You will hear a few common themes from us this year – foundations/groundwork and civic participation. In the pages of this newsletter and in our communications later this year, you will see evidence of plans being developed, work being done, and achievements being celebrated.

Robert H. Jackson was a proponent of public service, and he lived a life dedicated to such service. In doing research for the Smithsonian traveling exhibit, *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* that we are hosting this fall, I am learning about Jackson’s service in the local community as well as the rich history of our environs, and we cannot wait to share that with you. Please mark your calendars for September 6-October 8 and experience this amazing exhibit.

This exhibit well showcases our collective history as well as the role each of us plays in our democracy. While at the Center, we get to add our community’s unique contributions to this history and share our story, working with several community partners, such as the Warren County Historical Society and the Fenton Historical Center to secure community assets to add local flavor to the exhibit.

We specifically requested to host the exhibit during September to augment our Constitution Day discussions with teachers and students. We will be planning a number of programs and events during this time as well.

The Center’s formative first decade was devoted to capturing first-hand accounts of significant moments in history from those who knew Robert Jackson and to building our archives, now bursting to share more stories with those who will listen. Our second decade shifted us from preserving history to making connections and beginning to explore his modern relevance.

Now entering our third decade, we understand that almost nothing is without precedent. As we’re living history’s repetition, Robert Jackson’s work, philosophy, and thoughts provide a path to understanding, justice, and a thriving democracy.

As we approach our quarter century mark, (still two years away, so don’t rush me too much!) our plans are in full swing, so let me now tell you what we are achieving.

First, we are expanding our staff. We are searching for our inaugural Director of Programs to help elevate the amazing programs we offer – in the Center itself, virtually, and on the road. This person will guide us with deeper Jackson insights and an understanding of far-reaching legacy – how he continues to influence public servants today, how the foundations he laid are being challenged and how those challenges are being met, and how he can inspire all of us to contribute or work for the world in which we want to live.

We are thrilled with the support we have received from our foundation partners who recognize this is a critical hire for us.
Second, we are reimagining our virtual front door – our website. This project, a priority highlighted by me when interviewed for this job five years ago(!), officially kicked off in January and it is beyond time for this investment in making ourselves the first and best stop for all things Jackson. This is the first step in an expansion of what we can offer on Jackson and the guidance we can provide on how to navigate our world and its pressures today. Ensuring that depth of information will be an ongoing and iterative project, and we’re excited to begin its development. We look forward to unveiling our new front door later this year.

Third, as a corollary to the website as our virtual front door, we are assessing our physical space – and beginning to think about how we tell Jackson’s story here and how we can better incorporate our amazing cache of digital assets throughout this space, the exhibits and information we need, our theater space, and the flow through the building. This is a slightly more long-term project, likely to kick off in 2025, but we need to make sure our ducks are in a row before then. We have submitted several state and national grant applications to support these exciting updates.

We’ve been using the metaphor of doors because it nicely encompasses how we’re working on inviting you into the discussion, how we’re better enabling access to information, and how we’re taking Jackson’s legacy out into the world.

We all have been energized by our initial successes and support. We have been and will continue to find ways to bring Jackson’s fierce intellect and independent thinking into important conversations to address the challenges of our current times. Our Jacksonian lens is ever more important to help contextualize and provide guidance for today’s challenges, to help reconcile contradictions, and to encourage learning and growth.

Thank you to each of you for helping to bring the Center to life, for believing in the power of community and open discussion to educate and address issues of justice, and for being with us on this journey so far, and for being with us into our next exciting phase.

With thanks,

Kristan McMahon, President
Jackson Day in Warren

Our Jackson Day in Warren County celebration was held Wednesday, February 21 with keynote speaker Elizabeth Hirz, the first woman to serve as District Attorney in Erie County, Pennsylvania. She spoke on the importance of civic engagement in enhancing our communities and shared her passion for public service, to take special care of children, and stem the tide of violence in her community through early outreach and intervention.

Hirz said her early prosecutions in child abuse cases shaped her understanding of her current position, which to her is centered on a deep commitment to public service. “It requires more than just doing my job in an efficient way. It requires unwavering dedication to those that I serve and as a public servant I am accountable to the community.”

She continued, “and with this united vision in mind, and I take it very seriously, is to build bridges, find resources and help bring solutions to address many of the significant challenges in our community. I also learned this: these community partnerships cannot be achieved with me sitting behind my desk. I have to be out in the community,” she said.

Hirz is a native of Falconer, New York (Chautauqua County) and was admitted to the New York State bar in 1998 and the Pennsylvania bar in 1999. She began her career in the District Attorney’s Office in 2002 and became the District Attorney in January 2022.

Throughout her 20 years in the District Attorney’s Office, Hirz has prosecuted a wide array of criminal cases, including homicides, crimes against children, and other major felonies. As District Attorney, she now oversees an office of 16 Assistant District Attorneys, nine County Detectives, and 10 legal secretaries and support personnel.

Hirz serves on many civic and advocacy boards in Erie County, PA and volunteers her time for legal education outreach to young students.

The video of the address can be found at https://bit.ly/JacksonDay2024.
Beginning her research as an RHJC summer intern in 2021, Sara Godfrey realized the culmination of her work when she recently published an article published by the Global Accountability Network evaluating the prosecution of forced marriage in international courts. Her article, *Reviewing the Prosecution of the Forced Marriage of Women and Girls in International Courts: Sexual Slavery or Inhumane Act?* examines the evolution of forced marriage in the eyes of international law, a crime that she argues has too often been confined to charges of sexual slavery.

Godfrey, a 2022 graduate of Miami University, is currently a researcher with the Global Accountability Network (GAN), a nonprofit organization of international prosecutors and students aiming to secure justice for victims of atrocity crimes through documentation, research, and advocacy. GAN was founded by her supporting author, David Crane, the Founding Chief Prosecutor of the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), and former Board Chair of the Center. After expressing her interest in international law, Sara was connected with Prosecutor Crane during her summer internship at the RHJC. This working relationship, facilitated and supported by the Jackson Center, began a research endeavor extending more than two years beyond her internship.

Godfrey’s work began with a broad question posed by Crane: “How has the prosecution of gender-based crimes evolved from Nuremberg, through the tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, to Sierra Leone, and the ICC?” Godfrey began pondering this question during her internship with the Jackson Center, using the Center’s archives and vast sources on the Nuremberg era as a starting point. Choosing to continue her research with Crane after her internship, Sara joined GAN. After conducting a historical overview of the prosecution of gender-based crimes in international courts, together, Godfrey and Crane settled on the topic of forced marriage.

Sara was recently accepted and will soon begin study at, Columbia University’s IPA Masters of International Affairs, program where she will concentrate on humanitarian policy in the Middle East.

**Unfortunately, the range of crimes committed against women and girls during armed conflict is vast – how did you decide to focus on forced marriage?**

“I was struck by the international community’s focus on sexual violence when it comes to atrocity crimes committed against women and girls. While indeed necessary, especially given the lack of attention to sexual crimes at Nuremberg, I was curious about gender-based violence that was not confined to sexual acts, such as that present in forced marriage. Forced marriage highlights the fact that gender-based crimes are not limited to sexual violence, rather forced marriage is a broader gender-based crime as it often involves a sexual, social and domestic dimension. Therefore, I wanted to examine if international courts have been able to capture this distinction. Additionally, the topic of forced marriage as a distinct gender-based crime is also somewhat controversial, as international courts have repeatedly attempted to confine factual instances of forced marriage to the charge of sexual slavery, which in my view, incorrectly limits forced marriage to sexual violence. Prosecutor Crane shares this view, as he was the first international prosecutor to press charges of forced marriage as an inhumane act as a crime against humanity in Sierra Leone.”

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What defines forced marriage in current ICC terms?

“The ICC’s most recent Policy on Gender-Based Crimes (published December 2023) describes forced marriage as ‘a situation in which a person is [forcefully] compelled to enter into a conjugal union with another person,’ thus violating a person’s right to freely choose their spouse. Typically, during forced marriages, victims are labeled ‘wives’ and forced to fulfill the socially constructed gendered expectations of a ‘wife’ in the given society. This often includes fulfilling all of their ‘husband’s’ sexual demands, serving as his exclusive partner, reproducing with him, raising his children, and completing all of the domestic duties assigned to ‘wives’ based on social norms, like cooking and cleaning. Victims often experience lasting social stigmatization and mental trauma due to being labeled a combatant’s ‘wife.’ Only recently, in the 2023 Policy Paper, has the ICC explicitly recognized forced marriage as a gender-based crime made up of sexual violence, reproductive violence, and broader gendered harms.”

It seems easy and obvious to lump forced marriage in with the crime of sexual violence, but your paper shows that raising these distinctions is a positive evolution for the ICC. Why is it important to highlight the uniqueness of the crime?

“Prosecutor Crane was really the pioneer in this area. His work at the SCSL opened the door to the prosecution of gender-based crimes beyond the predefined crimes related to sexual violence. We both share the view that accepting the status quo and prosecuting all gender-based violence through charges of sexual violence will ultimately limit the range of prosecutable offenses in the future and fails to capture the true experience of victims. Our paper maps the evolution of how, beginning with Crane’s work at the SCSL, international courts have slowly begun to move away from framing women and girls as victims of sexual acts alone, but rather as victims of a broader range of gender-based crimes – whether sexual, reproductive, or nonsexual. This is important given that fact that charges related to sexual violence may be unable to capture the range of harms that result from gender-based violence. For example, in the case of forced marriage, the harms endured by the victim are not limited to acts of sexual violence but also may include forced reproduction, domestic labor, and social stigmatization. Confining forced marriage to sexual slavery therefore fails to recognize the unique harms – beyond the sexual – that victims are forced to endure.”

Why do you think it has taken so long to evolve to our present definitions and sensibilities towards GBV?

“I believe that the historical tendency to view women and girls through the lens of their sexuality alone is why it has taken so long for the international community to come to recognize them as victims of a broader range of gender-based violence rather than victims of only sexual crimes. Prosecuting sexual violence is extremely important, especially as Nuremberg failed to prosecute documented instances of rape, sexual violence, and enforced prosecution. As a result, the tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda both intentionally focused on sexual violence, pushing back on the tendency to view the rape of women and girls as an inevitable consequence of war. However, this focus on sexual violence, while incredibly necessary and important, did begin to equate women and girls as victims of only sexual violence. So, understandably, it took some time (and push-back) to move away from this framing and begin to recognize the serious nature of other forms of gendered violence beyond the sexual realm.”

What are the lasting effects of the survivors?

“Victims of forced marriage experience a range of consequences that differ dramatically from victims of sexual slavery, particularly regarding the social dimension of the crime. The labeling of victims as combatants’ ‘wives’ often results in social stigmatization and psychological trauma that extends beyond the conflict. For example, in Sierra Leone, community reintegration was extremely difficult for many victims of forced marriage after the conflict as the labeling of victims as ‘wives’ broke down social support structures and family ties. This largely arose from the exclusive nature of forced marriage as women and girls who were ‘married’ were viewed as more of an extension of their rebel ‘husbands’ than victims themselves. Therefore, victims of forced marriage tend to experience less sympathy and additional social hardship after conflict. In Sierra Leone, some community members viewed ‘bush wives’ as complicit in rebel activities like looting, with some believing that ‘bush wives’ benefited economically from the war. Further, many communities refused to raise ‘rebel children,’ making it impossible for some victims to return to their original homes and families after the war. Therefore, given the shame and stigma of being a rebel’s ‘wife,’ victims of forced marriage often suffer lasting psychological harm and social isolation post-conflict.”
Korematsu Foundation President to speak for Constitution Day

Dr. Karen Korematsu, will speak at the Robert H. Jackson Center for Constitution Day observances on September 17, at 10 am in the Carl Cappa Theatre. Korematsu is the Founder and President of the Fred T. Korematsu Institute and the daughter of the late civil rights icon, Fred Korematsu. She is a national speaker and travels the country advocating for civil liberties, social justice, civics, and ethnic studies education.

2024 marks the 80th anniversary of Korematsu v. United States, a landmark 1944 U.S. Supreme Court case that upheld the constitutionality of executive order 9066, whose ultimate result was the incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans in internment camps during World War II.

The Court ruled in a 6–3 decision that the exclusion order was permissible executive action.

The dissenting opinion, written by Jackson, argued that the exclusion order violated personal liberties and equal protection guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment. They stated that there was no evidence of disloyalty among the affected population to justify such restrictions. It is widely criticized today for setting a precedent that government practices of racial discrimination are permissible during wartime.

Dr. Korematsu has been interviewed on radio, podcasts, and TV. Her Op/Eds have appeared in the New York Times and Washington Post. She has received numerous awards and honors for her work.

Constitution Day recognizes U.S. Congress’ adoption of the United States Constitution in 1787 and, since 1941, as also Citizenship Day to honor all who are U.S. citizens regardless of their path to attainment.

All institutions receiving federal funding, including funding through the U.S. Department of Education, are required to hold an educational program pertaining to the United States Constitution in September. The Robert H. Jackson Center is proud to contribute to the education goals of area schools with this annual event, but the public is invited to attend, as well. This program is free, but registration is required.

Constitution Day is sponsored in part by the Chautauqua Abstract Co., Fessenden Laumer & DeAngelo, and the Randall J. Sweeney Education Fund.

Website Redesign
reimagining the digital front door

The Robert H. Jackson Center is overhauling its website, which after 15 years is showing its design and technical limits.

We’re excited to begin its development with digital marketers, Cardwell Beach who recognized early on that the dedication to preserving Jackson’s legacy is not just about retelling history, but breathing life into principles, and ensuring that the echo of justice resounds in contemporary dialogues.

For an additional sneak peek and to learn how you can contribute to this effort, contact Tina Downey at tdowney@roberthjackson.org or (716) 483-6646.
Jackson Lecture on the U.S. Supreme Court Announced

Chautauqua Institution and the Robert H. Jackson Center will be welcoming law professor and writer, Kate Shaw was the speaker for the 20th Annual Robert H. Jackson Lecture on the Supreme Court of the United States, Monday, July 29, at 3:30 pm in Chautauqua Institution’s Hall of Philosophy.

Shaw is a constitutional, administrative and legislation law professor at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School. She previously worked in the Obama White House Counsel’s Office and served as law clerk for U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens. Her academic work focuses on executive power, the law of democracy, the Supreme Court, and reproductive rights with work appearing in many law review journals as well as national newspapers and magazines.

She is a co-host of the Supreme Court podcast Strict Scrutiny, a contributor with ABC News, a Contributing Opinion Writer with the New York Times, and a Public Member of the Administrative Conference of the United States.


Attending this lecture requires a Chautauqua Institution gate pass. Please allow additional time for parking and Institution entry procedures. A CHQ Assembly subscription is required to view this event online. Sign up for CHQ Assembly services online at https://bit.ly/CHQAssembly or by scanning the QR code.

If you are 73 or older, you can support the Robert H. Jackson Center through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA or retirement account.

A QCD is a direct transfer to a charity that counts toward your required minimum distribution (RMD) but is excluded from your taxable income.

Key benefits of QCDs include reducing your tax bill without itemizing, avoiding limits on charitable deductions, and supporting causes you care about. An individual can gift up to $105,000 per year in QCDs, while married couples can gift up to $210,000 total.

To make a QCD to the Center, simply inform your plan administrator, request they send a check with your name to our address (305 E. 4th St., Jamestown, NY 14701), and enjoy knowing you’ve made a meaningful impact supporting justice and the rule of law.
Exhibition Feature: Voices and Votes

Last year, the Museum Association of New York (MANY) selected the Robert H. Jackson Center as one of 12 participant and host sites for Voices and Votes: Democracy in America, a Smithsonian traveling exhibition that integrates the resources of the host community and institutions to explore, reflect on, and tell the story of their role in the evolution of American democracy and envision the future of our nation. It is part of the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program.

Voices and Votes will be on view at the Jackson Center September 6 – October 18. This exhibition is part of MANY’s A New Agora for New York: Museums as Spaces for Democracy humanities discussion series.

Robert H. Jackson Center President Kristan McMahon says this exhibit is a wonderful way to celebrate our area’s rich history and the Center’s mission, while creating an opportunity to work with our partners and give our community an opportunity to share their thoughts. “This opportunity is perfectly aligned with our mission to educate our communities on issues of justice and civic participation, and the Center is the perfect venue to host this exhibit. Jamestown was the home of the Automatic Voting Machine Company, and we’re looking forward to working with the Fenton History Center, Prendergast Library, and other community partners to tell the story of Jamestown and our surrounding area as a seat of the democratic process,” she said.

The material is adapted from American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith currently on display at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. Voices and Votes includes historical and contemporary photographs; educational and archival video; engaging multimedia interactives; and historical objects like campaign souvenirs, voter memorabilia, and protest material. It is combined with content from the host communities and museums to give a local perspective to the struggle to support national democratic systems.

The goal of the project is to amplify the role that our state and residents historically played in the development of American democracy as we approach the nation’s semiquincentennial. The themes are designed to facilitate thought-provoking discussions about the roots and responsibilities of our democracy and community.

The project is supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) award and a grant from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. The 30-month exhibition opened at Preservation Long Island in March then travels to Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site, and the National Women’s Hall of Fame before its tenancy at the Robert H. Jackson Center for six weeks starting in September 2024.

It continues to the Munson in Utica, Alice Austen House, Long Island Museum, Onondaga Historical Association and Skà•noñh Great Law of Peace Center, Genesee Country Village and Museum, Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission, Chemung County Historical Society, and concludes at the Underground Railroad Education Center in, Albany in January 2026. Each site hosts the Voices and Votes exhibition for six weeks.

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MANY is New York State’s representative of the Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program, an outreach program of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service that brings traveling exhibitions, educational resources, and programming across America to communities through local museums, historical societies, and other cultural venues.

“We’re excited to collaborate once again with the Museum Association of New York, to share the wealth of the Smithsonian’s research on democracy in America,” said Carol Harsh, Director of the MoMS program. “As one of the original thirteen colonies, New York was at the heart of the American experiment to create a government of, by, and for the people. The support from the NEH will expand the reach of Voices and Votes and help communities amplify their own local history.”

To learn more about A New Agora for New York: Museums as Spaces for Democracy and the Voices and Votes MoMS exhibition, visit http://agoranewyork.org/

Living Voices

Living Voices, the Seattle-based live, historical theater troupe, is wrapping up its season at the Jackson Center in May. Since January the Center has hosted 20 performances enjoyed by hundreds of students from across the county and Warren, PA.

Each performance is combined with archival film and sound, transforming history into a moving, personal journey using historical perspectives based on real people and events. Living Voices is designed to inform and provoke discussion in classrooms, families, and the community.

Monica Linkerhof, Curriculum Development Specialist in the Social Studies Department at Warren County School District says her students love the experience of seeing these performances. “The Living Voices program brings history to life in an incredibly powerful way. The Robert Jackson Center facilitates an invaluable educational experience that sparks curiosity and understanding in a truly memorable fashion, and I recommend the series to all social studies and history teachers and students.”

These programs are free, but registration is required online at www.roberthjackson.org/events or by phone at (716) 483-6646.

The series is expected to return to the Jackson Center in early 2025.
Early Voting at the Jackson Center

The Robert H Jackson Center is delighted to announce that we will once again be hosting early voting opportunities throughout 2024.

This not only increases voter turnout generally, but also promotes inclusivity and equity in our electoral system. As champions of democracy and civic engagement, we believe in the importance of making voting as accessible as possible to all citizens.

Early voting at the Center allows all Chautauqua County Residents to vote at their convenience for more than a week prior to elections, regardless of their assigned polling place.

The Center has hosted early voting for the past four years, reaffirming our commitment to fostering active citizenship and civic responsibility. We invite and encourage all eligible voters to take advantage of early voting opportunities where you live.

The next early voting opportunity is June 15-23 for federal, state, and local primaries, and again October 26 – November 3 for the general election.

Consult the Chautauqua County Board of Elections for details about early voting times.

The Chautauqua County Board of Elections utilizes the Center’s banquet room to facilitate early voting. The process involves moving privacy booths, printers, readers and a large safe downstairs. The workers stress the importance of security in all of their operations with representatives from both major parties working collaboratively as a way to preserve fairness.

Rental Options

Plan now for summer and fall rentals

The Center’s Kent Mansion, theater, and banquet room provide grand backdrops for business meetings, retreats, summer socials, and get-togethers complete with elegantly carved woodwork, chandeliers, gilded mirrors, fireplaces, and leaded glass windows. We offer a unique venue to host your corporate or private event any time of the year.

Amenities include a 200-seat theater, banquet hall, reception, and conference rooms. Handicapped access and restrooms are conveniently accessible on two levels. Off-street parking for 30 vehicles is available on site.

Arrangements can be made by contacting: info@roberthjackson.org or (716) 483-6646.
Upcoming Events

Your voting story is coming to the
Robert H. Jackson Center
September 6 - October 18

Early Voting Primaries - June 15-23
Jackson Lecture at Chautauqua Institution - July 29
Early Voting General - October 26 - November 3
Voices and Votes - October 26 - November 3
Constitution Day - September 17

Please visit roberthjackson.org for the latest program announcements.
To receive notifications of upcoming programs subscribe to our email list at roberthjackson.org.