

A HERO'S LIFE AND WORK

Remarks at the Memorial Service for Sam Wilson
June 23, 2017

Welcome to this memorial service honoring the life and work of Sam Wilson, the College's 22nd president. Having only joined this community a year ago, you all knew Sam much better than I. But from the conversations I enjoyed with Sam, I was always struck by his passionate belief in the transforming power of a Hampden-Sydney education and the importance and continuing relevance of this College's mission "to form good men and good citizens," a mission we have been pursuing continuously since it was penned by the College's first president in 1775. In addition to college president, Sam played many other roles during his long life: he was a soldier and a military hero, a public servant, a husband and father, friend, mentor, and, above all, a teacher. In all of these roles, Sam's life exemplified the great quote:

*What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us;
What we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.*

This was a theme in every conversation I had with Sam—that our work must be about others and not ourselves, our work must be about bringing-out the talent and full potential of every individual, our work must involve building-up not tearing down, our work must be to advance the common good. In every conversation, Sam reminded me that we have here at Hampden-Sydney the Wilson Center for Leadership *in the Public Interest*. And, Sam's focus on others and the world is why so many of you have gathered here today; to acknowledge that Sam's life and his work live on in us, in the way we live our lives and through our work.

To Susi and the Wilson family, the Hampden-Sydney College community extends a special greeting. The loss of a husband, father, or close relative can be a time of unspeakable grief. We hope you feel a special embrace of love and warmth from all who have gathered here today.