

THE  
BETTER ANGELS  
SOCIETY

A close-up, artistic photograph of the American flag. The red and white stripes are prominent, flowing diagonally across the frame. In the background, a warm sunset or sunrise is visible over a body of water, with a dark silhouette of a star in the bottom right corner.

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

TELLING AMERICA'S STORIES

# LETTER FROM THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY

Dear Better Angels Donors and Friends,

The Better Angels Society has celebrated four years as a non-profit organization that supports Ken Burns and other documentary filmmakers as they “tell America’s stories.” The past year has brought significant momentum and success to this very young and vitally important organization.

The Society is now governed by a nationally respected board of directors that number 25 leaders. We have moved our headquarters from Shelburne Falls, MA to Washington, D.C., grown our donor base to over 250 strong and raised over \$39 million.

Now, we are thrilled that the long-anticipated 18-hour documentary series *The Vietnam War* begins, which Ken Burns, Lynn Novick and Sarah Botstein have worked on for over a decade. This film is supported by sixteen generous individual donors and family foundations through gifts to The Better Angels Society, and to date our members have been invited and participated in 40+ screenings and events across the country. *The Vietnam War*, an epic story of one of the most consequential, divisive and controversial events in American history, includes testimony from nearly 80 witnesses from all sides of this war. The film has had unprecedented outreach, public engagement and educational impact thanks to our Better Angels.



*The UNUM platform.*

We are excited to share the results of a generous gift from David Rubenstein to fund the development and design of a digital platform, UNUM, a searchable, browsable way to explore US history through Ken Burns clips. The vision for the platform builds on the design of the award-winning Ken Burns iPad app, enabling an interactive and searchable database of films available for free on any device.

Thanks to each and every one of you who has either donated or helped to lead The Better Angels Society. It's wonderful to be able to celebrate the people and partners who have worked with us so diligently on our ambitious goals on behalf of The Society and Ken Burns. We applaud you for your loyalty and generosity. As we continue to look at Ken's plans for his films well in to the 2020's, we are deeply grateful for your continued support and participation.

Our heartfelt thanks,

Amy Margerum Berg  
President, The Better Angels Society

Nancy J. Cable, Ph.D.  
Chair, The Better Angels Society  
Board of Directors





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Jeff Cibul, LA Times



# ABOUT THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY



Clockwise from top left: Artemis Joukowsky, Dalton Delan, Nancy Cable, Jason Schlesinger; Ron Moultrie and John Fullerton; Ken Burns with David Pfeil; Laura Roosevelt with her father Elliott; Diane and Hal Brierley

The mission of The Better Angels Society, a 501c3 organization, is to support the extraordinary filmmaking and educational legacy of Ken Burns. We understand that our nation's history informs our citizenry and strengthens our democracy, and so are dedicated to ensuring that his historically significant films are completed, broadcast and promoted in ways that reach and educate as many people as possible for decades to come.

The Society also works to ensure that the next generation of documentary filmmakers who have been inspired by Ken Burns and his team at Florentine Films, receive the education, mentoring, training and support they need to continue his legacy.

We are dedicated to preserving America's history through documentaries presented in a balanced way for current and future generations.

## Our Mission:

- Funding the next ten years of films by Ken Burns and Florentine Films
- Supporting the next generation of documentary filmmakers as part of Burns's legacy
- Preserving, restoring and rebroadcasting past films
- Expanding our educational outreach
- Leveraging our partnerships
- Enhancing dialogue and civic outreach
- Reaching a broader and more diverse audience through technology

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## HERITAGE CAMPAIGN GOALS

*An ambitious 10-year plan to fulfill the mission of The Better Angels Society*

### Endowed Education Fund

20M

Permanently endow educational outreach on a wide range of platforms, digital technology and social media with national partners.

31M Legacy

- **The Next Generation of Filmmakers:** An endowed fund to ensure emerging documentary filmmakers "in the Ken Burns mold" can continue his legacy well into the future. Grants to young filmmakers will provide start up funding, access to a broader audience and potential funders, as well as the mentorship of seasoned filmmakers. (\$12M)
- **Restoration and Preservation:** Restore, preserve and re-broadcast films produced before 2005, which were mastered in outdated formats and many elements are now deteriorating. (\$8M)
- **Ken Burns Institute:** Partner with an educational institution to serve as a permanent home and repository for all of Burns's assets to further the teaching of America's history and values through storytelling. (\$10M)
- **Endowed Intern Fund:** Support up to four interns per year. (\$1M)

### Completed Films and Films in Production

52M

Over \$39 million has already been raised towards this goal.

### Future Film Productions

57.5M

Our goal is to raise 50% of the total cost of the next 10 years of films.

5M

### Outreach and Digital Platform

Develop a free digital platform which enables users to explore the historical themes and stories in all of the films in an interactive and searchable manner, connecting users with current events and civil dialogue.





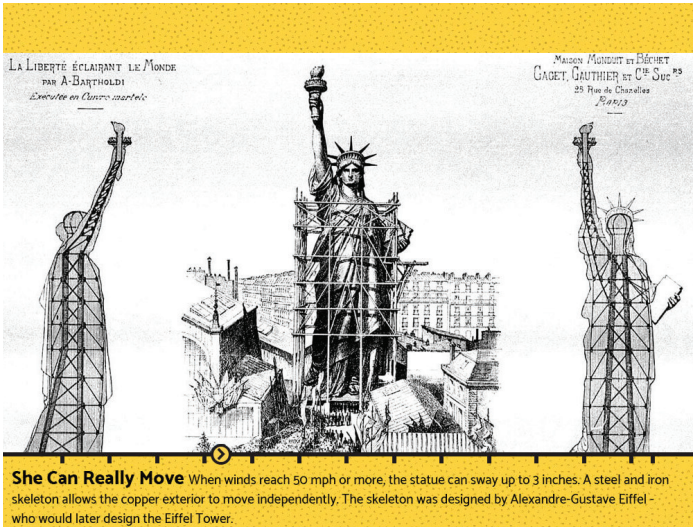
*Ken interacts with students at National History Day 2017, College Park, MD.*

Over the years, the Ken Burns/Florentine Films brand has become one of the most trusted resources for classroom programming in the country. With support from The Better Angels Society, educational materials are created in consultation with an educational advisory board consisting of teachers from a variety of disciplines, educational technology experts and curriculum designers. Materials are distributed directly to schools through regional and national educational conferences, direct mail, email blasts, and extensive partner networks.

With each film, a comprehensive, content-rich companion website is created, which lives on pbs.org and reaches millions of people of all ages. The Better Angels Society is proud to work with WETA, PBS, and our many donors, to broaden and strengthen the educational outreach components for supported films.

For example, **Lynda and Stewart Resnick** contributed a \$1 million gift to The Better Angels Society to further the educational outreach associated with Ken Burns' watershed documentary, *The Vietnam War*. They believe Vietnam is a defining moment in U.S. history and wanted to address the fact that little about this war is covered in American classrooms. The Resnicks saw an opportunity to dramatically advance the next generation's understanding of this complicated and pivotal point in our history by expanding the reach of both Ken's film and the learning tools associated with it.





*Explore It: The Statue of Liberty and The Interactive Lewis and Clark Trail.*

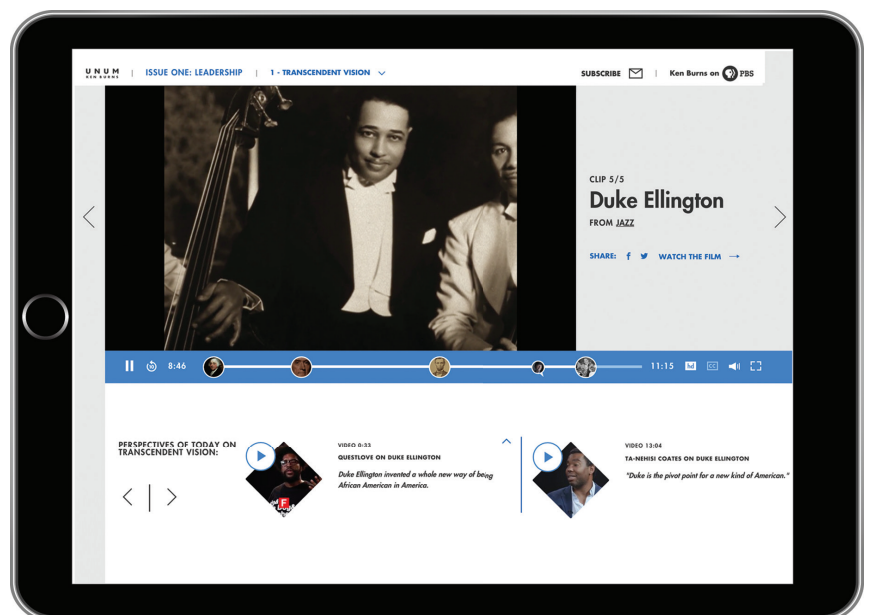
Their goal in working with The Better Angels Society was not to simply fund the creation of educational curriculum based on the series, but to ensure that every high school in America can actively teach students about the Vietnam War in a new and dynamic way. This gift made it possible for the film — along with source materials and lesson plans — to be distributed to 25,000 high schools across the country, directly benefiting hundreds of thousands of students and their teachers.

Thanks to a gift from **The Lyda Hill Foundation**, two new interactive experiences for students and educators will launch in the Fall on PBS Learning Media, providing PreK - 12 educators free digital content designed to improve teacher effectiveness and achievement.

In **Explore It: The Statue of Liberty**, students fly around the Statue of Liberty, experiencing history through her details. Students learn that the Statue was almost not built and the challenges that the builders faced once construction began through a combination of historical photographs, design sketches and video clips.

The **Interactive Lewis and Clark Trail** allows students to follow in the footsteps of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on one of the most important expeditions in American history. The map combines a compelling graphic interface with facts, lessons and video clips from the film.

We are also excited to announce a generous gift from **David Rubenstein** to fund the design and development of a new digital platform called UNUM, enabling users to explore the themes and stories that run through America's history through a first-of-a-kind experience curated by Ken Burns. Education remains a primary focus of The Society, so stay tuned for the reveal of this groundbreaking project.



*The UNUM digital platform.*

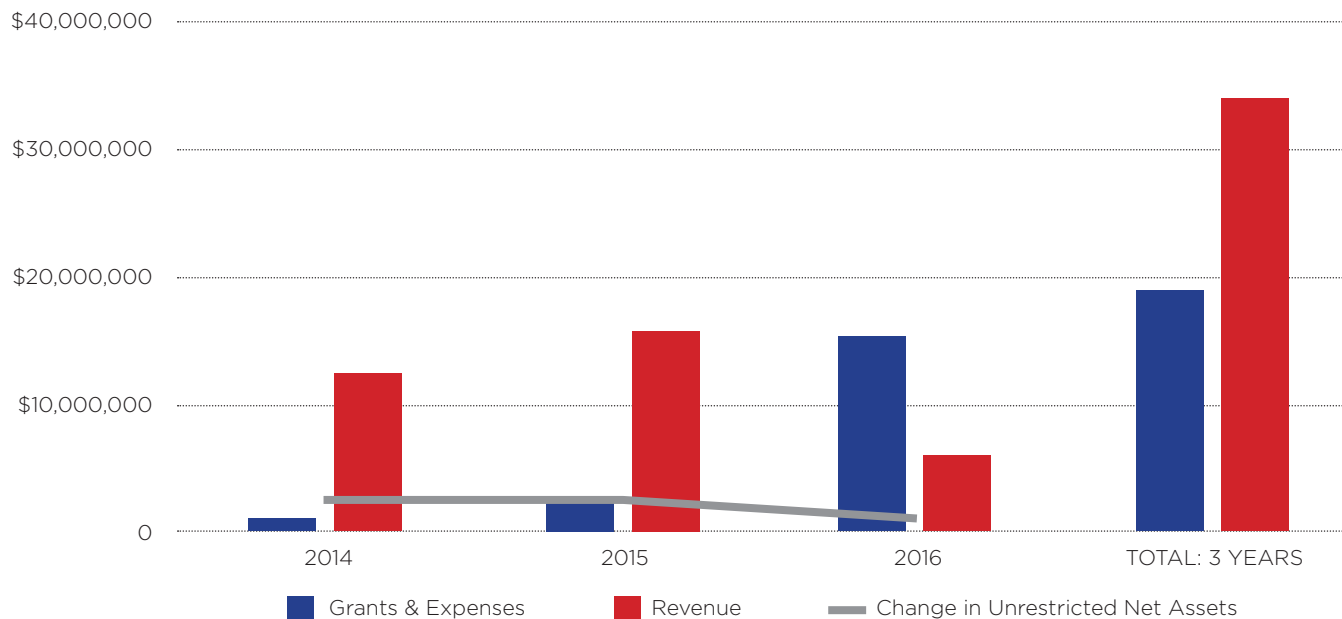


## FINANCIAL DATA BASED ON AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2014 — 2016

	2016	2015	2014
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$6,013,624</b>	<b>\$15,887,424</b>	<b>\$12,133,595</b>
EXPENSES			
Program	\$14,992,345	\$2,175,041	\$777,633
Administration	\$153,362	\$105,510	\$110,510
Fundraising	\$184,312	\$188,300	\$216,849
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$15,330,019</b>	<b>\$2,468,851</b>	<b>\$1,104,992</b>
NET ASSETS			
Change in net assets	(\$9,316,393)	\$13,418,573	\$11,028,603
Net assets - Beginning of year	\$24,933,136	\$11,514,563	\$485,960
Net assets - End of Year	\$15,616,741	\$24,933,136	\$11,514,563
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$15,637,735</b>	<b>\$24,944,342</b>	<b>\$11,531,593</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$20,994</b>	<b>\$11,206</b>	<b>\$17,030</b>
NET ASSETS			
Unrestricted	\$6,251,852	\$5,224,619	\$2,933,248
Temporarily Restricted	\$9,364,889	\$19,708,517	\$8,581,315
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$15,616,741</b>	<b>\$24,933,136</b>	<b>\$11,514,563</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$15,637,735</b>	<b>\$24,944,342</b>	<b>\$11,531,593</b>

In 2016, TBAS raised \$6 million in contributions and grants and re-granted \$15 million of both current and prior years' donations. Over a 3-year period, The Society raised \$34 million and made grants to support documentary film and education totaling \$18 million. The financial statements of The Better Angels Society were audited by Downey, Sweeney, Fitzgerald & Co., P.C.

## 2014 — 2016 Total Revenues, Grants & Expenses and Change in Unrestricted Net Assets



## IMPACT OF FILM AND PROJECT FUNDING



Funds to be Assigned to Future Films



College Behind Bars



Restoration &amp; Preservation



Digital Platform



Defying The Nazis



Hemingway



East Lake



Country Music



The Mayo Clinic



The Vietnam War



Jackie Robinson



The Roosevelts

**TOTAL RAISED****\$38,871,035**



# THE SOCIETY'S DONOR LIST

## GIFTS OF \$5 MILLION AND ABOVE

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Fullerton Family Charitable Fund\*

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 In Honor of David Cypes  
 In Honor of Mr. Ira S. Hirschfield  
 In Honor of Houston Public Media  
 In Honor of Sherrill Terry  
 In Memory of Donald J. Faught  
 In Memory of Charles Gromley  
 In Memory of Seymour & Marilyn Halpern  
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 In Memory of David Nathan Klein  
 In Memory of Lt. Colonel James  
 Robert Watson

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 WETA

*Donors through 8.24.17*

\* denotes board member or  
 founding board member





## THE VIETNAM WAR



"Those of us here today have inherited an incredible gift--our wonderful, thriving nation. It arose from the pain, sacrifices, energy and accomplishments of our forebears. But they are gone, so how can we express our gratitude to them? Ken Burns has presented us with a unique way to show our appreciation. In supporting his efforts our family feels that we are giving back, and thanking our forebears by educating our current citizens on what these people did for us. But, in addition, Ken gives us the opportunity to learn from the past, and with this knowledge continue to nourish our nation for future generations."

— Paul and Sandra Montrone

*"For the past 25 years, the Lynch Foundation has focused our philanthropic efforts on investing in organizations whose leaders have innovative ideas and approaches to education. With his ability to convey American history that is accessible, Ken Burns engages students and educators at all levels. Our support of The Better Angels Society and Burns's new film on the Vietnam War accomplishes the goals we seek to accomplish in supporting educational and cultural programming."*

— PETER LYNCH,  
THE LYNCH FOUNDATION

*"By investing in The Better Angels Society, we allow Ken to spend his valuable time making films like The Vietnam War and less time raising funds. Diane and I are proud to help make Vietnam and Ken's future films possible."*

— HAL AND DIANE BRIERLEY



"We have focused our philanthropy on K through 12 education for children who are born in the wrong zip code. When we visited Ken in Walpole and viewed his documentaries we realized that supporting Ken's work was the best way to help educate our children and their parents also. With K through 12 schools offering fewer history and civics courses, the need for Ken's work is that much greater. We are proud, as members of The Better Angels Society, to help fund his documentaries, most recently his epic work on Vietnam."

— John and Catherine Debs

*"It's important to understand the lessons from difficult periods in American history. We are proud to support Ken and Lynn's monumental efforts to document all sides of the Vietnam conflict in an agenda free manner and to pass on that knowledge to future generations."*

— PERRY AND  
DONNA GOLKIN



*"Few filmmakers have adequately explored the emotional toll the Vietnam War took on our country. Ken's extraordinary filmmaking talent is perfectly suited to capture the true sadness surrounding this horrible conflict."*

—LYNDA AND STEWART RESNICK

# THE VIETNAM WAR FILM DONORS



*"We are proud to help bring this seminal chapter of American history into clearer focus for both present and future generations."*

— LEN BLAVATNIK



*"The Vietnam War impacted our lives and the lives of many of our friends on a very personal level. It polarized the nation and has had a huge effect on today's culture. As they have done with so many other projects, we believe that Lynn and Ken will document the history of the Vietnam War truthfully and with respect."*

— DONNA AND DICK STRONG



*"Our support for The Better Angels Society was motivated by our desire to make important, unbiased history available to millions of people as well as assist Ken's undertaking of one of the most divisive, controversial and unresolved periods in our nation's history. Ken's telling of this epic conflict does unique justice in honoring our brave military and their many sacrifices but also presents a candid portrayal of the losses suffered on both sides of the Vietnam War."*

— JONATHAN AND  
JEANNE LAVINE

*"Thanks to Ken Burns, Lynn Novick, and the entire team. There is no one better than the storytellers and historians at Florentine Films to help us understand the Vietnam War and its aftereffects- one of the defining chapters of our history. The series is evenhanded, reflective, and thought provoking. We are drawn into the individual stories, which, stitched together, form a compelling and riveting narrative of a difficult time. It is a privilege to support Florentine Films and the production of The Vietnam War."*

— Amy and David Abrams

*"The reason I wanted to support the Vietnam project was because I lived through it as a young adult and never understood what was really transpiring when reading about it day to day. There were so many conflicting opinions and outright lies. And at the same time I was terribly worried that both my husband and brother would be called up to service and likely be killed. And that I would never really understand why."*

— DAPHNE WHITE,  
THE LAVENDER BUTTERFLY FUND

*"There is no one who can tell a story as big as The Vietnam War except Ken Burns, nor in such a dramatic way. Ken's extraordinary and invaluable work is something Bonnie and I enthusiastically support. Ken continues to appeal to "the better angels of our nature" and through his works he does exactly that. He is an inspirational and gifted "emotional archaeologist" whom we are thrilled to support."*

— Tom and Bonnie McCloskey



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EVENTS

In the year leading up to the broadcast of *The Vietnam War*, our Better Angels were invited to over 40+ screenings and conversations held by PBS affiliates across the country. These “courageous conversations” have created a great deal of awareness among a very diverse audience, including Vietnam veterans and veterans of other U.S. wars, Vietnamese immigrants, war protesters, academics, students and citizens from all sides of the political spectrum. These pictures represent a few of the many opportunities afforded to us this year.





Accusations That a Political Campaign Reached Out to a Foreign Power to Influence a Presidential Election.

Stolen Classified Material Dropped in the Public Sphere, Destabilizing Conventional Wisdom.

Mass Demonstrations Across the US Protesting the Current Administration.

A White House Obsessed with Leaks.

Reading the statements above, you'd think we had abandoned our 40-year interest in producing historical documentaries in favor of current events, but these are just four events from the Vietnam War period that resonate with today's headlines.

For four decades, my colleagues and I have been trying to tell America's stories, based on our conviction that understanding our past gives us a better sense of what's going on now. We have done so with an unwavering commitment to accuracy and above all impartiality. (We rarely reference the present moment in any of our films).

In our film on the Vietnam War, for example, you'll hear from soldiers who fought on all sides—as well as those who protested the war across America and in the streets of Saigon. You'll learn little-known facts that will challenge the conventional wisdom of this pivotal event in our nation's history. And, as with our films on the Civil War and World War II, you'll see images of remarkable bravery and incalculable loss.

Our mission has been to educate, engage and provoke thoughtful discussion among people of every political persuasion and ideology. And we remain steadfastly committed to this mission at a time when civil discourse is under siege by partisan bickering...when even those truths that we held to be self-evident are being thrown into question.

And yet, at this critical moment in history—when it has become increasingly important to have serious national conversations about foreign policy, the criminal justice system, immigration, poverty, the environment, and race—many politicians are calling for reductions of spending on public television. These cuts will have a serious impact on not only our filmmaking but the educational outreach and new media that is so essential if we are to raise a new generation of leaders.

The Better Angels Society is made up of citizens from across the country and across the political spectrum who have made a significant commitment to ensuring that America's stories continue to be told...so that we—and future generations—can better understand who we are as a people and what it really means to be an American.

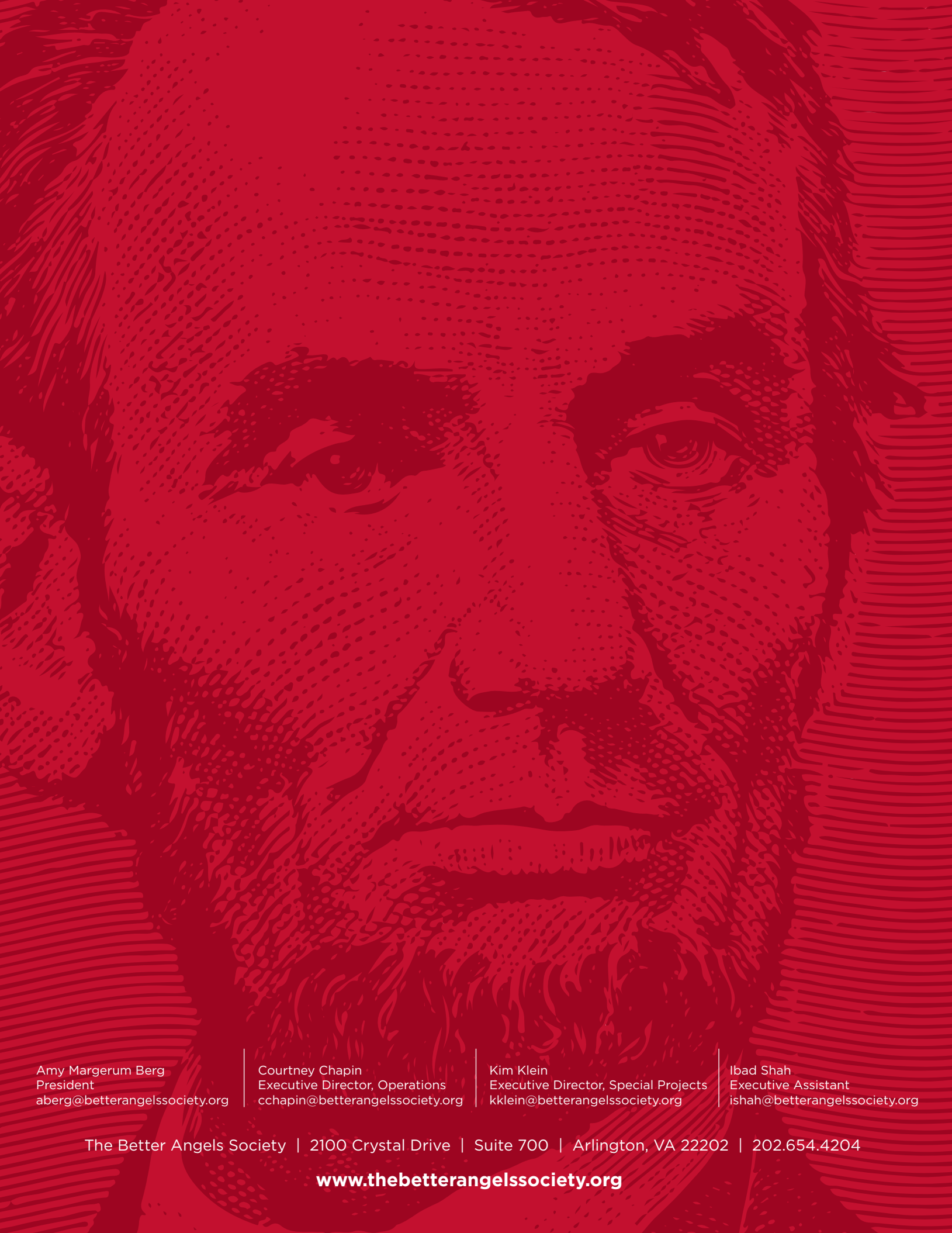
As President Lincoln said when our country was most divided, "We must not be enemies, but friends. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Thank you! We hope you'll continue your interest and support of our work through The Better Angels Society.

— Ken Burns







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