

First Annual Report of The Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (Calendar Year 2007)

Dear Declaration signatories,

The Coalition's strategy is working! Over 1,200 people have signed the *Declaration of Reasonable Doubt*, and we've attracted enormous attention to the authorship issue. With each new signatory, it becomes more difficult for orthodox scholars to continue claiming that there is "no room for doubt" about the identity of William Shakespeare.

Thanks again for being a signatory. Your willingness to stand up and declare that the authorship issue should now be regarded as legitimate in academia will help make it possible for professors and teachers to do research, publish, and teach their students about the authorship issue without risking their reputations and careers as a result.

We are off to a good start, and we hope that you will continue to support our efforts – both by telling others about the Declaration, and by making a donation to the SAC so we can keep pressure on Stratfordians in 2008. We've shown that we can get results. Give generously and we will show you even more. **Declaration posters like those used in this year's three signing ceremonies** (but without lines for signatures at the bottom) **will be mailed to donors of \$40.00 or more (\$50.00 outside U.S.) by the end of 2007.** Place one on your wall, or present one to a family member, friend, school, or library. For details, visit our website's donations page: www.DoubtAboutWill.org/donations

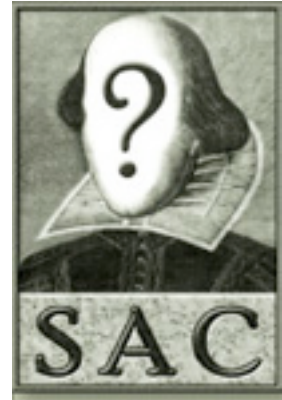
To learn more about our strategy, 2007 accomplishments and goals for 2008, read on.

Declaration Strategy

If the public knew how many highly intelligent people have doubts that Mr. William Shakspere really wrote the Shakespeare canon, the Stratfordian claim that there is no room for doubt would become untenable, opening the way toward resolving the issue. To change our image, we need credible people to be the public face of our movement. That's why we've listed twenty prominent doubters of the past in the Declaration text, and why we are making it easy for prominent doubters of the present to sign it online.

The Declaration is a very moderate, well-reasoned document, which recognizes that there are reasons why scholars have long thought that Mr. Shakspere was the author. By laying out the evidence simply and clearly, for all to see, the Declaration counters orthodox stereotypes that all authorship doubters are irrational, or merely class snobs. It is also very well-researched, making it difficult for Stratfordians to counter-attack. It is the ideal tool for uniting non-Stratfordians behind the one thing we all agree on.

The fact that the Declaration takes no position on the true identity of the author also makes it difficult to counter-attack. Until now, Stratfordians have always been able to distract attention from the weakness of the case for the Stratford man by attacking the alternative candidates. With no alternative to attack, they are thrown on the defensive. Doubters of all persuasions are signing the Declaration, making it difficult to exploit our differences by highlighting our disagreements. We all agree it wasn't Shakspere!



2007 Accomplishments

The big breakthrough was achieved on 8 September in Chichester, West Sussex, U.K. The combination of (1) Sir Derek Jacobi and Mark Rylance headlining a Declaration signing event, (2) following a performance of Mark's play about the authorship issue, "*I am Shakespeare*," and (3) the advent of Brunel University's new master's degree program in Shakespeare Authorship Studies, headed by William Leahy, did the trick. The story gained worldwide attention, with a minimum of rebuttals by our opponents.

U.K.-based authorship societies all turned out, and designated representatives to join Mark and Sir Derek in signing the "Authorship Societies' Copy" of the Declaration. The Coalition donated this copy of the Declaration to the Shakespearean Authorship Trust, chaired by Mark Rylance. Mark took the lead in organizing the signing event. This copy is on permanent loan from the SAT to Brunel University in West London.

On behalf of the Coalition, I want to thank Mark, Sir Derek, Dr. Leahy, and everyone who worked behind the scenes to make "Doubters' Day" a success on September 8th, including the many people who made the trip to Chichester for the post-play signing.

Thanks also to Carole Sue Lipman and the members of the L.A.-based Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable, who first launched the Declaration at the Geffen Playhouse on April 14th, and to Dr. Daniel L. Wright and his colleagues at Concordia University for organizing a second signing event later that day in Portland, Oregon. Although we didn't attract media attention then, their efforts set the stage for success in Chichester.

Special thanks also to the many people who helped in the writing of the Declaration. First and foremost was Diana Price, author of *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*. Her book was an inspiration, and she was most generous in providing documentation. Others deserving recognition include Joseph Sobran, Richard Whalen, Mark Rylance, Dr. William Leahy, Dr. James Brooks, Gary Goldstein, Frank Davis, M.D., Ramon Jiménez, K.C. Ligon, Alex McNeil, Sally Mosher, Christopher Paul, Virginia Renner, Professor Dean Keith Simonton, Dr. Richard Smiley, and Professor Peter Usher.

Finally, we're all pleased that the SAC website (www.DoubtAboutWill.org) worked so well, even when bombarded with nearly 600,000 hits on one day – September 9th. The website is our main mechanism for disseminating the Declaration, and gathering signatures, and it is gratifying that many people have had good things to say about it. So thanks to Brent Miller for his programming, and to Nick Filin for his design work.

At the time of our last official update on October 29, 1,161 people had signed online, including 203 current or former faculty members at colleges and universities, and 409 signatories with advanced degrees – 261 doctoral degrees, and 248 master's degrees. Signatories came from a broad range of academic fields, with no one field accounting for more than 10% except English literature graduates, who accounted for 206 (18%).

In choosing signatories for the "notables" list, we set the bar high, selecting only very prominent Shakespearean actors, and others we thought might attract media attention. In fact, many signatories are very accomplished in their fields, though not necessarily famous. We are considering expanding the notables list to include more such people.

Goals for 2008

Looking ahead to 2008, our first objective will be to take advantage of our successes by focusing on the many known prominent authorship doubters who have yet to sign. Many of these people are understandably reluctant to be out in front on controversial issues, especially complex ones which may fall outside of their own area of expertise. Now that the Coalition has a record of success, the Declaration has been fully vetted, and over 1,200 have signed it, including over 200 current or former faculty members, many more high profile public figures may be willing to consider signing at this time. We will make a concerted effort to recruit as many of them as possible by next April.

Our second priority, if we have the resources, will be to increase the visibility of the Declaration in academia by advertising in journals such as *The Shakespeare Journal*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *English Journal* (read by high school English teachers), and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. We need to make it clear to everyone that we are here for the long term, the Declaration will not go away, and that it cannot be ignored.

Third, we are always looking for additional prominent venues for signing ceremonies. We have a few good prospects for this year, but none that we're yet able to announce. Please let us know if you learn of any opportunities at prominent cultural institutions.

Annual Fundraising Appeal

To accomplish these goals, we need your help. In addition to recruiting signatories, we need your financial support. We've built a customized website to promulgate the Declaration online. To avoid having any financial barrier, we charge no fee to sign it. We have a non-membership structure, so we collect no dues revenues. We charge no fees for educational events, because we are focused on promulgating the Declaration.

So far we've had to rely on a few large donors for nearly all of our financial support. But to keep our tax exempt status in the long run, we must demonstrate broad-based support from a large number of small donors. Please take advantage of our year-end offer of a Declaration poster (\$20.00 value) for donations of \$40.00 or more (\$50.00 outside the U.S.). Go to www.DoubtAboutWill.org/donations to make your donation online, or send a check or money order to the Coalition mailing address shown below.

The Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC, Coalition) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, incorporated in the State of California for charitable and educational purposes on March 17, 2006. Our application for federal tax-exempt charitable status under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code was approved April 26, 2007.

Thank you very much.

The SAC Board of Directors
John M. Shahan, Chairman

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