

“Urgency of Civility” Conference Held in Washington DC

Experts Convene and Create Action Plan to Drive Civility Forward



Caption: Attendees of the Urgency of Civility Conference on the steps of the George Washington Masonic Memorial.
Photo Credit: Urgency of Civility

WASHINGTON DC -- The Urgency of Civility conference was recently convened in Washington D.C. Experts from many related fields, organizations, and interested individuals gathered to discuss civility in the arenas of government, education, media, community, and the workplace. The event was highlighted by an address from Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II, and recognition of Mrs. Virginia Forni and her late husband, Dr. P.M. Forni, of the Johns Hopkins Civility Initiative.

The groups participated in two days of discussion and interactive presentations, to assist in the effort to re-introducing civility into our daily lives.

Presentations included a reenactment of George Washington's inaugural address (on the 230th anniversary of the event), followed by a presentation on George Washington and Civility by Shawn Eyer, Director of Communications and Development, George Washington National Masonic Memorial Association. Clark Olson and Jennifer Linde, authors of *Hot Topics, Cool*

Heads: Communicating Civility and Listening through Civil Dialogue discussed practical civil dialogue techniques. Daniel Buccino, Founding Member (with P.M. Forni) of the Johns Hopkins Civility Initiative, presented an inspiring closing presentation on bringing civility to the next generation. These dynamic presentations challenged the attendees to rethink preconceived notions of civility, and rededicate themselves to a new, fresh, outlook on the topic.

Here are the top takeaways from this historic event:

The Call of Collaboration in Civility was Heard Loud and Clear

“I'm impressed with the potential for collaboration among various organizations and individuals and I think that we can accomplish a great deal through the collaboration without diminishing anybody's efforts, and enhancing everybody's” - Michael Nebin

As the conference got underway, it became quickly apparent that many of the attendees had been working hard as individuals to promote civility in a given sector, with varying levels of success. As the event progressed, and these individuals began sharing their thoughts and ideas, it became clear that many of these groups could team up and accomplish much more through cooperation, than they ever could alone. This sparked many inspiring relationships and opportunities to collaborate on exciting civility projects in the future.



(Caption: The Family, Youth, and Education Team from the Urgency of Civility Conference held in Washington DC.
Photo Credit: Carol Miller-Foley)

This Conference will Influence the Civility Movement Going Forward

“I think this conference has unified civility organizations and helped increase the profile of civility and when we see the results of this in a year, in 5 years, in 10 years, we will look back on this moment as being a catalyst for really showcasing civility and putting it front and central in the lives of our politicians and our citizens.” - Clark Olson

As the two days of track discussion concluded, the five tracks of focus (government, education, media, community, and workplace) reconvened, *en masse*, to share their findings. Participants were asked to identify both the progress already made and the challenges we still face, concerning civility, in all facets of our lives. They were then encouraged to answer the call to action.

Action items were identified, and volunteers to spearhead the initiatives came forward. Many of these action items spanned multiple disciplines, and this final discussion was particularly

exciting, as it saw the various groups join together in achieving goals for the common cause of civility.



(Caption: Group discussion from the Urgency of Civility Conference held in Washington DC. Photo Credit:Rebecca Lane)

Civility was Rediscovered -- and Redefined

"I have spent my life trying to make a difference in the lives of other people and to give them hope that civility is for all people, and I have been inspired here like I've never been inspired before to go out at the age of 85 and still make a difference in the world, to make the world more civil for all people" - Bertie Simmons

It was pointed out that, in recent years, civility has come to mean many things and has developed many definitions. As a result, addressing the issues of incivility directly can be challenging. However, what came from the discussions, both formal and casual, was that though the definitions may vary and solutions may be even more numerous, the restoration of civility is more important than ever and will require innovative thinking, community engagement, and devoted persistence. Attendees routinely expressed a renewed sense of urgency and importance from the conference, with many coming away with an enhanced sense of purpose

and a rejuvenation of their commitment to the cause. Attendees agreed, regardless of the definition, now is the time for action.



(Caption: Author and Retired Educator Bertie Simmons addresses the Urgency of Civility Conference held in Washington D.C. Photo Credit: Shawn Eyer)

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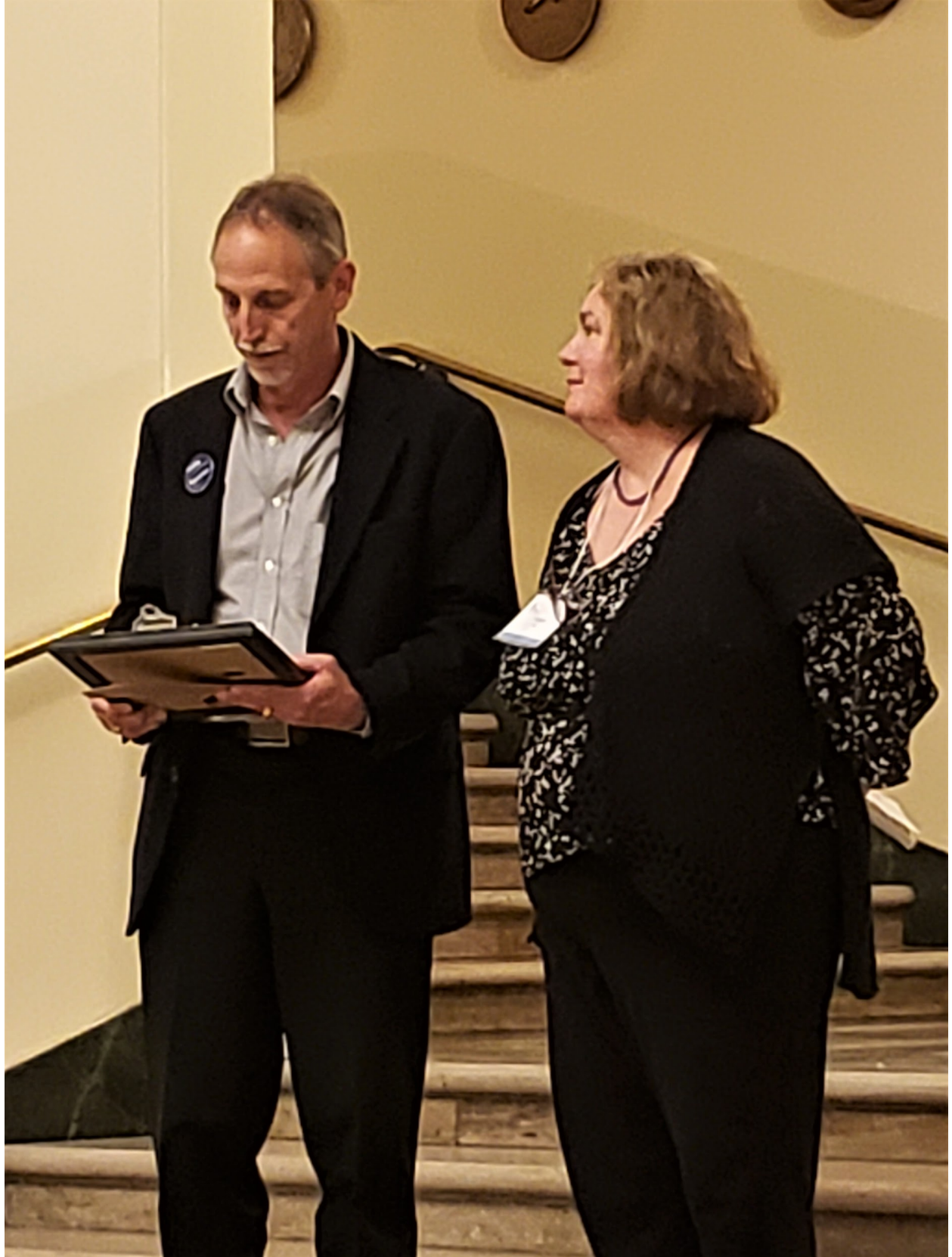
About The Urgency of Civility:

Civility is rapidly disappearing in our society today, yet sprouting anew as a goal of many organizations throughout the free world. The Urgency of Civility conference is an opportunity for disparate groups to engage in productive dialogue towards the goal of making a positive impact in current civility initiatives through higher awareness and the discovery of common understanding. For more information, contact Russ Charvonia at info@civilityconvening.org.

More photos from the event:



(Caption: Congressman Emanuel Cleaver addresses the Urgency of Civility Conference held in Washington DC.
Photo Credit: Linda Charvonia)



(Caption: Urgency of Civility Conference organizer Russ Charvonja presents a certificate of appreciation to Virginia Forni of the Hopkins Civility Initiative. Photo Credit: Carol Miller-Foley)