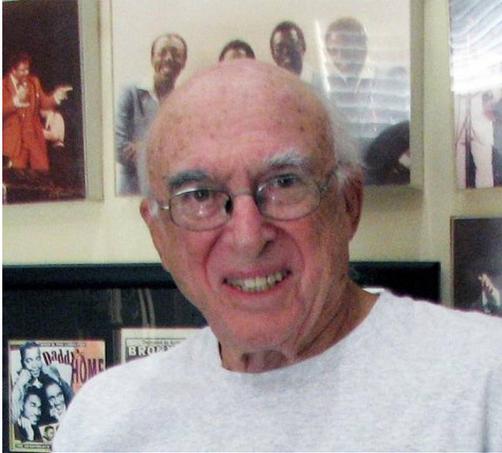


DELRAY SUN

## The green lady weeps | Opinion

By Steve West  
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**Steve West**

Recently, Judy and I jetted to New York to attend our grandson Jackie Robinson West's bar mitzvah. His present would be an all-boys week in Washington, D.C. along with my son, Mike. The intention was a mix of fun and facts to expose the young man to his American heritage.

We started our tour at the monuments surrounding the Tidal Basin. The individuals thus honored by memorials situated around that small body of water made the final cut as the most valued leaders that our country has spawned.

These magnificent shrines provided Jackie with a glimpse of our history. At the same time, the selected quotes inscribed on the walls offered up the basis of the philosophical ideals that have inspired America to strive to be the most democratic society in history.

We were reminded that in the mid 1770s some of the greatest minds ever collaborated to spark a humanitarian revolution that ultimately transcended politics. Although their goal is yet to be fully achieved, the founding fathers set the paradigm in motion that would lift the moral consciousness of the world.



Columnist Steve West took his grandson Jackie Robinson West to Washington, D.C. recently to celebrate his bar mitzvah.  
**STEVE WEST / CONTRIBUTOR**

They relied upon the original “Founding Father” and based their philosophy on the Golden Rule, “Do unto others... “. This is a foundation of our laws and policies that made America the shining beacon of justice — an abiding American ideal.

It was obvious to the three of us that the immortals that we were visiting were re-gifting this philosophical torch to us to keep it aflame in our own time.

A core example of our ethical stature is how we welcome immigrants to our shores. This question has traditionally been answered by the unambiguous welcoming voice of the statuesque green lady standing in New York’s Harbor since 1883. Given voice by poet Emma Lazarus, she has cried out America’s unqualified welcome: *”Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

Slowly, we were getting there — not without prodigious struggle — but we were gaining ground over time. Suddenly we’re forgetting her credo. The green lady silently weeps.

Again we struggle to hold onto the principles that have made America great. We must turn to the inspiring words inscribed on the Tidal Basin monuments, which deserve a thoughtful revisiting.

The inscriptions engraved on their walls remind us of America’s Golden Rule-based foundation echoing through the ages. Jackie, heed well and be guided by what our greatest Americans have aspired to:

*”We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men (people) are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...”* — Thomas Jefferson

*”We must scrupulously guard the civil rights and civil liberties of all our citizens, whatever their background. We must remember that any oppression, any injustice, any hatred, is a wedge designed to attack our civilization.”* — FDR

Of course, the sage and inspirational words of most past, present or future presidents will never be honored alongside those now situated overlooking the Tidal Basin. Certainly, it just doesn’t fit America’s ethos to inscribe such obscene graffiti as *”Why are we having all these people from s\*\*thole countries come here?”* in these hallowed precincts.

*Steve West is a social justice advocate and entrepreneur living in Delray Beach*