

Remembering Vincent Rubera on Founder's Day

by Chad Wollerton - April 11, 2023

Founder's Day is one of the most important days of the year at Monticello. It is when we mark the anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth and present the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medals in conjunction with the University of Virginia.

Our in-person ceremony on the West Lawn (which we livestream for those who cannot join us in person) consists of remarks from that year's Medalist in Citizen Leadership recipient, music, and more. Today we remember a special component of that in-person ceremony that continued for more than 25 years: Vincent Rubera's faithful donation of a Thomas Jefferson-themed cake for folks to enjoy after the Founder's Day ceremony.

For decades Mr. Rubera—who joined us in person as often as he could—and his cake (and then additional cupcakes!) were a mainstay at our Founder's Day ceremony. It is with a heavy heart that this year will not hold the same tradition, as Mr. Rubera recently passed away.

Rubera developed a love of Monticello during his time working as a master carpenter on the landmark 1992 Roof Restoration Project that returned the main house's complex roof systems to Jefferson's original design. He was an early advocate of taking aerial photographs of the completed project and treasured the copies he received from the Foundation.

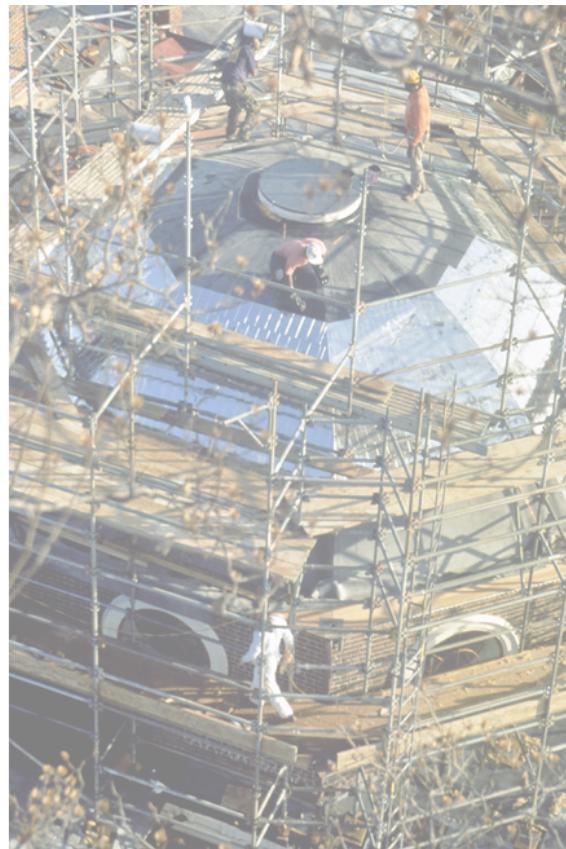


Vincent Rubera in 2007 at Monticello on Founder's Day standing next to the cake he donated that year

Mr. Rubera and the Monticello Roof Restoration Project



Mr. Rubera (in white) working on Monticello's roof balustrades



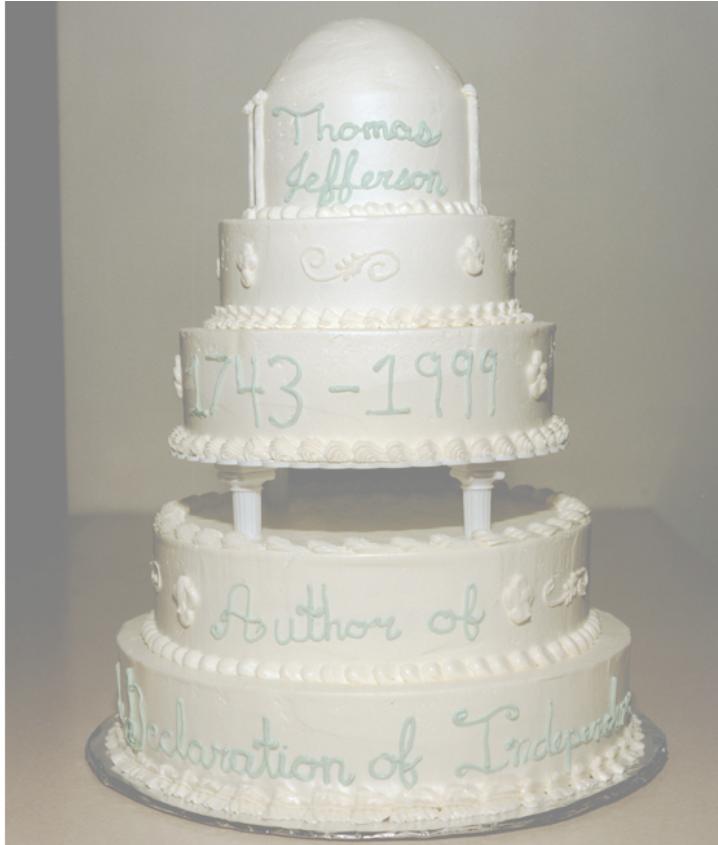


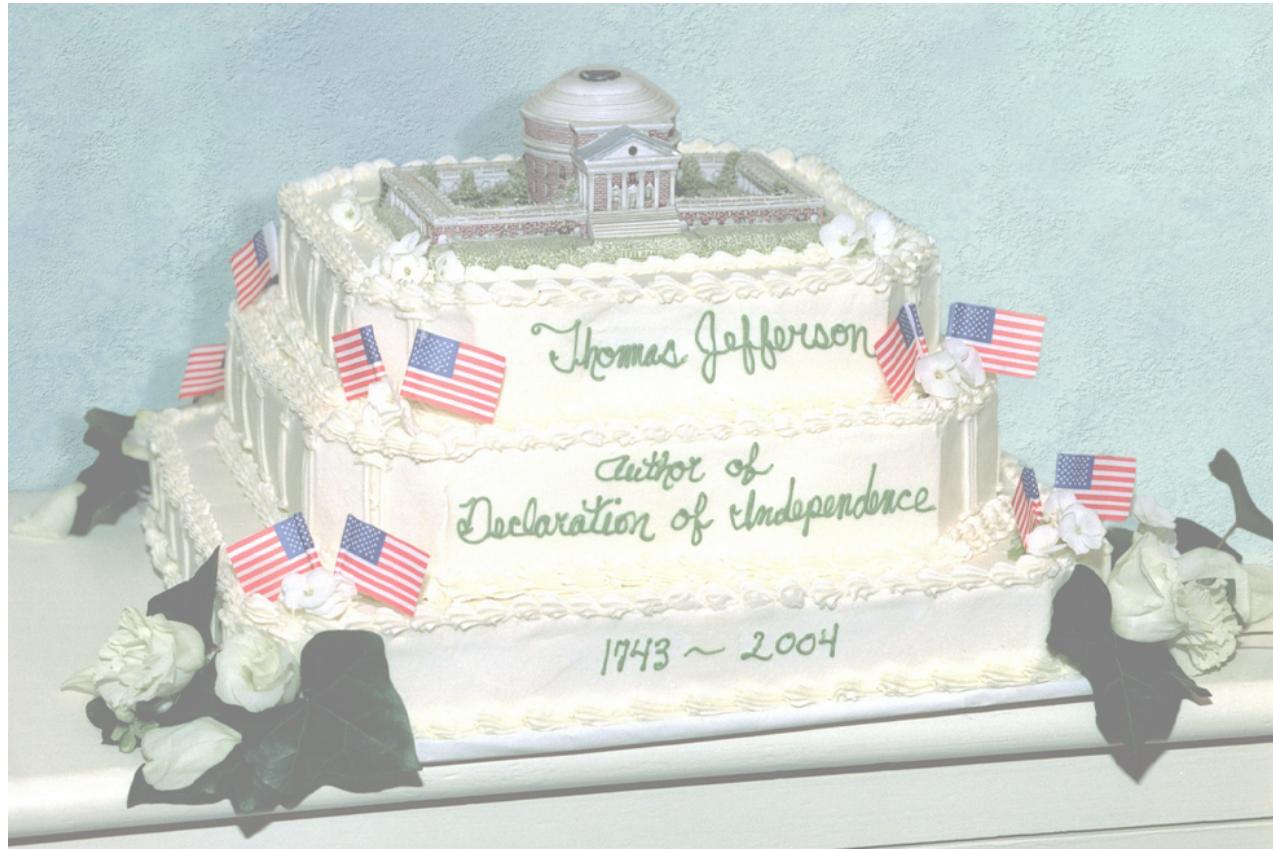
After the restoration project, Rubera began an annual habit of donating a cake to Monticello on Jefferson's birthday, April 13. Much of the staff nowadays knows of Mr. Rubera through those cakes, which were typically made by bakers in Central Virginia and were often as inventive as they were beautiful. Staff members who met him during the Roof Restoration Project – or later met him at one of the annual Founder's Day and Independence Day celebrations he often attended – remember him as a kindhearted and gentle person who took a special pride in his part of restoring Thomas Jefferson's home.

Gallery of Cakes



Founder's Day Cake, 1997





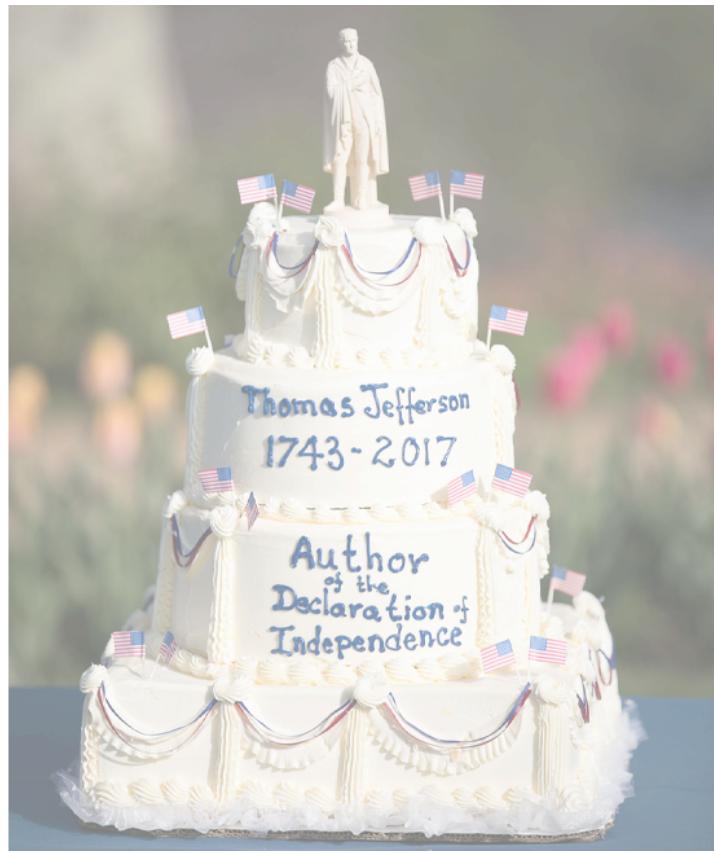














We will continue to honor the tradition he began in the early 1990s with cake after this year's Founder's Day ceremony, and we invite you to enjoy the sampling of photos below from cakes donated by Mr. Rubera over the years.

Our heartfelt condolences to Mr. Rubera's family, friends, and all who mourn his loss, many of whom are among the larger Monticello community.

More on Vincent Rubera and Monticello's roof:

[2006 Washington Examiner article highlighting Rubera's work on the Baltimore Basilica](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/keys-to-basilica-returned-as-restoration-work-ends)
(<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/keys-to-basilica-returned-as-restoration-work-ends>).

[Monticello's Roofing](https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/roofing) (<https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/roofing>).

BRINGING HISTORY FORWARD ([HTTPS://WWW.MONTICELLO.ORG/EXHIBITS-EVENTS/BLOG/?CATEGORY=BRINGING-HISTORY-FORWARD](https://www.monticello.org/exhibits-events/blog/?category=bringing-history-forward))

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