

Signers of the Declaration of Independence

“At 20 years of age the will reigns; at 30 the wit; at 40 the judgment”
- Benjamin Franklin

The Young Elected Leaders Project (YELP) studies and works with young people who run for public office. YELP research reveals that twelve out of the fifty-six signers were age 35 or younger. The youngest delegates were Edward Rutledge and Thomas Lynch of South Carolina, both 27. The oldest signers were Samuel Chase, John Penn, and George Walton.

Signer	State	Age
Samuel Chase	Maryland	35
John Penn	North Carolina	35
George Walton	Georgia	35
James Wilson	Pennsylvania	34
William Hooper	North Carolina	34
Arthur Middleton	South Carolina	34
Thomas Stone	Maryland	33
Thomas Jefferson	Virginia	33
Elbridge Gerry	Massachusetts	32
Thomas Heyward	South Carolina	30
Edward Rutledge	South Carolina	27
Thomas Lynch	South Carolina	27

About the Young Elected Leaders Project (YELP)
Originating in 2002 with funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Young Elected Leaders Project studies and works with young people who run for public office. For this project, Eagleton established a database of young elected officials; conducted a survey of young elected leaders regarding their background and leadership experience; convened a conference of young leaders in May 2003; and issued a report entitled *Political Generation Next: America's Young Elected Leaders*. Currently, YELP is led by Dr. Elizabeth Matto, assistant research professor and director of Eagleton's Youth Political Participation Program, working with a team of undergraduate researchers.

