

NOTES FROM

FEE

Summer 2018

INSIDE:

—
FEE rings in the summer with nearly 700 attendees at FEEcon—Get an inside look at the conference everyone is talking about!



From the Desk of the **PRESIDENT**



Dear Friend of FEE,

A few weeks after FEEcon 2018, all of us on the FEE staff are still aglow from it all. As you might imagine, a full year of planning goes into pulling off something as big and spectacular as that, but it's incredibly fulfilling to know it was all worth the effort!

Hundreds of our contributors and hundreds more students from 35 states and 29 countries witnessed the magic of a major FEE gathering. We inspired and we educated. Many lives will be forever shaped by the friendships made and the principles learned at FEEcon 2018.

You know you've made a difference when you get unsolicited notes like this one from Noah Barnes, a sophomore at Ottawa University in Surprise, Arizona, who is studying Business Administration: "I had the absolute privilege of being selected to attend FEEcon 2018 and I must say, it was an unforgettable experience. Being surrounded by hundreds of other like-minded freedom lovers inspired me greatly and gave me a great hope for the future of this country."

Giving people, both young and old, hope for a future in freedom is really what FEE is all about. Thanks for helping us do that!

Sincerely,

Lawrence W. Reed
President



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FEE's **vision** is to bring about a world in which the economic, ethical, and legal principles of a free society are *familiar, credible, and compelling* to the rising generation.

FEE has defined three strategic objectives to guide every program and to inform opportunities for growth:

- ① FEE will be the movement leader in knowing our customer.
- ② FEE will be the leader in introducing freedom as a life philosophy.
- ③ FEE will be a leader in the leveraged distribution of ideas on liberty.



FEEcon by the NUMBERS

17 COUNTRIES 5 CONTINENTS

SOUTH AMERICA
BRAZIL
COLOMBIA
ECUADOR
EL SALVADOR
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
MEXICO
URUGUAY

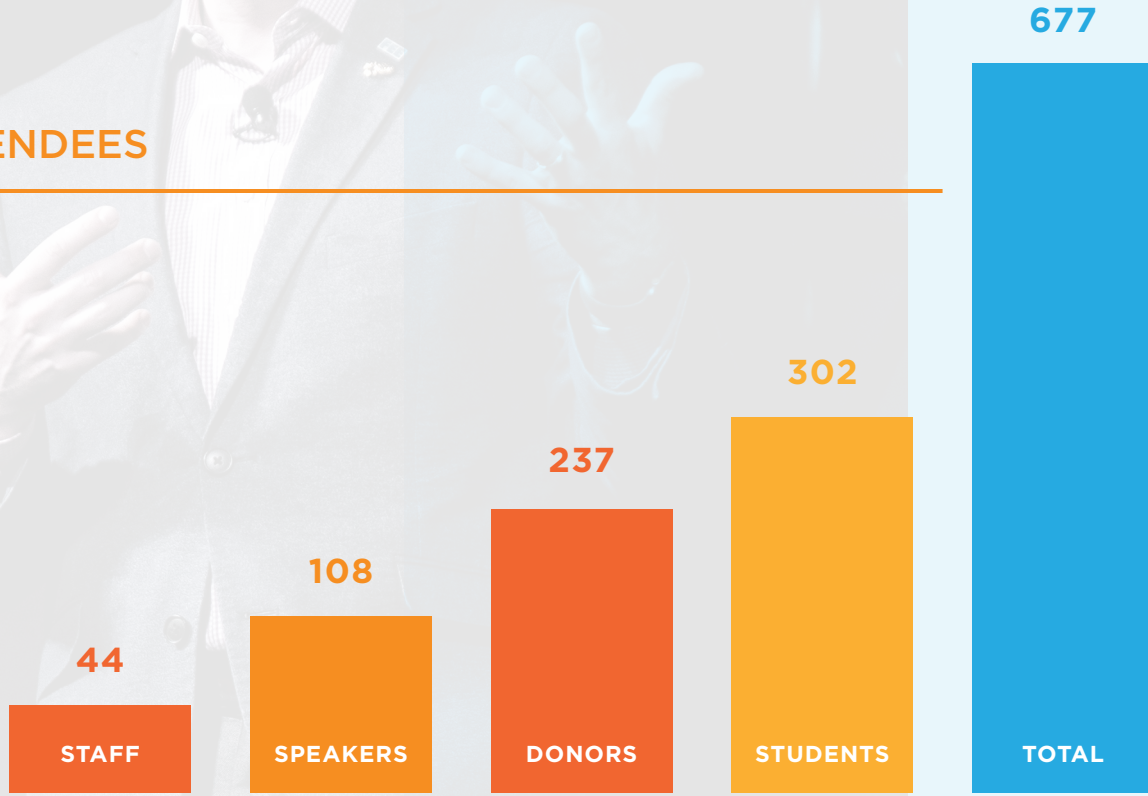
ASIA
SAUDI ARABIA
INDIA

AFRICA
NIGERIA

EUROPE
GERMANY
POLAND
SPAIN
SERBIA

NORTH AMERICA
USA
CANADA

ATTENDEES



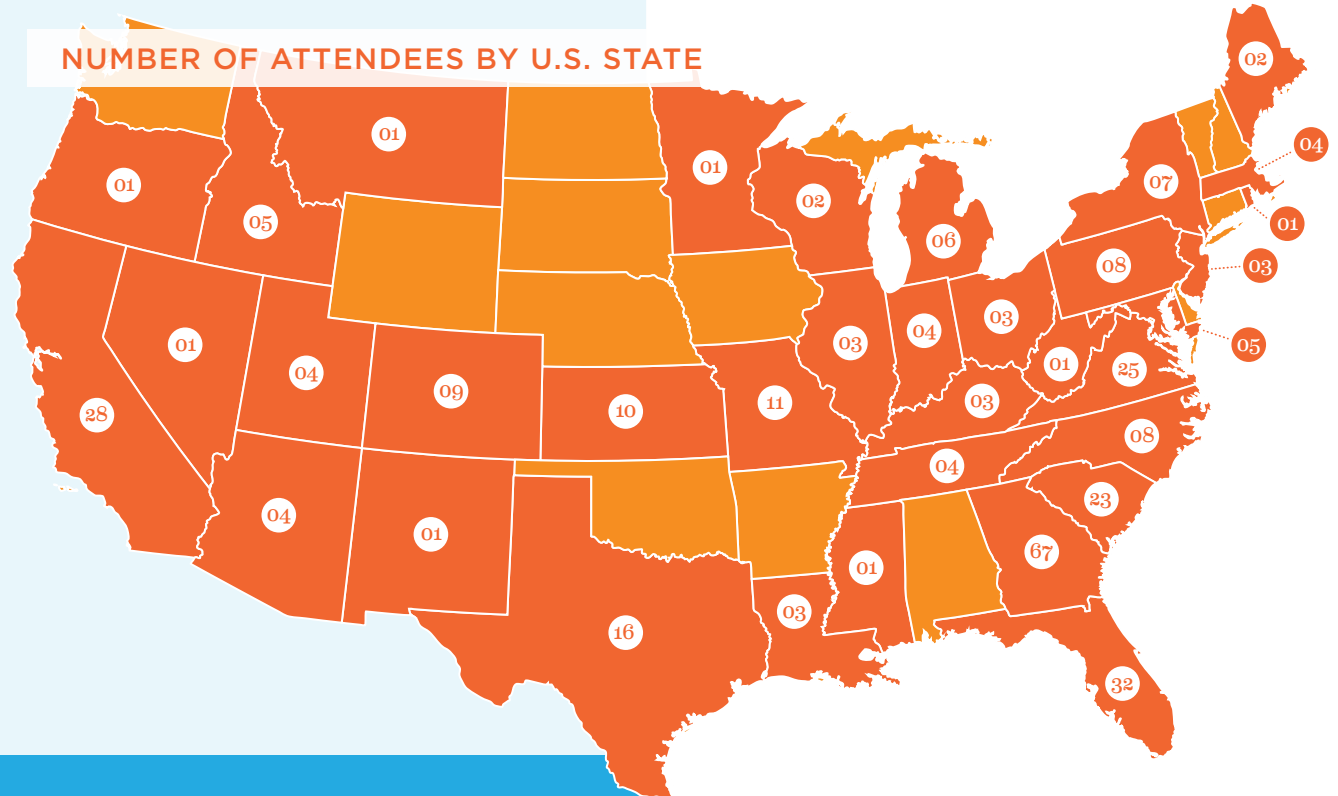
4 FILM SCREENINGS



10 TRACKS 47 SPONSORS 108 SPEAKERS 237 DONORS

55 ACADEMICS 53 ENTREPRENEURS

NUMBER OF ATTENDEES BY U.S. STATE





FEE Staff



SCOTT HARRISON
CEO of charity: water



KATHY SMITH
Sponsor/FEE Donor, Loving Liberty



NELSON AND MARY NASH
Blinking Lights Award Winner,
FEE Supporters



MAGATTE WADE
Founder and CEO of Tiossan



LAWRENCE W. REED
President of FEE



FEE Interns



LONNIE JOHNSON
Inventor of the Super Soaker
and Nerf Gun



TINA GUO
Musician



FEE Interns



MATT KIBBE
President of Free the People,
Leonard E. Read Alumni Award Recipient



JOHN KASH AND LAWRENCE REED
FEE Supporter



KENNETH AND ELLEN BISSON
FEE Supporters



WULLY ARTEGA
Venezuelan Student Activist

ATLANTA
FEECON
 2018



FEECON 2018: ARTISTS, ENTREPRENEURS, AND INNOVATORS CELEBRATE THEIR COMMON PRINCIPLES

By Jason Riddle

Building on the enormous success of the inaugural FEEcon, FEEcon 2018 exceeded expectations and solidified FEE's annual conference as the must-attend event of the summer.

A global community of nearly 700 people from 38 states and 17 countries joined together at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta from June 7th–9th in a celebration of what is possible when the power of human creativity is left free.

Energy and excitement flowed throughout FEEcon with conversations about innovative and practical solutions to current issues. The conference was filled with individuals who aren't waiting around for someone else to shape their world—a welcome relief from the counter-productive politicking that seems to dominate today's headlines.

Friday morning opened with an electrifying performance of the *Wonder Woman* theme by Tina Guo, internationally acclaimed Grammy-nominated cellist, recording artist, and composer. After her rousing performance, Tina shared her inspiring personal story and career journey, explaining how she battled through doubt and hardship to establish a career in music on her own terms.

Other keynote speakers spoke to the importance of grit and determination as they each set their own path in the face of resistance.

Scott Harrison, founder of charity: water, detailed his story of hitting a personal rock bottom after spending years as a New York City nightclub promoter. After facing a crisis of purpose, Scott took responsibility for his direction and decided to invest in himself while making a positive difference in the world. He has since coordinated over 28,000 privately-funded projects to bring clean drinking water to over eight million people in developing nations.

Brian and Gabrielle Bosché, founders of The Millennial Solution, explained how students can turn passion and talent into profit by creating value for others. They emphasized that today's generation will have to shed the permission-based mindset to discover their purpose and take charge of their own careers.

Lonnie Johnson, inventor of the Super Soaker, now President/CEO of Johnson Research and Development, shared his incredible journey from growing up in segregated Mobile, Alabama to becoming one of the most respected engineers and scientists in the world. Lonnie was the only black high school student to participate in the 1968 Alabama state science fair. He went on to work for NASA and now holds more than 120 patents in his name.

Anousheh Ansari, the first self-funded woman to travel to the International Space Station and the first ever Ira-

nian in space, closed the conference with a message that encouraged students to turn big dreams into reality by taking responsible action. Anousheh witnessed the Iranian Revolution as a teenager before immigrating to the United States at the age of 18. She is now the chairman and CEO of Prodea Systems and established the Ansari XPrize in 2004 to jumpstart the privately-funded space industry.

SET YOUR PATH, CHANGE THE WORLD

FEE's president, Lawrence W. Reed, set the tone for the conference with his opening remarks on the main stage about what we mean at FEE when we talk about liberty as a "life philosophy." Drawing from his new essay in the revised edition of *Are We Good Enough for Liberty?* Mr. Reed explained that liberty as a life philosophy "...is made up of two components: The first is how you see yourself. The second is how you see (or interact with) others in society." He reminded us that we should focus on getting our own affairs in order in lieu of trying to shape the world by controlling others.

The self-empowering messages of entrepreneurship, personal responsibility, and creativity were common themes throughout the conference as FEEcon attendees had the opportunity to customize their own conference experience.

Selecting from over 50 breakout sessions across nine tracks, students and FEE's supporters attended sessions side-by-side to explore the foundations of a free and prosperous society.

The Entrepreneurship and Business Success track was designed for those looking to change the world through commerce with a clear message that you don't have to choose between earning money and helping people. In a talk about the virtues of entrepreneurship, Brian Brenberg, Executive Vice President and Chair of the Program in Business and Finance at The King's College in New York, explained how profit and service have a lot more in common than people think.

In addition to learning foundational principles, students also learned practical skills for professional success.

Katherine Swartz Hilton, the Executive Director of the McNair Center for Entrepreneurism & Community Engagement at Columbia College, led a panel discussion about what it is really like to start and grow a business. Entrepreneurs on the panel included Magatte Wade (Founder of Tiossan), Levi Morehouse (Founder and CEO of Ceterus), and Steven Carse (Founder of King of Pops).

Students even had the opportunity to put their own ideas to the test in the *FEEcon Innovation Challenge*. In a single day, participants formed an idea, created a viable business plan, and pitched the idea to a panel of experts for the chance to win over \$15,000 worth of prizes, including funding and mentorship to bring the business idea to life.

The self-empowering messages of entrepreneurship, personal responsibility, and creativity were common themes throughout the conference.

FEEcon offered the *Creative Pursuits* track for students interested in making a career in the arts. Professionals from across disciplines shared advice about how to turn a passion for creativity into a meaningful career. FEE's Director of Media Sean Malone moderated a series of panels that ranged from getting that first break to accepting criticism from your creative mentor(s). Speakers in this track included diverse talent such as YouTube personality Kevin Lieber, screenwriter Paul Guay (*Liar, Liar*), film composer John Jennings Boyd (*A Lego Brickumentary*), radio host Joey Clark, and photojournalist Lido Vizzutti.

Attendees also had the ability to network with industry professionals from Taliesin Nexus, which hosted a screening of five short films, followed by an interactive Q&A panel discussion, at the Thursday night welcoming reception.

FEEcon even featured several live podcast recordings, including FEEcast episodes with T.K. Coleman and Magatte Wade, and a Words & Numbers episode with James R. Harrigan and Antony Davies. Bryan Hyde, host of the *Loving Liberty* program, recorded several interviews from the FEEcon sponsor hall.

FEEcon featured a variety of tracks examining the deeper foundations of freedom.

The *Philosophy, Politics, Economics* track, sponsored by Reason, covered a range of topics in the moral sciences. This track featured three sessions on Austrian economics, including a talk by professor Donald J. Boudreaux on competition, prices, and the entrepreneurial market process through the Austrian lens. Yaron Brook, chairman of the board at the Ayn Rand Institute, made the philosophical case for free markets in a talk titled “Self-Interest: Necessary for Value Creation & Freedom.”

The Ralph Smeed Private Memorial Foundation sponsored a track on *Challenging Statism* that featured a panel discussion about the socialist destruction of Venezuela. In one of the most-attended breakout sessions at FEEcon, panelists provided a first-hand account of how Venezuela went from prosperity to ruin when liberty was lost.

The emotional apex of the conference came when Wuilly Artega took the stage with his violin to perform a chilling set against the backdrop of protest footage from Venezuela. This courageous young man escaped from Venezuela earlier this year after being detained and tortured for his role in protesting (famously, by playing violin) against the oppressive and violent Venezuelan government.

After the performance, Venezuelan freedom advocates Jorge Jraisatti and Javier Garcia joined Wuilly on stage to present a Venezuelan flag to Lawrence W. Reed in appreciation of FEE’s support in the battle against government tyranny.

FEEcon also offered a series of debates and panels that allowed attendees to hear a variety of perspectives about the proper role of government. The *Debating the Issues* track, sponsored by Loving Liberty, took on a range of topics from inequality to the environment. FEE’s Director of Content Dan Sanchez moderated a discussion about the limits of free speech with the Goldwater Institute’s Christina Sandefur, Reason’s Robby Soave, and Students For Liberty’s Wolf Von Laer.

The *Technology and Innovation* track, sponsored by Social Evolution, explored an array of technologies that are reshaping our world. From panels on “Blockchain and Cryptocurrency” to “Seasteading and Startup So-

cities,” Max Borders moderated a series of discussions that provided a window into our future. Robert Viglione, Co-founder of ZenCash, joined blockchain experts Michael Tidwell and Justin Goro to discuss the practical implications of decentralized technology.

FEE also partnered with *Market Urbanism* for an entire track devoted to exploring the complex ecosystem of cities in the modern setting. Nolan Gray, Michael Lewyn, and Emily Washington explained how government imposed standards and planning restrictions have caused traffic congestion and created an affordability crisis in urban housing. Patrik Shumacher offered a better way forward, drawing on insights about the capitalist revolution in urban development.

The *Paths to Education* track explored what is possible in the world of education when we push the limits of thinking about how we learn. Several sessions focused on practical advice for improving leadership skills and developing a personal brand. Others highlighted stories from people who are innovating the way the world learns. A panel featuring Reason’s Nick Gillespie, Bold’s Carrie Sheffield, Free the People’s Matt Kibbe, and Grassroots Leadership Academy’s Matthew Hurtt discussed the tools and platforms they use to reach people where they are learning today.

Think Freely Media returned to FEEcon to host the 2018 FEEcon Great Communicators Tournament. Laura Williams won first place and advanced to the 2018 Great Communicators Tournament, held during the Atlas Network’s Liberty Forum in New York City on November 7th-8th. The 2017 FEEcon tournament winner, Abbey Lovett, went on to win the \$10,000 Great Communicators Grand Prize that year. This year, Abbey rejoined us at FEEcon as a speaker. She took the stage with T.K. Coleman, education director at Praxis, to teach students how to be rockstar communicators.

All of this, of course, would not be possible if not for our generous supporters and partners. At FEEcon, VIP attendees had access to all sessions, plus they enjoyed exclusive experiences they had come to expect from FEE’s Annual Retreat.

*I can’t wait to see
which achievements
FEEcon inspired
this year!*



After a strategic update from FEE staff, VIPs were treated to the premiere of the latest film in FEE’s How We Thrive documentary series, featuring Magatte Wade.

During the VIP lunch, a panel led by Stand Together’s Erin Keating discussed how partners in the non-profit sector can apply the Market-Based Management approach to further social impact.

The conference concluded with a banquet dinner, featuring a keynote address by Charles C. W. Cooke, Editor of National Review Online.

BUILDING LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

At the closing dinner on Saturday, Matt Kibbe, winner of this year’s Leonard E. Read Distinguished Alumni Award, remarked that a FEE seminar was the first time he felt that he was not alone in these ideas, and that FEEcon has taken that experience to an entirely new level.

In addition to being a content-rich environment, FEEcon is a community. It’s a gathering of friends both new and old. Several attendees from Brazil remarked that FEEcon is the one opportunity where they can get together with student leaders from around South America to meet one another in person and learn what everyone is working on in their respective home countries.

The networking opportunities allowed students to engage with our partners and business leaders, and our partners were able to connect with the next generation of people who are changing the world. In addition to the

conference-wide receptions hosted in the exhibit hall for our 40 sponsoring organizations, FEEcon featured “next steps” and “ask me anything” panels where students could directly engage with partners of interest including Young Americans for Liberty, the Institute for Humane Studies, Reason, and The Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

When embarking on a project like FEEcon, you can’t fully know what the impact will be. That’s why it is so encouraging to hear stories of people putting new inspiration into action. For example, during FEEcon 2017, the folks at Loving Liberty hatched a new project called “Who’s Next?” that has already reached millions with true stories of real families impacted by government overreach.

I can’t wait to see which achievements FEEcon inspired this year! It has truly blossomed into an incredible community of entrepreneurs, innovators, wealth creators, and people of extraordinary personal character who are changing the world.

I hope you mark June 13th-15th on your calendar and join us for FEEcon 2019 at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis!



Jason Riddle is the Vice President of Programs and Strategic Operations for FEE.



MATT KIBBE

Recipient of the 2018 Leonard E. Read Distinguished Alumni Award

1. You've been a part of the FEE family for many years and dedicated your career to advancing the values of liberty. How does it feel to be chosen as this year's winner of the Leonard E. Read Distinguished Alumni Award?

It's such a unique honor. FEE has had a profound impact on my professional development, as one of the very first organizations in the U.S. seeking to reach the general public with the ideas of liberty. And that vision comes from Leonard Read and the FEE ethos. My career as a communicator and community organizer has been an exploration, and hopefully, an expansion of this ethos.

2. How did you first get involved with FEE?

I attended my first FEE seminar in 1984, at the suggestion of Dr. Hans Sennholtz, my professor and mentor at Grove City College. I had discovered Ayn Rand and Ludwig von Mises in high school, and eventually stumbled upon the economics program at GCC. But even then, studying the philosophy of liberty felt a little bit like learning to speak Latin: a lost art, and a really lonely endeavor. But arriving at FEE for the first time, I discovered a vibrant and growing community animated by the same principles that had turned me onto liberty.

3. What's the one piece of advice you would give to a high school or college student who's interested in advancing the cause of liberty, but doesn't plan to work for a liberty-advancing non-profit organization? How can these students advance change in their everyday lives?

Advancing liberty, like most everything else in our modern world, has been radically democratized. As our potential audience has grown, all of the old barriers between academia, think tanks, grassroots advocacy, the media, and private enterprise have collapsed. Because of technology, academics are now pop stars on YouTube, and business leaders can educate and organize their own communities every bit as effectively as the "professionals." So, go for your passion, do what you do well. And leverage your skills and success in the cause of liberty.

We caught up with this year's winner of the Leonard E. Read Distinguished Alumni Award, Matt Kibbe, at FEEcon 2018. Below we take the opportunity to ask him a few questions about his recent work, the fight for liberty, and his advice for students.

4. You've often said that your organization, Free the People, is all about pushing past partisanship and having an open conversation with people from all different walks of life. Can you unpack that a little bit more?

We have to get upstream of politics, into the popular culture. Politics today has gotten so tribal and identity-focused that it can crowd out common sense and any understanding of the shared values that hold us together as a society. Those tribes, Red and Blue, are growing smaller and more isolated. It's as if the one side can't even hear what the other side is trying to say. But I think the counterrevolution, if you will, is more listening and more civility—more curiosity about alternative views and solutions. At Free the People, we embrace the humility of knowing that we don't have all the answers. We experiment with various engagement techniques, and we let our targeted audiences help us connect with them. That's why we use video and social media to tell stories.

We specifically target new audiences, particularly young people flirting with socialist ideas, to test our messages and the various tools that we use. Young people are immersed in a technology-driven culture that allows them to curate their own lives, one click at a time. Free choice and voluntary association define their radically democratized culture. They are inherently liberty-curious, if we are willing to reach out.

5. What keeps you optimistic about our shared mission of spreading the message of liberty?

It may sound counterintuitive, but I'm wildly optimistic about the future. We are living in the midst of a beautiful paradigm shift that is decentralizing and democratizing everything in our lives. What an opportunity! We've come a long way since 1947, when F.A. Hayek and a handful of his colleagues quietly gathered at the peak of Mont Pelerin, worried for the future of liberty. Our job is to make that light at the end of the tunnel bright enough to draw the next generation to it. They will find the way there, their own way.



MATT DAY

FEEcon MVP: 2018

How do you advance FEE's mission?

I try and make FEEcon an enlightening, fun and exciting experience for everyone who's into FEE—old and new.

What were you up to before joining FEE?

Before FEE, I helped my family grow their company into one of the premier special events companies in the southeast. When I wasn't churning out events, my wife and I also found time to have three lovely children.

What inspired you to advance freedom with FEE?

My wife actually inspired me to start reading about these ideas when we first met in college. After spending countless hours in the library soaking up any book on the subject, I was convinced.

What were you most excited about at FEEcon this year?

Hands down, Tina Guo's performance was what I was most excited about.

What is something new that we can expect to see at FEEcon 2019?

What makes for a good event are the surprises that are unveiled. You'll have to check out FEEcon 2019 for yourself to see what's in store!

Matt Day joined the FEE team in November 2016, and he's been integral to the organization since day one. Although he's the principal manager for all of FEE's events, the main focus of his role is the production of FEEcon. The success of this year's conference is largely due to his hard work and dedication. He always goes above and beyond to make FEEcon extraordinary for each and every attendee.

Leonard E. Read

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

The Leonard E. Read Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes the unique professional and personal achievements of a FEE alumnus or alumna who has demonstrated exceptional dedication to the cause of liberty. This is the highest honor given to a FEE alumnus or alumna. The award recipient is selected by their peers serving on the FEE Alumni Board.

FEECON 2018 TESTIMONIALS

“

Communities really feed on fun and a sense of belonging—the thing about FEEcon is that it’s freaking fun and I feed off the energy of young people who are discovering these ideas for the first time. This could be the center of the free-market universe.



—MATT KIBBE,
President and Chief
Community Organizer
at Free the People

“

I love the theme of this conference. You are challenging everyone to set a path and go after it.



—ANOUSHEH ANSARI,
CEO and Co-Founder of Prodea
Systems & First Iranian and First
Self-Funded Female Astronaut

“

I like FEE a lot. I can be something that I’ve never been before.



—ANDRE JOHNSON,
Shark Tank Participant and
Youngest FEEcon 2018 attendee
(8 years old)

“

What’s great about FEEcon are the people who come.



—CARRIE SHEFFIELD,
Writer and founder of media
startup, Bold

“

I love the idea of an audience of hundreds of young people who are excited about liberty and libertarian ideas, and there’s no other place that you can see them outside of FEEcon.



—NICK GILLESPIE,
Editor at Large at Reason

“

FEE is promoting the ideas which provide the solutions to my higher purpose, which is ending poverty.



—MAGATTE WADE,
Founder and CEO of Tiossan

“

It’s important to come to FEEcon because of the people that you meet.



—KEVIN LIEBER,
YouTuber and Producer at
Vsauce, Founder of Vsauce2

“

We came back because we were inspired by what we heard here.



—KATHY SMITH,
Loving Liberty
(FEEcon Sponsor)

“

I love FEE. I love the spirit of FEE—it’s not about orthodoxy, it’s not about being doctrinaire, it’s actually very human and very humane.



—ROBIN KOERNER,
Author of The Art of
Political Persuasion

“

Here at FEEcon you have a great audience of very bright young people that really excites me. Last year, I invited my son to come, he’s an engineering student at the University of Michigan, and he loved it. He’s back again this year.



—ERIC TUBBS,
President at Think Freely Media

FEE FOUNDATION *for*
ECONOMIC EDUCATION

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Atlanta, Georgia 30309

FEE.org

A photograph of the Atlanta skyline at sunset, with a warm orange and red sky. The text is overlaid on the image. The word 'ATLANTA' is in a smaller font above 'FEECON', which is in a large, bold font. Below 'FEECON' is the year '2019'.

ATLANTA
FEECON
2019

Save the date for the third annual FEEcon!

JUNE 13-15, 2019

Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Atlanta, Georgia

Stay updated at *FEEcon.org*