

BYRD CENTER PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Teacher Institute

The Teacher Institute is the keystone Byrd Center initiative that provides professional development to grades 6-12 educators about the Constitution, Bill of Rights, Congress' constitutional role, and the legislative process. The Institute is presented through a partnership between the Byrd Center, Shepherd University, and the Center for Legislative Archives at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Support for the Teacher Institute enables the expansion of the program to locations across West Virginia and offset facility rental fees, honorariums, and travel expenses. The first Teacher Institute was held at the Byrd Center in the summer of 2016 and has since its inception engaged over 400 educators.

People Powered

People Powered: Civic Action, Community Engagement, and American Representative Democracy will train high school educators in inquiry-based teaching pedagogies and engage students in a year-long series of collaborative civics-focused experiential activities that culminate in a research-based authentic task assignment. Designed as a hybrid project incorporating the most successful elements of the Byrd's Center's highly regarded annual Teacher Institute and student-focused Government and Deliberation programs, *People Powered* will utilize innovative primary source-based lessons and student-led activities to facilitate broader and deeper understanding of the full arc of American civic life in historic and contemporary contexts.

Student Internship Program

The Student Internship Program enables students to work with the Byrd Center's collections to gain valuable hands-on experience. Support of the Student Internship Program enhances one of the center's core initiatives by providing more students with an opportunity to develop the foundational skills required of those seeking careers as archivists, museum professionals, historians, and political scientists. This program augments Shepherd University's academic programs in public history and historical preservation.

Constitution Day

Constitution Day, inaugurated by Senator Byrd in 2005, is a signature event at the Byrd Center and is celebrated annually on or about September 17. A highlight is the Tom E. Moses Memorial Lecture on the U.S. Constitution, featuring renowned authors and scholars speaking on topics related to the Constitution and American civil liberties.

Robert C. Byrd Oral History Project

The Oral History Project is a core component of the Byrd Legacy Project, a commitment of the center to collect interviews with former members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, congressional staff members, friends, family, and constituents of the late senator. Oral history interviews provide an avenue to gain additional perspective and context about Senator Byrd's life and career and the ways in which his friends, colleagues, and contemporaries remember him.

Government and Deliberation Initiative

This collaborative, immersive civics education initiative was developed and led by the Byrd Center in partnership with Berkeley County Public Schools. Students visited the Byrd Center to attend workshops on the Constitution and the legislative process which prepared them to engage in a year-long mock congress simulation. Students worked through committees and a House of Representatives and Senate to craft legislation to address an issue facing their colleagues and their school district. The students returned to the Byrd Center near the end of the school year to sit as their respective legislative bodies and debate and ultimately pass their legislation.

Robert C. Byrd Traveling Exhibit

In celebration of the Centennial of Senator Byrd's birth in November 2017, the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education produced a dynamic, fact-filled traveling exhibit about the senator's life and career titled Robert C. Byrd: Senator, Statesman, West Virginian. The exhibit toured 22 large and small venues across West Virginia and Washington, DC from April 2016 through January 2018. The exhibit tour concluded with a gala celebration at The Culture Center in Charleston on November 20, 2017, the senator's 100th birthday. A book version of the exhibit was produced and distributed free of charge to all public and academic libraries across West Virginia.