

# FROM THE BRAFFERTON

## Power & Promise

Charter Day 2012 was an especially momentous occasion. During the ceremony, Robert Michael Gates was invested as William & Mary's 24th Chancellor. Like British universities, William & Mary spares its Chancellor the burdens of governance and the molestations of management. Our Chancellor focuses instead on symbolizing the continuity and splendor of William & Mary, on providing wise counsel to the campus community while gracing our most important ceremonies, and on pressing the flesh from time to time with students, faculty and alumni.

Before the American Revolution sundered William & Mary's ties with the mother country, the College's chancellors

son to serve as U.S. Secretary of Defense under presidents from different political parties and whose career in public service is the stuff of legend. That Secretary Gates was asked to continue heading the Defense Department despite a dramatic shift in political control of the White House was powerful testimony to his integrity, judgment and capacity to lead. All in all, Bob Gates has worked for eight U.S. presidents. When he retired from federal service in June 2011, President Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor.

William & Mary's chancellorship is one of many treasures from the College's storied history. The people who hold the office provide convincing evidence that William &



and nation. Bob Gates, Class of 1965, stands splendidly in this tradition.

William & Mary's deep roots in American history and seminal role in the creation of the United States, coupled with its striking contemporary accomplishments, make a dynamite combination. When you mate being one of the very first colleges in North America, and having been present at the creation of our country, with the dynamism of vibrant success in our time, you get an institution of enormous power and promise.

In the closing section of his Charter Day remarks, Chancellor Gates reminded us of the College's special role: "In the great and urgent endeavors that lie before us, I have no doubt that the graduates and scholars of William & Mary — this community of learning, listening and working through issues — rooted in the original soil and the basic principles of American liberty, have a special role, and a special obligation, to be part of the solution: as leaders, as public servants, as citizens."

We embrace that role, for all time coming.

W. TAYLOR REVELEY III  
*President, College of William & Mary*

*Visit [wm.edu/charterday/videos/](http://wm.edu/charterday/videos/) to view videos of the Charter Day celebration.*

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were Archbishops of Canterbury or Bishops of London, plus an occasional earl or two. William & Mary then had very close ties to the Anglican Church. After the Revolution, our first American Chancellor was none other than the great George Washington, who assumed the post in 1788 and held it until his death in 1799, including while he was President of the United States.

During recent times, starting in 1986, we have had a brilliant run of Chancellors — former Chief Justice of the United States Warren Burger, former Prime Minister of Great Britain Margaret Thatcher, former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, then the incomparable Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to serve on the United States Supreme Court, and now our own alumnus, Bob Gates, Class of 1965, who is the only per-

Mary is a special place and those associated with it are making a difference for the better.

To revisit my favorite quote from Thomas Jefferson's biographer, Dumas Malone, "Our continent has provided no greater seedbed of greatness than the one square mile of this old colonial capital, and no American institution of learning has ever surpassed the record of this little College, in Jefferson's generation, as a nursery of statesmen." When Jefferson completed his studies at William & Mary in 1762, two and a half centuries ago, the College was already 69 years old. Fast forward 250 years to today, and William & Mary, in its 319th year, has become one of the most time-tested and acclaimed institutions of higher education in America and one of the most prolific producers of graduates devoted to the good of their communities, states