**Benjamin Rush**

**As Portrayed by Bob Gleason**

Bob Gleason’s Benjamin Rush shows us a man who was really curious about what made things work. More than that, he was an extremely caring and conscientious man who wanted to make things work better. Besides being the first professor of chemistry in America and having an active medical practice, Rush was an ardent abolitionist. He published his anti-slavery views, helped organize the first anti-slavery society in America, and became the society’s first president. Later, Rush would also champion the cause of women’s education.

Rush urged Thomas Paine to write a pro-independence pamphlet using simple language that the common person could understand and even gave Paine the title for his tract: *Common Sense.* As Surgeon General for the Revolutionary Army, Rush was called on to treat wounded soldiers without having adequate supplies, and was forced to find solutions quickly and under extreme circumstances. Never one to run away from difficult situations, Rush stayed in Philadelphia during the Yellow Fever epidemic, caring for the poor, tending the sick. Benjamin Rush instituted many reforms in the care of the mentally ill while serving as senior physician at Pennsylvania Hospital and became known as the Father of Psychiatry.

Since 1980, Bob Gleason has presented programs featuring nearly 150 historical figures, stretching over 2000 years of history. These programs have taken him from Washington D.C. to San Diego, California, and from El Paso, Texas to Milwaukee, Wisconsin (21 states, so far). He has performed at the White House Visitors Center, The Smithsonian Institution, Constitution Hall, George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Ford’s Theatre, Independence Hall, The National Constitution Center, The Union League of Philadelphia, Valley Forge National Park, Federal Hall in NYC, numerous historic sites, and a long list of schools, libraries and other venues public and private. He lives near Lansdale, PA with his wife of 35 years, and a large stock of costumes, props, and books.