A CITYWIDE CELEBRATION
THE YALE CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

AMBASSADORS IN ACTION: AN AYA CASE STUDY
THE ASSOCIATION OF YALE ALUMNI

Eleanor Babbitt
Senior Director for Club and Association Relations

INTRODUCTION

The Yale Club of St. Louis was presented with a wonderful opportunity for civic collaboration with the citywide celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the city of St. Louis.

The city had planned a year-long celebration, and the planning committee had approached Yale Professor Jay Gitlin along with the Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders, to organize a symposium for the kick off weekend in February 2014.

Through partnerships with The Missouri History Museum, Washington University and Les Amis (a Francophile friendship organization) the Yale Club was able to create events to benefit its members, as well as to enrich the local community and bring Yale’s name to the forefront of a much larger celebration.

THE OPPORTUNITY

To partner with other non-profit organizations to celebrate a milestone event for the entire St. Louis community. To raise Yale and the Yale Club’s profile in the community and give the Yale Club new and engaging touch points within the community. To create an event around which the Yale community of St. Louis could rally.
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THE MISSION

To provide an educational symposium that would explore the history of the founding of the city of St. Louis. To bring Yale educated lecturers in for a public symposium.

THE PROPOSAL

To create a full day symposium to study the history of St. Louis, from its founding days. Partnerships would be formed with the Missouri History Museum and Washington University, along with Les Amis.

What Happened

Professor Jay Gitlin approached the AYA about a possible partnership with Yale on the symposium he had been asked to put together, “A great City from The Start: The Founding and Lasting Significance of St. Louis” on Friday, February 14, 2014. More than half of the speakers would have Yale PhDs, and most were former students of Jay’s. The AYA was able to tap into the resources of the Redpath Endowment funds to cover the travel expenses for his speakers. We alerted the leadership of the Yale Club of St. Louis about the symposium, and they immediately joined in and began planning a black tie dinner to take place the night of the symposium, in partnership with Les Amis. Steering committees were formed and a handful of Yale volunteers were extremely engaged in the process. The Missouri History Museum was approached and agreed to host the symposium and provide the facility at no or little cost. Washington University was approached and agreed to host and largely underwrite the luncheon and provide transportation to and from the History museum. Les Amis volunteers staffed registration tables and served as hosts. Representatives from the Embassies of France and Spain were invited, as were the leaders of the Osage Tribe and the Délégué du Québec au Midwest.

WHAT WAS THE RESULT – SUCCESS METRICS

Over 200 people attended the full day symposium, which included 15 speakers. 150 people attended the Black Tie dinner that night. Jay Gitlin was interviewed on television (and appeared on multiple broadcasts) and by the local newspapers. Yale and the Yale Club of St. Louis were lauded as important sponsors of the event and a great deal of general good will was generated.