



Eastern West Virginia  
Community & Technical College

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **BEN FRANKLIN LEADS CONSTITUTION DAY CEREMONIES AT EASTERN**

In a return visit to Moorefield last week, the great American founding father Benjamin Franklin moderated a question-and-answer Constitution Bowl between two student teams at Eastern WV Community and Technical College. “Where liberty is, there is my country,” Franklin noted, as the Daring Delegates overcame the Proud Patriots in a battle to see which team knew and understood more about the wellspring national document from which all American freedom flows: the United States Constitution.

“We strongly support the vital educational mission underlying Constitution Day,” said Robert ‘Buck’ Eagle, Eastern’s Dean for Academic and Learner Support Services. Mysteriously appearing only after Ben Franklin had left the building, Eagle pointed out that “staging a competitive event among students makes it fun for everyone. And we’ve found that we all learn a lot, both students and staff.”

Acknowledging that participants in these events often become aware of how much they *don’t* know about the Constitution, Eagle indicated that the college is working on plans to involve more students, and perhaps the public as well, in future observances of the day.

“Because especially in times like these, when the American Idea is under challenge and threat from so many quarters,” Eagle said, “both in the world at large, and right here at home, it’s downright dangerous for us not to have a strong understanding of this most cherished document in our nation’s history.

#### **Elegant and Simple**

“Ignorance of the meaning, purpose and rights framed and guaranteed in the Constitution,” he insisted, “jeopardizes the security and survival of liberty in our land.”

West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, whose legislation three years ago established Constitution Day as a national observance, agrees. Calling the Constitution “the most elegantly simple solution to government that the world has ever known,” Byrd recently told a Washington audience that “our Constitution describes a government of limited powers, answerable to the people. No other people on Earth, or throughout history, have lived under such a government, designed and dedicated to securing their freedoms alone.”

Marking the September 17 anniversary of the Constitution’s signing provides an important opportunity “to increase our knowledge and appreciation of this signal charter of government. Without that knowledge, we may miss attempts,” the longest-serving senator in history warned, “however well meant, to erode the rights and guarantees laid out in the Constitution.”

Headlining Constitution Day observances this year at Wheeling Jesuit University, Byrd asked, “But how can citizens participate fully in democracy if they don’t know what their rights and liberties are?”

**Living Heritage**

In Moorefield, Ben Franklin expanded on Byrd's point. By arming themselves with awareness, understanding and knowledge of the Constitution, he emphasized, "They that are on their guard and appear ready to receive their adversaries are in much less danger of being attacked than the supine, secure and negligent."

Cindy Drumm, Eastern's Learner Support Counselor, who conceived the Constitution Bowl as an annual college event to observe the anniversary and raise awareness of the Constitution's living heritage, celebrated Franklin's ideas. "We're very grateful that he could take time out of his busy schedule to join us and lead our students and staff to a greater understanding of our national treasure. But if you ask me, I thought his trousers were a little foppish."

To which Franklin replied, "Like beauty, my dear, foppishness is in the eye of the beholder."

For more information about Eastern's financial aid opportunities, programs of study and workforce and community education, call toll free: 877-982-2322; or check the College's website: "[www.eastern.wvnet.edu](http://www.eastern.wvnet.edu)".

Serving the residents of Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton and Tucker counties, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College is a comprehensive and equal opportunity community and technical college bringing the resources and assets of Education That Works to the families, communities and employers of the Potomac Highlands.