

The Thomas More Society of America

Suite 700

1211 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20036

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NEWSLETTER OF THE THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Volume 1, Number 1

While intended for our members, this Newsletter is also being distributed to certain persons whose interest in Thomas More merits our invitation to join and the complimentary offer of this Newsletter as an introduction to our Society. Membership dues are set forth at the end of this Newsletter.

A number of members of the Society have asked how and why the Society came to be established. Though its present Directors were all familiar with Thomas More and his life, the spark for its founding came from Chief Judge Howard T. Markey of the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals in Washington. Having suggested to several people for some time that a national society should be created, he formed a Working Group in 1977 and hosted a series of meetings looking to establishment of a Society on a solid foundation. In these days of weakened values and confusion, the "why" of the Society is to emphasize the positive, to recognize and to honor those who best exemplify the high principles of More's life in Government, business and the professions, and to make those lessons known to a people looking for values in their national and personal lives. The Society gives a sustained, centralized and coordinated impetus to those who admire More and who wish to make better known his goodness and the goodness of his life in high public office.

The thought fell on receptive ears among several of us who knew Chief Judge Markey. Members of the Working Group had one thing in common: we worked in the District of Columbia. Professions were diverse: academic, law, the bench, public relations and military. In 1979, the Society was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the District of Columbia. It then acquired tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service and bulk mailing privileges from the U.S. Postal Service.

Our first officers and directors were elected in July 1979 to hold office until September 30, 1980 with formal inaugural of the Society on October 1, 1979. Judge Markey declined because of his judicial office to serve as President but did accept election as a Director. The officers and directors are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Office Telephone</u>
C. Normand Poirier	President	(202) 724-9168
Thomas H. Wall	President-Elect	(202) 862-8042
Ms. Alice O'Donnell	Treasurer	(202) 633-6347
Dr. Marie Helene Gibney	Executive Officer	(202) 625-4231
Col. John R. Crown	Director	
Joseph D. Crumlish	Director	

John D. Lane	Director
Honorable Howard T. Markey	Founder and Director
Mrs. James Scully	Director
Mr. Vincent T. Wasilewski	Director
Richard E. Wiley	Director
Dr. Don Zies	Director

All the officers are also directors.

As set out in the Charter of the Society, its purposes are:

- To educate the public as to the principles, ideals and standards exemplified in the life of Thomas More; learned wit, author, ambassador, High Steward of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, Speaker of Parliament and its presiding officer, and Lord Chancellor of England.
- To facilitate cooperation and fellowship among people in promoting understanding of the importance and relevance of More's principles, ideals and standards.
- To foster research, education and communication in order to increase public awareness and appreciation of More's principles, ideals and standards.
- To make grants, provide scholarships or awards in memory of Thomas More.

Any individual who supports and is willing to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Society is qualified for membership, and may be elected or appointed to any office. The Society desires a membership drawn from every walk of life and from every creed or race.

A previous unincorporated association headquartered in Washington, D.C. yielded its name and informal membership list to our Society. We are unaware of any other national or North American society dedicated to or named after Thomas More. There are regional and local societies in Maryland, New York City, New Haven (allied with the Thomas More Project at Yale University), Minneapolis, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

There is also an international organization AMICI THOMAE MORI (The Friends of Thomas More), founded on December 29, 1962 in Brussels whose General Secretary is the ABBE GERMAIN MARC'HADOUR, Professor of Medieval and Tudor English at the University of Angers, France, and which is headquartered in that city. The official publication of the AMICI is the scholarly bi-lingual quarterly "MOREANA". They have also newly launched the annual "Thomas More Gazette" whose English version has been adopted as the official bulletin of our Society. (Any member who has not yet received the first issue should write us immediately.)

The Society intends to compete with no other group dedicated to Thomas More, but to cooperate with all and to provide a national and continental focal point for those who are genuinely interested in More and who wish to perpetuate, through research and education, the ideals and principles for which he stood through research and education. We consider ourselves fortunate to have a special cooperative relationship with the AMICI and ABBE MARC'HADOUR.

Getting the Society off the ground in its essential form occupied much of the energy of the founders. The organizing activities included the corporate charter and By-laws of a non-profit corporation, tax exempt status, bulletins, announcements and brochures of a fledging institution, and membership campaign. Though in actual operation only a few months, the Society is solvent; its membership is growing well, and its program of activities has been launched.

As a visible sign of our successful inauguration, we held a luncheon meeting on February 7, 1980. Yale Professor Louis Martz, our guest speaker, gave a mesmerizing talk on "St. Thomas More - Private Conscience and Public Life". On May 19, we held our second luncheon meeting with ABBE GERMAIN MARC'HADOUR speaking movingly of "The Significance of Thomas More for Our Times". The text of his speech is being distributed to existing members or those who join by September 30, 1980.

Under the By-laws, our elections will be held on the third Saturday of September. All members are invited to send the names of their recommended nominees for President-Elect and Directors to C. Normand Poirier at the Society's headquarters by July 31. Three classes of Directors will be elected at the annual meeting: one group of four Directors for three years; the second group of four Directors for two years; and the remaining four for one year. Thereafter all directors shall be elected for a three year term. Upon expiration of his term, the President serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors for one year. The Treasurer and the Executive Officer (responsible for administration and management) are elected by the Board of Directors.

President-Elect Wall plans a one-day seminar on Thomas More and his times, with three or four speakers and an evening social event, for February 7, 1981, at a Washington, D.C. university. We will also have more lunch conferences and will launch regional conferences as soon as chapters are founded.

Our charter and our objectives look not only to the establishment of regional chapters but also to affiliated organizations who wish a formal but limited liaison with the Society. The chapters would be composed entirely of the Society's members banded together on a cohesive, geographical basis to conduct their own semi-autonomous activities. Criteria under consideration by the Board of Directors indicate that chapters would not be incorporated separately but that chapter members would elect their own local officers.

It is contemplated that charters would be granted by the Board of Directors. Meanwhile those Society members who would like to start a chapter in their own localities are encouraged to do so and to write us to discuss their plans. Chapters wishing to sponsor their own events will receive our help and encouragement. This we are prepared to do. Of course, no one can legally obligate the Society, financially or otherwise, without advance written authorization from the Board of Directors.

As the Society grows, its Board of Directors is expected to be composed of men and women from throughout the nation and, eventually, from throughout the Western Hemisphere.

This is our first newsletter. You are invited to submit material and news items for inclusion in the next issue as well as articles for the next issue of the Gazette. While no promise of publication can be made, we will forward the articles to the Gazette's editor, ABBE Marc'hadour. We also ask that you alert us to articles or books on More that should be brought to the attention of our members.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Charter Sustaining Membership (Oct. 1, 1979 to Sept. 30, 1980 only)	\$100
Sustaining Membership	\$ 50
Regular Membership	\$ 25

Name and Address

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