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# OUR FOUNDER

**PETER G. PETERSON**

**1926 – 2018**

**“We have a moral obligation to future generations to build a dynamic, growing American economy that is defined by opportunity, mobility and prosperity.”**

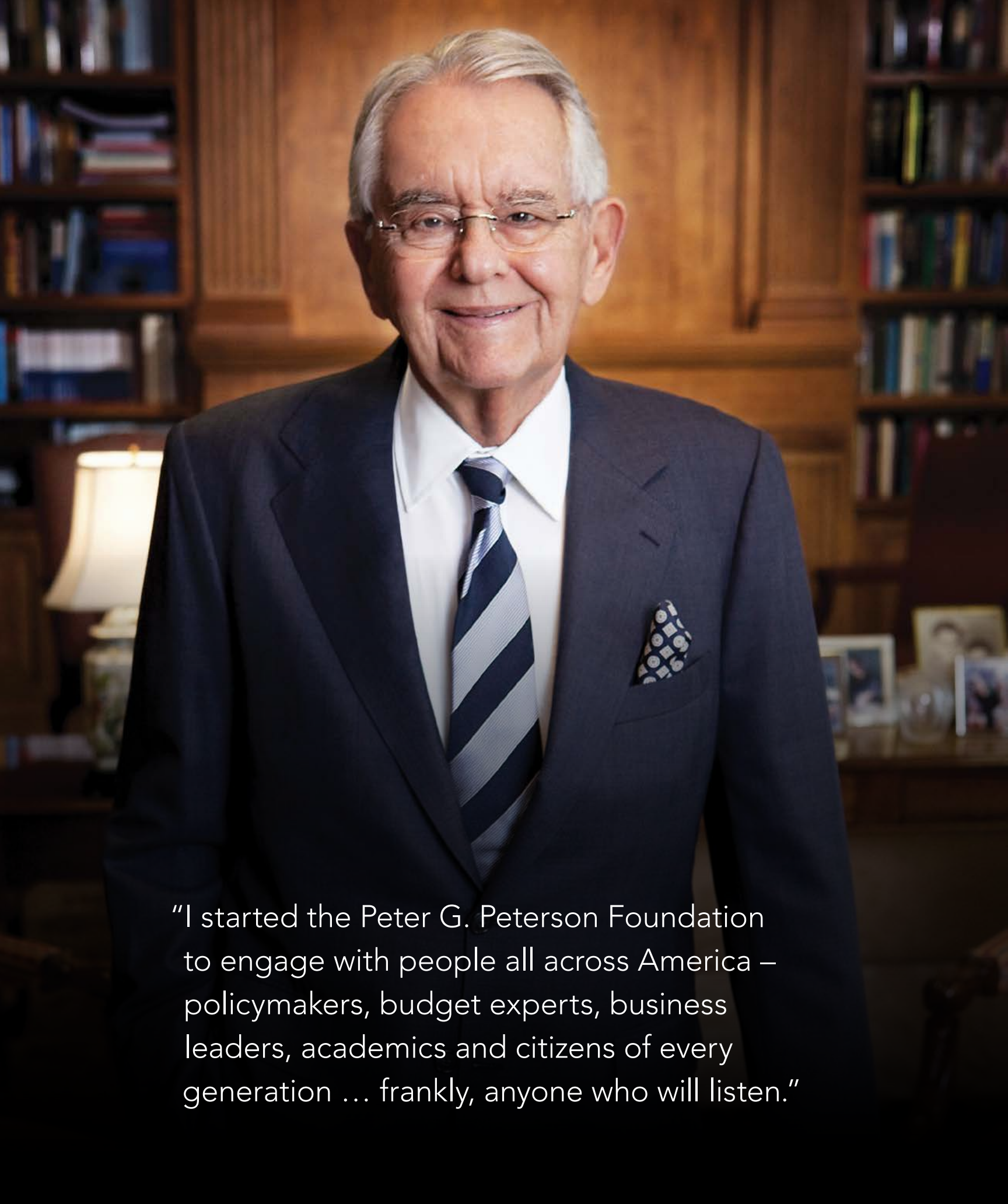
Pete Peterson traced the roots of his character and work ethic back to his birthplace of Kearney, Nebraska. A first-generation American, Pete was born during the Great Depression to Greek immigrant parents who arrived in this country with little education, only a few words of English, and just pennies in their pockets.

His family operated the quintessential Greek diner – the Central Café – which stayed open for literally 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for 25 straight years. This example taught Pete important lessons about the value of hard work, responsibility and, importantly, saving for the future.

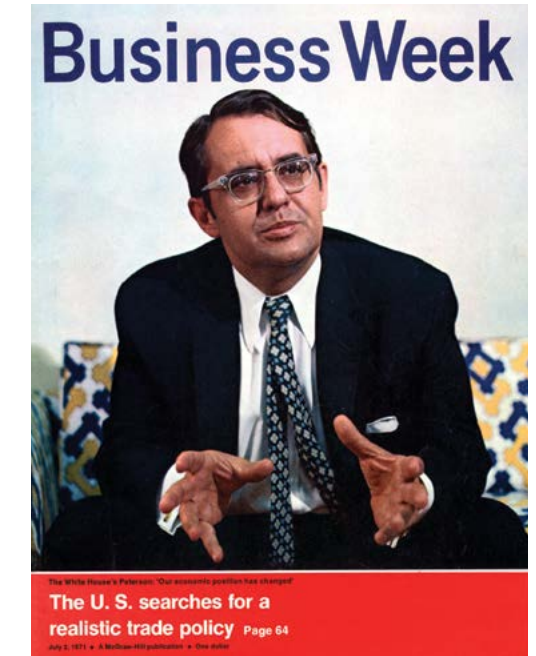
These lessons stayed with Pete throughout his life, driving his passion to ensure that future generations have the same opportunity to live the American Dream that he did. He saw the rapidly growing national debt as a threat to opportunity, and with good reason.

Across Pete’s distinguished and far-reaching career – which included significant accomplishments across public service, business and philanthropy – he was a relentless advocate for fiscal responsibility. An author of eight books and dozens of articles, as well as a frequent public speaker, Pete committed himself to educating and persuading voters and policymakers alike about the need to recognize and prepare for America’s coming demographic challenges.

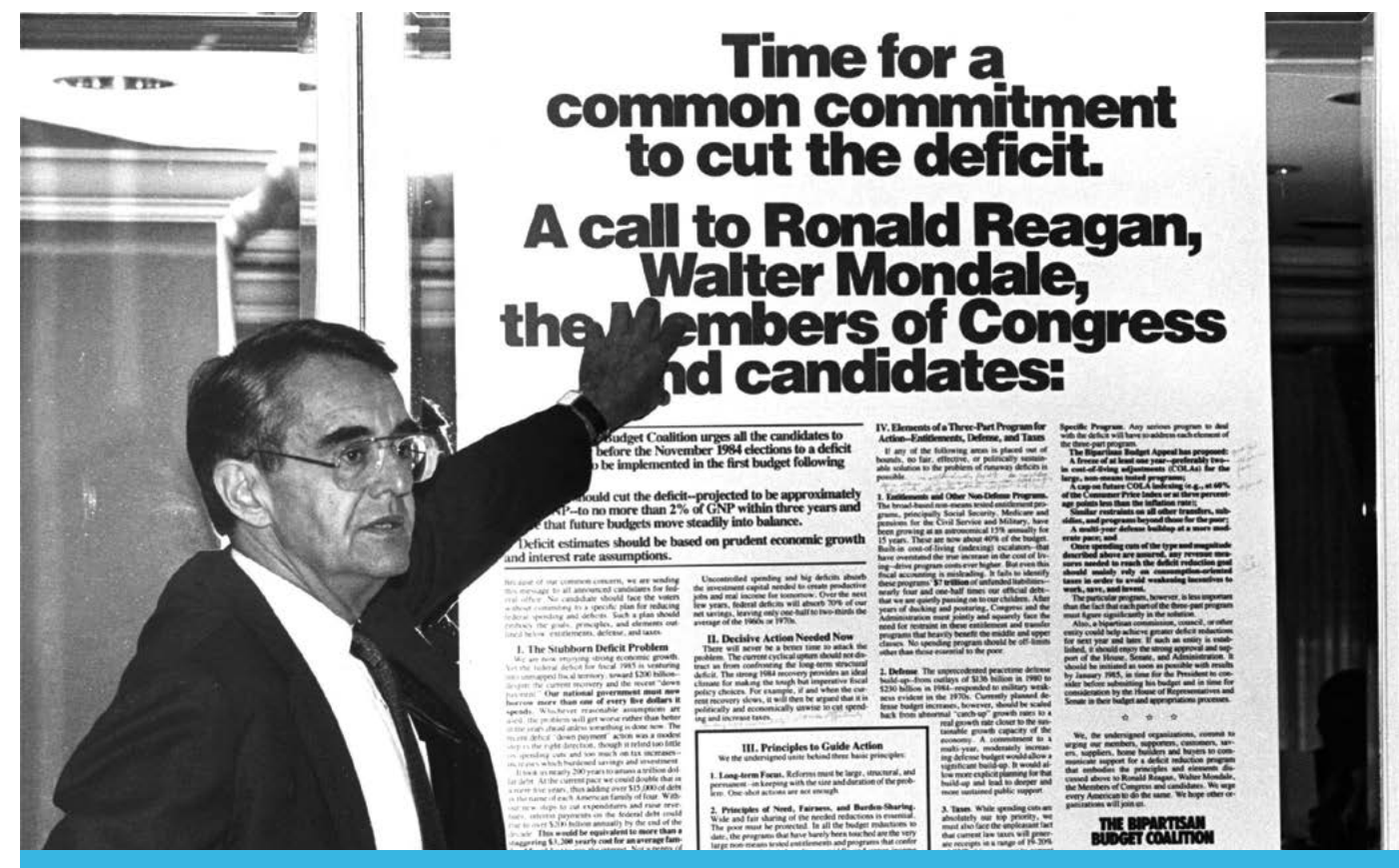
At a fundamental level, Pete saw the nation’s fiscal outlook as a threat to the long-term future of America. In 2008, Pete launched the Peter G. Peterson Foundation because, he said, “nothing less than the American Dream itself was at stake.”



In 1972, Pete became the United States Secretary of Commerce.



Pete, as Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs in 1971. (Used with permission of Bloomberg L.P. Copyright©2017. All rights reserved.)



Always the ad man, Pete leveraged the media to pressure presidential candidates and Congress to address the deficit in 1984.

"I started the Peter G. Peterson Foundation to engage with people all across America – policymakers, budget experts, business leaders, academics and citizens of every generation ... frankly, anyone who will listen."

“History teaches us that good ideas can come from unexpected sources and that lasting legislative solutions are generally those that are built on a solid bipartisan, or even non-partisan, foundation.”



Pete was a prolific writer who penned eight books and many articles.



Pete with his wife, Joan Ganz Cooney, a Director of the Peterson Foundation.



Pete and Michael Peterson together at the 2016 Fiscal Summit.



For Pete, the Fiscal Summit was a nonpartisan platform where policymakers and influential leaders could come and share big ideas.

**“WHILE RESTORING AMERICA’S FISCAL HEALTH MAY BE AN UPHILL BATTLE, I LEARNED FROM MY PARENTS THAT, IN AMERICA – IF YOU WORK HARD ENOUGH – ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE. KNOWING THIS, I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT, LONG AFTER I AM GONE, THE PETERSON FOUNDATION WILL CONTINUE TO CHAMPION OUR NATION’S BEST POSSIBLE ECONOMIC FUTURE AND HELP MAKE IT A REALITY.”**