

Permanent Things



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THIRTY YEARS OF THE WILBUR FOUNDATION PROGRAM

For the past thirty years, since 1979, graduate students writing dissertations or scholars writing books have resided in Mecosta as Wilbur Fellows in four small houses provided by the Wilbur Foundation.

Frequent in-house seminars, with presentations by the Fellows, help to form a close and stimulating intellectual community and friendships that are often life-long. The roster of former Fellows, which primarily includes

professors and scholars, also includes lawyers, librarians, journalists, media specialists, translators, publishers and many others from a variety of fields, even extending to an elected member of the European Parliament.

While they are in residence, which can be anywhere from a few weeks

or months to a year, the Fellows have access to the Kirk Center's Library of 10,000 volumes on history, literature, philosophy, theology, law, politics, and economics. The Center's extensive archive contains all

was established by Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, the author of several books about early California history. Mrs. Wilbur knew Russell Kirk and his work and in 1979 asked him to be president of her small foundation, a position he held until his death in 1994.

Currently Gary Ricks, a lawyer in Santa Barbara, is president of the foundation.

Other members of the board are: Annette Kirk, Gleaves Whitney, Jeffrey



On the occasion of celebrating 25 years of the Wilbur Fellows Program in Mecosta in 2004.

of Russell Kirk's writings and is frequently used by Fellows. Until his death, Dr. Kirk served as mentor to the Fellows. Since then Senior Fellows and other scholars have taken this role.

The Wilbur Foundation, a non-profit educational foundation whose office is in Santa Barbara, California,

Nelson, and former Michigan Governor John Engler. The productivity of the hundreds of Wilbur Fellows attests to the continued vitality of this program.



REFLECTIONS BY WILBUR FELLOWS



*Glen Austin Sproviero, 2000,
St. Andrews University, M. Phil.
Rutgers School of Law, J.D.*

To stay at Piety Hill is to visit another world, a world full of learning and hope.... The spirit of history comes alive at Dr. Kirk's ancestral home, where the feeling of community breeds new ideas and confirms the eternal verities. If every student were to receive this education, most would be able to see beyond the politicization of the academy and view the world with a genuinely open mind.



*Bart Smith, 2004
Broker, Lloyds of London, UK*

The Russell Kirk Center is a unique intellectual community that offers many educational and social opportunities. My views as a member of the British Conservative Party evolved during my time in Mecosta. The reason for this would be my new understanding of what being a conservative is about. Whereas I once believed conservatism was an ideology, I now understand it is something more, a way of life.

REMARKS BY SPASIMIR DOMARADZKI ON HIS RESIDENCY

Prior to my arrival, I didn't know what to expect from a "platonic academy," as former resident, Professor Rett Ludwikowski described it, remote from most of the main scholarly centers in the United States. My first steps in Mecosta were somehow hesitant. This however changed the moment I crossed the doorstep of the most fascinating library I have ever seen. The cozy atmosphere attracts the reader and provokes interesting and enriching discussions with other Wilbur Fellows who can be met at every hour of the day. In this regard it should be mentioned that one of the enormous advantages of the Center is the broad spectrum of research interests represented. Scholars with interests in history,



Annette Kirk with Fellows Joseph Stuart and Spasimir Domaradzki. Stuart, a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Edinburgh, is writing a dissertation on Christopher Dawson. While in residence, Dr. Domaradzki researched Kirk's concepts of rights and duties for his book on civil liberties.

theology, literature, politics and many other disciplines can meet and share ideas and opinions which widen one's perspective.

From day one I felt surrounded by people ready to discuss every issue that concerned me and to encourage

my research. This kind of attitude might seem natural to many, but only those away from their families can understand the warmth and strength that such an attitude conveys. The Russell Kirk Center has excellent accommodations, vast research possibilities and fantastic relations among people.

Spasimir Domaradzki received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the Jagiellonian University. He is currently the Vice Dean at the Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski University College in Krakow, Poland. On Election night 2008, Dr. Domaradzki broadcast live via Skype from The Russell Kirk Center to a television station in Krakow. He reported on the results of the election and commented on its implications for Poland.

WILBUR FELLOWS HOUSES



Fellows House



Califia House



Scholars House



Faye's Cabin

**THE RUSSELL
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NEWSLETTER**

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**“The Russell
Kirk Center is a
perfect
extension of the
Wilbur
Foundation.”**
**Former Governor,
John Engler**

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PROGRAMS AT THE RUSSELL KIRK CENTER

While Wilbur Fellows are in residence, they are able to take part in activities held at the Center. Presently, the Center brings together students and scholars for a day or a weekend to participate in seminars and conferences held throughout the year to discuss not only the historic and intellectual roots of conservatism but also how an understanding and appreciation of the permanent things can serve as an antidote to the disorders of the day.

In addition to organizing and hosting its own public and in-house seminars, the Center works with other groups to co-sponsor programs. These groups include The Intercollegiate Studies Institute and The Liberty Fund, who have a joint program for graduate students and young college professors. They come two or three times a year for conferences. ISI began sending undergraduates to seminars in Mecosta in 1973, and they have come every year since then, sometimes several times a year... for more than three decades now.

The McConnell Center for Political Leadership at

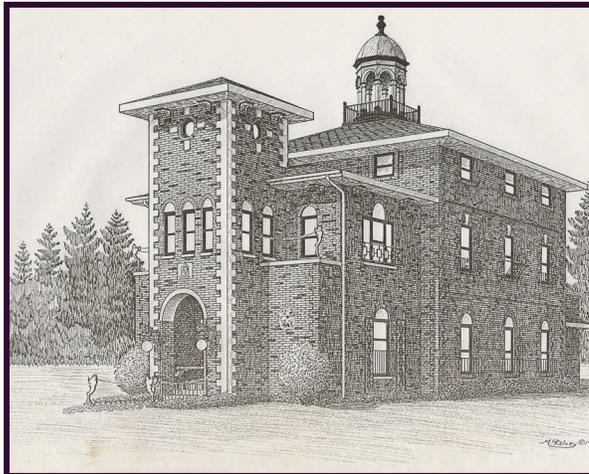
the University of Louisville brings their political science students to the Center as part of their course of study.

The Kirk Center also cooperates with a new group based in Michigan but who hope to sponsor

business, the professions, and blue-collar workers—in effect, to that portion of the public who wish to learn more about the basics of conservatism both in theory and in practice.

Finally, the Center also publishes two journals, *The University Bookman*, the nation's oldest conservative review, founded in 1960, and *Studies in Burke and His Time*, a new journal founded by the Kirk Center in 2000.

We hope that these programs carried on by the Russell Kirk Center will help



Piety Hill, home of the Russell Kirk family



The Russell Kirk Center Library

programs in several other states. The New Centurions educate promising future leaders in the classics of conservative intellectual thought. They appeal to persons involved in small

those who participate in them revitalize ideas and practices that will contribute to cultural renewal, not only for this generation but for generations to come.