

# DAVID L. WOLPER

TELEVISION & FILM PRODUCER

July 4, 2009

Prefix FirstName LastName Suffix

If Title, Title

If Company, Company

Address1

Address2

City, State Zip

Dear Salutation, if no Salutation then Prefix Last Name:

As someone with a lifelong interest in American history and a deep and abiding love for my country, I naturally want to see the next generation grow up with the same knowledge and appreciation I have. That is why I became involved with the American Council of Trustees and Alumni—and why I am writing to you this Independence Day.

Throughout my career in movies and television, I have produced programs dealing with themes in American history—*Roots*, *North and South*, *Sandburg's Lincoln* and *The Making of the President*, to name just a few. I also served as the chairman of the committee overseeing America's bicentennial.

So imagine my disappointment when I asked my college-aged children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews some basic questions about American history—and none of them were able to answer correctly.

Do you have college-age children, grandchildren, or nieces and nephews? Perhaps the next time you see them, you can ask them these four simple questions:

Q: What do we celebrate on July 4<sup>th</sup>?

A: The Declaration of Independence

Q: Who was the president of the United States at the start of WWII?

A: Franklin D. Roosevelt

Q: Who was the American general at the Battle of Yorktown?

A: George Washington

Q: Where does the phrase “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” come from?

A: The Gettysburg Address

July 4, 2009  
Page Two

Now, these might seem like easy questions to you. But would you believe that most college seniors got these—and others like them—wrong in a multiple-choice test? I didn't believe it, until I asked these questions of my very own family.


The proof is in ACTA's study *Losing America's Memory*, which reported the results of a multiple-choice American history test administered by the University of Connecticut. Even the seniors at our top-ranked colleges fared poorly. And these findings are coupled with an even more shocking one ACTA has uncovered: On most of our campuses, American history is optional.

This Fourth of July, most of our fellow citizens will be spending the day attending parades and celebrating with family and friends. But will they understand just what it is they are celebrating? Do the students at your institution understand?

I urge you to make this Independence Day an occasion to see whether your college is ensuring that its graduates understand what the fireworks are all about. If you need any assistance or advice on how to do so, ACTA is a great resource to consult. I encourage you to give them a call at 202-467-6787.

Thank you for your service to our colleges and universities, and Happy Independence Day.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David L. Wolper". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

David L. Wolper