

Palmarium

The Classical Academy exists to assist parents in their mission to develop exemplary citizens equipped with analytical thinking skills, virtuous character, and a passion for learning, all built upon a solid foundation of knowledge.



Reflections on the Idea of Civility

••••• Assorted Quotes

I know no religion that destroys courtesy, civility, and kindness. *William Penn*



William Penn
(1644-1718)



My hope is that we would begin to have a dialogue in this country about the importance of civility. We can have strong differences, but it does seem to me that most of the country believes it's gone to critical mass in what I would call the professional class across the political spectrum – left and right. *Tom Brokaw (1940-)*

We have a choice about how we behave, and that means we have the choice to opt for civility and grace. *Dwight Currie*

Straightforwardness without civility is like a surgeon's knife, effective but unpleasant. Candor with courtesy is helpful and admirable. *Yuktswar Giri (1855-1936)*

Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind. *Henry James (1843-1916)*

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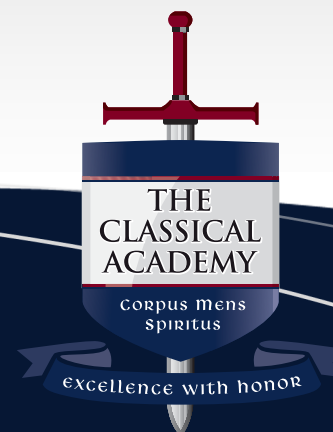
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- Whole Person Focused
 - Relationship Based
 - Classically Oriented
 - Idea Centered



At a Crossroads: Civility – Part 2

by Wesley Jolly, *Director of Academic Services*

Continued from Vol 30 – September 2016.

In the news release for the soon to be published 2016 *Civility in America* study when “[a]sked to identify the groups contributing most to the lack of civility in society, both likely voters and the overall public cite politicians, the Internet/social media and the news media as the top three sources – each being named by more than half the respondents.”

The report goes on to state “Americans tend to absolve themselves from contributing to the coarsening of society, saying uncivil behavior is more prevalent the further they get from home. Ninety-four percent say they always or usually act politely and respectfully; 72 percent say the same for the people they know; 56 percent for people in their community. But only 20 percent of respondents think the American people always or usually behave civilly.”

Last month we touched upon some of the generational viewpoints regarding civility. In *Civility in America 2014* results showed that 27% of millennials have quit a job due to a workplace being uncivil and 16% of millennials have moved from a residence because of uncivil neighbors. Likewise, 49% of millennials have stopped buying from a company or advised others (44%) not to buy from a company because of uncivil treatment by a company representative [2014, p. 6]. Interestingly for all generational groups

Civility in America by the numbers

INCIVILITY EXPERIENCES

- 17.1 = average number of times Americans encounter incivility in a 7-day week, or 2.4 times per day
- 8.5 = average number of times Americans encounter incivility **in real life/offline** in a week
- 8.6 = average number of times Americans encounter incivility **online** in a week

Of Americans surveyed...

- 50% have ended a friendship because another person was uncivil
- 48% have defriended, blocked or hidden someone online because of uncivil behavior
- 43% expect to experience incivility in the next 24 hours
- 26% have quit a job because it was an uncivil workplace
- 24% have personally experienced cyberbullying (threefold increase since 2011)
- 19% of parents have transferred their child to a different school because of incivility at school

INCIVILITY PERCEPTIONS

Of Americans surveyed...

- 95% believe we have a civility problem in America
- 87% think it is uncivil to be on a phone while talking with someone else in person
- 81% think uncivil behavior is leading to an increase in violence
- 80% agree that the level of civility won't improve until our government leaders act more civilly
- 71% believe civility is worse compared to a few years ago
- 70% think the Internet encourages uncivil behavior
- 70% think that incivility has risen to crisis levels
- 34% who expect civility to worsen blame Twitter

[taken from page 3 of the *Civility in America 2013* report]

At a Crossroads: Civility – Part 2 (continued)

(Millenials, GenXers, Boomers, and the Silent Generation) the highest indicated area where individuals claimed personally experiencing incivility was while driving.

With the continual increase in screen devices for communication by all segments of society (smartphones, iPad-type devices, computers, etc.) and the explosion of social media opportunities (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) it is not surprising that perceptions are increasing that those devices/mediums are contributing to greater incivility.

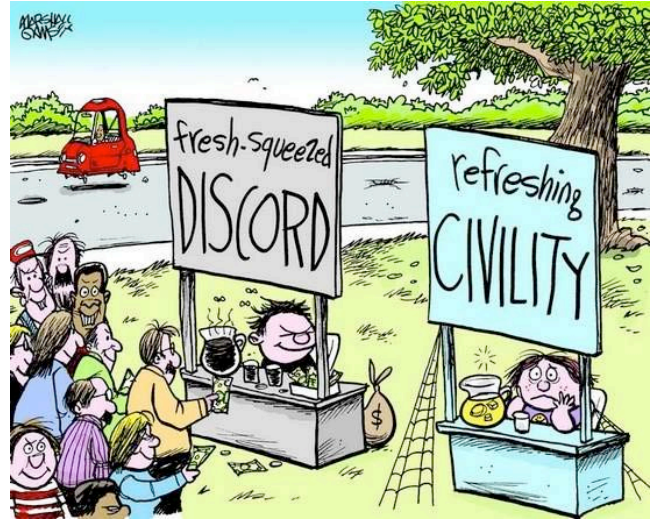
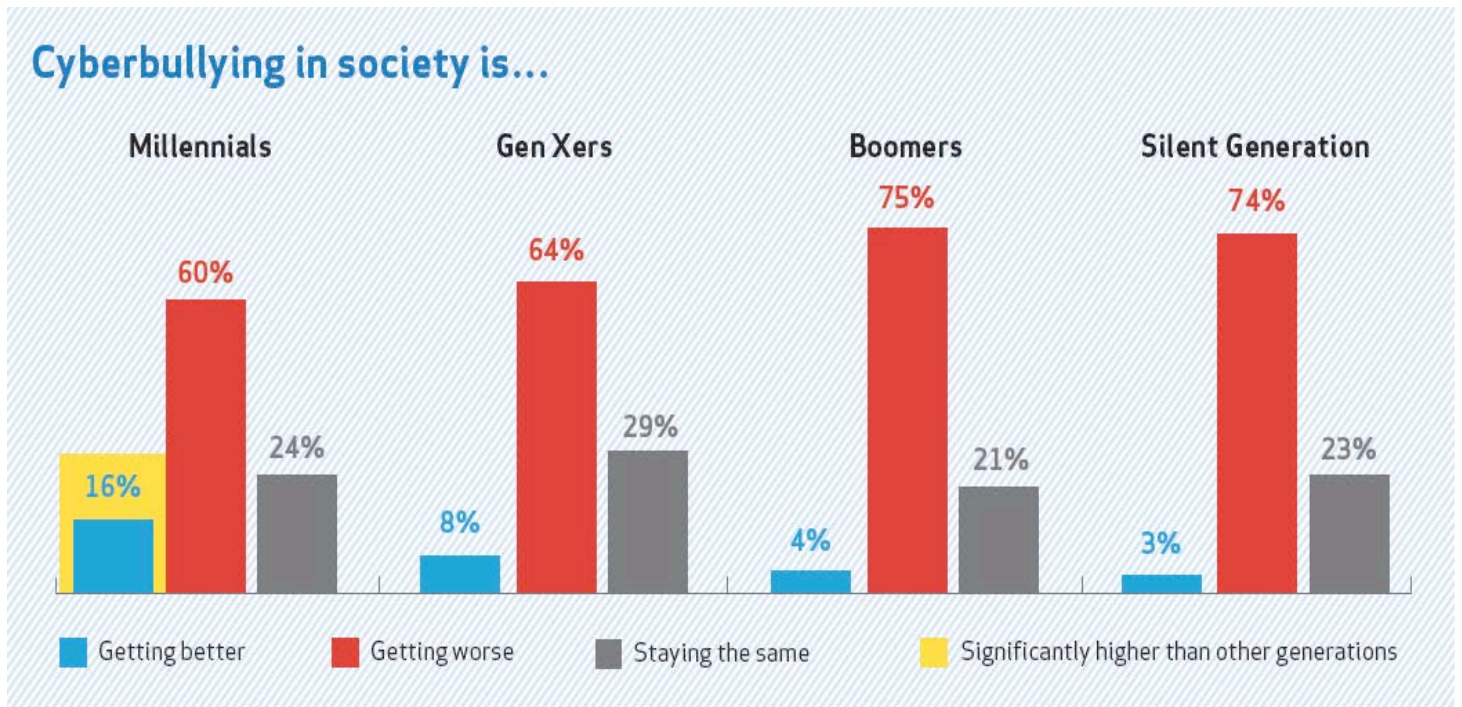


Image created by Marshall Ramsey in *The Clarion Ledger* for a September 19, 2010 article titled "Choosing Civility: The Lemonade Lesson" by Eric Thomas Weber.

Views on cyberbullying from the *Civility in America 2014* report:



At a Crossroads: Civility – Part 2 (continued)

So let’s step back in time – a time before there were smartphones and tablets and instant communication. A time where it took weeks or months for messages to travel from one person to another. By the time George Washington had reached the age of sixteen in the late 1740s he had copied by hand the 110 *Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation*. Those rules were based upon the writings of French Jesuits in 1595. Richard Brookhiser writes in his book *Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington* that because of his foundation in the *rules of civility* “when the company for whom the decent behavior was to be performed expanded to the nation, Washington was ready. Parson Weems got this right, when he wrote that it was ‘no wonder every body honoured him who honoured every body’ [see reference *Foundations Magazine: Ideas to Build Your Life On – Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior* (rights obtained to utilize this [link](#))].



If you have time, I’d recommend you click on the link above and read the 110 *Rules of Civility* that Washington copied to improve his penmanship. Even 400 plus years after they were first developed many would agree these maxims would still serve us well today. I’ll include a few examples – that if we followed, just possibly, in the line of reasoning of Malcom Gladwell, maybe such a series of small actions can make a big difference in our civility “tipping point.”

- Rule #1** Every Action done in Company, ought to be with Some Sign of Respect, to those that are Present.
- Rule #14** Turn not your Back to others especially in Speaking . . .
- Rule #50** Be not hasty to believe flying Reports to the Disparagement of any.

Two topics, written about centuries ago, appear to speak directly to two areas many consider lacking in civility today – cellphone use and cursing.

Rule #18

Read no Letters, Books, or Papers in Company but when there is a Necessity for the doing of it you must ask leave . . .



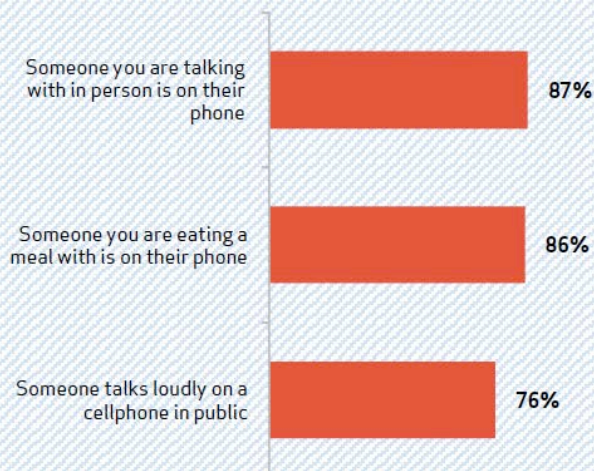
At a Crossroads: Civility – Part 2

Incivility in American life: cellphones

One area we took a closer look at this year was cellphone incivility. About one-third of Americans who expect civility to worsen blame cellphones/smartphones (34%).

The majority of Americans consider rude cellphone behavior uncivil. These behaviors include using a phone while speaking with someone else (87%) or while having a meal (86%), and talking loudly on a cellphone in public (76%). Americans ages 50 years and older are significantly more likely than those under 50 to consider these behaviors uncivil.

% Americans who consider it uncivil when...

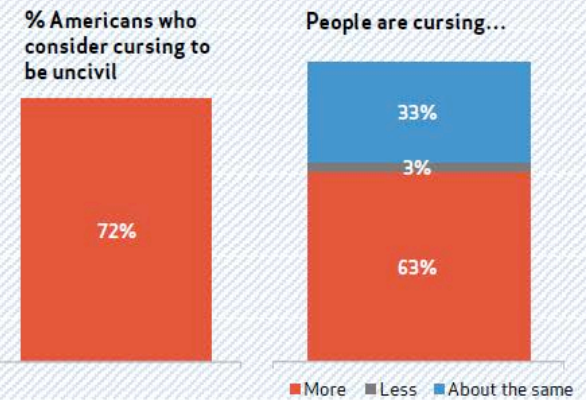


Rule #49

Use no Reproachful Language against any one neither Curse nor Revile.

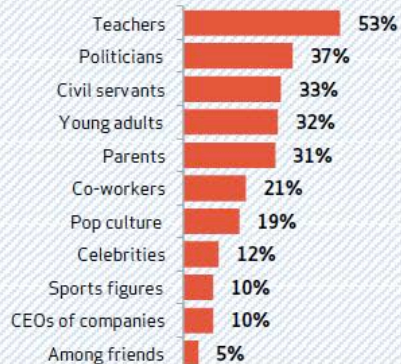
Incivility in American life: cursing

Just as we released Civility in America 2012, news spread of a Massachusetts town that approved a fine for cursing in public. We investigated perceptions of profanity this year to see if Americans overall hold this kind of language in similar contempt. Nearly three-quarters of Americans (72%) believe cursing is uncivil and nearly two-thirds (63%) find people cursing more today than in the past. Those 50 years and older are significantly more likely than those younger than 50 years old to consider cursing uncivil (81% vs. 68%).



Regardless of age, Americans have the least tolerance for teachers cursing (53%) and the most for cursing among friends (5%). Cursing by politicians is also regarded negatively. Cursing by celebrities (12%) and sports figures (10%) appears to be taken for granted as the norm and is more widely accepted.

Cursing is most uncivil when it's done by...



At a Crossroads: Civility – Part 2 (continued)

In the 2013 *Civility in America* survey “[w]hen asked to define civility in their own words, survey respondents most frequently answered with variations of, ‘Treat others with respect.’ Following this Golden Rule when communicating and interacting with others is the first step toward improving our nation’s civility crisis” [12]. The concept of the Golden Rule is found in nearly every religion and for many is a part of one’s ethical code. The idea of treating others as you’d like to be treated yourself – stares each of us in the face as we stand at the crossroads of civility. Will we choose to follow the path of so many in our society today and fail to live up to the expectations of an exemplary citizen, or will we embody good citizenship and live by *rules of civility* that guided such men as the Father of our Country, George Washington? The choice is ours and we have opportunities to demonstrate it everyday – on the highways, standing in line at the grocery store, by our word choice, in our Facebook posts and tweets. As we continue to discuss *character strengths and virtues* this year, and into the future at TCA, let’s remember that character and civility go hand-in-hand. To claim virtue without civility is simply hypocritical. We can do better, we must do better – our culture has embraced a lack of civility – let’s be counter-cultural and re-engage with those fundamental rules of behavior and discourse.

The final rule of civility that George Washington would transcribe when working on his penmanship was Rule #110. It states - Labor to

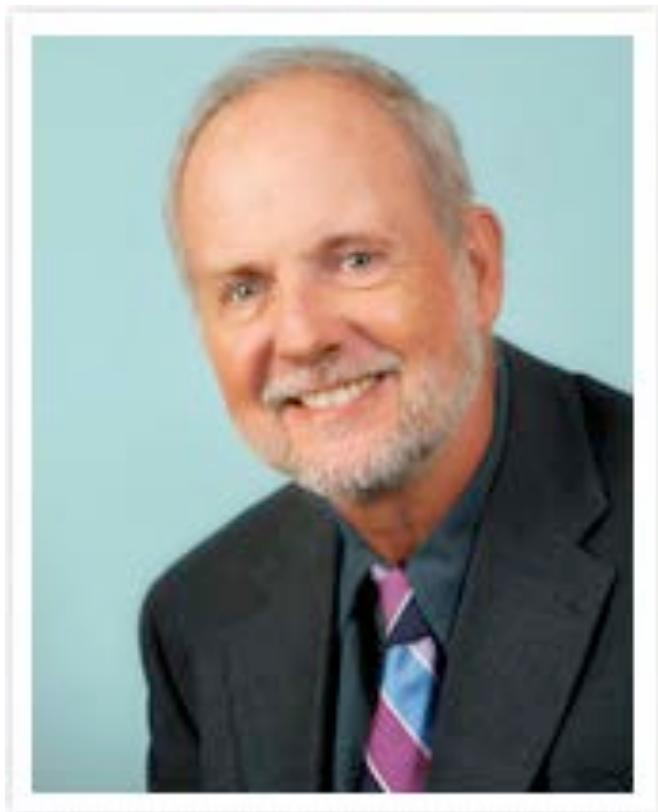
keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience. As I read back through all the rules of civility and thought about the part we each play in contributing to a more civil society I was reminded of the Mark Twain quote included in Volume 27 of the PALMARIUM this past April. Twain remarked, “It is by the goodness of God that in our country we have those three unspeakably precious things: freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and the prudence never to practice either of them.”



I would personally like to thank Michelle Guida from the New York City branch **Weber Shandwick** for granting permission to use their *Civility in America* publications and info-graphics in this and September’s volumes of the PALMARIUM.

Dr. Scott Poland

Parenting in Challenging Times



On **Wednesday, October 26**, from **7:00-8:30 pm** in the North Campus Gym, our TCA parent community will have the opportunity to hear **Dr. Scott Poland**, a nationally-recognized expert on youth suicide, school crisis, and prevention speak on the topic **"Parenting in Challenging Times."** Additionally, on Thursday morning, October 27, Dr. Poland has agreed to have a similar staff-specific discussion related to youth suicide, self-injury, depression, technology, and social media with our TCA staff. To accommodate the 90-minute discussion that morning we have made the decision to have a **2-hour delay for all TCA schools on the morning of October 27**. **Dr. Poland will meet with staff from 7:45-9:15 am** at the North Campus Gym.

Upcoming TCA Board Meetings

Monday, October 17 @ 6:00 pm

Monday, November 14 @ 6:00 pm

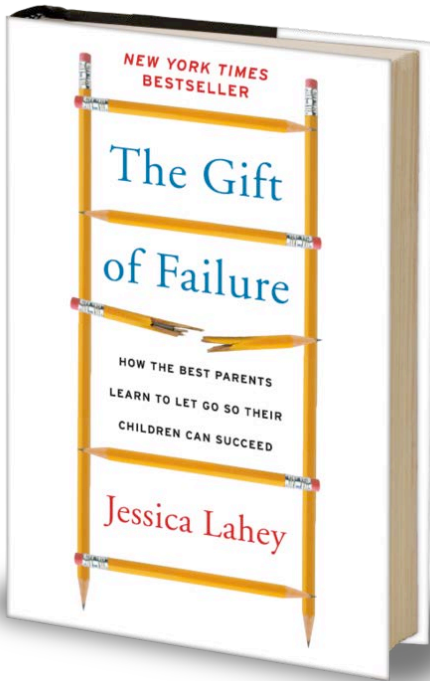
Monday, December 12 @ 6:00 pm

all meetings are held in rooms 2213/14 at North Secondary

DISTINGUISHED TEACHER

At our recent October Conference we presented our first ever Distinguished Teacher recognition to **Bleys Kueck**. Mr. Kueck was TCA's recognized Distinguished Teacher, out of over 200 teachers, across our seven schools and three campuses. When nominating Mr. Kueck, our high school principal, Sean Shields, wrote, "Bleys teaches Latin and Rhetoric and serves as the department lead for languages in the secondary schools. He is a great example of how rigor and relationships work together to create an engaging atmosphere where learning is fun. He is a leader among his peers and supports the K-12 concept that is critical to our philosophy here at TCA. Bleys is one of our best teachers, a relationship builder with our students, and a keeper of our philosophy."





BEYOND THE BOOK CLUB

As part of our continuing *Engaging Minds* theme this year we will have our first meetings of the **Beyond the Book Club** on *Washington's Circle: The Creation of the President* on **October 24 and 25 at 4:00 pm** at TCA's North Campus. The second book to be discussed this first semester will be *The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed* by Jessica Lahey. We will discuss this title the last week of November. If you would like to join us for one of the sessions please RSVP to me at wjolly@asd20.org. Our book study meetings will each last approximately 90-minutes.

If you would like more information on how you can participate in the *Engaging Minds* book studies and the specific dates we will discuss the four titles this year (two each semester) please e-mail me at the address above.

So let us begin anew –
remembering on both
sides that civility is not
a sign of weakness,
and sincerity is always
subject to proof.

John F. Kennedy

George Washington

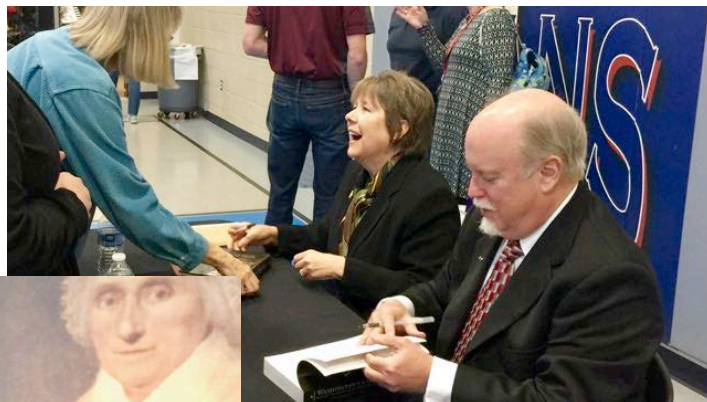
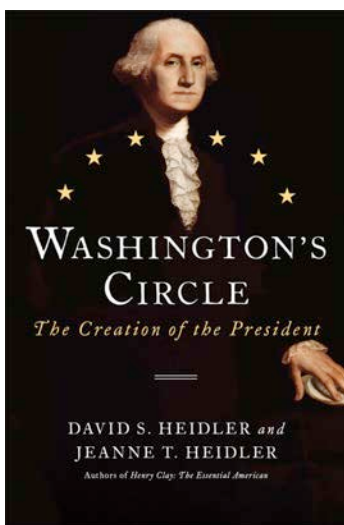
The Hero as a Virtuous Leader

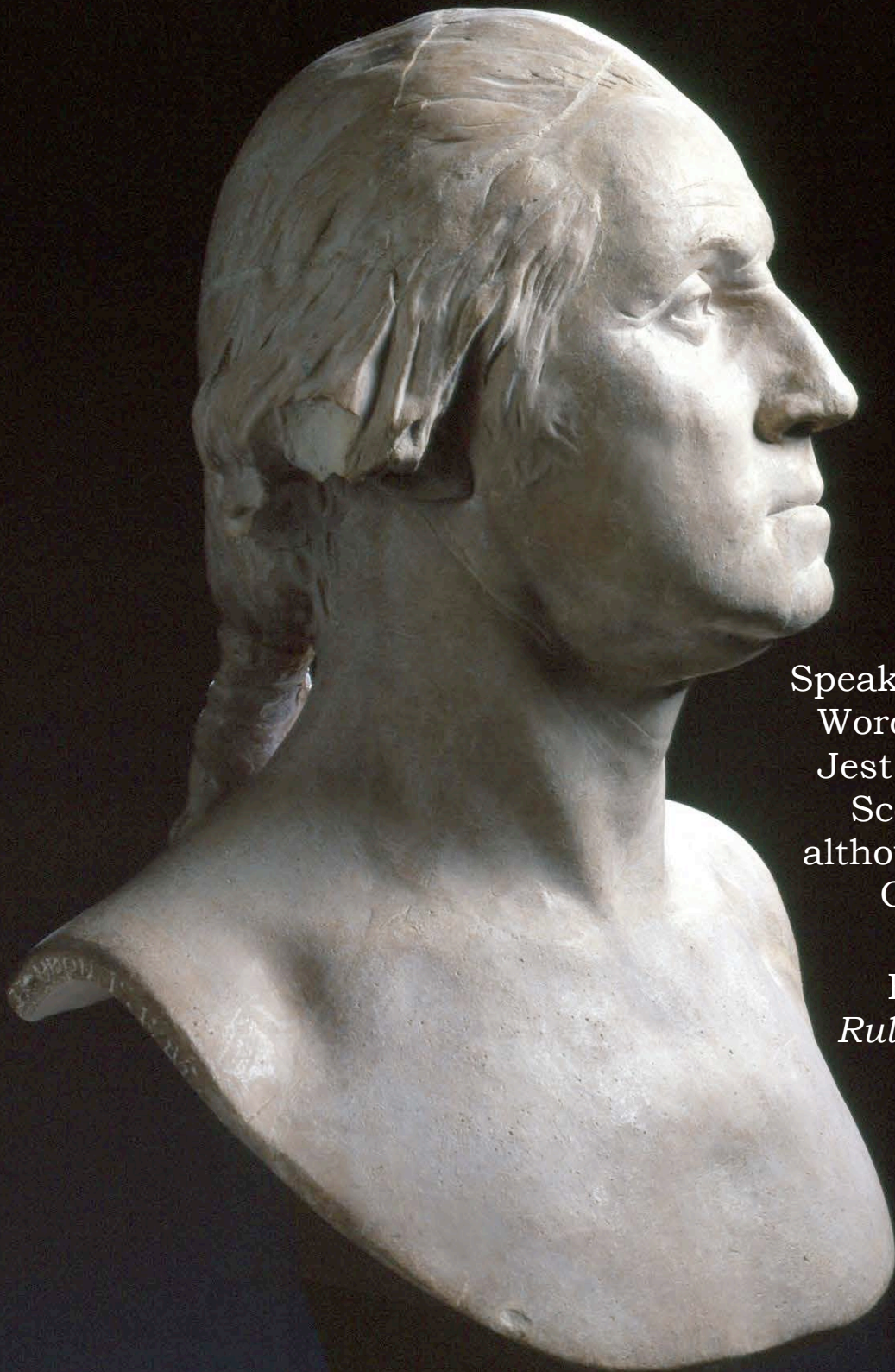


On October 10th, TCA welcomed **Jeanne and David Heidler** as our guest speakers for the kick-off of our annual October Conference. Teaching staff, and many others at TCA, had been reading their work *Washington's Circle: The Creation of the President* since the end of last

school year. Their presentation titled *George Washington: The Hero as a Virtuous Leader* focused on Washington's character traits, his leadership qualities, and the importance of his role in the founding our country. The ninety-minute session was well received by those in attendance. After a question and answer period with the authors, staff met in twenty-five

different groups to discuss the book and overall K-12 character implementation at TCA.





Speak not injurious
Words neither in
Jest nor Earnest
Scoff at none
although they give
Occasion.

Rule #65
Rules of Civility