



Eagle Council XLVIII

Saturday, 9/21/19

10:45 am

Speaker: Wilfred McClay, PhD – Wilfred M. McClay is the G. T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma, and the Director of the Center for the History of Liberty.

His book *The Masterless: Self and Society in Modern America* was awarded the Merle Curti Award of the Organization of American Historians for the best book in American intellectual history. He has written several other books including his most recent, *A Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story*.

He is a member of the U.S. Commission on the SemiQuinCentennial, which has been charged with planning the celebration of the nation's 250th birthday in 2026.

He is a graduate of St. John's College (Annapolis) and received his Ph.D. in History from the Johns Hopkins University.

Title: *Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story*

Outline – Why I wrote this book:

- A book like this is important, because a great nation needs and deserves a great narrative, as an expression of its own self-understanding.
- There has long been a need for a well-written, accurate, and appealing account of our nation's past that does justice to its greatness and its importance in human history, while being scrupulously accurate.
- The field has been dominated, however, by books that either skew the American past along political lines or render the subject hopelessly boring by burying it under a blizzard of details.
- Instead, our history needs to be rendered as a great and ongoing story, one that reflects not only what we have done, but that which we aspire, that which draws us forward and motivates to strive for high and noble things.
- *Land of Hope* seeks to reverse the maleducation of our young people and make them better prepared to take their place as responsible citizens capable of upholding our political institutions and national culture.

- We must know about the past that shaped us. This is not only essential to our being citizens; it is an essential element in achieving the fullness of our humanity. Our It is also one of the essential elements that binds us together as a people.
- I will explain the book's title, *Land of Hope*, which has several distinct but related meanings.

Action points:

- We need to diffuse awareness of this book as far and as wide as we can. We do not have the resources of the big textbook publishers, and the established relationships they have with the system of public education nationally.
- From now on, we need to pay much closer attention to the books and other materials by means of which our children's view of the nation is being formed. They are not being well-served. I wrote *Land of Hope* to provide an alternative. I don't mean that it's the final word, but it's a big step in the right direction. I would urge you all to take a look at the book and show it to anyone you know who is interested in American history, and who has some measure of involvement in the education of American young people.