



Madison's Gift: Five Partnerships That Built America

David O. Stewart

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Historian David O. Stewart restores James Madison, sometimes overshadowed by his fellow Founders, to his proper place as the most significant framer of the new nation.

Short, plain, balding, neither soldier nor orator, low on charisma and high on intelligence, Madison cared more about achieving results than taking the credit. To reach his lifelong goal of a self-governing constitutional republic, he blended his talents with those of key partners. It was Madison who led the drive for the Constitutional Convention and pressed for an effective new government as his patron George Washington lent the effort legitimacy; Madison who wrote the Federalist Papers with Alexander Hamilton to secure the Constitution's ratification; Madison who corrected the greatest blunder of the Constitution by drafting and securing passage of the Bill of Rights with Washington's support; Madison who joined Thomas Jefferson to found the nation's first political party and move the nation toward broad democratic principles; Madison, with James Monroe, who guided the new nation through its first war in 1812, really its Second War of Independence; and it was Madison who handed the reins of government to the last of the Founders, his old friend and sometime rival Monroe. These were the main characters in his life.

But it was his final partnership that allowed Madison to escape his natural shyness and reach the greatest heights. Dolley was the woman he married in middle age and who presided over both him and an enlivened White House. This partnership was a love story, a unique one that sustained Madison through his political rise, his presidency, and a fruitful retirement.



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Minnie Rivera:

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