you want freedom for all, it also requires that no one be dominated by anybody else. To avoid domination is to pursue equality, and in particular to pursue political equality. So I've been trying to reunite these concepts and to



## Danielle Allen

*James Bryant Conant University Professor and Director,  
Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University*



get people thinking about how does political equality connect to economic questions? How does all of this relate to social equality to see if we could have a more interesting conversation about these different aspects of the concept?

**Question:** How can we say that the Declaration is a document which defends equality when the slave tradition is embedded in the history of compromise toward creating it?

**Answer:** It's a super interesting question that I think requires recognizing a few things. The first is that this country has always had multiple traditions. We sometimes think when we conjure up the concept of originalism that there was one thing that everybody thought at the very beginning, but that's not the case. They were able to get started because they achieved what philosophers call an overlapping consensus, which means that they were willing to sign onto the same documents but for different reasons. So that Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration, the four alongside Jefferson, included people who thought slavery was a bad thing and were against slavery, as well as people like Jefferson who thought that slavery was problematic but couldn't quite think his way out of it, and also in various ways profited from it. The point is just that the Declaration has these two traditions in it and it has compromises in it. It has pro-slavery compromises, which is that excision of the passage where Jefferson does talk about the sacred rights of life and liberty for the distant people in Africa. But then there are also anti-slavery moments. The phrase life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was an anti-slavery moment. John Adams had been arguing for happiness as the key organizing concept. That term replaced property. By the spring of 1776, property had been very closely connected to the slave interest. To defend property rights, by the spring of 1776, was to defend slavery. So in keeping property out of the Declaration, the anti-slavery people were actually making room for abolitionism and indeed the first people to make use of the Declaration in the next phase of American politics were abolitionists. By January of 1777, a free African

American in Boston named Prince Hall was using the language of the Declaration to submit a petition to the Massachusetts Assembly to end slavery. He was invoking the principles of the Declaration, invoking social contract theory, in order to make the case for an end to slavery; and slavery was ended in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Vermont by the early 1780s. So that abolitionist tradition comes out of the Declaration just as much as there were slave owners who signed on and endorsed it. So we have to recognize that both of those things are there. So in terms of just the concepts themselves, the ideas, I think the interesting thing here, and it's one that we still all have trouble wrestling with, is that even some of the slave owners, Jefferson, in particular, genuinely meant this point about human equality. So the people who were against slavery definitely meant it, but then what about Jefferson? And so Jefferson's sort of strange way of thinking these things through was to think that yes, all people are created equal and actually all people do deserve the right to self-government, but, he just didn't think black and white people should have self-government at the same time in the same place. So he was perfectly fine with the notion that Africans should go back



**Gleaves Whitney joins members in a discussion at the dinner prior to Danielle Allen's lecture.**





**Hauenstein Center Director Gleaves Whitney joins Danielle Allen on stage following her lecture for Q & A.**

to Africa and have their separate but equal society there. And so that really is, I think in Jefferson's line of reasoning, the origins of the separate but equal tradition in the U.S. So you have these two different traditions there at the beginning, a genuinely egalitarian tradition that is ready for abolition and ready for integration and starting to think about what it means to have a multiracial community of free and equal self-governing citizens. That's one tradition. And the other tradition is the Jeffersonian one, that at that very beginning introduces the separate but equal conception of what human life requires for flourishing.

**Question:** Something stuck with me from the beginning of your talk about how what we have in common is that we are all hoping that somehow tomorrow will be better than yesterday. It reminded

me of a Bob Dylan song where he says "yesterday is just a memory, and tomorrow is never what it's supposed to be." In the context of these political situations, how do we resist the mentality that tomorrow is never what it's supposed to be, and maintain hope in the face of situations like a constitutional crisis?

**Answer:** I didn't spend as much time as I might have talking about how (in the Declaration) we get from the "I" to the "we"—the "my rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" to "our shared safety and happiness," and there's only one way to get there, which is by talking. By the same principle that nobody else can figure out what my path to happiness is, I can't know what anybody else's is unless I actually listen to them. They have to tell me. The point of saying that is that process of working together on shared values and shared means

of moving forward is actually immensely pleasurable, and so the experience of happiness starts to grow from that itself. That becomes part of the picture of happiness. It's not the whole picture of any given person's happiness, but I think that the Cook Leadership Academy is about that. What does it mean to be a participant in a community, to own or take responsibility for the shape of that community? It's very fulfilling, people find. Beginning to search for happiness with others is to move forward toward happiness. I keep trying to encourage people to do it. I know it sounds completely lame but I have a deal, and I don't think anyone's taken me up on it yet, but take a handful of people to lunch... I used to say take people who disagree with you to lunch but I think that's too hard so I may give up on that... and actually have a serious conversation about shared values and what those might be.



So here's how you can do it. First of all, just ask people what thing they're most worried about, and then ask them what personal value they have explains that fear. Maybe their personal value for sustainability, or faith, or duty, or autonomy, or prosperity. Then the next question is okay, there's a list of things that are values which you need in a democracy specifically, which really isn't that long. It's something like liberty, equality, justice for all, unity, because you can't actually have democracy if you can't stick together (that was Lincoln's contribution to the canon), opportunity, honesty, and the rule of law. There might be a few others, but these are key. The next question is that you're worried about prosperity, so which of these shared values does it connect to for you, and tell me the story of its connection. The point of all that is to say that it's okay that we all have completely different, diverse sets of personal values, that's one of the glories of America, that we're this huge heterogeneous country. Your job then becomes to connect your personal values to the shared set of values. You don't have to pick all of them. Just one! Then talk about those linkages. To say shared values is not to say

we all have to believe the same thing. That's not the point at all. Keep your set of personal values that define who you are and the path you're cutting through the world, just take the time and be responsible to link them to that set of shared values so you can have a conversation with someone. You can see that your definition of freedom is different from the other persons, so what's the difference and why? Have the conversations. I keep offering to buy people lunch if they'll take me up on this, but no one does!

Just as a last answer to this question, "what's the source of hope?"

The solution is not in Washington, the solution is with all of us. If we can knit ourselves back together as a people, anything is possible.

**Question:** Does the Declaration give us the right to abolish the current form of government?

**Answer:** When I was talking about the Declaration I used the word "alter" and skipped over the "abolish" part. That was intentional. I think we should be working on altering things. Here's why I say alter, and not abolish. What they say in the Declaration is that changes should not be made for light and transient causes. Then they spend a lot of time explaining why they were convinced their reasons were not light or transient. The reason was that they had been trying for a decade to make very specific changes. Not only were they not getting anywhere, but they had gotten nothing but a closed-door from King George. They thought you had to try multiple times over and over to achieve alterations before you even open the question about whether or not there should be a radical break with the past. I don't think that we, as a country, have put in the work yet to rebuild our political institutions for ourselves, so from my point of view, we should be on the course of alteration, not abolition.



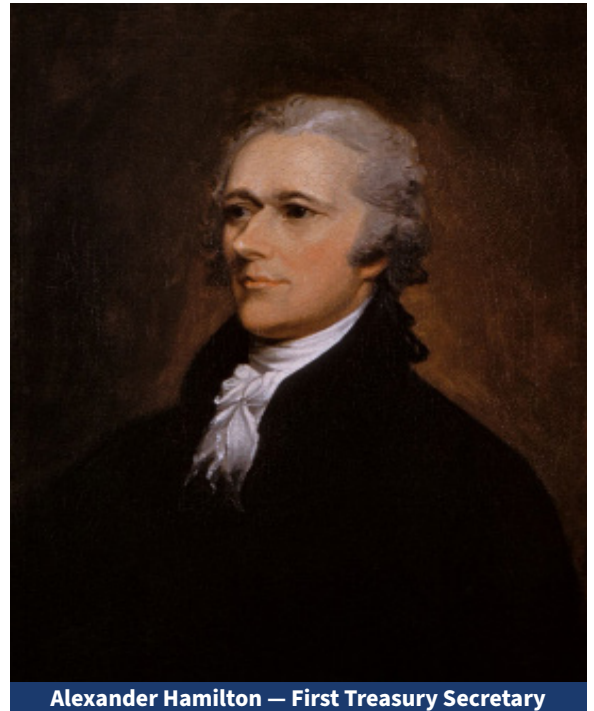


# Federalist Paper #70

Recently, there has been a great deal of discussion about the degree of initiative the Executive Branch of our government should have. It is a question which has been debated since the very beginning of our republic. In Federalist Paper #70, Alexander Hamilton laid out what he thought the duty of the president should be. What follows is an excerpt from that paper.

## The Executive Department Further Considered

“There is an idea, which is not without its advocates, that a vigorous Executive is inconsistent with the genius of republican government. The enlightened well-wishers to this species of government must at least hope that the supposition is destitute of foundation; since they can never admit its truth, without at the same time admitting the condemnation of their own principles. Energy in the Executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks; it is not less essential to the steady administration of the laws; to the protection of property against those irregular and high-handed combinations which sometimes interrupt the ordinary course of justice; to the security of liberty against the enterprises and assaults of ambition, of faction, and of anarchy. Every man the least conversant in Roman story, knows how often that republic was obliged to take refuge in the absolute power of a single man, under the formidable title of Dictator, as well against the intrigues of ambitious individuals who aspired to the tyranny, and the seditions of whole classes of the community whose conduct threatened the existence of all government, as against the invasions of external enemies who menaced the conquest and destruction of Rome.



Alexander Hamilton — First Treasury Secretary

There can be no need, however, to multiply arguments or examples on this head. A feeble Executive implies a feeble execution of the government. A feeble execution is but another phrase for a bad execution; and a government ill executed, whatever it may be in theory, must be, in practice, a bad government.

Taking it for granted, therefore, that all men of sense will agree in the necessity of an energetic Executive, it will only remain to inquire, what are the ingredients which constitute this energy? How far can they be combined with those other ingredients which constitute safety in the republican sense? And how far does this combination characterize the plan which has been reported by the convention?

The ingredients which constitute energy in the Executive are, first, unity; secondly, duration; thirdly, an adequate provision for its support; fourthly, competent powers.

The ingredients which constitute safety in the republican sense are, first, a due dependence on the people, secondly, a due responsibility.

Those politicians and statesmen who have been the most celebrated for the soundness of their principles and for the justice of their views, have declared in favor of a single Executive and a numerous legislature. They have with great propriety, considered energy as the most necessary qualification of the former, and have regarded this as most applicable to power in a single hand, while they have, with equal propriety, considered the latter as best adapted to deliberation and wisdom, and best calculated to conciliate the confidence of the people and to secure their privileges and interests.”

It is interesting to note that for the first half of our country’s history, most presidents deferred to Congress. Apart from Lincoln, who suspended habeas corpus, and Andrew Johnson, who challenged Congress over the tenure act and received ten articles of impeachment as his reward, most of the presidents during this period refused to act contrary to the wishes of the elected representatives of the people. It is only recently, and perhaps since Wilson and FDR, that we see a more robust, independent, and energetic executive of the type Hamilton advocated.

# Cook Leadership Academy Spotlight

## Fellow Candidate



Miranda Bryan

"In the Cook Leadership Academy we don't connect by comparing our shiniest, proudest moments, but rather our most vulnerable ones. By opening up to each other and recognizing that we have more in common than we think, I have begun to tackle my imposter syndrome and realize that if I think people bring something valuable to the room, then I do as well." Miranda is a senior with majors in Political Science and Religious Studies and a minor in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and this is her second year in the Cook Leadership Academy. This passion is now reflected in her participation in Grand Valley's Model United Nations team, of which she is the President. She is also the Vice President of Triota, the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies honors society. She completed an internship through the Kent School Services Network at Godwin Heights Middle School, where she led a chapter of Girls for Change, focusing on leadership and social justice education. Miranda studied abroad in China during the summer of 2018 and considers Shanghai a second home. She cares deeply about human rights, civil rights, and the environment, and wishes to pursue a career in law or the government in which she can work toward gaining justice for disadvantaged communities at both a domestic and global level.

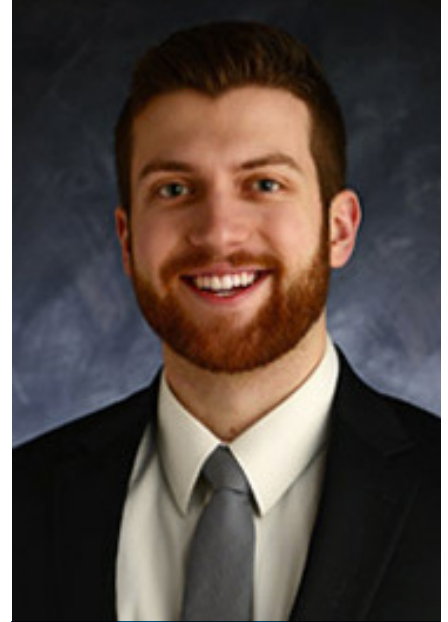
## Alumna



Lilia Hauenstein

"Through the academy I gained solid support for my dream to live and work in Japan. My hope is to reach professional fluency in Japanese and to combine my language skills with my knowledge and passion for Japanese culture to make a positive impact on the business world." Lilia is a member of the December 2019 graduating class. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Advertising and Public Relations after 3 years as a part of the Cook Leadership Academy. Throughout her time as a Laker, Lilia was involved in the community and took advantage of the resources offered at GVSU. After completing her first semester, she began working at University Development where she developed skills for nearly two years. She spent her Junior year studying abroad in Japan. There, she immersed herself in Japanese culture, lived with a host family, traveled to places like Seoul and Tokyo, privately taught and tutored English to Japanese students, created lifelong friendships with Japanese and students from all around the world, and even participated in filming the Laker Effect campaign video. As quoted above, it has been Lilia's dream to work in Japan. We are incredibly proud to share that after much hard work and determination, Lilia has accepted a job offer with a Japanese start up and has moved to Tokyo.

## Alumnus



Nate Gillespie

On December 15, our Director, Gleaves Whitney, was approached by NBC. They were looking for people in the Kent County area who identified as Republicans, were thoughtful and well-reasoned individuals, who would be willing to engage in a roundtable discussion about the current political situation. One of the names which immediately came to mind at the Peter C. Cook Leadership Academy was one of our fellows, Nate Gillespie, who graduated in 2018. He currently is a private equity analyst at Auxo Investment Partners and helped found the Coronavirus Civilian Corps. His willingness to come forward and engage in a thoughtful, meaningful discussion about such divisive issues as impeachment and the 2020 election were indicative of the best values the graduates of our leadership academy show on a daily basis. In his appearance on *Meet the Press* on December 15, Nate stated that "it's merited to understand whether or not the president directed a quid pro quo.... But then it felt like the game was already finished and we were watching a pre-determined process that was played for political gain on both sides." To see why NBC chose to focus on Kent County, and to view Nate's contribution, please visit us at [gvsu.edu/hc/media](https://gvsu.edu/hc/media)



# Lunch & Learn with Gleaves

1 PM every Tuesday and Thursday

As we stay home and stay safe, the Hauenstein Center will continue to bring you exciting content. We have been pleased to launch our new webinar series that's broadcast live each Tuesday and Thursday for the duration of the pandemic. *Lunch & Learn with Gleaves* has been offered since March 31, 2020. Join Gleaves and a special guest for a brief video conversation that explores a provocative topic. Previous discussions will be available on our website, YouTube, or Facebook pages.

Please use the link below to join the webinar for every session:

<https://zoom.us/j/715140715>

Or Telephone:

**US: +1 929 205 6099**

**Webinar ID: 715 140 715**



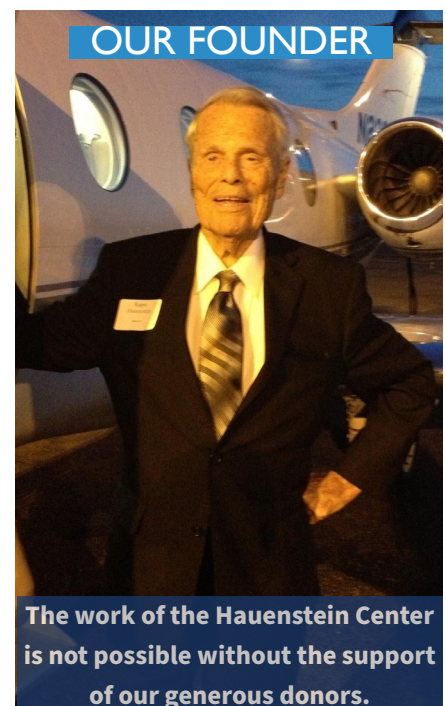
## Support Ralph's Mission!

If you are new to the Hauenstein Center family, welcome — and thank you so much for your contributions! For those who are interested in learning more about our mission, and ways to help us continue Ralph's legacy of "fostering ethical, effective leadership for the 21st century," you can visit us at:

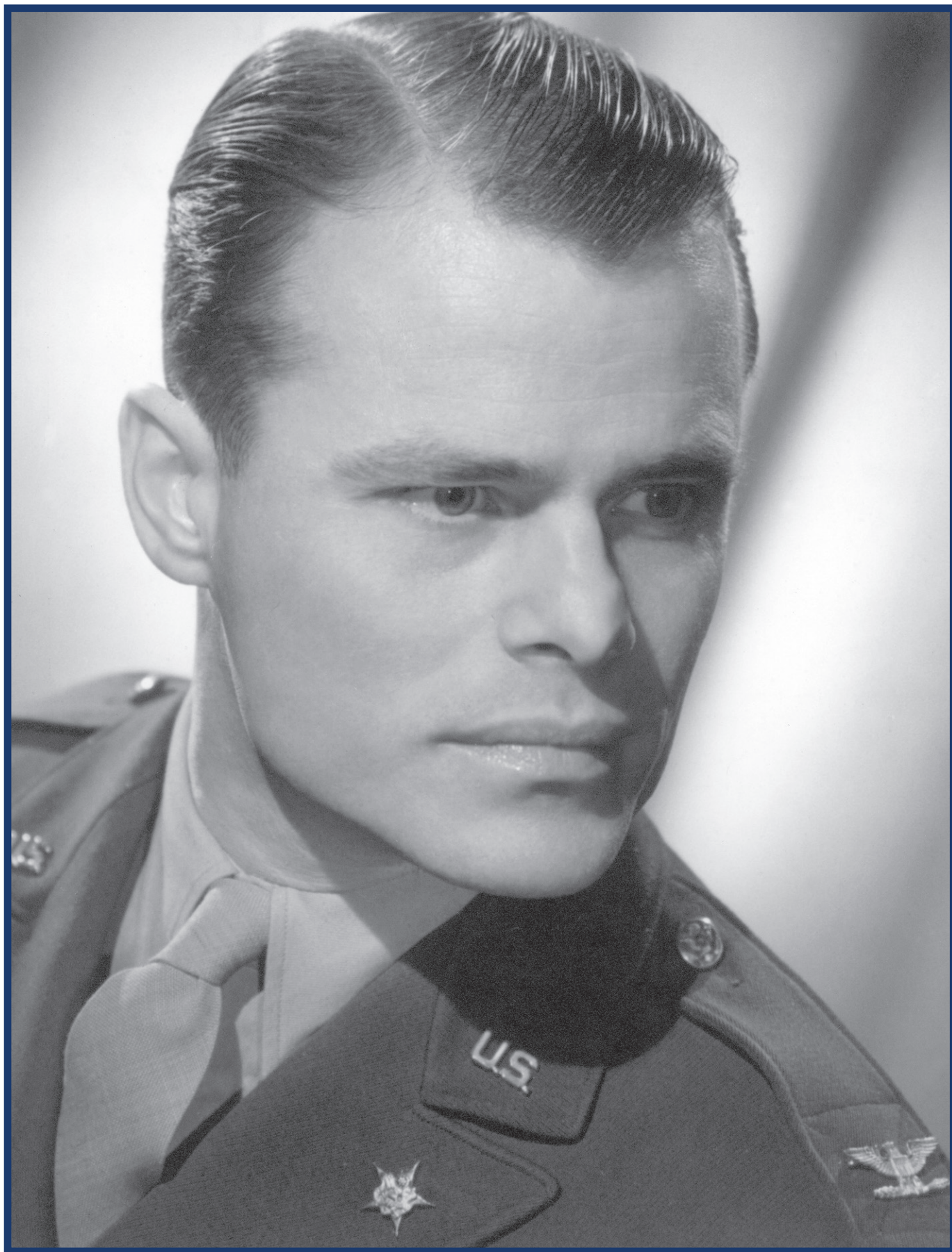
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