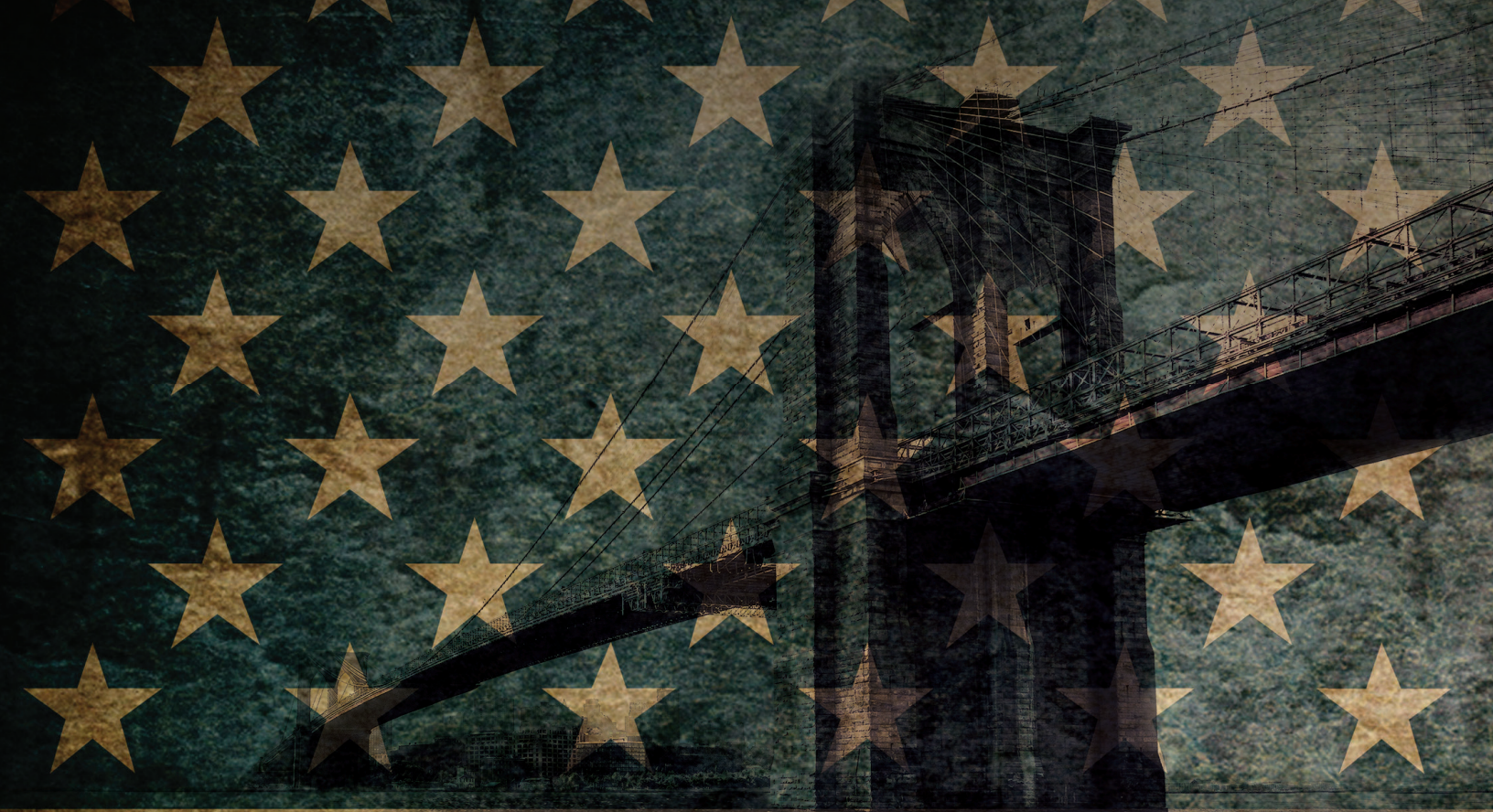


THE
BETTER ANGELS
SOCIETY



2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT

TELLING AMERICA'S STORIES



The Better Angels Board at the 2019 Spring Meeting, Nashville, Tennessee

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Dear Better Angels Donors and Friends,

The generosity and support of all of our friends and donors constantly reminds us of our namesake...

President Lincoln's words at his first inaugural:

"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 battlefield 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."

Your contributions are making a substantial impact, and our work is more important than ever given the polarized and divisive world we are living in. We can't thank you enough.

This year marked a giant leap for The Better Angels Society in accomplishing one of our major goals: to ensure the legacy of Ken Burns by honoring and supporting emerging documentary film artists in his image. With the generous support of **Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine**, we have been able to implement the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film. Partnering with the Library of Congress, The Better Angels Society has established this new annual competition to award \$200,000 to an American history documentary film in the tradition of Ken Burns.

On the educational front, working with National History Day, we are thrilled to announce The Next Generation Angels Awards, which support and promote middle and high school student history filmmakers, showcasing American stories through the film medium in the tradition of Ken Burns.

These student films can be watched online via the digital platform Ken Burns UNUM, thanks to remarkable support from **David Rubenstein**. UNUM is the educational bullet needed to propel the films of Ken Burns and his team into the lives of the next generation — connecting millions to clips from the Florentine library of films, searchable by theme and by date and linked to current events and influencers.

And the films keep coming and having an enormous impact. *The Mayo Clinic* was watched by over six million people; every high school in America received copies of *The Vietnam War* (thanks to a grant from **Lynda and Stuart Resnick**); the *Brooklyn Bridge* was remastered with a generous donation from **Mauree Jane and Mark Perry**; and so many of you supported the upcoming epic 16 hour film, *Country Music*. It is sure to make a positive dent in our cultural conversation, reminding us of our 'better angels' through stories that unite us all.

There has never been a more important time for us to understand our history as a nation, and we are grateful for your support,

Amy Margerum Berg
President, The Better Angels Society

Bobby Stein
Chairman, The Better Angels Society



Sarah Botstein, Giovanni Hernandez, Lynn Novick



Ken Burns, Donna and Patrick Butler



Courtney Chapin, David Pfeil

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Our Mission

The Better Angels Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating Americans about their history through documentary film.



Charlotte DeWitt, Ken Burns, Meredith DeWitt



Ron Moultrie

2019 Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film

In March 2019, The Better Angels Society, in partnership with the Library of Congress and thanks to an extremely generous endowment from Better Angels Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine, launched the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film.

Each year, this new national prize will provide finishing funds, including support for outreach and marketing, to a feature-length documentary on American history in the tradition of Ken Burns.

The prize is designed to honor filmmakers whose projects use inclusive voices, reflect the highest standards of accuracy and original research, and are driven by compelling storytelling. The goal of this annual award is to encourage quality American historical documentary films so that more are seen by wider audiences.



On October 17, 2019, The Better Angels Society will host an award ceremony and dinner for the prize in the Great Hall of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

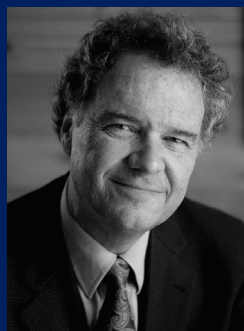
2019 Prize Jury



Andrew Delbanco



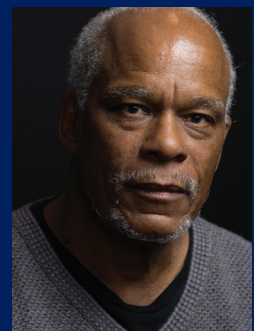
Dawn Porter



Edward Ayers



Rachel Dretzin



Stanley Nelson

Meet Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine



Jonathan and Jeannie Lavine, Ken Burns

“We are proud of the support we have been able to provide Ken and his team.

We are equally excited about building on this work and creating a new program, in partnership with The Better Angels Society and the Library of Congress, to recognize other filmmakers working in this space and the stories that they can share with their fellow Americans.” Jeannie and Jonathan serve on several national boards. Jeannie serves on the Board of The Better Angels Society. Jonathan is the Co-Managing Partner of Bain Capital.

“We believe an understanding of history is critical to a healthy democracy.”

— JEANNIE AND JONATHAN LAVINE, BETTER ANGELS

About the Crimson Lion/Lavine Family Foundation



Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine established the Crimson Lion/Lavine Family Foundation to focus a significant portion of their philanthropic efforts toward leveling the playing field for individuals and families. The Foundation works to address pressing social challenges in the areas of education, community and public service, health and welfare, and discrimination and poverty. The Foundation supports the multi-disciplinary efforts of organizations that serve to

strengthen society through research, innovation, public policy, direct service, and advocacy.

Other projects supported by Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine include *Defying the Nazis: The Sharp's War* (2016), *The Vietnam War* (2017), *The Holocaust & the United States* (2021), *Benjamin Franklin* (2022), *The American Revolution* (2025), and *LBj & the Great Society* (2027).

For more information on these films, visit www.thebetterangelsociety.org/we-support/films

the next generation angels awards

On June 13, 2019, The Better Angels Society, in partnership with National History Day, presented six students with the first annual Next Generation Angels Awards. The prizes reward middle and high school students for excellence in historical documentary filmmaking.

2019 Next Generation Angel Awards

Medals were presented to the first-, second-, and third-place winners in the junior (grades 6–8) and senior (grades 9–12) divisions from schools across the country, including US territories and international schools in China, Korea, and South Asia. The first place winner in the Senior Division received the inaugural **Anne Harrington Award**, a prize named in memory of beloved colleague, advisor, and friend Anne Harrington, who passed away in 2018. Anne was Vice President of Interactive Engagement and National Outreach at WETA, a collaborator with TBAS on educational initiatives, and a champion of National History Day.

Through the support of The Better Angels Society, this year's student awardees and their chaperones will travel to Washington, DC, for an all-expense-paid, three-day excursion of events celebrating their work. In addition to having their films screened before an audience of their peers at the AFI Silver Theater in Silver Spring, MD at the *Next Generation Angels Awards Student History Film Festival*, they will enjoy special visits to the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian Museum of American History, and will be recognized by Ken Burns at the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film Award Ceremony Dinner on October 17, 2019.



Alison Bushong and Jon Peede, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities

We are pleased to announce the first-ever winners of the Next Generation Angels Awards!

**Winning films are available to stream on Ken Burns UNUM at <https://pbs.org/kenburns/unum/>

Junior High Individual Documentary Category



Sophie Elliott, Sydney Brown, Courtney Chapin, and Josef Schuller

FIRST PLACE

Sophie Elliott | Singapore

Film Title: *Positives and Negatives: Shaping Native American Identity Through the Photography of Edward S. Curtis*

SECOND PLACE

Sydney Brown | Oregon

Film Title: *By Chance: The Story of the First Code Talkers*

THIRD PLACE

Josef Schuller | Missouri

Film Title: *The Bridge over Funchilin Pass: The Only Option for Retreat*

Senior High Individual Documentary Category



Taylor Baron, Courtney Chapin, Alison Bushong, and Melinda Chen

FIRST PLACE

THE ANNE HARRINGTON AWARD

Allison Bushong | California

Film Title: *Triumph of Representation and Tragedy of Repercussion: Silent Gesture of 1968*

SECOND PLACE

Taylor Barton | Pennsylvania

Film Title: *Dam! Better Call Clara!*

THIRD PLACE

Melinda Chen | New Jersey

Film Title: *From Miracle to Mishap: The Cutter Incident and its Impact on Modern Vaccine Safety Standards*

A STORY OF AMERICA, ONE SONG AT A TIME.

COUNTRY MUSIC

A FILM BY KEN BURNS

TUNE IN OR STREAM
SUN SEPT 15 8/7c
 AVAILABLE ON THE PBS VIDEO APP



No one has told the story this way before.
 Tune in or stream September 15 at 8/7c.

Country Music

This major documentary film series, supported by The Better Angels Society, will explore the history of a uniquely American art form: country music. From its deep and tangled roots in ballads, blues, and hymns performed in small settings, to its worldwide popularity, viewers will learn how country music evolved over the course of the 20th century, eventually emerging to become America's music. *Country Music* features never-before-seen footage and photographs, plus interviews with more than 80 country music artists. Tune in to PBS on September 15, 2019, for the national broadcast of episode one.

The eight-part, 16-hour series is directed and produced by Ken Burns, written and produced by Dayton Duncan, and produced by Julie Dunfey.

"Country music, like opera, is true poetry with a brilliant tempo! No song is more beautiful than 'Stand by Your Man' sung by Tammy Wynette."

— MERCEDES T. BASS, BETTER ANGEL



The Country Music soundtrack will be available fall 2019.



Ken Burns interviewing Dolly Parton

PHOTO BY KATY HAAS

Interview with Rocco Landesman, Better Angel and *Country Music* Donor



Rocco and his son Dodge at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee

Why do you think this film [*Country Music*] is important now?

Country music as a genre has a very broad appeal. It really reflects American history and American values, and I think the history of country music is the history of our country. Music is the way many of us relate to each other and our community.

Could you tell us just a little bit about your personal connection with country music?

I remember getting my driver's license in 1964 and driving along hearing the song "Dang Me" by Roger Miller. The lyrics went, 'roses are red, violets are purple, sugar is sweet, so is maple surple,' and I thought, 'what is this?' This is someone using language and playing with words in a way I haven't heard before. I started listening to more country music and found that the stories being told were stories I could relate to. What is special about country music is that the very structure is storytelling. There are characters and stories the way there are not in rock music.

Later, when I decided to do a Broadway show written by Roger Miller, I started to see the strong affinity between country music and show tunes — both being very lyrical, with characters and stories.

Ken Burns's films always have two stories going on at once. You have the human story right in front of you, and then there is the backstory of what's going on in the country.

So when you're hearing about Charley Pride and how he broke into country music, you are also hearing the story about race relations in the country. When you are hearing about Merle Haggard, it is the story of breaking out of poverty and the history of rural America. When you see Buck Owens, you are seeing the Bakersfield version of American history.

With Ken Burns there is always a story within a story, and that is why his films resonate, because there is always more going on in any moment than you may first realize, and he really has a way of letting the story tell itself.

Supporting documentary film isn't the most conventional choice for philanthropy. Why do you think it has impact?

With Ken Burns documentaries, you have a tremendous reach. First, they are entertainment, and people watch them on television and are entertained, but they also have pedagogical value.

There is an educational and instructional value to everything he does. Your money really gets leveraged throughout the culture in a way that other philanthropic investments would not be. It is fun to be part of something that is so compelling.

"I'm drawn to Ken's ability to bring history to life and to ensure that future generations remember the history, both good and bad, of our country. It's really all about the stories that his documentaries preserve."



— MICHELLE SMITH,
BETTER ANGEL AND
COUNTRY MUSIC DONOR

College Behind Bars

College Behind Bars is a four-hour two-part documentary film series that tells the story of a small group of incarcerated men and women struggling to earn college degrees and turn their lives around in one of the most rigorous and effective prison education programs in the United States — the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI).

Shot over four years in maximum- and medium-security prisons in New York State, this four-hour film will show over two nights and will take viewers on a stark and intimate journey into one of the most pressing issues of our time — our failure to provide meaningful rehabilitation for the over two million Americans living behind bars. Through the personal stories of the students and their families, the film reveals the transformative power of higher education and puts a human face on America's criminal justice crisis. It raises questions we urgently need to address: What is prison for? Who has access to educational opportunity? Who among us is capable of academic excellence? How can we have justice without redemption?

Directed and produced by Lynn Novick; produced by Sarah Botstein; edited by Tricia Reidy ACE; produced by Salimah El-Amin and Mariah



Sarah Botstein, Giovanni Hernandez, Lynn Novick

“I got my GED on Rikers Island in 2005 when I was sixteen. And from that point until 2010, my mentality was very negatively focused. I thought I could go home and do crime better. Then, I got here and discovered, oh, they have college. I didn’t want to do it, but a friend forced me to apply to the program, which is the kindest, most loving thing anyone has ever done for me. Because who I am now is light years away from who I was then. I have to go home and I have to succeed. That’s the only way I’ll be able to redeem myself, in my eyes, in my family’s eyes, in society’s eyes. That’s the only way.” — GIOVANNI HERNANDEZ, BPI GRADUATE

Doran; original music by Jongnic Bontemps; cinematography by Buddy Squires ASC and Nadia Hallgren. Ken Burns is the executive producer. College Behind Bars is a production of Skiff Mountain Films, in association with Florentine Films and WETA-TV



“College Behind Bars is a timely and important film that speaks to one of the most pressing problems facing our country — mass incarceration. Through nuanced and intimate storytelling, we witness the impact that educational opportunities can have on incarcerated students, and we see firsthand the possibilities for learning and growth behind bars.”

— AMY AND DAVID ABRAMS,
BETTER ANGELS AND *COLLEGE BEHIND BARS* DONORS

Note from the *Hemingway* Producers



Sarah Botstein, Carol and Patrick Hemingway, and Lynn Novick in Montana

Over the past six years, we've succeeded in collecting a diverse tapestry of voices that have illuminated many dimensions of Hemingway's life. We were privileged to delve deeply into his private world in two interviews with his sole surviving son, Patrick. We also interviewed a coterie of biographers and scholars as well as an extraordinary group of celebrated writers, including Mario Vargas Llosa, Edna O'Brien, Tobias Wolff, and Mary Karr — who have all labored in the shadow of Hemingway.

Embarking on our biography of the great American writer Ernest Hemingway, one of our most important tasks was to find interviewees to help us not only understand his life and work, but also enable us to truly inhabit his world — to understand his fame, family, influence and enduring legacy.

As Abraham Verghese told us, "If you're a writer you can't escape Hemingway. He's so damn popular that you can't begin to write until you try and kill his ghost in you, or embrace it."

Our film will also benefit from evocative live cinematography we filmed at Hemingway's beloved Cuban estate, Finca Vigia, and the home in Idaho where he committed suicide. We have enjoyed unfettered access to the Hemingway collection at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, where we've been able to examine Hemingway's writings from the earliest drafts and to amass a trove of photographs and footage from every stage of his life. Midway through our edit, we are confident that our three-part series will provide a deeper and more nuanced portrait of Ernest Hemingway than has ever been done.

Films in Production

- **Hemingway** (2020/21)
- **Ali** (2021)
- **The Holocaust & the United States** (2021/22)
- **Benjamin Franklin** (2022)
- **The American Buffalo** (2024)
- **Leonardo daVinci** (2024)
- **The American Revolution** (2025)
- **LBJ & the Great Society** (2027)
- **Emancipation to Exodus** (2028/29)
- **History of Crime and Punishment in the United States** (TBD)

The Better Angels Society is currently seeking support for all of these film projects. For more information or to make a donation, please call our office, 202-809-9972, or email Amy Berg at aberg@betterangelsociety.org.

Ken Burns UNUM

The Ken Burns UNUM digital platform, made possible by the generosity of Better Angel David Rubenstein, offers students and armchair historians alike a searchable database of Ken Burns's filmography organized by American history themes and time periods.

It has been a busy year for the UNUM team as the site has added many new features and issue themes. Earlier in the year, UNUM partnered with National History Day (NHD) to create a Triumph & Tragedy theme to coincide with the NHD 2019 topic by the same name. The theme also includes the Next Generation Angels Award-winning films on the subject from the 2019 National History Day contest.

UNUM also streamed special features on John Musgraves (featured in *The Vietnam War* film) speaking with younger veterans about their experiences of combat and finding the strength, daily, to move on, as well as a panel discussion with filmmakers Sarah Burns and David McMahon in conversation with the "Central Park Five." The story of the five was featured in Florentine's 2012 documentary, *The Central Park Five*, and dramatized in Ava DuVernay's 2019 Emmy-nominated miniseries, *When They See Us*.

Special guests featured on UNUM have included author John Green (on the legacy of *Huckleberry Finn*) and singer John Legend (on the 1970s Kent State tragedy).

Explore these and more exciting issues and themes to come, including Elections, Art, Innovation, and Leadership, at www.pbs.org/kenburns/unum



Follow UNUM on Social Media



@UNUMKenBurns

Georgetown Partnership



On March 11, 2019, The Better Angels Society, in partnership with Georgetown University, hosted a special preview of *College Behind Bars* in Georgetown University's Gaston Hall.

Before hundreds of undergraduates, law students, and members of the public, Ken Burns and Georgetown President Jack DeGioia moderated two related panel conversations focusing on the upcoming *College Behind Bars* film and how it relates to larger issues of incarceration, education, and meaningful criminal justice reform. Participating in these panels were the filmmakers, Bard Prison Initiative graduates/former inmates, policy experts, and Georgetown professors. Panelists included the film's director, Lynn Novick; Bard Prison Initiative Executive Director Max Kenner; BPI alumnus and Ford Foundation Program Officer Jule Hall; Georgetown Professor of Government and Law and Founding Director of the Prisons and Justice Initiative, Marc Howard;

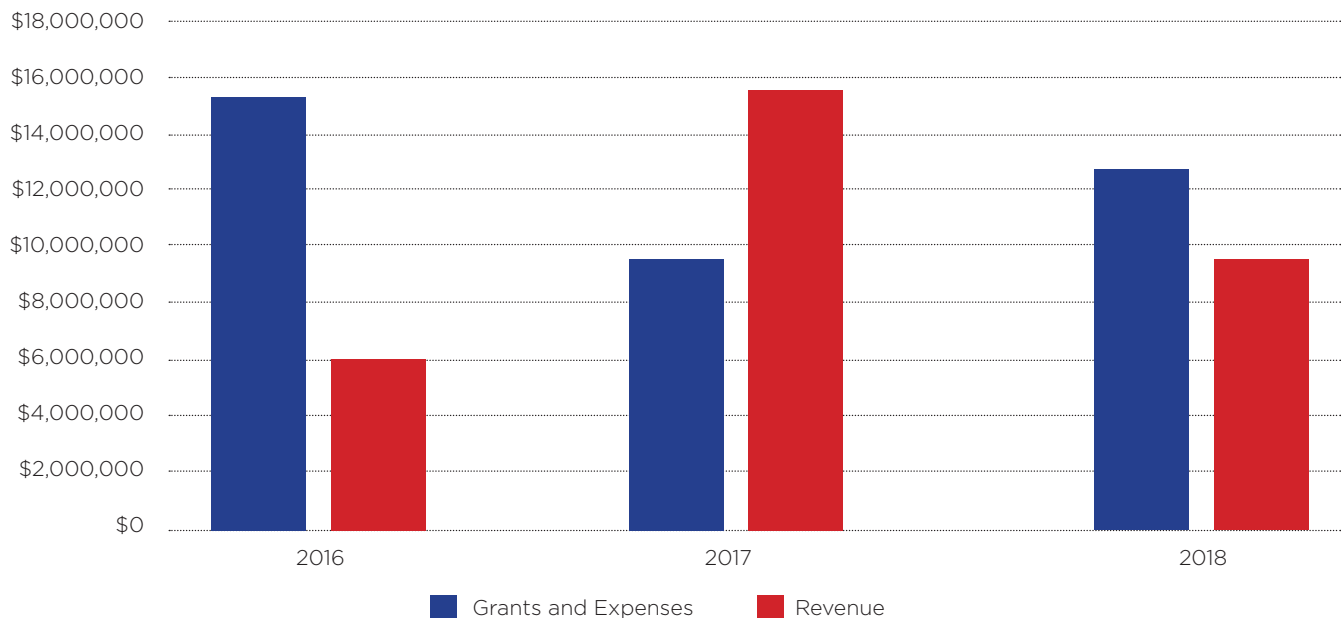
Associate Professor of Law Shon Hopwood; Project Manager of the University's Pivot Program, George Chochos; and Executive Director of the DC Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs, Brian Ferguson. In attendance were prominent civic and cultural leaders, including PBS President and CEO Paula Kerger, WETA President and CEO Sharon Rockefeller; members of The Better Angels Society's Board, journalists, congressional staff, and others. This was an event in the Courageous Conversations series, which The Better Angels Society is hosting in collaboration with Georgetown University. The series aims to underscore the relevance and impact historical documentaries can have on academic and public life in our democracy.

FINANCIAL DATA BASED ON AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2016 – 2018

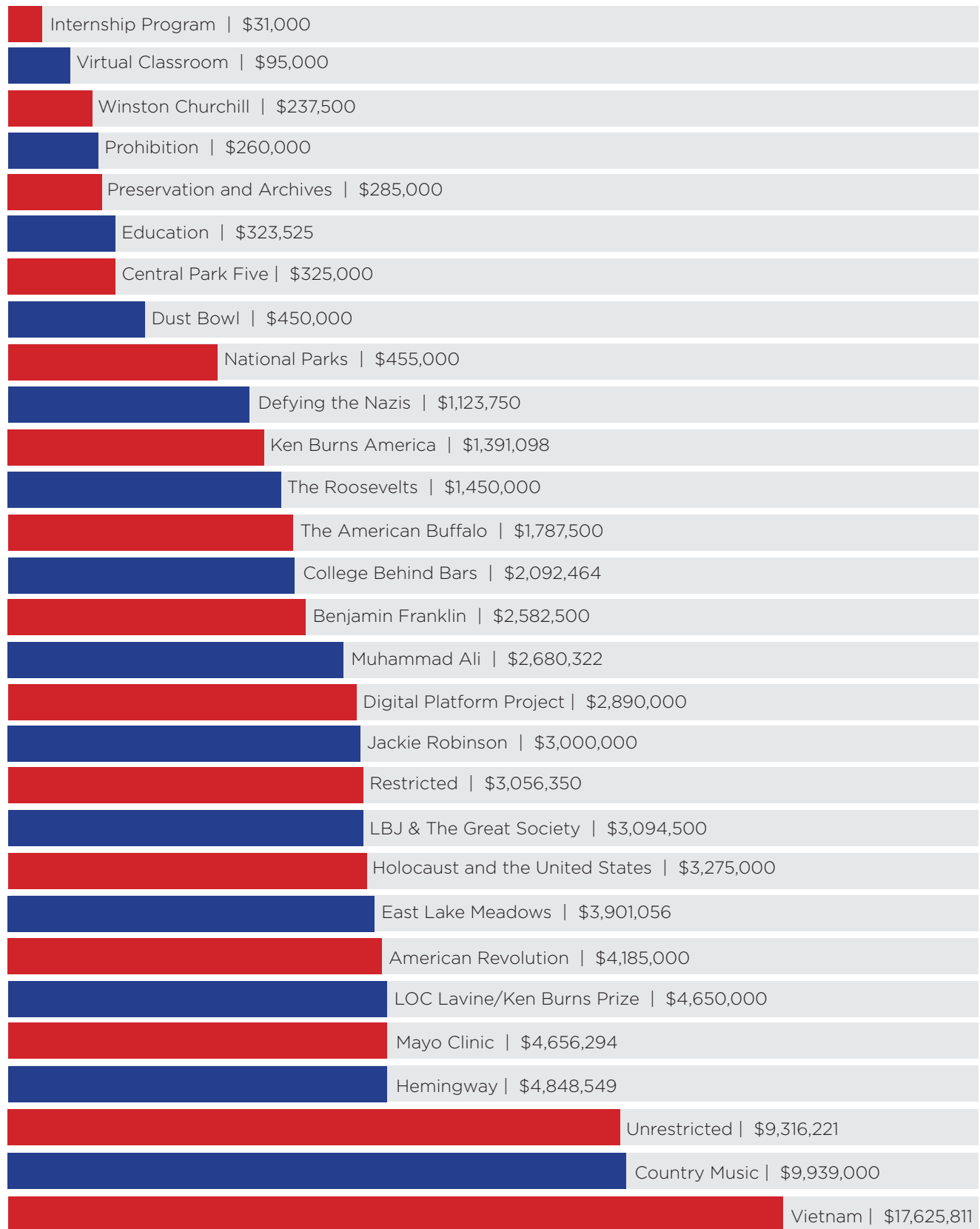
	2018	2017	2016
TOTAL REVENUE	\$9,562,659	\$15,695,096	\$6,013,624
EXPENSES			
Program	\$11,864,006	\$6,623,511	\$14,992,345
Administration	\$391,445	\$286,907	\$153,362
Fundraising	\$216,319	\$359,271	\$184,312
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$12,471,770	\$7,269,689	\$15,330,019
Change in net assets	\$(2,909,458)	\$8,425,407	\$(9,316,395)
Net assets, beginning of year	\$24,625,328	\$16,199,921	\$25,516,316
Net assets, end of year	\$21,715,870	\$24,625,328	\$16,199,921
TOTAL ASSETS	\$21,748,016	\$24,753,792	\$16,220,915
LIABILITIES	\$32,146	\$128,464	\$20,994
NET ASSETS			
Unrestricted	\$8,810,346	\$5,854,084	\$5,026,861
Temporarily restricted	\$12,905,524	\$18,771,244	\$11,173,060
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$21,715,870	\$24,625,328	\$16,199,921
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$21,748,016	\$24,753,792	\$16,220,915

In 2018, TBAS raised \$9.3 million in contributions and grants and re-granted \$11.3 million of both current and prior years' donations. Since 2015, The Society has raised over \$47 million and made grants to support documentary film and education totaling \$29 million. The financial statements of The Better Angels Society were audited in 2018 and 2017 by Raffa, Inc.(now Marcum, LLP) and by Downey, Sweeney, Fitzgerald & Co. P.C. in 2016 and 2015.

2016, 2017, and 2018 Total Revenues and Total Grants and Expenses



OVER \$90 MILLION RAISED FOR FILMS AND OTHER PROJECTS AS OF 6/30/2019



all funds raised are less admin fee

WE ARE THANKFUL TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

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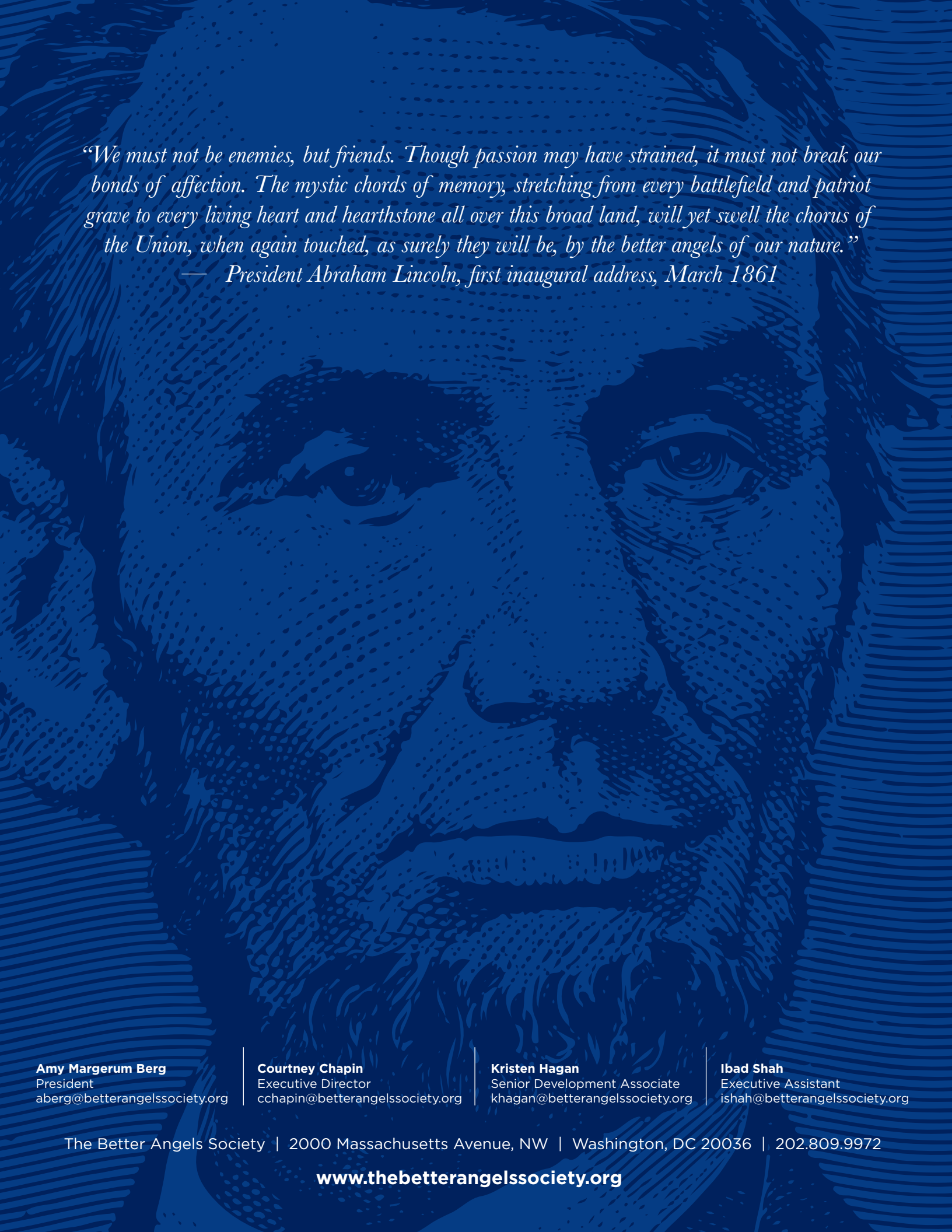
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— *President Abraham Lincoln, first inaugural address, March 1861*

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