



PERMANENT THINGS

Number 2

We commence this second number of the quarterly update on the activities of The Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal with an introduction to Center President Annette Y. Kirk.

LIFE IS FOR ACTION

Annette Kirk has dedicated her life to the recovery of wisdom and virtue as the true aims of education. She has worked tirelessly at the local, state, and national levels to promote the necessity for moral imagination in schooling. She has been an active participant in several of the seminal events associated with the birth and development of modern conservatism, including acting as the recording secretary for the famous Sharon Statement drafted in the early 1960s at the home of William F. Buckley, Jr.

For two decades, Annette has hosted students in search of what the poet T.S. Eliot called the "Permanent Things." More than two thousand students and dozens of distinguished lecturers have descended upon the tiny village of Mecosta to take part in seminars hosted by Annette and her late husband, Russell Kirk. For the last sixteen years, her home has served as the center for a vibrant and productive literary community.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan appointed her to the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which fifteen years ago published its landmark report, *A Nation at Risk*, elevating educational issues to national prominence. Since then, she has encouraged our educational and political leaders to consider to what purpose we are educating our youth, and whether true education can exist without a moral dimension. Annette co-founded with her son-in-law, Jeffrey Nelson, The Russell Kirk Center to



Michigan Governor and Kirk Center Advisory Board Member John M. Engler with Annette Kirk.

institutionalize, in the form of a unique residential study center, Russell Kirk's efforts to renew our culture.

MUSIC, KANT, AND CULTURE: SOME RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

The community of thinkers that comprise the Kirk Center includes one of contemporary America's most prolific ballet composers, Mr. Webster Young. He is completing a major new book on the cultural effect of America's declining musical literacy. Associate Professor of Philosophy from Catholic University and Spanish native, Miss Patricia Pintado, delivered a lecture on "Immanuel Kant's Notion of Culture," the topic of the doctoral dissertation she is completing while in residence.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

We note with regret the passing of a close friend and ally of the Kirk Center, constitutional scholar William Bentley Ball. Mr. Ball's writings and legal work in defense of religious freedom were an inspiration to those of us associated with the

Center. He once wrote the following in a letter to Russell Kirk: "We are now faced with the development of a crisis... [which] is nothing less than the organized, highly financed drive to organize civilization without God.... I find myself missing sleep quite regularly on



William Bentley Ball (left) at a Piety Hill seminar in 1992 with Judge Brevard Hand (right) and the Kirks (center).

account of it.... My lack of calm is due to the fact that the whole loss, the whole retreat, the scandal, the peril to our children, and the monstrous evil of it all is – as yet – absolutely unnecessary. We are fleeing headlong into slavery in the face of a noisy but resolute charge of paper tigers. The 'paper' in question consists of money, TV and movie scripts, and a vast outpouring of newspaper and magazine material." A prophetic voice and generous spirit is now silent. We celebrate and cherish William Ball's life and legacy. He is an exemplar for the rising generation. 🏛️

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