



HARRY S. TRUMAN SCHOLARSHIP

The Presidential Memorial to Public Service

A better future relies on attracting to public service the commitment and sound judgment of bright, outstanding Americans. This belief is what led President Truman, when approached by a bipartisan group of admirers near the end of his life, to encourage the creation of a living memorial devoted to this purpose rather than a bricks and mortar monument. For forty years, the Truman Foundation has fulfilled that mission: inspiring and supporting Americans from diverse backgrounds and from across the United States to public service.

Outstanding public service leaders are essential if our society is to function well and prosper. Yet public service in the United States is often perceived today as uncivil and ineffective—a perception that can contribute to these very conditions by discouraging new generations from pursuing a call to serve. Within this context, the Truman Foundation inspires new generations of Americans to pursue lives that emulate in spirit that of President Truman's—to become honorable leaders who serve. The Foundation's hallmark is the Truman Scholarship, which is the preeminent fellowship for aspiring public service leaders in the United States. With the fellowship, we nurture and support Americans who have demonstrated a commitment to public service at a young age. By the example of Truman Scholars, we look to inspire all Americans to engage in efforts that advance the public good.

The Truman Foundation celebrates those who make a difference through public service in all of its forms. Public service leaders teach our children ABCs and keep our children healthy. They build our roads and our rocket ships. They protect our people and our planet. They are scientists and soldiers, social workers and city planners, grassroots activists and elected officials. They are both first responders in emergencies and the last person defending your rights. The Truman Foundation celebrates all who make a difference through public service, from those who toil day-in and day-out in community-based non-profits to those who build careers in the halls of Congress.

The challenges we face today—from mitigating climate change to managing global economic crises, from ensuring quality education for all children to keeping our shared physical infrastructure from crumbling—are as complex as ever. In order to succeed in addressing them, we must encourage outstanding leaders from all backgrounds and every walk of life to find their way to public service. To that end, the Truman Foundation supports and encourages people from diverse backgrounds. And then we build community among them; by fostering an environment where public service leaders can connect with one another—whatever their background or perspective. As a result of these intentional efforts, the work of diverse public service leaders is buoyed and sustained.

The stability and progress of our society results from the successful efforts of public service leaders; yet their impact is often little known or appreciated. From modern travel and communications made possible by investment in national defense and space exploration to life-saving medicines and technologies made



possible by basic research, successful public service has wide-ranging and far-reaching effects. We must do more to tell these success stories. Whether as a member of Congress, as the manager of an international education program, as a grassroots activist or as a rural county judge, the Truman Foundation can share stories of impact in order to champion the myriad, often overlooked contributions made by so many in order to improve the lives of others.

Our vision is a country that deeply values the diverse and innovative ways that Americans make a positive difference in the lives of others through public service. Our purpose is clear. The need more urgent than ever. The Truman Foundation is a beacon that inspires and guides Americans to lead through public service. Our core values are those embodied by President Truman:

1. **Grounded by the People.** Truman led with great humility and never forgot where he came from. He frequently spoke of the importance of “getting out among the people.” With so many special and diverse interests, it is easier than ever to lose sight of this simple idea. The best public servants are constantly grounded by the needs and dreams of the people they represent.
2. **Courageous for the People.** Truman once defined courage as “Not always facing the foe, but in taking care of those at home with a true heart and a strong mind.” This is putting your integrity into action. Today we too often think of courage in political terms and taking a stand against a party or a policy. In fact, what is needed is more courage to take bold chances, try new things, and explore new approaches—all in service to those whose interest you represent.
3. **Committed to the People.** “The buck stops here” is Truman’s most famous line. It speaks to accountability and the need to see a job done, whether that was getting a road built, the military desegregated or rebuilding postwar Europe. This is no different today, with pressing challenges ranging from crumbling infrastructure to combating climate change and ISIS. At the end of the day, the best public servants are steadfast in their determination to make a difference through deeds not words.

Four decades into our work, we honor President Truman with a unique approach to effecting outstanding public service leadership, an approach he prescribed and that is simultaneously low-cost and high-impact.