

Remarks accepting
The Philip Merrill Award
for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education

Still Waiting . . .

by Dr. Alan Charles Kors

Introduction by Janice Rogers Brown
Tributes by Robert P. George, C. Bradley Thompson, & Allen Guelzo



ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

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ACTA is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to academic freedom, academic excellence, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Founded in 1995, ACTA is the only national organization dedicated to working with alumni, donors, trustees, and education leaders across the United States to support liberal arts education, uphold high academic standards, safeguard the free exchange of ideas on campus, and ensure that the next generation receives an intellectually rich, high-quality education at an affordable price. Our network consists of alumni and trustees from over 1,300 colleges and universities, including over 23,000 current board members. Our quarterly newsletter, *Inside Academe*, reaches more than 15,000 readers.



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October 27, 2023
Washington, DC

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I am deeply grateful to ACTA. This award privileges me by placing me in the company of so many heroes of liberty and of decency, and I see in this room, as well, so many heroes of liberty.

In particular, I thank Michael Poliakoff for his extraordinary kindness to me and his ongoing contributions to the good cause . . . and I am overwhelmed and would never know how adequately to respond to you who introduced me, but Robby and Brad and Allen, thank you, from the bottom of my heart, from the marrow.

So, let me talk about the last 35 years. Starting in the mid-'80s, I truly thought that I could win. I was sure that I would win. Public exposure of the betrayal of liberty and legal equality and privacy on America's campuses would undo the politicized structure of higher education. I just had to make people know what was occurring.

With the water buffalo case in 1993, 30 years ago this past spring, I thought I *had* simply won. I had the media, down to Garry Trudeau and *Doonesbury*. Trudeau sent me a full-color original of his excoriation of Sheldon Hackney, president of Penn, of the insanity of speech codes. I thought, "I've got Sunday *Doonesbury*. I've won." The *Washington Post* editorialized in my favor in the same language as the *Wall Street Journal*. NBC News gave 10 minutes to the water buffalo case, John Chancellor

presenting it as the madness of academics who wanted to police language and deprive us of the most ordinary benefits of plain speaking. On *Crossfire*, for those of you who might remember, the water buffalo case was the one and only time when Kinsley and Buchanan agreed entirely. Every liberal newspaper in Philadelphia was on my side. The *Philadelphia Daily News* called the administration at Penn “a herd of dik-diks,” violating both the racial and the sexual harassment code.

Universities were exposed. Penn was a laughingstock. Trustees met in September and repealed the speech code. Wouldn't the next decades be absolutely grand?

Alas, no. I began fighting speech codes, intrusive political training, invasions of conscience, double standards, and kangaroo courts in the mid-1980s—fighting these things at Penn but also talking at many colleges and before groups interested in what was happening. I was stunned by the lack of understanding on our campuses, among the very people who were living through new forms of authoritarian and abusive control over the life of the mind.

In 1980, deciding I had to reach a larger and different audience, I wrote an op-ed in 1989 for the *Wall Street Journal*. My editorial was about speech codes at Penn and the introduction of racial sensitivity training for student life staff and for defendants in the campus judicial system. In October 1989, about 34 years ago from today, I penned the following: “The subsidized activists,” I wrote, “facilitators and social engineers who work in student life and support services are a powerful force in the academic world. They attend conferences together, and they testify to each other's successes. They are the expertise that other activist officials call upon to justify with expert testimony their own programs. They share language and conceptual schemes. ‘Culture’ is not an evolved system that confers survival and life-enhancing benefits upon its inheritors, adapting as material conditions and ways of thinking change, but a system of creating and preserving ‘hegemonic dominance for white males.’ Diversity does not mean diverse

individuals for them. It is the recognition for them of the primacy of group identity.”

I wrote about a brave undergraduate on the planning committee for diversity education, who wrote to her colleagues about, “My deep regard for the individual and my desire to protect the freedom of all members of society,” and, still quoting from my 1989 editorial, “which led an administrator on the committee to reply to her, ‘The word individual is a red flag phrase today, which is considered by many to be racist. Arguments that champion the individual over the group ultimately privilege the individual’s belonging to the largest or dominant group.’”

I concluded, “The practical strengths of such a movement are obvious. The legitimate complaints of truly harassed individuals, the intellectual support for such notions of culture in America within the professoriate, the ability of new age ideologues to threaten negative publicity and disruption, the radicals’ almost uncontested control of moral symbolism. Its moral vulnerabilities, however, are also legion. The Orwellian substitution of thought reform for behavioral sanctions, the desire for essential freedom of speech and expression by professors and undergraduates,” (If only!), “the ability of its potential intellectual allies to distinguish between authentic education and tendentious indoctrination,” (Wrong again), “the unwillingness of administrators to defend intellectual repression under public scrutiny and the manifest wickedness of imposing group identities upon the universities of a nation with the right to individuate according to private conscience remains the authentic criterion of liberation. We shall see.” Nineteen eighty-nine. Still waiting.

From the 1980s until my last day of teaching at Penn less than 10 years ago, I framed the issue as a generational swindle. “The heirs of the ’60s who run universities today have moved more and more campuses from their Free Speech Movement to their speech codes, from their struggle against mandatory chapel to their own struggle for mandatory diversity education and sensitivity seminars, from their struggle for racial integration to their

efforts for newer forms of separate racial programs. . . . American students are victims of a generational swindle of truly epic proportions.”

I believed that the campus zealots had succeeded in institutionalizing their agenda and their programs, but they had failed to win the students. Too many students remained independent and critical in their thought and values. Most so-called minorities deeply rejected any truly radical politics. Most whites just did not feel guilty about their birth. Women and men, far from perceiving each other as class enemies, continued to fall in love and even write each other poetry, if not collaborations far, far worse.

In 1984, there occurred a shift of extraordinary importance in American academic life. Up until 1984, faculty held onto the belief inherent in the culture of the '60s that they were the voice of students, that students were theirs. In 1984, a significant majority of American college students voted for Ronald Reagan. The professoriate looked up with an, “Oh my God, we have to save them from themselves. We have to save them from American society. And we have to save American society from a generation of our brightest and best that voted for Ronald Reagan.” You may date, not political correctness, but coercive political correctness—abusive, arbitrary, tyrannical political correctness—from that sense of, “Oh my God, they did what?” The '60s were over.

Faced with that reality, campus ideologues imposed whole new regimes of intrusive political and cultural inquisition and catechism, which reinforced the agitprop that many students already had been getting from grade school through high school graduation.

But think on this. For college students, this was the pinnacle of the educational pyramid, and they assumed that it had all been vetted by the best minds in the country. It all must have been vetted by the best minds at a university. Before you blame students, remember, when they arrive after high school, they're introduced to universities, the life of the mind, in an orientation that is a political bootcamp. But what they hear, they all assume,

has been vetted by the finest minds in the country. Don't blame students. We have allowed them to be miseducated from kindergarten through Ph.D. by people who loathe this country and its deepest values. In high school, they can be skeptical. Mr. X, Ms. Y could be wrong, but the faculty of Harvard, the faculty of Penn, the faculty of a place astute enough to admit me? They believe they are being introduced to the acquired knowledge of our society.

I was hoping that the split between faculty and students would last until students and their allies demanded an end to the PC tyranny. There was a window from the mid-1980s to maybe 2015 when students, despite a full generation of indoctrination and agitprop in K through undergraduate degree, were the hope of individualism and liberty in higher education. Those of us who engaged, as did many of you here, had so much success with students. But now the zealots and partisans reap the benefit of what they sowed as lords of the university. Those undergraduates who agree with them reign on our campuses. The independents hear no other voices. The dissidents are terrified or silenced. The despisers have won undergraduate culture, even if they have not won all undergraduates. The worst scenario actually occurred. Indoctrination, political catechism, guerilla theater, agitprop, and incentives to join the woke mob changed their recipients. Think about incentives in a college campus. How much easier to come out on campus sexually than to come out as a classical liberal or conservative or, God forbid, a Republican.

I was wrong also, alas, about a deep backlash that I expected long ago, decades ago, warning in 1989, "It will not last. America patiently has subsidized critics who have the utmost contempt for its values of individual identity and individual rights. But it is an utterly absurd supposition that the victims of partisan codes, intrusions of conscience, lack of due process, and selective biased enforcement of campus regulations will acquiesce indefinitely in the double standards upon which their campus

legal inequality depends. There will be a day of reckoning, but when it comes, God help us, because where will one then find a broad coalition already formed around the love of liberty, due process, free speech, and legal equality? Where will all our self-proclaimed progressive academics find shelter when those winds blow after they themselves have attempted to convince everyone who passes through their portals that liberty and legal equality are wholly tactical and dispensable?”

The patience of such long acquiescence in being the victims of double standards is beyond anything I could have imagined even now, even today, even with the news of the last week.

Let me conclude. Our schools have become the enemies of a free society. Stop the subsidies. One may not give in. One may not give up. There always will be alternatives for the kids of parents who know and understand. The great moral, political need and task (which is also the great intellectual need and task) is to create alternatives, school choice writ large, for all the other kids.

It is above all else our liberty and legal equality that define us as human beings with dignity, capable of morals. The struggle for that freedom in higher education has been one of the defining struggles of the age in which we find ourselves. Whether you would locate a true higher education in the reform of current universities or in new models and venues, do not let that struggle end, and join it with rigor, vigilance, will, and courage. The recovery of liberty and dignity begins with and depends upon the education of the minds and souls of our children. There are no sidelines. Thank you all for being here.

* * *

Introduction and Tributes

The following introduction and tributes were given in honor of Professor Alan Charles Kors at the presentation of the Philip Merrill Award on October 27, 2023.

Introduction

Janice Rogers Brown

Former Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court; Former United States Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit

Good evening. I am Janice Rogers Brown, a member of ACTA's Board of Directors. It is a great pleasure to introduce the ceremony that will follow in a few moments. October is always a time of renewal and celebration for ACTA, its affiliates, and, I have learned a new term, the ACTA adjacent. But this is indisputably the high point of ACTA's year.

The Merrill Award selection committee chose very wisely. More than ever, we need champions of Western Civilization and the values it has bestowed on the world. Those values are in peril, and nowhere has there been a more ardent, erudite defender of Western Civilization and Enlightenment values than the winner of the 18th annual Philip Merrill Award, Professor Alan Charles Kors.

I was Dr. Kors's student for about a day and a half. As a newly minted, very newly minted, federal judge, he was my guide through a seminar on John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*. The discussion was memorable, but his ardent defense of individual rights was mesmerizing. I only had that one opportunity to sit at his feet, but I've never forgotten it.

It would take too long to list all of Dr. Kors's academic achievements, so I'll just list a few. He served as editor-in-chief of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*. In 2005, he was awarded the National Humanities

Medal for his dedication to the study of the humanities and to the defense of academic freedom. In 2008, he received the prestigious Bradley Prize. Additionally, he has won the Lindback Award and the Ira Abrams Memorial Award for distinguished college teaching. Given Dr. Kors's profound commitment to his students, I imagine these latter two awards are, of all his accolades, the ones he treasures most.

Dr. Kors has dedicated his life to transmitting the values of Western Civilization to the next generation, particularly the Enlightenment values of the pursuit of truth and the essential value of personal liberty. He embodies the qualities that the late Philip Merrill envisioned when he established this award.

We will have three extraordinary guests who will say more about his contributions: Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University; followed by C. Bradley Thompson, BB&T Research Professor in the Department of Political Science and the executive director of the Clemson Institute for the Study of Capitalism at Clemson University; and Professor Allen C. Guelzo, once a student in Professor Kors's class, now a distinguished professor and winner of the Lincoln Prize and also a recipient of the Bradley Prize.

After these tributes to Professor Kors, I have the privilege of presenting our honored guest with his unique Merrill Award trophy. We will all then have the pleasure of hearing Professor Kors's acceptance speech.

Tributes

Robert P. George

McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Princeton University

Alan Charles Kors is our Moses. For 40 years—more than 40 years—we have been wandering in the desert, trying to make our way to the promised land—a land of free inquiry, truth-seeking scholarship, and non-indoctrinating

teaching. Alan has led us. Inspired us. Encouraged us. Exhorted us. Supported us. And, when we have been a stiff-necked people, reprov'd us and rebuked us.

He has led us and inspired us *by example* as well as by precept. Was there ever a more truly independent thinker? A more determined truth-seeker? A bolder or more courageous truth-speaker? A more dedicated and honest teacher?

Certainly not in our time. These virtues are rare in all times.

And where would the higher education reform movement be without our Moses? Although we have not—yet—made our way to the promised land, without Alan's work and witness—without his willingness to sacrifice and even make himself an object of anger and animosity—we would likely not be making our way at all. We probably would have been drowned in the all-too-Red Sea of toxic ideologies that have afflicted academia since its hostile takeover several decades ago.

No one in this room needs reminding that those ideologies are more toxic today than they ever have been. Academia and the broader intellectual culture are full of ideas (or what pass in these sad times for ideas) so inane, so obviously irrational, that they would have been regarded as the stuff of low comedy as recently as five years ago. But there is a strong, vital movement fighting back. They—we—are building valuable infrastructure within existing institutions and building new academic and para-academic institutions to replace those that are too far gone to save and reform. Organizations like ACTA, NAS, FIRE, Heterodox Academy, and the Academic Freedom Alliance are doing the Lord's work. They will be joined soon by the new American Academy of Sciences and Letters. Programs and institutes and whole schools dedicated to academic freedom, integrity, and excellence are springing up all over the country at institutions large and small, religiously-affiliated and non-sectarian, private and public.

Although it remains distant, we are, finally, beginning to glimpse the promised land.

I doubt that Alan or I or perhaps anyone in the room here tonight will have the blessing of actually entering the promised land. If anyone deserves to live long enough to enter it, it is Alan; but I will leave that question between God and him, the two of them having a rather complicated relationship. But I thank God that Alan and I and all of you are getting a glimpse. We know that over the horizon there is indeed a promised land, and it can and will be reached and entered. A Joshua of our movement will finally lay siege to the decadent Jericho that is contemporary academia. Although its ramparts seem robust, its walls are, in truth, thin and weak. The trumpets will sound, and those walls will come tumbling down.

And when our descendants enter that land flowing with the milk of intellectual freedom and the honey of scholarly excellence and academic integrity, they will shout and sing of Alan Charles Kors, the visionary, tenacious Moses who led his people through the grimmest of deserts, never abandoning faith in the highest intellectual standards and noblest moral ideals, never giving up hope, even when our little band of reformers seemed weakest and most vulnerable. “For,” if I may quote Deuteronomy, “no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that he did in the sight of all Israel.”

C. Bradley Thompson

Professor of Political Philosophy and Executive Director of the Clemson Institute for the Study of Capitalism, Clemson University

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I take as my theme tonight a well-known verse from the *Book of Ecclesiasticus*: “Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.”

We are here to celebrate the remarkable career of a remarkable man, our guest of honor, Alan Charles Kors.

I shall leave it to others to tell the story of Alan’s outstanding career as a teacher, as a writer, and as a fighter for a free society. Instead, I would like to share with you a few thoughts on Alan Kors, the man.

That I should do so is somewhat presumptuous given that I have probably only been in the same room with Alan on no more than half a dozen occasions.

But every now and then you meet someone whose impact on your life is immediate and profound. For me, that person was Alan Charles Kors.

To meet Alan, even just once, is to be forever shaken from one's dogmatic slumbers.

A Personal Note

I first met Alan Kors 28 years ago when we were lecturing together one summer at Bryn Mawr College in June of 1995. I was just starting out on my academic career, and Alan was a distinguished senior scholar by then.

The fact is that I did not really want to be there. My wife had just given birth to our first child only a few weeks before, and I just wanted to be at home with *them*.

I will never forget that warm summer night when Alan and I sat outside on a picnic table until the wee hours of the morning drinking wine, smoking cigars, and having an intense conversation about life's most important questions.

What I found most remarkable about Alan that night is that he took the time to talk to me about my new son and the meaning of fatherhood. I barely knew Alan, but he was *genuinely* happy for me. I could see *that*—I could see it in his face. At that moment, I saw his common decency, and I was struck by the intensity of his benevolence.

He didn't have to do that. He was a somebody and I was a nobody, and yet he took the time to talk to a young man just starting out on his career as a professor and a father.

I've never forgotten what Alan taught me that night, which was that we can all make the world just a little bit better if we take the time, every now and then, to share in someone else's joy.

For that conversation alone, I will always be grateful for Alan's friendship. I should add parenthetically that the baby boy of whom we

spoke that night is now himself a young professor and the father of a newborn son.

It is my hope that both will someday meet Alan, or someone like him.

Alan's Moral Character

For many scholars of *my* generation, Alan is not only a brilliant scholar, but he is a model of moral character, whom we all admire.

Anyone who knows Alan knows he is a *moral* force of nature. This is the source of his greatness.

Alan is, first, a man of independence. Throughout his career, he always seemed to take the road less traveled—and that seems to have made all the difference. He did it *his* way, on *his* terms, and always with honor, even when it hurt his professional career.

When I think of Alan, I'm reminded of that line from the film, *Rob Roy*, when Roy, played by Liam Neeson, is asked by his son to define what honor is, and the father answers: "Honor is a man's gift to himself." I'm pretty sure that's all Alan ever needed. He knew he was right, and that's what matters most.

I've never met a man as intellectually honest—and sometimes even brutally honest—as Alan, nor have I ever met a man who has united his moral principles with his moral action as completely as Alan has.

If integrity is the principal of *being* principled, then my friend has it in spades.

What separates a *real* mensch from a mere academic is that the *real* man not only "talks the talk" but "walks the walk." And that, Alan has always done.

Alan is a warrior. One might even say of him what Herman Melville said of Captain Vere in *Billy Budd*, that he is "intrepid to the verge of temerity."

I don't mean that as a back-handed compliment. In an age characterized by academic fecklessness and cowardice, Alan is and has been throughout his career fearless and courageous. He speaks truth to power.

Alan was the man we needed most in the 1980s and 1990s when political correctness and wokeness were coming to dominate higher education. He stood, sometimes alone, against the forces of academic barbarism, whilst others cowered in the faculty lounge.

I do not think, however, that Alan's warrior-spirit is driven entirely by what the Greeks called *thymos* or spiritedness. To me, Alan's fighting spirit is driven by something much rarer: common decency and his respect for the notion that all men and women should be given the freedom to fulfill their highest purposes, dreams, and aspirations.

The acronym of the organization he cofounded, FIRE, might be the best and most fitting way to describe Alan. We might even say of him what was once said of the great Abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison, that he is a man "*All on fire*"—all on fire for liberty and justice. For those of us fortunate enough to know him, we all know that *his* moral fire has lit the way for the rest of us.

Alan has done something that few can say they've done: He made America a bit freer than it otherwise would have been. Like David, he stood up to the Goliath of Political Correctness, and he won.

If there were a Nobel Prize for Freedom, surely Alan would be one of its first recipients.

Conclusion

Finally, we should not forget that Alan was never *alone* on his journey. Standing at his side through thick and thin has been his remarkable wife, Erika.

I'm quite certain that Alan would not have been able to accomplish half of his achievements without the love, support, and inspiration of Erika. She *loaned* Alan to the cause of freedom, and for that we are deeply thankful. The good news is that she can now call *in* the loan.

And so, whatever we say in thanks to Alan tonight, we also say to Erika!

I end this testimonial to my friend Alan Charles Kors with a personal message from me to him.

In the words of Tennyson:

We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Thank you.

Allen C. Guelzo

Thomas W. Smith Distinguished Research Scholar and Director of the Initiative on Politics and Statesmanship in the James Madison Program, Princeton University

On March 10, 1762, a 62-year-old cloth merchant from Toulouse named Jean Calas was executed for the murder of his son Marc-Antoine. According to the prosecutor, the son had been about to convert from his father's Protestant Huguenot faith to Catholicism, and in a fit of rage, the father had killed the son. Jean Calas, however, denied the accusation and persisted into the denial right up to the moment when he was tortured and strangled. The torture was twofold: an eighteenth-century version of waterboarding, then breaking his limbs on the wheel. But after two hours of torture, it was observed he neither wavered nor cried out. And his last words were, "I die innocent."

There was a sensational aspect to this case, since it began to appear from the start that Jean Calas had been singled out by the authorities, not because he was a murderer—he was not; the young Calas was actually a suicide—he was singled out because Jean Calas was a Huguenot. In Toulouse, a Huguenot could not be a lawyer. No Huguenot could be a surgeon, a bookseller, a printer.

Word of the case was brought by Jean Calas's other son, Donat, to the famous playwright and essayist François-Marie Arouet, better known by

his pen name Voltaire. For the next three years, Voltaire amassed growing mounds of evidence that pointed to Jean Calas's innocence. And why? "You will ask me perhaps why I interest myself so strongly in this Calas who was broken on the wheel," Voltaire asked. "It is because I am a man." Voltaire had taken as his battle cry in 1759, *Écrasez l'infâme*, "Crush the evil." Crush the evil of bigotry. Crush the evil of organized stupidity. Crush the evil that thinks that power can substitute for truth. Finally, on March 12, 1765, a judicial panel reversed Calas's conviction. Far too late to save his life, but enough to save his reputation.

Two hundred and sixteen years after *L'Affaire Calas*, a great admirer of Voltaire, which is Alan Charles Kors, found his own version of Jean Calas, which was me. I was a first-year history graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania and, perhaps, the strangest graduate student the history faculty had ever laid eyes upon. (They couldn't pronounce my name either.) I came from a small Protestant religious college that none of them had ever heard of and embraced a Protestant evangelicalism that the other faculty sneered at as fully as Calas's condemners had sneered at his. But when they moved at my first semester review to recommend that I be quietly dropped from the program—since, of a certainty, in their view, I would never fit in their world of higher education—the spirit of Voltaire rose in the words of Alan Kors. "You are religious bigots," he told them. Embarrassed, they shelved their recommendation, and I went the distance to the Ph.D.

I stand before you this evening, not as one broken on an academic wheel, but as one rescued from that breaking by a modern Voltaire, a *philosophe*. And why? Because he is a man.

I stayed with Alan Kors through two semesters of his survey of European intellectual history in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. To describe his lectures in those old days in college hall would be like describing life next to a blast furnace. It was a classroom in which Hobbes and Locke, Beccaria and Montesquieu, John Wesley and Pierre Bayle strode through our imaginations as from life. No one could have been further

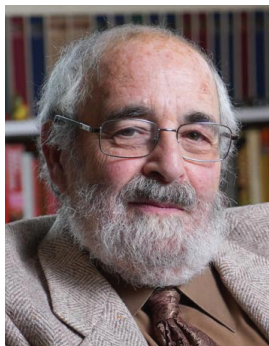
removed in his own mind from John Wesley than Alan Kors, and yet when he lectured on Wesley in the eighteenth century, the fires licked around the edges. Alan said, “Witnesses describe Wesley’s preaching to the new industrial suburbs where life is work from dawn till dusk and where people have been abandoned by the Church of England.” I was writing this in words I could barely write as fast as they were being uttered. “But into this,” Alan said, “Into this comes Wesley preaching the love of God, that they are not abandoned, that they have a reward. Yet to the philosophers and scholars, Wesley has a different message: Do you think that the solar system is routine? Then consider the God who made it.”

At the end, I had but one wish: to teach like Alan Kors and to teach by his examples the greatest of energy, the strictest of objectivity. When asked in class what he really thought about Wesley’s gospel, Alan replied, “If you can guess what I think personally about any of these issues, I will consider that I have failed.” And behind it all rises the figure of Voltaire, the Voltaire who writes against arbitrary authority as the source of wrong, who seeks freedom of thought, of the press, of expression, of conscience, of securing for people the freedom to pursue the simplest tasks of this world, the cultivation of their own gardens.

These are the lessons taught by Alan Kors, lessons that burned their way into my mind, and it is not too much to say that all that I have done in the years since our first encounter early one morning in the fall of 1978 is the fruit of the trust that you placed in me, a friendless, fatherless boy. Nor was I in fact the last Jean Calas whom you rose to defend, as the case of Eden Jacobowitz demonstrated. But the lessons were always the same, and these are the lessons which I now seek to pass on to yet another generation. And to Alan Kors tonight, I say this: *Écrasez l’infâme. Écrasez l’infâme, mon professeur modèle. Écrasez l’infâme, jusqu’à la fin.* Thank you.

* * *

Dr. Alan Charles Kors



A distinguished scholar of European history, an award-winning teacher, and the cofounder of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), Alan Charles Kors is a champion of individual liberty and the values of Western Civilization. Dr. Kors joined the University of Pennsylvania in 1968, where he now holds the post of Henry Charles Lea Professor Emeritus of European History. His scholarship and teaching focus on European history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the French Enlightenment, the history of classical liberalism, and the phenomenon of political disillusionment. He served as editor-in-chief of the Oxford *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* and has written several books and many articles on early modern French intellectual history, including *Naturalism and Disbelief in France, 1650–1729* and *Epicureans and Atheists in France, 1650–1729*. He served for six years on the National Council for the Humanities and has received fellowships from the American Council for Learned Societies, the Smith-Richardson Foundation, and the Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University.

In 2005, President George W. Bush awarded the National Humanities Medal to Dr. Kors for his dedication to the study of the humanities and to the defense of academic freedom. Three years after accepting the National Humanities Medal, Dr. Kors received the prestigious Bradley Prize. He has also won both the Lindback Award and the Ira Abrams Memorial Award for distinguished college teaching.

In 1999, he coauthored *The Shadow University: The Betrayal of Liberty on America's Campuses*, a highly influential book that exposed the sacrifice of liberty, open inquiry, and fairness at the altar of political correctness. The principled courage and vision of Professor Kors became the catalyst for the birth of FIRE in 1999, for which he has served as the pro bono codirector, president, and chairman.

Dr. Kors received his B.A. from Princeton University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University.

The Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education



ACTA is most pleased to present the 18th annual Philip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to Liberal Arts Education. The awarding of this prize, made with the advice of a distinguished selection committee, advances ACTA's long-term goal to promote and encourage a strong liberal arts education.

The Merrill Award offers a unique tribute to those dedicated to the transmission of the great ideas and central values of our civilization, and it is presented to inspire others and provide public acknowledgment of the value of their endeavors.

The prize is named in honor of Philip Merrill, an acclaimed public servant, publisher, businessman, and philanthropist who served as a trustee of Cornell University, the University of Maryland College Park Foundation, the Aspen Institute, the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Throughout his career, Mr. Merrill was an outspoken proponent of academic excellence and an articulate spokesman for the importance of historical literacy in a free society. Mr. Merrill was a founding member of ACTA's National Council.

Traditionally, threats to higher education have stemmed from outside academia. Today's challenges, it seems to me, stem more from an interior hardening of the arteries.

—Philip Merrill, in an early correspondence urging support for the newly founded ACTA



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