JEFFERSON’S GODFATHER
GEORGE WYTHE: MENTOR TO THE FOUNDING FATHERS

Instructor:
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The three sessions will be loosely organized around the three lifetime achievements that Thomas Jefferson asked to be engraved on his tombstone and the mind of his mentor George Wythe behind each accomplishment: author of the Declaration of Independence, author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and father of the University of Virginia.

The basis of discussion will be research conducted for the George Wythe biography: *Jefferson’s Godfather: The Man Behind the Man*, by Suzanne Munson.

SESSION ONE: Wythe—Leader of Leaders
---America’s first leadership crisis
---Wythe, teacher of leaders
---Wythe, the leader
---The three lifetime achievements that Jefferson wanted to be listed on his tombstone
---The University of Virginia—Jefferson’s proudest lifetime achievement
   How Jefferson’s Williamsburg experience shaped his plans for the school

SESSION TWO: Wythe and Jefferson—Two Freedoms

*Freedom of Religion*
---Wythe’s mind behind the second of Jefferson’s “tombstone” achievements: Virginia’s Statute for Religious Freedom
---The epic fight for reform laws
---The saving of Monticello

*Freedom from Bondage*
---Judge Wythe’s groundbreaking ruling on slavery: *Hudgins v. Wrights*
---The professor preaches to his students
---Jefferson’s evolving views on slavery
---Wythe’s namesakes slug it out in the Civil War

SESSION THREE: America’s Cornerstone Documents

*The Declaration of Independence*
---Wythe’s influence behind Jefferson’s first “tombstone” achievement
---Wythe: Prophet of the American Revolution

*The United States Constitution*
---Virginia: battleground for the Constitution’s ratification and survival
---Wythe’s pivotal championship role

Wythe’s Unusual Death and the Aftermath

Lessons from the life of George Wythe