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William & Mary Citizenship Creed



MARSHALL

1922



WYTHE



WE, the members of the classes in Virginia Government and Citizenship of the Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship, of the College of William and Mary, at Williamsburg, Va., after a series of open discussions in the class room, and after obtaining suggestions from leading public men and scholars in this State and other States, do declare that without undertaking here to enumerate those private virtues and those social and religious duties which enter into the making of a good citizen, the following is a summary of our conception of our duties as citizens to the governments under which we live.

My Duties as a Citizen

I.

To acquaint myself with those fundamental principles embodied in our constitutions and laws which experience has shown are essential to the preservation of our liberties and the promotion of good government, and to defend those principles against all attacks.

II.

To inform myself on all public issues, and on the character, record and platform of all candidates for office, and to exert actively my influence in favor of men and measures in which I believe.

III.

To vote in every election, primary and general, never using my vote for personal or private ends, but only for the public good, placing the welfare of my country above that of my party, if the interests of the two should ever conflict.

IV.

To connect myself with the political party which most nearly represents my views on public questions, and to exert my influence within the party to bring about the nomination of good men for office and the endorsement of measures for the public weal.

V.

To have the courage to perform my duties as a citizen regardless of the effect upon me financially or socially, remembering that a cowardly citizen is as useless to his country in time of peace as a cowardly soldier is in time of war.

VI.

To stand for honest election laws impartially administered.

VII.

To obey all laws whether I deem them wise or not, and to uphold the officers in the enforcement of the law.

VIII.

To make full and honest returns of all my property and income for taxation.

IX.

To be ever ready to serve my country in war, and in peace, especially in such inconspicuous capacities as juror and election official.

X.

To acquaint myself with the functions of the various departments of my government and to spread the knowledge of the same among my fellow citizens in order that they may enjoy to the fullest extent the advantages offered by the government, and may more fully recognize the government as a means of service to the people.

XI.

To encourage good men to enter public service and remain therein by commending the faithful performance of their duties and by refraining from criticism except such as is founded on a knowledge of facts.

XII.

To seek to promote good feeling between all groups of my fellow citizens and to resist as inimical to public welfare all partisan efforts to excite race, religious, class and sectional prejudice.

XIII.

Not to think alone of what my government can do for me but more about what I can do for it.

XIV.

To inform myself with respect to the problems which confront my country in its foreign relations, and to support policies which safeguard its legitimate interests abroad and which recognize the responsibilities of the United States as a member of international society.