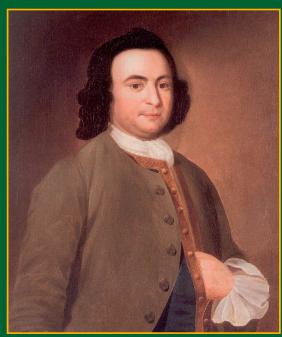
Defender of Liberty

"I...look'd forward to...Independence,...and will risque the last Penny of my Fortune, & the last Drop of my Blood upon the Issue."

George Mason, 1778



George Mason 1726-1792

George Mason belonged to the genteel Virginia plantation society that cultivated some truly extraordinary leaders. George Washington regarded Mason as his mentor and Thomas Jefferson described him as "the wisest man of his generation." He devoted himself to achieving American independence, despite being a widower with nine children to raise. Mason helped draft the

Fairfax Resolves that recommended a "continental congress" to preserve colonial rights. In 1776 Mason wrote the landmark Virginia Declaration of Rights that not only inspired the American Declaration of Independence, but also France's 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the United Nations' 1954 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.





After helping lead a revolt against Great Britain, George Mason prepared to lead another against his fellow delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention. He refused to join them for the signing ceremony (above) on September 17, citing their failure to forbid the importation of slaves or guarantee individual human rights. With the adoption of the U.S. Bill of Rights (left) in 1791, Mason finally devoted his "heart to the new Government."



On April 9, 2002, George Mason received recognition as a champion of human rights and individual liberty. Designed to incorporate the existing 1905 fountain and its garden setting (left), the memorial draws its inspiration from Mason's beloved Gunston Hall plantation.