

Introduction: Response to Mary Ann Sures

Thank you, Mary Ann. Listening to you on this wonderful occasion – reminds me of our sharing many years ago in another co-operative celebration. I have in mind our joint lectures in Washington D.C., where we celebrated the integrity of George Washington, and various artistic portrayals of him. It was, in essence, a portrayal of why George Washington deserved tribute as, “The Indispensable Man”, in the American Founding revolution.

And this occasion here today is for us, as ARI co-donors, another wonderful tribute, in this case, to Ayn Rand. Thanks to the sculptor – of whom I will have more to say momentarily – we are participating in bringing to the Ayn Rand Institute a profound portrayal of the person we all know will, some day, be heralded as “The Indispensable Mind” in today’s battle to complete, and definitively win the American Revolution.

For all this, my deepest thanks go out to everyone here today – be they employees or supporters- and, most profoundly, I thank Sandra Shaw – the sine-qua-non of the whole event.

Three comments about this majestic work of art

I would like, for this occasion, to make three comments about this work: i) What it means to me. What it projects about Ayn Rand; ii) What it means, to ARI, to have it here; iii) What it means about its creator, Sandra Shaw.

i) What This Work of Art Projects to Me

First, this is Ayn Rand’s physical countenance – there are no distracting physical surprises or distractions at all. And secondly, this is Ayn Rand in a profound moment of intense focus, and deep emotional reaction to what she is seeing before her. My view is that what she is seeing, embodied as John Galt, is man at his vibrant best: focused; evaluating; acting with rational conviction and passion; achieving; and proud of having achieved.

For all this, Ayn Rand, as presented in this work, is experiencing full, secular reverence. And finally, given all she knew, and what I knew of her, I see here in this bust before me Ayn Rand’s reverence for herself!

All this, present in this work and thus made objective for us to encounter, in physical form, is what this work’s value is to me and my life. It says YES, to life and YES, to my own life, every day, from its pedestal in my living room.

ii) What, therefore, can this bust mean to all of you working here at the Ayn Rand Institute?

It can act as your “Statue of Liberty”, welcoming you to this harbour of rationality, purpose, industry and importance where you work. It can both fuel you for the journey, and give you an image of where we all seek to go – to a world fully fit for human life. This can serve, within these offices, as your Wyatt’s torch, standing as the living flame of your work, out of which all that is good will eventually arise. From Ayn’s hand to us, the torch has been passed, for us to carry forward.

(iii) Finally, I would like to comment on what this work tells me about its author – Sandra Shaw.

I have known Sandra for thirty years, starting with her enrolling in my “The History and Power of Ideas” course at York University in Toronto. From her response then, to her first sculpture commissions, to her study of art history at the University of Toronto, to the sculpture academy in New York City, to constant growth revealed in work, after work, after work, to here, and this work is the intellectual, spiritual, and artistic odyssey of her life. And it is all captured in the work unveiled here, before us, today. This bust, in this sense, is both a heroic portrait and a personally heroic accomplishment. Thus, for me, this work also reveals to me Sandra’s soul, for which – I know - Sandra deservedly holds reverence. And so she should! Sandra, it is a personally very moving and rewarding honor for me to thank you, and to turn the room over to you.