
JEFFERSON

EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

THE WIDER WORLD

The Nobel Peace Prize: What Does it Signify?

By Diane Chido, Scholar-in-Residence
September 2025

Like many historical ironies, the Nobel Peace Prize is named for Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite. His father had moved the family from Stockholm to St. Petersburg, Russia, to [found](#) a landmine production factory for the Russian Tsarist government in 1842. The factory went bankrupt after Russia's devastating loss in the Crimean War in 1856. Eager in language and science, Alfred became fascinated by nitroglycerine and sought to stabilize, use, and sell it. He mixed it with gunpowder, and, in 1867, filed the first of 355 patents.

The next year, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences gave him an honorary award for "important inventions for the practical use of mankind." This inspired him to consider the value of recognizing scientific achievements. He has been described as a "superidealist" due to his love of poetry and his ardent support of those who campaigned against militarism and war. He also wanted to contribute to disarmament efforts and the peaceful solution of international conflicts.

In line with his interests, Nobel left most of his vast fortune to finance the awarding of annual awards to be made in the fields of chemistry, literature, medicine or physiology, physics, and peace; economics was added later. He died on Dec. 10, 1896. These prizes are awarded the week of his death, and the Peace Prize is awarded on Dec. 10 in Oslo, Norway, unlike the other prizes, which are awarded in Stockholm. It is also the Norwegian Nobel Institute that makes the decision, not the Swedish. Nominees will be announced for this year on Oct. 10.[\[i\]](#)

We can all name a few recipients, such as Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Malala Yousefzai of Pakistan, Mother Theresa of Calcutta, India, and American Martin Luther King, Jr. President Barack Obama was the fourth U.S. president to be awarded after Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Jimmy Carter. Obama was honored in December 2009, less than one year into his first term in office. The Nobel Peace Prize committee stated the reason as, "During his first year in power, President Obama showed himself to be a strong spokesman for human rights and democracy, and as a constructive supporter of the work being done to put effective measures in place to combat the climate crisis." [ii]

The award came while the U.S. was still fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, and it was so early in Obama's presidency that it sparked backlash and even consternation that the award would be given for the *promise* of a contribution to peace and not for actually achieving it. Critics and supporters alike claimed it might harm his ability to accomplish important diplomatic objectives. In Rose Garden remarks upon learning of the prize, he said, "To be honest, I do not feel that I deserve to be in the company of so many of the transformative figures. ... I will accept this award as a call to action, a call for all nations to confront the common challenges of the 21st century." [iii]

In May 2018, a group of Republican senators first sent a nomination for Donald Trump for his peace-bringing efforts of the Korean peninsula. [iv] The nomination followed a statement in late April that year by South Korean President Moon Jae-in — after Trump's summit meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. At that time, Trump's response was, "Everyone thinks so, but I would never say it." [v]

In advance of the Oct. 10 public announcement in 2025, discussions about whether Trump will be so honored have become more frequent. On Aug. 19, 2025, Trump himself said, "I stopped seven wars, and they were, they're big ones too. I've settled six wars, and a lot of people say seven because there's one that nobody knows about." [vi]

In August 2025, Hilary Clinton, Trump's opponent in the 2016 presidential election, even said that if he was able to end the war in Ukraine without it losing any territory to Russia, she would nominate him for the Peace Prize. [vii] Out of curiosity, I decided to look into the six or seven wars he has claimed to have stopped. Here is a brief overview of each one.

India and Pakistan

In May 2025, India and Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire after violence flared in the disputed border territories of Kashmir and Jammu. When the majority Hindu India and mainly Muslim Pakistan separated in 1947, shortly after independence from the British Raj, these areas were permitted to choose to which country they

would belong. The Hindu Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir chose to become part of India, although this region was 77% Muslim. He acceded to the Dominion of India to get the support of Indian troops against an invasion by armed tribal groups and the Pakistan Army. The two countries fought over Kashmir until the United Nations established a ceasefire in 1948.

There have been four wars fought over the territory with the most recent occurring this year. On April 22, India was rocked by a terrorist attack at a tourist spot in Jammu, near Kashmir. The attack reportedly targeted Hindu tourists as they were commanded to recite the Quran, and 26 were killed. The Resistance Front (TRF), an alleged offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba that attacked Mumbai in 2008, claimed responsibility. Two weeks later, India struck back with a military operation, leading to an escalation of violence between the two rivals, which eventually ended in a fragile cease-fire.

On May 11, Pakistan's Prime Minister nominated Trump for the Nobel Prize for the U.S.'s role in the talks, and Trump agreed to a coveted meeting with him on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York at the end of September. In July 2025, the U.S. and Pakistan announced a trade deal that Islamabad said would lead to lower tariffs and increased investment, but without specifying the level. Pakistan has been the recipient of the most investment funding under China's Belt and Road Initiative and is building an important transit corridor through the country. It is also investing in its infrastructure, hydroelectric mining, and agricultural sector as well as a new international airport.^[viii]

Israel and Iran

Israel attacked Iran's nuclear facilities on June 13, 2025, resulting in a 12-day war, which was brokered by the U.S. and Qatar. During the negotiations, the U.S. conducted its own strikes on three Iranian nuclear facilities on June 22. Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow with the Brookings Foreign Policy Program, with whom I had the pleasure of working in 1994, has said, "He managed to use a combination of a good relationship with Netanyahu, but also a willingness to put a little pressure on Netanyahu that I think contributed to the at least temporary cessation of hostilities." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he had nominated Trump for the Nobel Prize.^[ix]

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda

This is a conflict in which Rwanda has consistently supported militant groups, such as M23 and Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FLDR), in destabilizing DRC in the three decades since the end of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In doing this, Rwanda looks to violate DRC's sovereignty and exploit its

mineral resources. An agreement known as the “Washington Accords” was mediated by the U.S. and Qatar on June 27.

The agreement dictates that both sides must not violate each other’s sovereignty nor support nor engage in any hostilities. There is also language about protection of civilians and repatriation and return of refugees and internally displaced persons who have fled the conflict. The parties were also to develop within 30 days a Joint Security Mechanism that “shall establish shared operating procedures and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency in the scale and scope of operations.” [\[x\]](#) The agreement also stipulated a total end to hostilities within 90 days, which would be by Sept. 27.

However, there are reported to be 120 “armed groups” operating in DRC, none of whom were represented at the talks. On Aug. 20, Human Rights Watch claimed that Rwandan-backed M23 DRC killed 141 people in attacks on 14 villages in Eastern DRC in July. These villagers are reported to be mainly Hutus, whom the Rwandan government targeted for a six-week massacre that killed an estimated 800,000 during the genocide.[\[xi\]](#) The United Nations Human Rights Office reported the killing by M23 of at least 319 civilians in the same region in August.[\[xii\]](#)

In July 2025, at a three-day summit with Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania and Senegal, all five African leaders voiced their support for Trump to receive the Nobel Prize for his work on the agreement. These countries are shown on the second map.[\[xiii\]](#)



Map of Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea-Bissou, Liberia and Gabon in East Africa

Thailand and Cambodia

This border dispute has long simmered, resulting in sporadic outbreaks of fighting. The issue dates back to 1907, when France created two nations within its colony of Siam. Both countries claim that Preah Vihear, an 11th-century Hindu temple on the border, belongs to them, but the French placed it in Cambodia. Violence increased with Cambodian independence in 1953.

On July 21 this year, a mine explosion on the border wounded five Thai soldiers and ignited a war that included small arms fire, rockets, artillery, and Thai air strikes.^[xiv] This area is strategic in the rising U.S. tensions with China as the U.S. conducts joint military exercises with Thailand, although China is the biggest trading partner of both countries, but Cambodia has a naval base China has mainly funded. ^[xv]

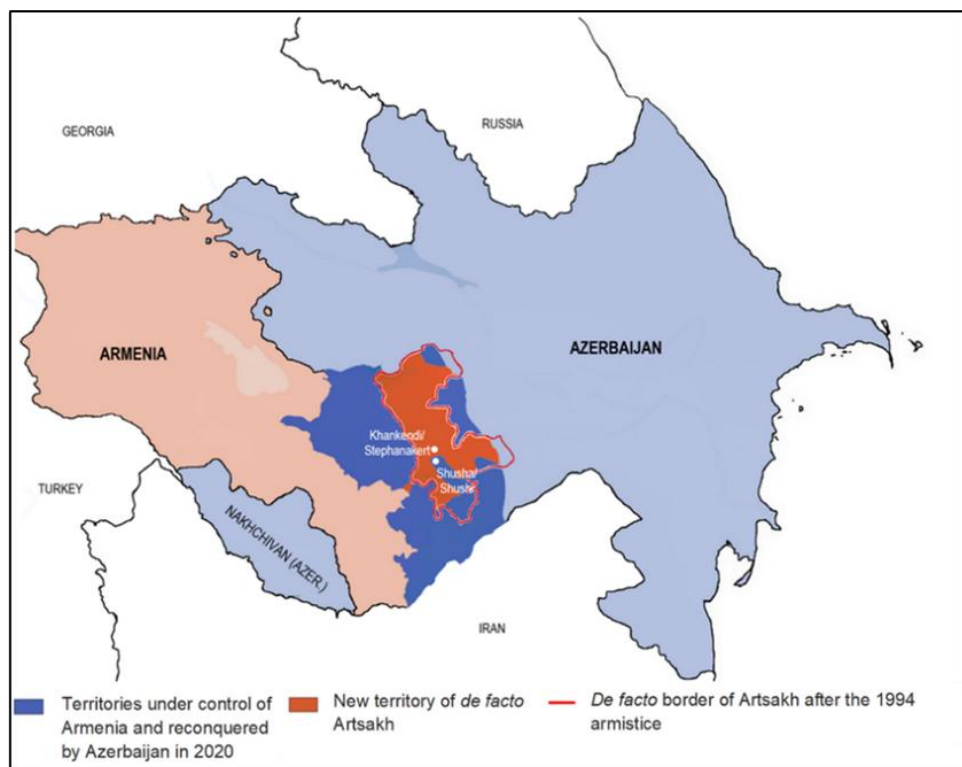
Amid pressure from China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to end hostilities, Cambodia and Thailand agreed to a ceasefire in Malaysia on July 28 after Trump threatened both countries with higher tariffs if the fighting continued.

On Aug. 7, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet nominated Trump for a Nobel Peace Prize with 70,000 Cambodian Buddhist monks supporting the nomination at a demonstration on Aug. 10.[xvi]

However, Thailand claimed on Aug. 27 that Cambodian forces had planted new land mines along the border that wounded three Thai soldiers. Cambodia claims they were not new mines but left over from previous disputes, but the Thai military command insists they patrol the area frequently and the mines were newly planted. More than 40 people have been killed on both sides, and hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes.[xvii]

Armenia and Azerbaijan

This conflict goes back to the 1915 genocide of 1.2 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks during Armenian expulsion from the Sultanate during World War I. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, new nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan were formed as Soviet republics. In 1923, the Soviet Union created Nagorno-Karabagh, an autonomous enclave within Azerbaijan, mostly populated by Armenians, that intended to temporarily resolve an ongoing territorial dispute between the two republics as shown in the map indicating frequent border shifts.[xviii]



Map of Nagorno-Karabagh with border shifts

Nagorno-Karabagh declared itself independent of Azerbaijan in 1980 and conflict ensued until an all-out civil war took place in 1994 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which ostensibly ended with a cease-fire mediated by Russia, but violent disputes still occurred.

War flared again in 2020 and resulted in a ceasefire under which Azerbaijan regained all its territory in the region. Periodic violations of the agreement with varying levels of violence have continued to take place. Following an Azerbaijani offensive and occupation of Nagorno-Karabagh on Sept. 19, 2023, almost the entire population of 100,000 Armenians fled to Armenia within a week, and the enclave was officially dissolved on Jan. 1, 2024.

Leaders of both countries began to speak of peace in early January 2025 and on Aug. 8, through U.S. mediation, the leaders announced a peace deal at the White House, which includes exclusive U.S. development rights to develop a strategic goods and oil transit corridor through the South Caucasus,^[xix] now called the “Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity.”^[xx] After the agreement was made both countries’ leaders nominated Trump for the Nobel Prize.

Egypt and Ethiopia

On Sept. 9, Ethiopia opened its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile tributary in the northern Ethiopian highlands, from where 85% of the Nile's waters flow.^[xxi] It is the largest dam in Africa and is among the largest in the world. Sudan and Egypt, who both rely on the Nile for their primary freshwater source have tried to stop the project for years. Numerous African heads of state were on hand for the event, with South Sudan and Kenya, among others anxious to purchase electricity from the project.

For Egypt, however, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs has claimed that the dam poses an “existential threat.” The country built its own Aswan High Dam on the Nile in the 1960s but has feared since the plan was announced in 2011 that Ethiopia’s could reduce its water supply during droughts and might inspire additional upstream dams to be built. Egypt claims the dam violates international law and took its case to the U.N. Security Council.^[xxii]

Recently, Trump claimed that the U.S. had funded the dam project, but the Ethiopian director of the dam project refutes that, stating that Ethiopians financed it without any foreign assistance.^[xxiii] It is not clear how the U.S. has intervened in this nonviolent dispute recently, but in 2019, Trump did mediate in the decades-long, sometimes violent conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and was disappointed when Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed received the Peace

Prize, claiming, “I made a deal. I saved a country, and I just heard that the head of that country is now getting the Nobel Peace Prize for saving the country.”[xxiv]

Serbia and Kosovo

As Yugoslavia, a quasi-Soviet satellite state, disintegrated in 1992 with the fall of the Soviet Union, Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević ignited a genocide against Bosnians in his own state of Serbia and in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina. His equation of Bosnian Muslims with Turkish soldiers’ brutality against Orthodox Serbs during World War I struck a chord with some Serbs, as did his claims that “(Bosnians) will not replace us” sound eerily familiar today.

After NATO got involved in the conflict, the Balkan Wars were finally ended with the Dayton Peace Accords in 1994 after a horrendous amount of death and devastation. Six new countries were born as a result: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia.

By 1996, ethnic Albanians in Serbia complained about their treatment and sought independence. NATO quickly intervened in the ensuing violence between the Kosovo Liberation Army and the Serbian military, and in 1999, sent a multinational peacekeeping mission, promising independence after a five-year cooling off period while Kosovo reoriented itself to manage its own state. By 2008, most countries, except Serbia and its allies, which include Russia and China, recognized Kosovo’s independence. After a decision by the U.N.’s International Court of Justice, Kosovo joined the U.N. Kosovo is shown on the third map.[xxv]



Disputes between Serbia and Kosovo continued sporadically and in September 2020, Trump brokered a deal to normalize economic relations focusing on job

creation and economic growth, and with Serbia moving its Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Israel agreed to recognize Kosovo's independence. Neither country has ratified the agreement, and it has not been implemented.[xxvi] There are ongoing tensions and occasional violence mainly managed by the European Union. During his press conference after the conclusion of the NATO summit in The Hague, Trump claimed to halt an impending clash between Serbia and Kosovo without elaboration when there was no apparent increase in tensions.[xxvii]

According to the Nobel Prize Committee, only eligible people can make nominations for prizes to the Norwegian Nobel Committee. Those eligible include numerous people representing certain Swedish and international organizations, university professors and "members of national assemblies and national governments (cabinet members/ministers) of sovereign states as well as current heads of state." So, the nominations by nine heads of state and four U.S. members of Congress between March and August this year appear valid for 2025.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee is responsible for selecting eligible candidates and choosing the Nobel Peace Prize laureates. The committee is composed of five members appointed by the Norwegian parliament. However, nominations are closed on Jan. 31 of the nominating year. This makes President Obama's nomination stranger as it was apparently submitted within a week after his inauguration to his first term in office. In addition, this also means that none of Trump's nominations for this year's prize were sent before the deadline.

When it first meets on Feb. 1, the committee may add names to the list, and they begin discussing the candidates. From this, the committee draws up a short list of 20 to 30 names for further consideration. These are then reviewed over the course of a few months by the Nobel Institute's permanent advisers, which include the Institute's director and research director and a small group of Norwegian university professors with expertise in subject areas with a bearing on the Peace Prize. Reports are also occasionally requested from other Norwegian and foreign experts.

The committee reaches a decision only at its very last meeting before announcing the prize at the beginning of October. It tries to achieve unanimity, but on the rare occasions when this proves impossible, the selection is decided by a simple majority vote. There are 338 candidates nominated for the 2025 prize, 244 of which are individuals and 94 are organizations, an average total for prior years. According to the statutes of the Nobel Foundation, the list of nominees remains secret until it is released 50 years after the prize is awarded.

While I may be a trained intelligence analyst with the goal of prognostication, without knowing of anyone who nominated Trump before the Jan. 31 deadline, I

cannot assess with any confidence whether there were any valid nominations for 2025. Along with Trump, we will just have to wait and see if another U.S. president will join the laureates' hallowed ranks.

References

- [i] "Alfred Nobel," *The Nobel Peace Prize*, available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [ii] "Barack H. Obama," *The Nobel Peace Prize*, available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [iii] "Barack Obama: Remarks on Winning the Nobel Peace Prize," *The American Presidency Project*, available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [iv] "House Republicans nominate Trump for Nobel Peace Prize," *CNN*, May 2, 2019 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [v] "Trump: 'Everyone thinks' I deserve Nobel Prize," *CNN*, May 9, 2019 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [vi] "Trump says he's ended 6 or 7 wars. Here's what the record shows." *CBS News*, September 2, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [vii] "Hillary Clinton says she'd nominate Trump for Nobel Peace Prize if he ends Ukraine war without giving territory to Russia," *CBS News*, Aug 15, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [viii] "'At all costs:' How Pakistan and China control the narrative on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor," *Brookings*, Jun 2020, available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [ix] "Trump says he's ended 6 or 7 wars. Here's what the record shows." *CBS News*, September 2, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [x] "Peace Agreement Between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda," *Press Release*, Bureau of African Affairs, *U.S. State Department*, June 27, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [xi] "DR Congo: M23 Mass Killings Near Virunga National Park," *Human Rights Watch*, Aug 20, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [xii] "DRC: Türk appalled by attacks against civilians by Rwandan-backed M23 and other armed groups," *Press release*, *Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights*, Aug 6, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [xiii] "Why Trump invited five African leaders to the White House," *BBC*, July 9, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [xiv] "Thailand-Cambodia border. Now border clashes have killed at least 12 people," *PBS News*, July 24, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [xv] "Thailand and Cambodia agree to ceasefire. What's behind the conflict?" *NPR*, Jul. 28, 2025, available <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/28/nx-s1-5482345/cambodia-thailand-ceasefire-talks>, accessed on Sep. 24, 2025
- [xvi] "Cambodian monks support PM nominating Trump for a Nobel Peace Prize," *USA Today*, Aug 21, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [xix] "New Mine Explosion Tests Ceasefire Hailed as Trump Triumph," *Newsweek*, Aug 27, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025
- [xviii] "The Casualties of War: An Excess Mortality Estimate of Lives Lost in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict," *Population Research and Policy Review*, May 2023, available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

[xvx] “U.S. secures strategic transit corridor in Armenia-Azerbaijan peace deal,” *Reuters*, Aug 7, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

[xx] “Tensions Between Armenia and Azerbaijan,” *Center for Preventive Action, Council on Foreign Relations*, Aug. 12, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

[xxi] *The controversy over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam*, Brookings, Aug. 5, 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-controversy-over-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam/> accessed on Sep. 24, 2025

[xxii] “Ethiopia outfoxes Egypt over the Nile’s waters with its mighty dam,” *BBC*, Sep 6, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

[xxiii] “Ethiopian Official Refutes Donald Trump’s Claim of U.S. Funding for Grand Renaissance Dam,” *The Voice of Africa*, Sep 13, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

[xxiv] “Ethiopia’s Abiy Ahmed responds to Trump’s Nobel Prize complaint,” *BBC*, Jan 13, 2020 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

[xxv] “Serbia country profile,” *BBC*, Jan 28, 2025 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

[xxvi] “The ‘Washington Agreement’ Between Kosovo and Serbia,” *American Society of International Law*, Mar 12, 2021 available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

[xxvii] “Press Conference: Donald Trump Hosts a Press Event at the NATO Summit - June 25, 2025,” *Roll Call transcript* available [here](#), accessed on Sep 21, 2025

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diane Chido is an Erie native who spent her early career in Washington, D.C, returning to found DC Analytics, a research and analysis firm. She has taught Intelligence Studies at Mercyhurst University, Political Science at Gannon University, and Cultural Analysis at the US Army War College and has conducted research for numerous US defense agencies. She holds an MS in Applied Intelligence Analysis, an MA in Russian Language, and a BA in International Relations and Soviet Studies.



Subscribe to JES Publications
Mailing List!

Support JES | Donate

In Case You Missed It

[Tribute | Gift to Erie: The Story of Denise Illig Robison Mullen](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Dr. David Frew**

[Be Well | Surprising Reasons Why Your Back Hurts](#) written by **Debbie DeAngelo**

[Book Notes #202 | Reminding Americans Who We Are](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Dr. Andrew Roth**

[Building Community and Social Infrastructure](#) written by **Lavea Brachman, JC, MCP, and Meriem Hamioui**

[In the News | Past Air Disasters May Help Prevent Future Ones](#) written by **Mark Steg**

[JCLA Report | 'It's Broken, so Let's Fix It'](#) written by **2024 Jefferson Civic Leadership Academy Cohort**

[Men in Crisis | Chivalry is Dead: Long Live Medieval Masculinity](#) written by **Jeff Bloodworth**

[On the Waterfront | Neighborhood Theology Lessons: Those Pesky Lutherans](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Dr. David Frew**

[Russia-Ukraine War Series | Peace in Ukraine Nowhere in Sight](#) written by **Lena Surzhko-Harned**

[The Wider World | Power – Hard, Soft, Smart?](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Diane Chido**

[Truth in Love | Rosa Parks: Resolute Leader America Needed](#) written by Jefferson Scholar-in-Residence **Dr. Parris Baker**