

The Lives of Benjamin Franklin



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Try Your Hand at a Franklin Magic Square

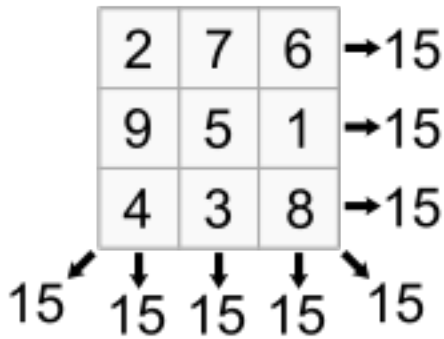


PLATE IV. *A Magic Square of Squares.* Page 300.

200	217	232	249	8	25	40	57	72	89	104	121	136	153	168	181
58	39	26	7	250	231	218	189	186	167	154	135	122	103	90	71
108	219	230	251	6	27	38	59	70	91	102	123	134	155	166	187
60	37	28	5	262	249	230	197	188	165	156	133	124	101	92	69
201	216	233	248	9	24	41	56	73	88	105	120	137	152	169	184
55	42	23	10	247	264	245	202	183	170	151	138	119	106	87	74
203	214	245	246	11	22	46	54	76	86	107	118	139	150	171	182
53	44	21	12	243	260	243	204	181	172	159	140	117	108	88	76
205	212	267	244	13	20	45	62	77	84	100	116	141	148	153	180
51	46	19	14	243	258	241	206	179	174	157	142	115	110	83	78
267	210	249	242	15	18	47	50	79	82	111	114	143	146	175	178
49	48	17	16	241	240	209	208	177	170	145	144	112	112	81	80
186	221	248	263	4	29	36	61	68	93	100	125	132	157	164	189
82	95	96	3	254	227	222	195	190	163	158	131	126	99	94	67
184	223	226	235	2	31	34	63	66	95	98	127	130	169	162	191
84	33	32	1	256	225	224	193	192	161	160	129	128	97	96	65

Complete this magic square using the numbers 1 to 16 (the magic number is 34)

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Benjamin Franklin: A Chronology

- 1706 Born January 17 in Boston to Josiah and Abiah Folger Franklin, Josiah's second wife.
- 1714-16 Attends Boston Grammar School and George Bronwell's English School (for one year each) but is withdrawn because of the expense of formal schooling.
- 1718 Apprenticed to brother James, who owns and operates a printing house in Boston.
- 1721 James Franklin begins his own newspaper, the *New-England Courant*, and Benjamin continues as apprentice, working on the newspaper among other tasks.
- 1722 Writes fourteen letters, signed 'Silence Dogood,' submitted anonymously to the *New-England Courant*. James, imprisoned by the Massachusetts Assembly for using his newspaper to challenge local authority, is forced to have brother Benjamin manage the paper.
- 1723 Leaves his apprenticeship without permission from James and sets out for other colonial cities, first New York, then Philadelphia. Arrives October 6 and finds employment as a journeyman printer with Samuel Keimer.
- 1724 Travels to London for the first time with James Ralph and Thomas Denham.
- 1725 Works as a printer in Palmer's printing house in London. Writes *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, a deistical response to William Wollaston's *The Religion of Nature Delineated*. An admirer of Franklin's work introduces him to Bernard Mandeville, famed deist.
- 1726 Returns to Philadelphia and is employed by Thomas Denham as clerk, bookkeeper, and shopkeeper.
- 1727 Seriously ill with pleurisy. In June returns to work in Keimer's print shop. Forms Junto (the 'Leather Apron Club'), a private club aimed at self-improvement, with a cluster of other enterprising young men of the artisan class. Members meet Friday evenings to discuss issues of morality, politics, philosophy and business.
- 1728 Starts his own printing business with Hugh Meredith.
- 1729 Writes the 'Busy Body' essay series, published in Andrew Bradford's *American Weekly Mercury*. Interested in improving the economic viability of Pennsylvania in the face of a hard currency shortage, writes and publishes *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper-Currency*, published in April. Purchases Keimer's failed *Pennsylvania Gazette*. (Within a decade, turns the failing newspaper into the most widely read paper in the American colonies.) Son William is born in 1729 or 1730 to a woman whose identity is never revealed.
- 1730 Becomes Pennsylvania colony's official printer. Enters into a common law marriage with Deborah Read (Rogers). (They cannot legally wed because Read's former husband's whereabouts are unknown, so divorce or death papers cannot be produced.) Son William joins their household.
- 1731 Joins the Freemasons and is elected junior warden of St. John's Lodge. Forms the Library Company of Philadelphia, the first subscription library in the United States.
- 1732 Son Francis Folger is born in October. Begins publishing his own *Poor Richard's Almanac* in December; volumes are published annually until 1757.
- 1733 Embarks on 'the bold and arduous plan of arriving at moral Perfection.' Visits family in Boston and James Franklin in Newport, RI.
- 1734 Elected Grand Master of the Freemasons in Philadelphia. Edits and publishes a reprint of James Anderson's *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons*, the first Masonic book printed in America.
- 1735 Proposes a fire protection society and a system of paid night watchmen for the city of Philadelphia. Although he has ceased even occasional attendance at church about 1732, attend church in order to hear sermons preached by Rev. Samuel Hemphill. Hemphill, whose philosophy

- includes preaching practical moralism, is criticized as unorthodox. Interested in methods to induce improved moral habits, Franklin comes to Hemphill's defense and writes several pamphlets. Leaves church after Hemphill is suspended by the Presbyterian Synod in September but continues for the sake of his family, to make contributions to the church.
- 1736 Appointed clerk of Philadelphia Assembly. Son Francis dies of smallpox at age four. Franklin organizes Philadelphia's first fire company (Union Fire Company).
- 1737 Appointed postmaster of Philadelphia.
- 1738 A mock Masonic initiation rite goes awry, fatally burning an apprentice, with Franklin accused of having taken part in the spurious events. Denies responsibility for and knowledge of the events surrounding the youth's ordeal.
- 1739 Meets and gets to know George Whitefield, who is visiting Philadelphia for the first time. So impressed by Whitefield's work, encourages subscriptions for printing Whitefield's writings.
- 1741 Designs Pennsylvania fireplace, otherwise known as the Franklin stove.
- 1743 Publishes *A Proposal for Promoting Useful Knowledge among the British Plantations in America*, the instrument behind the founding of the American Philosophical Society. Proposes a plan for the Academy and College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania). Daughter Sarah ('Sally') Franklin is born in August.
- 1745 From Peter Collinson, Fellow of the Royal Society (London), receives information about electrical experiments conducted in Germany, along with some experimental apparatus. Fascinated with the information, begins experimenting with problems in electricity.
- 1747 Publishes pamphlet, *Plain Truth*, calling for Pennsylvania defense against French and Spanish piracy on the Delaware River. Publishes satire, 'The Speech of Miss Polly Baker, before a Court of Judicature,' in *The General Advertiser*. Reports on progress of his electrical experiments to Peter Collinson, who shows Franklin's accounts to the Royal Society.
- 1748 Joins the Pennsylvania defense militia as a soldier, having refused to serve at the rank of colonel. Takes on as a printing laborer David Hall, who has arrived from London, and so likes Hall's work that he forms a printing partnership with him. Leaves the print shop in Hall's hands, essentially to retire from printing so as to focus on scientific inquiries and public affairs.
- 1749 Becomes Justice of the Peace for the city of Philadelphia and is appointed Grand Master of Masons. Writes *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*, which leads to the formation of the Philadelphia Academy (later the University of Pennsylvania).
- 1751 Assists in funding project and founding the Pennsylvania Hospital. Proposes establishing an English School in Philadelphia. Elected to a seat in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The Academy and the College of Philadelphia open. Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity*, Part One, a collection of his scientific letters regarding electricity, is published in London. (Parts Two and Three are published in 1753-54). Pens tract on population, published in 1755 as *Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Counties, &c.*, in response to the British Iron Act of 1750 prohibiting colonies; further development of slitting and rolling mills, plating forges, and iron and steel manufacture.
- 1752 The Pennsylvania Hospital opens. Performs the kites experiment, proving that lightning is composed of positively and negatively charged particles and is thus a form of electricity. Installs a lightning rod on his own home. In a letter to his brother John, who suffers from bladder stones, Franklin proposes a design for a flexible urinary catheter.
- 1753 Receives honorary graduate degrees from Harvard and Yale. Publishes in London a second set of electrical experiments. Receives appointment as joint Deputy Postmaster General of North America. In November, negotiates a treaty with the Ohio Indians in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
- 1754 Attends intercolonial meetings in Albany, NY. In July, the conference votes to form a union among the colonies. Franklin proposes a Plan of Union (also known as the Albany Plan) that is sent to

- the colonies for ratification. This plan, rejected by the colonies and the British government, nonetheless would later influence decision-making about the colonies' Articles of Confederation and the United States Constitution.
- 1755 In securing Pennsylvania against French invasions, procures supplies for Major-General Edward Braddock, commander of the British forces in North America, for the siege of Fort Duquesne. Supports the Assembly's request to tax the Lords Proprietors' (Penn family) landholdings in Pennsylvania so as to raise money for the defense of the frontiers against the French and their Native American allies.
- 1756 Engages in military expeditions to inspect British strength in Carlisle, Harper's Ferry, and New York, and confers in Easton with a segment of Delaware Indians. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London by unanimous vote. Receives honorary degree from the College of William and Mary. Receives election as corresponding member to the Royal Society of Arts.
- 1757 Receives appointment as Agent of the Pennsylvania Assembly to England, aiming to settle the taxing status of the estates held by the Lords Proprietor. Completes the writing of 'Father Abraham's Speech,' famously known as *The Way to Wealth*, which becomes the Preface for his 1758 *Poor Richard's Almanack*.
- 1758 Joins club culture of London and encounters many of the most important natural and political philosophers, writers, explorers, and scientists of his generation, including Andrew Kippis, Richard Price, Captain James Cook, Joseph Priestley, James Boswell, and David Hume. Invents a damper for stoves and chimneys. On a tour of England, visits ancestral family towns with son William.
- 1759 Receives honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and is thereafter called 'Dr. Franklin.' During tours of northern England and Scotland, meets Adam Smith, William Robertson, and Henry Home, Lord Kames.
- 1760 Publishes third edition of his electrical experiments, along with a pamphlet outlining Great Britain's best cultural and economic strategies in North America, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered with Regard to her Colonies, And the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadaloupe*.
- 1761 Witnesses the coronation of King George III. Invents glass armonica, which is played for the first time in 1762 by Marianne Davies.
- 1762 Oxford University awards an honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law. Returns to Philadelphia. Son William is commissioned Royal Governor of New Jersey.
- 1763 Britain's war with France in North America, often called the Seven years' War, ends, with the 1763 Treaty of Paris.
- 1764 During his campaign for a seat in the Pennsylvania Assembly, is wrongly attacked for reasons of character, fiscal incontinence, and bias against Germans and loses the election. Subsequently elected to serve as the Assembly's Agent and sails for London in November. Charts the Gulf Stream.
- 1765 Stamp Act is passed by the House of Commons and protests occur in the colonies. Aware of the intense problems caused by the measures proposed in the Act, Franklin eventually publishes in London several newspaper articles calling for its repeal and attempting to explain colonists' positions on such matters.
- 1766 Testifies before the Committee of the Whole House of Commons regarding the Stamp Act. Travels to Germany and is elected to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Göttingen.
- 1767 Visits Paris, meets Horace Walpole, and is presented to Louis XV.
- 1768 Continuing to attempt to explain colonists' views regarding British intrusions in colonial affairs, publishes *Causes of the American Discontents before 1768*. Appointed Agent of Georgia Assembly.

- 1769 Joins the Ohio Company, a cluster of well-placed individuals seeking land grants from George III in order to sell land in the Ohio Valley to those who would settle the territory. Elected president of the American Philosophical Society, a position he would hold until his death. Is appointed Agent by the New Jersey House of Representatives. Issues a corrected and enlarged fourth edition of his *Experiments and Observations on Electricity*. Deborah Franklin suffers a stroke and is plagued by failing health thereafter.
- 1770 Elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives and thus becomes Agent for Massachusetts. Serves as Agent in England for four colonies: Pennsylvania, Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. Drawing attention to parallels between political slavery and chattel slavery, prints 'A Conversation on Slavery' in London's *Public Advertiser*.
- 1771 Batavian Society of Experimental Science, Rotterdam, elects Franklin to membership. Writes first part of his autobiography.
- 1772 Ohio Company receives charter, but territory is never conveyed. Begins public argumentations against the institution of slavery with publication of 'The Sommersett Case and the Slave Trade.' Obtains secret letters circulated between Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson and Lieutenant Governor Andrew Oliver and sends this correspondence to Massachusetts Speaker Thomas Cushing.
- 1773 Hutchinson letters are presented to the Massachusetts House and denounced as inflammatory and inaccurate representation of situation in Massachusetts. Massachusetts House calls to remove Hutchinson and Oliver from office. In England, stands accused of treason on the basis of a letter sent to Cushing, but a copy of the letter is never produced. Publishes 'Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One' and 'An Edict by the King of Prussia,' challenging British treatment of American colonies.
- 1774 Upon news of Boston Tea Party in London, Franklin is called before King's Privy Council and dismissed from his position of Deputy Postmaster General for his role in the Hutchinson letters affair. First Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia. Makes several attempts to mediate tensions between Britain and the colonies, but his 'Hints for a Durable Union between England and America' is rejected by court in London. Deborah Franklin suffers another stroke and dies December 19. She and Franklin have not seen each other for ten years.
- 1775 British and colonial American hostilities break out at Lexington and Concord. Returns to Philadelphia and is elected to the Second Continental Congress. Advocates a paper currency and designs continental bills to serve as colonial money. Drafts the Articles of Confederation, but Congress does not adopt his measure. King George III declares the colonies to be in rebellion. Franklin continues his work with the Congress and composes numerous writings in support of the war.
- 1776 Son William, Royal Governor of New Jersey, is relieved of his duties by the New Jersey militia and put under house arrest. Opts not to intervene when William is later imprisoned in Connecticut. Resigns from Pennsylvania Assembly and focuses on congressional work. Appointed to a committee (including John Jay, and John Adams) to compose the Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson. Elected Congressional Commissioner to France and sails for France.
- 1777 Commissioners request French aid in war against Great Britain and Louis XVI offers financial assistance. Elected to the Royal Medical Society of Paris.
- 1778 Treaties of Amity and Commerce with France are signed, and France goes to war with Great Britain. Is joined in Paris by John Adams, another newly elected Commissioner, to treat with the French. Is appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to France. Present at initiation of Voltaire into the Masonic Lodge of the Nine Sisters and officiates at Voltaire's Masonic funeral later that year.
- 1779 Spain declares war on Great Britain. Compilation of Franklin's writings, *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces*, is published in London by Benjamin Vaughan.

- 1781 Along with Jay, Henry Laurens, Jefferson and Adams, is appointed by Congress to act as Peace Commissioner in war. General Charles Cornwallis surrenders to George Washington at Yorktown, Virginia.
- 1782 Along with Jay and Adams, negotiates for peace with Great Britain.
- 1783 Treaty of Paris is signed by Great Britain and the United States, ending the American Revolution against Great Britain. Prints treaty on his own press at Passy. Elected an honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- 1784 Franklin, Adams and Jefferson are appointed by Congress to negotiate treaties with European nations and Barbary States. Elected to membership in the Royal Academy of History in Madrid. In a letter to daughter Sarah, makes fun of the new Society of the Cincinnati (honoring wartime veterans in perpetuity) and decries the proposal of the eagle as the symbol of the American nation, instead offering the wild turkey as a more fitting representative. Writes second part of the autobiography.
- 1785 Congress grants Franklin permission to return to the United States and appoints Jefferson as his replacement as Minister Plenipotentiary to France. Creates plan for bifocal eyeglasses. Returns to Philadelphia on September 14 and is met by enthusiastic crowds. Elected to the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania and subsequently appointed its President. Makes first written reference to the invention of bifocals in a letter to George Whatley.
- 1786 Invents device for the removal of books from high shelves.
- 1787 Elected to the Federal Constitutional Convention and named President of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. Suggests that sessions of Congress should be opened with prayer, a controversial motion that is later dropped. Also proposes 'Great Compromise' on issue of representation in the House and Senate. This measure is approved, making representation in the House contingent on population and representation in the Senate equal among all states.
- 1788 Writes will and begins Part Three of autobiography. Ends public career by concluding service as President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania.
- 1789 Writes and signs the first protest against slavery addressed to Congress. Elected to membership in the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg. Makes the now famous remark to Jean Baptiste Le Roy: 'in this world, nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes.'
- 1790 On behalf of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Franklin petitions Congress for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. Writes last essay, an account of Sidi Mehmet Ibrahim on the slave trade, designed for the Federal gazette. Dies April 17 at home and is buried beside wife Deborah and son Francis in Christ Church cemetery, Philadelphia.

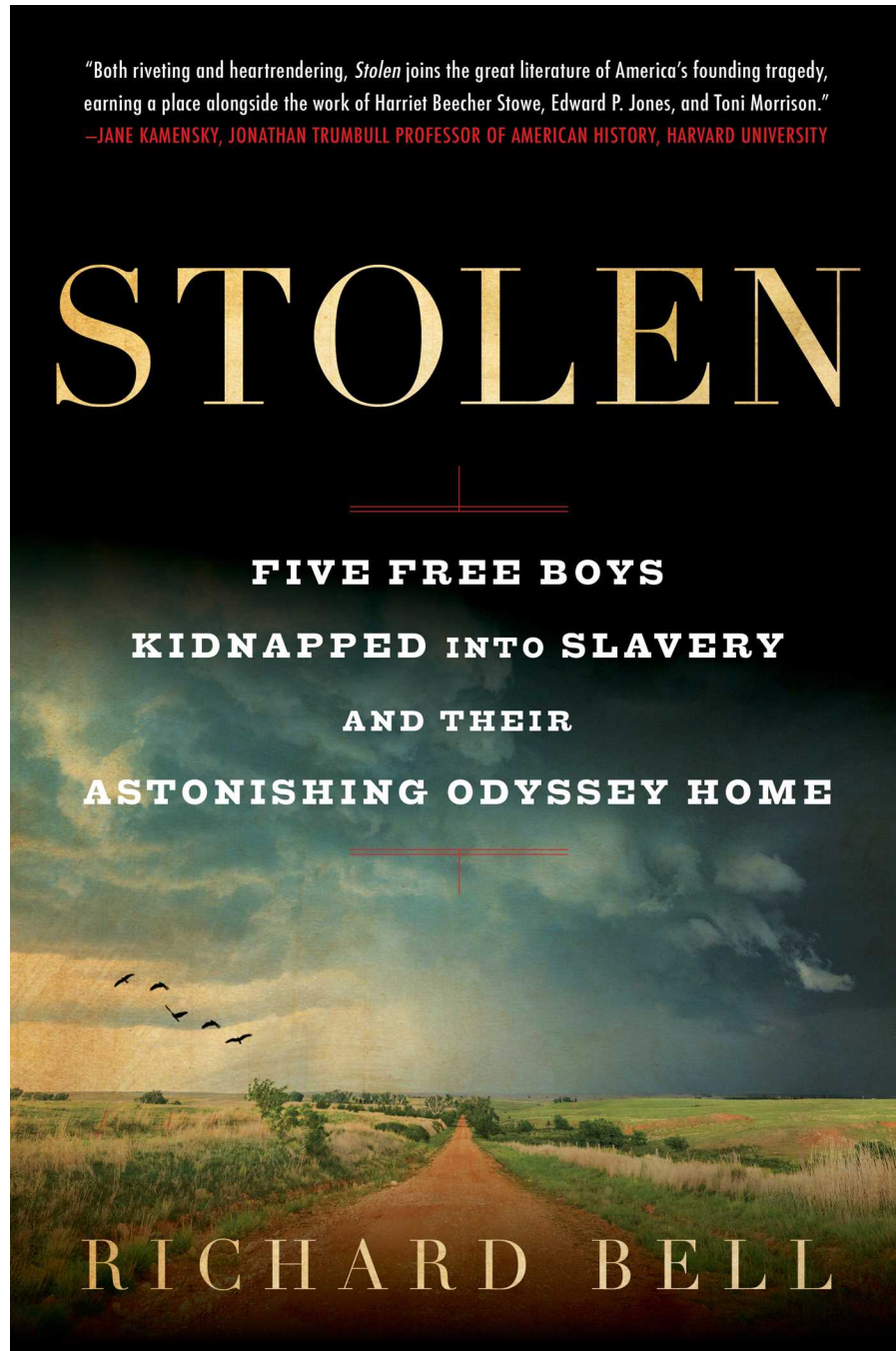
Lightly adapted from Carla Mulford, ed,
Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Franklin (2008), xiv-xxii

Some Other Franklin Fun Facts

- An accomplished horseman.
- Taught himself to read, write and translate German fluently. Also studied French, Italian, Spanish and Latin.
- Not all his publishing enterprises were successful: His *General Magazine and Historical Chronicle* (1741) was shuttered after six months as were his two German-language newspapers: the *Philadelphische Zeitung* (1732) and *Die Hoch Teutsche und Englische Zeitung* (1751-52).
- Donated not just books to his subscription library but also a fossil collection, a collection of "Instruments and Utensils of the Eskimaux" from Labrador, the hand and arm of an Egyptian mummy, and a piece of marble from the ruins of Herculaneum.
- Wrote the first treatise on chess to be written by an American and printed in America. As a player he occasionally cheated "and had an annoying habit of drumming his fingers on the table when his partner took too long to make a move."
- Second American documented as having sent soybeans to North America and the first to describe them as "tau-fu" (tofu).
- In the audience at the second public performance of Handel's *Messiah* in 1759, though he tended to prefer folk ballads and natural methods of singing,
- Instrumental in preventing the planned genocide of hundreds of Conestoga Indians after they took refuge in Philadelphia in 1764 following raids by the Paxton Boys near Lancaster.
- Wrote a pamphlet on *The Art of Procuring Pleasant Dreams*.
- Proposed improvements to the English language including the deletion of four letters from the alphabet and the addition of six new letters to match the six most common sounds used in American English. His proposals later became a model for Noah Webster.
- Encouraged Tom Paine, a down-on-his-luck English artisan, to move from London to Philadelphia and gave him a letter of introduction to help him find a job in the book trades. Two years later, Paine wrote *Common Sense*.
- Commissioned to investigate the claims of Friedrich Anton Mesmer, the founder of the doctrine of animal magnetism.
- Discussed his hope that hot air balloons armed to the teeth would one day bring an end to war and create 'perpetual peace' by rendering all earthbound defenses useless.
- Crossed the Atlantic eight times

*Richard Bell's new book is **STOLEN***

A gripping and true story about five boys who were kidnapped in the North and smuggled into slavery in the Deep South
—and their daring attempt to escape and bring their captors to justice.



“In *Stolen* Richard Bell brings to life amoral con men, heartless slave dealers and suffering victims. He vividly re-creates the squalid social environments of interstate human trafficking. His superbly researched and engaging book exposes previously hidden horrors of American slavery.” —Wall Street Journal

“It’s an uncomfortable part of [US] history, but one that needs to be told. Bell’s story—part thriller, part tragedy, part ode to the resilience of the human spirit—goes a long way to making that history come alive.” —Baton Rouge Advocate