

F.M. KIRBY FOUNDATION SOLICITATION EVALUATION FORM

DATE: March 29, 2021

REQUEST DATE: March 3, 2021

Last grant acknowledgement: Yes

Program Area: Arts, Culture, Humanities

APPLICANT:

Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union

PO Box 110

Mt. Vernon, VA 22121

CONTACT: Dr. Douglas Bradburn, President & CEO

PHONE: (703) 799-8650

PAYEE OTHER THAN ADDRESSEE:

AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$250,000 **NATURE OF REQUEST:** Toward the acquisition of original Washington objects and its inclusion in a new Museum exhibit as part of our Campaign for Mount Vernon

GRANT HISTORY

LAST GRANT DATE: 4/30/2020

LAST GRANT AMOUNT: \$50,000

FYE DATE: 12/31/2019

AFS DATE: 9/22/2020

2014	\$84,000	4/14/2014	Toward the development of animated productions about the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, as well as the winter encampment of 1777 at Morristown
2017	\$39,000	6/30/2017	Toward the acquisition of the Washington to the Marquis de Chastellux letter of May 10, 1783 highlighting philanthropy and benevolence
2018	\$39,000	5/31/2018	Toward the acquisition of the Washington to the Marquis de Chastellux letter of May 10, 1783 highlighting philanthropy and benevolence
2019	\$40,000	7/31/2019	
2020	\$50,000	4/30/2020	

No request received in 2016 or 2015. JWK/KMK endorsements received.

DLK COMMENTS: Financial analysis attached.

JFT COMMENTS: The acquisition of the Peter Family Collection is a part of the overall \$150M *Strengthening Our Foundation: The Campaign for Mount Vernon* campaign “to take on immediate preservation challenges, build a transformational endowment that will secure the financial strength of the Association, and ensure education resources that are second-to none.” Much of the collection will be displayed in a new exhibit, tentatively titled *Becoming Mount Vernon*, scheduled to open in February 2022. The exhibit will occupy all eight galleries (approximately 5,000 sq ft) in Mount Vernon’s Donald W. Reynolds Museum and will include the Peter Collection along with additional objects. The F.M. Kirby Foundation Gallery (within the Reynolds Museum that offers temporary exhibitions, which generally change every 1 to 2 years) “will be transformed into the final section of the exhibition, which highlight the truly remarkable story of how Mount Vernon has been preserved. This section will chronicle Mount Vernon’s 19th-century rescue and its ongoing

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preservation. Artwork, artifacts, and archival material will offer a behind-the-scenes look at the groundbreaking and ongoing work of the all-female MVLA (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association) to preserve Washington's home for the nation."

The history of the Peter collection dates back to the Mount Vernon estate sales of 1802. A large portion of the items owned by the Washington's descended into the families of Martha's four grandchildren, one of which was Parry Parke Curtis Peter. "In the late 19th century, Patty's granddaughter, Britannia Wellington Peter Dennon, created an inventory of the collection to guide its dispersal to other five grandchildren." Now the nearly 100 original Washington items will have a permanent home at Mount Vernon.

The planned exhibition "will present material culture through multiple viewpoints, inviting visitors to consider the objects on exhibition in unexpected contexts and through intersectional lenses.

Though MLVA faced the challenges of the estate's closure from mid-March through mid-June, there were still impressive accomplishments, including raising \$20.6M (one of the strongest years on record), 8.7M visitors to their website (a new record), 174 livestream events, 3.2M viewers of United in Song: Celebrating the Resilience of America concert (PBS - New Year's Eve), 2.5 tons of fruits and vegetable harvested from Mount Vernon and donated to families, in need, and 998 teachers participating in the virtual George Washington Teacher Institute to name a few. They also completed multiple capital projects.

I contacted Joe Bondi (Senior Vice President for Development) regarding the current campaign. Mount Vernon's campaign began in earnest on January 1, 2018. Although they have not announced an end-date, it was intended to be a 5-year campaign. They think they may end up needing an additional 6 months to a year to reach the goal of \$150M. MVLA has currently raised \$81.8 million toward the \$150M goal.

There is never a time when I am reviewing material from Mount Vernon that I do not vividly recall my visits there. I'm sure the Peter Family collection is a good investment, and I wholeheartedly support the JWK/KMK endorsed funding as noted below.

JJK COMMENTS: The Peter collection represents a significant homecoming for long-exiled Mount Vernon artifacts that will now be reassembled to join what is already the "largest assemblage of ceramics, silver, furniture, lighting, and even humble kitchen wares surviving from any single 18th-century American household." Inspired by the *poudreuse*, or child's dressing table, I found it more than a little fun to imagine the children and grandchildren of the Washington and Lafayette families composing letters to one another, perhaps with some attempts at each other's language.

It is fascinating to consider how a collection of articles can tell the story of an early republic and its Founding Father. Many of the objects appear to have European provenance, suggestive of both the economic dependence as well as fashionable preferences of early America towards Europe. However, other early aspects of Mount Vernon demonstrate an emerging American identity: the landscapes and gardens of Washington's own design, the distillery making American spirits, and, of course, tragically, slavery itself. Moreover, the exhibition titled *Becoming Mount Vernon* promises to also tell the story of those who worked to preserve the history of the home, forming the first historic preservation organization in the nation's history.

As JFT indicates, program service in 2020 was resilient, despite the many challenges. Like many of our arts, culture, and humanities grantees, Mount Vernon likely tapped entirely new audiences through an expanded digital footprint. I am astounded by the popularity of the fall 2020 virtual

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George Washington Symposium, which garnered 28K participants. Always nice too to see how Mount Vernon serves as a rich resource for teachers, as evidenced by the more than 660 educators who participated in webinars or teacher institutes.

The total budget for the Peter collection and later museum exhibit is \$6M. They have already raised \$5M. With the finish line in sight, a commitment from FMKF will help move this forward. I recommend a pledge of \$250K, spread over three years, towards the acquisition of the Peter collection. I look forward to visiting someday soon.

SDK COMMENTS: Agree; quite a year and with no PPP (government funding!). To put it all in perspective, 2019 admissions was \$14.4mm, 2020 was \$2.8mm and 2021 budget is \$7.7mm. Naturally, this spring is still crucial and not clear how tourist will react.

Might April 2022 finally result in the KA/FMKF joint gathering?

DISPOSITION:

- Declination
- Hold for review on/about:
- Approval for: **\$250,000**
- Hold for Board Review
- Insert Information: **Toward the acquisition of the Peter Family Collection, enclosed herewith is \$85,000, and we hereby pledge \$85,000 in 2022 and \$80,000 in 2023 for like use.**

- Other:

Initials: JOL Date: 3/26/21
Check #: _____ Date: _____

FM KIRBY FOUNDATION
Financial Statement Analysis

Grantee Name:	Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union	Date:	<u>3/10/2021</u>
Prepared By:	DLK		
Grant Request Amt. Budgeted Amount	\$ <u>250,000</u> <u>\$100,000 - \$150,000?</u>	Type of Financial Report Submitted	<u>Audit</u>
		Period Covered in Financial Report	<u>12/31/2019</u>
Audit Firm	<u>Marcum LLP</u>	Date of Report Issuance	<u>9/22/2020</u>
Opinion	<u>Presented Fairly</u>		
Basis of Acctg.	<u>GAAP</u>		

Current Ratio (Liquidity Ratio/Working Capital Ratio)	2.93	Amount of Unrestricted Net Assets (Operating Reserve)	\$ 137,653,243
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Note: A current ratio measures an organization's ability to pay short-term and long-term obligations. The higher the ratio, the more capable the organization is of paying its obligations. A ratio under 1 indicates that the organization's liabilities are greater than its assets.

Allocation of Functional Expenses	2019	%	Must Read Financial Statement Notes
A. Program Service Expenses	\$ 49,267,820	86%	Ideally program expenses should be at least 70% of total budget.
B. Management and General	\$ 3,913,378	7%	
C. Fundraising	\$ 4,244,570	7%	
D. Total Expenses	\$ <u>57,425,768</u>	<u>100%</u>	

Comments/ Notes:

Budget - The 2021 budget projects an operating deficit of \$224K vs a deficit of \$6.3M for 2020. Revenues are budgeted to grow by \$6.6M (94%) , all tied to Mount Vernon attendance-related revenue as it was able to reopen in June. Expenses are budgeted to decline by \$2.8M (9%) as Mount Vernon was forced to reduce staff, initiate some early retirements and eliminate positions. Budgeted reductions in land purchases and acquisitions also helped reduce budgeted expenses.

Audit - Will review the audit but given it is pre-pandemic, not particularly relevant. The Assn. had an operating surplus of \$13.8M for 2019 vs \$8.7M for 2018. Total net assets grew by \$41.9M in 2019 (with a huge positive swing in investment returns of \$47.2M in 2019) vs a loss of \$8.0M for 2018. Total revenues/support grew by \$6.2M (10%) in 2019, primarily in contributions (\$5.8M) and appropriations from endowments (\$975K). Program expenses were relatively flat, growing by \$646K (1%), while management expenses grew by \$118K (35) and fundraising expenses grew by \$302K (8%). The Association had investments totaling \$189.8M as of December 31, 2019, \$184.8M of which are endowment-related. The subsequent events noted that due to the postponement of programming between March and June, 2020, attendance-related revenue was anticipated to decline by \$21.0M. Whenever possible, programs and tickets were being rescheduled and donations were being requested prior to refunding. There were no red flags as a result of my review.