

The image shows the interior of the United States Capitol dome, featuring a highly ornate ceiling with a grid of octagonal medallions and a central fresco. Below the ceiling is a balcony with a decorative railing and a row of arched windows. The lighting is warm and highlights the architectural details.

DECEMBER 2022

UNITED STATES SENATE  
YOUTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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POST OFFICE BOX 1798 | WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-1798

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (2022-2024)

President.....	Amanda Patarino (CO 2012)
President-Elect .....	Taylor Oster (ND 2012)
Vice-President.....	Joshua Duden (KS 2012)
Secretary .....	Neil Kline (WI 2014)
Treasurer .....	David Zavadsky (WI 1990)
Parliamentarian .....	John Connolly (PA 2012)
Liaison Officer .....	James Brown (CO 2008)
Communications Director.....	Aaron Cross (WV 2002)
Technology Director .....	Ryan Gavin (ME 2009)
Alumni Programs Director .....	Victoria Cundiff (CO 1973)
Eastern Regional Co-Director .....	Johnson Elugbadebo (IL 1998)
Eastern Regional Co-Director .....	Nicholas Hanson (IL 2007)
National Capital Region Director .....	Sean Dzierzanowski (MD 2007)
Northern Regional Director .....	Guiseppe Di Cera (MO 2020)
Southern Regional Director .....	Victor Agbafé (NC 2015)
Immediate Past President.....	Gil Valadez (DE 1997)
Executive Director.....	John Selmon Blakley, Sr. (MI 1976)
Social Media Advisor.....	Nicole Fintel (NE 2018)

# INCORPORATING MEMBERS

## OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

John Selmon Blakley, Sr. (MI 1976)  
Wendy Jo Peterson (WA 1978)  
Michael S. Sundermeyer (MO 1969)

# FOUNDING MEMBERS

## OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Wendy Jo Peterson (WA 1978)	David F. Zavadsky (WI 1990)
Jonathan Lee Morton (AL 1990)	Robert R. Middleton (DC 1966)
Megan Nelson (WA 1998)	Randy L. Brantley (NC 1981)
Scott Shapiro (WA 1988)	Chandini Margaret Bachman (AZ 1970)
Norman L. Fortenberry (LA 1979)	Christine Drager (AK 1988)
Craig W. Hulvey (ID 1968)	Nathan J.A. Humphrey (CA 1990)
Kirby Lee (IN 1993)	Christopher Trott (FL 1999)
Michael S. Sundermeyer (MO 1969)	John Selmon Blakley, Sr. (MI 1976)
Michael Buckley (MA 1985)	James T. Molloy
Dan Brown (MS 1987)	Gladys S. Hundley



# PRESIDENTS

## OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

### 1999-2004

John Selmon Blakley, Sr. (MI 1976)

### 2004-2006

Robert R. Middleton (DC 1966)

### 2006-2008

Randy L. Brantley (NC 1981)

### 2008-2010

Norman L. Fortenberry (LA 1979)

### 2010-2012

David F. Zavadsky (WI 1990)

### 2012-2014

Rachel M. Lowe (OR 2000)

### 2014-2016

Chad Robinson (DE 2001)

### 2016-2018

Michael Gonzales (NM 1973)

### 2018-2020

Andrew Bradley (IN 1996)

### 2020-2022

Gil Valadez (DE 1997)

### 2022-2024

Amanda Patarino (CO 2012)

# ★ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ★

AMANDA PATARINO (CO 2012), USSYAA PRESIDENT



Dear United States Senate Youth alumni and friends,

On behalf of the USSYAA board, we wish you a happy holiday season and the best wishes for 2023.

This year brought many changes for the alumni association, and I am proud of all that our board has already accomplished since March.

The member database and website have both been improved and updated and are important tools for us to reach one another. Please be sure to log in to [ussyaa.org](http://ussyaa.org) to create an account if you haven't already. As part of the website, we will be launching a USSYAA jobs board this March – be on the lookout for opportunities to share jobs and internships and connect with other alumni! Our social media has also become much more active, and I love seeing the profiles, stories, and updates from alumni.

Importantly, we launched the Contributions Committee, with the help of all the association's past presidents. We have a lofty goal to raise \$30,000 for the association by March, and to increase the number of alumni who give regularly. Our mission as the association is threefold:

- Building and maintaining avenues of communication among program alumni;
- Providing financial assistance for professional educational needs of program alumni; and
- Supporting the William Randolph Hearst Foundation's United States Senate Youth Program.

Funding will ensure that we can do this all well into the future. When the association was founded in 1998, this was "Mom" Rosalie Wynn Hearst's goal, and as an association we strive to do this for many generations to come. Please consider giving regularly and join in on the President's Challenge in 2023!

We are hard at work planning the annual alumni reunion and mentoring tables. Mark your calendar for the first weekend of March and be sure you're subscribed to our emails and checking our website and social media channels for details! It has been wonderful to reach more alumni than ever before through virtual events in the past two years, and we look forward to more connections both online and in person.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that this year has also had sad moments – the association lost three close friends in 2022, Chandini Bachman, George Irish, and John Spisak.

- Chandini was one of the founding members of the board, and fiercely passionate about connecting with alumni across all class years, as well as serving on the scholarship committee year after year. We were excited to create the Chandini Bachman scholarship in her honor, which she was able to witness and celebrate before her passing.
- George B. Irish was Vice President and Eastern Director of the Hearst Foundations, and a close friend of the association. He helped to host many alumni events and received the James T. Molloy Alumni Service Award in 2019.
- John Spisak played a role in the USSYAA since its founding and served as a beloved member of the board and Finance Committee. He worked at the Hearst Foundations for 32 years, from 1975-2007, and was a strong supporter of the United States Senate Youth Program.

We will cherish the memories and contributions of all three as we continue to work on the important mission of the alumni association.

I am always heartened by the work of our alumni and friends, in public service, in our communities, and in connecting with one another. I am looking forward to seeing you (finally in person!) soon. Until then, I wish you a wonderful end of the year!

Sincerely,

Amanda Patarino (CO-12)  
USSYAA President

“If not us, who?  
If not now, when?”

JOHN F. KENNEDY

# 2021 USSYAA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



The winners from left to right (and top to bottom) are Mariette Aborn (VT 2012), Monica DiLeo (CT 2012), Eashan Kumar (IN 2014), Ramie Fathy (TN 2012), and Brett Biebelberg (NJ 2012).

Congratulations!

Providing scholarships that help Hearst Program delegates pursue post-graduate academic programs and continue community service is one of the goals of the USSYAA. For many years we have awarded one or more scholarships named for and honoring Rosalie Wynn ("Mom") Hearst, carrying on stewardship of the program and goals she advocated. This year, we have been exceptionally fortunate to add scholarships to honor **Chandini M. Bachman (AZ 1970)**, who many of our delegates came to know and learn from through the mentoring tables and networking. We are happy to announce this year's scholarship winners:

**Rosalie Wynn Hearst Scholarships of \$5,000 each:**

Mariette Aborn (VT 2012)

Monica DiLeo (CT 2012)

**Chandini M. Bachman Scholarships of \$2,500 each:**

Brett Biebelberg (NJ 2012)

Ramie Fathy (TN 2012)

Eashan Kumar (IN 2014)

## INFORMAL DC HAPPY HOUR

SEAN DZIERZANOWSKI (MD 2007)



On Wednesday, July 27, D.C.-area alumni met up for an informal gathering at the famous Capitol Hill watering hole – Bullfeathers. Alumni present ranged from 1996 to 2022 and included a former military mentor, Hill staffers, civil servants, and current university students. Overall, it was a fantastic evening full of good company and conversation. For future D.C.-area events, gatherings, and activities, keep an eye on your inboxes and the USSYAA website, or contact the National Capital Region Director, Sean Dzierzanowski, at (301) 821-1493 for details!



## EASTERN REGION REUNION AT HEARST TOWER

JOHNSON ELUGBADEBO (IL 1998) AND NICHOLAS HANSON (IL 2007)

On April 29, 2022, USSYAA hosted an Eastern Region reunion event at the Hearst Tower in New York City. Over 50 U.S. Senate Youth Program alumni came together for a networking reception on the stunning 44th floor of Hearst Tower. Of note, many of the participants were of the "COVID classes" of 2020-2021 and appreciated the chance to meet in person with fellow USSYAA delegates. We sincerely thank the Hearst Foundation for their support of such a spectacular event.

# TREASURER'S REPORT

DAVID ZAVADSKY (WI 1990)

USSYAA operates on a cash basis and for the period of January 1, 2022, through November 30, 2022, the year-to-date ("YTD") expenses were \$33,965.56 and consisted of scholarships, our Virtual Awards Annual Event, regional events, communications costs, and various operating and administrative costs.

Assets of the USSYAA are held at Fidelity Investments and consist of mutual funds, exchange-traded funds, and common stocks. This was a challenging year on many fronts, and our more future-focused investments underperformed expectations. The 12-month rate of return is -40.82% as

compared to the S&P 500 Index of -9.21% for the same period. The rate of return includes dividends/interest, realized and unrealized gains/losses.

USSYAA's Finance Committee manages its investments with goals to maximize the portfolio assets and to support the organization's Mission Statement. Contributions from members are a critical part of the alumni's goals to increase its scholarship awards and programs to ensure future success. Tax returns are available online at <https://ussyaa.org/bylaws-tax-info/>.

## TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

RYAN GAVIN (ME 2009)



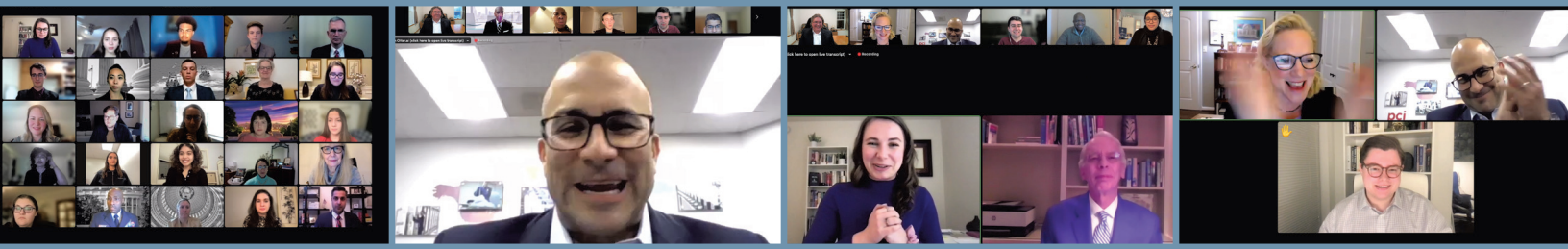
In 2022, the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association (USSYAA.org) significantly upgraded its database and member connectivity capabilities to better serve its members, foster new avenues of communication, and offer important digital features to further the mission of the Association.

Starting this year, USSYAA now maintains both a forward-facing website for members, as well as an advanced back-end data system to track important organizational metrics. Our forward-facing website at USSYAA.org features news

announcements, event registration functions, fundraising integration, and new features like scholarship application portals and an online member directory for members to more easily connect. New back-end features allow the Association to more securely and directly track important data like member contacts, engagement history, educational and professional connections, and more.

Please visit USSYAA.org today to check out the new features and update your profile!

# ★ VIRTUAL ALUMNI DINNER ★



## RAYNE GUILFORD

RECIPIENT OF THE TENTH JAMES T. MOLLOY ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD



For more than 30 years, Rayne Guilford has been working in Washington, D.C. as a leader and innovator in the fields of communications, education policy, legislative outreach, and program management.

Since 2007, she has been the program director of the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP),

her dream job, where she is responsible for all aspects of program oversight and management. Rayne works closely with the Senate to maintain and support the Senate's 60-year sponsorship of the program, and directs the program's national selection process criteria and implementation with the state departments of education nationwide. She also works closely with all institutional partners year-round in the nation's capital to create and execute the Washington Week agenda and ensure the access and goodwill the program receives. Rayne works closely with Department of Defense designated personnel to support and assist the annual collaboration that allows military officers to serve as mentors and guides for the delegates. She oversees all program publications, digital materials, and social media, and is responsible for the writing and publication of the widely distributed USSYP Yearbook. Rayne is responsible for all program policy regarding delegate comportment and participation, and for all aspects of program personnel, security, transportation, and budgeting.

Before joining the USSYP, Rayne served as the deputy director of the Digital Promise project, a national bipartisan initiative to fund advanced research and development of digital technologies for education, training, and lifelong learning to improve American society and overall American competitiveness in the 21st century. Prior to Digital Promise, she served for more than eight years as a senior legislative aide to Senator James M. Jeffords of Vermont, who became Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. In addition to working on legislative issues of early childhood education, literacy, and education technology, the Senator asked Rayne to make the case for increasing federal investment in K-12 education more tangible for fellow lawmakers. In this vein she launched Everybody Wins! DC, a reading and mentoring program founded by Senator Jeffords (then a Republican) and Senator Ted Kennedy, and a large bipartisan cohort of Senators and House members who would read to a child every week at Capitol Hill elementary schools.

Rayne began her career as a public relations manager for Roll Call Newspaper and then subsequently for C-SPAN, where she spent four years working for another great mentor in her life, C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb. She holds a BA in international relations with a minor in French language from Tufts University, and a Certificate of French Language and Political Science from the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po).

She is married to Matthew Guilford, bass trombonist for the National Symphony Orchestra and senior lecturer of trombone for the University of Maryland. They have two children, Kyle a visual artist, and Vivianne, a musician, who obviously got sick of their mother's lectures on politics and opted for a different course.

“If we invest in the American people, the American people always bring this Nation a good return.”

SENATOR BLANCHE LINCOLN



## SENATOR BLANCHE L. LINCOLN

RECIPIENT OF THE THIRTEENTH ROSALIE WYNN HEARST DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD



On November 3, 1998, Senator Blanche L. Lincoln made history when she became the youngest woman ever elected to the United States Senate at the age of 38 – a milestone that still exists today. She made history again on September 9, 2009, when she became the first female ever to serve as Chair of the Senate

Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee.

During her 16-year career in the U.S. Congress – first as a two-term member of the House of Representatives and then as a two-term member of the U.S. Senate – Lincoln built a reputation as a results-oriented, bipartisan legislator. She served on several Committees in Congress, including the House Agriculture Committee, the House Energy & Commerce Committee, the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee, the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, the Senate Special Committee on Aging, and the Senate Finance Committee. She continues to be recognized as a national leader in the areas of agriculture, anti-hunger, aging, health care, international trade, taxes, and energy policy.

As one of the Finance Committee’s top-ranking Democrats, Lincoln was named the first woman Democratic Senator to lead a Finance Committee Subcommittee. During her time on the Finance Committee, she went on to chair two

subcommittees and helped develop and pass legislation reducing taxes, improving health care, and expanding trade.

As a senior member of the Energy & Natural Resources Committee, Senator Lincoln worked to produce bipartisan legislation, improving energy efficiency and enhancing domestic energy supplies – including nuclear and renewable sources.

In her fight against hunger, she founded the Senate Hunger Caucus and used her Chairmanship of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee to author and enact the largest investment in child nutrition programs in history. The new law was deficit neutral, established nutritional standards for school lunches for the first time, received strong bipartisan support, and was signed into law by President Barack Obama.

As a farmer’s daughter, she became known as a champion of production agriculture who fought to ensure that producers were able to continue to provide the safest, most abundant, and affordable supply of food to meet the global needs of the 21st century.

Today, she is the Founder and a Principal of Lincoln Policy Group, a consulting firm that helps its clients successfully navigate the legislative and regulatory bureaucracies of the federal government.

Senator Lincoln is a native of Helena, Arkansas. She received a bachelor’s degree from Randolph-Macon Woman’s College in Lynchburg, Virginia.

# ★ ALUMNI NEWS ★

## *Class of 1973*

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**Victoria Cundiff (CO 1973)** shares with us: "Living in a virtual world has had some bright spots by enabling even more connections via Zoom. Our COVID era has enabled me to conduct virtual mediations and prepare for a virtual trial and, wonderfully, has enabled me to teach intellectual property classes from NYC at a number of law schools (Yale, Penn, and UVa) and even to connect with a number of alums now in school. Next semester I will be teaching in person at Penn Law School – if you are there, please let me know and I'll be happy to connect. I look forward to meeting more alums and to joining next year's in-person events."

## *Class of 1978*

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**Wendy Jo (Pond) Peterson (WA 1978)** had the following to share: "After nearly 38 years serving in the field of higher education in Admissions, Development and New Student Orientation, I have recently retired from my position as Executive Director of Admissions at Washington State University (WSU). The university faculty recently granted me Emerita status, which has been both humbling and rewarding, much like my experience as a delegate to the USSYP Program in 1978 and my early years with the Alumni Association (USSYAA). Since retiring, I am enjoying playing the keyboard and singing in a local classic rock and blues band, helping my husband of 40+ years however I can in our family-owned business, volunteering in the community, and watching our son navigate his college experience at WSU. Thank you for keeping this newsletter alive. 'Mom' Hearst would be so proud!"

## *Class of 1989*

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**From Erica Rowe Urquhart (CA 1989):** "Commensurate with the desire to create change in healthcare with the launch of a health-tech startup, I graduated from The University of Oxford with an Executive MBA in March 2022."

## *Class of 1993*

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**Trasa Robertson Cobern (DoDDS 1993)** shares that: "I write social media posts that are military, veteran, and history themed for the Texas Veterans Land Board, as part of an entire media campaign by a company called Proscalar. The company just recently won a Marcom Platinum Award for the Veterans Land Board Social

Campaign, and I was credited as the sole writer.

More information can be seen at:

<https://enter.marcomawards.com/entry/veterans-land-board-social-campaign/>.

I am proud to be able to use my experience as an Army brat, growing up on military bases around the world, to highlight and feature stories that are positive reflections of the United States Armed Forces and its veterans."

**Melanie (O'Quin) Rice (LA 1993)** was promoted in June 2022 to Vice President/Southern Arizona Division of Southwest Gas Corporation, where she leads the division's operations in the delivery of safe and reliable natural gas to customers in an affordable, environmentally-friendly way through construction, customer service, measurement and control, liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage, renewable natural gas delivery, engineering, and administrative operations. An alumna of Louisiana Tech University, Melanie holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering and is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Arizona. Melanie enjoys keeping up with her fellow 1993 military escort and delegates, as well as interacting with local USSYP alumni in southern Arizona.

## *Class of 1995*

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This year, **Luke DeKoster (IA 1995)** moved back to Asia after more than 2 1/2 years in Iowa (an unexpected blessing of COVID). He is teaching at a local high school and his kids (who are now 14 and 10 1/2) are taking online classes from the U.S.

## *Class of 1999*

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**Shannon Chapman (NV 1999)** writes in: "I have been busy raising a yours-mine-ours family of seven kids. My oldest is 20 and the youngest is 9. When the youngest went to school, I followed and have been teaching for the last five years. I have also been volunteering for the youth, music, and humanitarian programs in my local church. There is never a dull moment as I live the busy family life to the fullest!"

This spring, **Chris Kaergard (IL 1999)** left a 17-year career in daily political journalism and joined the nonpartisan, nonprofit Dirksen Congressional Center in Illinois as staff historian and communications director.

He helps maintain and publicize the papers of U.S. Sen. Everett Dirksen (one of the four sponsors of the resolution establishing our beloved USSYP), as well as U.S. Reps. Bob Michel, Ray LaHood, Harold Velde, and Aaron Schock, and congressional journalist Neil MacNeil. It's a treat to look at politics and public service from a new angle. And for those working on advanced degrees in political science or history, the center runs a Congressional Research Grant program to help fund scholars' research into Congress.

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### **Class of 2005**

**Kaitlin Spak (CA 2005)** was promoted to Principal Engineer this year at Exponent, a scientific and engineering consulting company. She is based out of Denver but spends most of her work hours traveling the world to investigate engineering challenges. When not traveling, she is riding her horse Hemingway, racing her F1000 car, or hanging out with her fiancé, two golden retrievers, and her cat!

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### **Class of 2010**

**Jenny Le (TX 2010)** welcomed a new family member this year: "I am a Texas 2010 delegate for USSYP. My husband, Brian, and I welcomed our first baby, Maya, in October to our family and will be relocating to Chicago in Q1 if there are any alumni who want to meet up!"

**Adam Swigost (ND 2010)** finally completed the 24th grade this past June and graduated from his dermatology residency at Georgetown University. He completed his board certification to become a Fellow in the American Academy of Dermatology and started as a full-time dermatologist with Peachtree Dermatology Associates in Atlanta, GA - practicing medical, cosmetic, and surgical dermatology.

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### **Class of 2011**

**Jordan Rasmusson (MN 2011)** was elected to the Minnesota Senate in November of 2022.

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### **Class of 2012**

**Kristina Pedersen (KS 2012)** finished her M.F.A. in Photography this past May at Concordia University and is still living in Montreal. Her film *Cloud Gate 2*, about memory and the substance of the unseen, has been officially selected to premiere at RIDM - Montreal's International Documentary Film Festival - this November. She is also this year's recipient of Dazibao Contemporary Art Center's Jeune tete d'affiche award. She has more films in the making and hopes that you get in touch! Her email is kristinapicture@gmail.com.

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### **Class of 2013**

**Jacob Podell (MI 2013)** just wrapped up the first year of his two-year clerkship at the Staff Attorney's Office for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. Over the summer, he moved to the lovely Chicago neighborhood of Edgewater with his partner and became a cat stepdad. Besides enjoying the outdoor recreation that Lake Michigan has to offer (the name "Edgewater" is literal), he volunteers with the young-adult board of his synagogue. He also started watching *The Golden Girls* and finds that it holds up.

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### **Class of 2014**

**Patrick Flanigan (LA 2014)** shared that in January he got married to his high school sweetheart, Alex Cloutet, in Mandeville, Louisiana. In attendance was fellow USSYP 2014 alum **Allison Berger (NJ 2014)** who came all the way from NYC to be with them on their big day! In May, Patrick graduated from Tulane Law School and moved to Houston with his wife for her medical residency. Then in September, he passed the Texas Bar Exam and started work as an Assistant District Attorney with the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

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### **Class of 2016**

**Dasom Ham (MN 2016)** started her first year at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor Economics PhD program with the Rackham Merit Fellowship. Before graduate school, she worked at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (Minneapolis Fed) after graduating from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. This year, she published a working paper as part of the Minneapolis Fed Opportunity & Inclusive Growth Institute (OIGI) working paper series. Her working paper has been used in a testimony at the House Oversight and Reform Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis and media outlets. She is happy to talk with USSYP alumni about survey data, designing experiments, formulating public policy, and research (even outside of economics). All views are her own. "Happy holidays and go blue!"

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### **Class of 2019**

**Abe Baker-Butler (NY 2019)** spent the summer working at the Aspen Institute Germany, where he published analysis of the 2022 G7 Summit and served as Rapporteur for a conference on Western Balkans democratization. In October, Abe brought Iraqi Kurdistan's U.S. Representative, Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, to Yale's campus for an Alexander

Hamilton Society seminar on the Kurdish people and their interests/challenges. In November, Abe and a team of Yale undergraduates won 1st place among 41 undergraduate teams in the national Tulane Health Policy Case Competition with a proposal to combat gun violence through veteran-based youth mentorship and adult firearm safety training. They are currently seeking to implement the proposal and appreciate any connections in the gun violence prevention space!

**Catherine Daniel (AL 2019)** has had an extremely busy year! She graduated from Troy University last May with a bachelor's degree in exercise science. While at Troy, she worked as a tutor for the athletic department and for the Pike County Board of Education. She was also able to work with Dr. Teresa Johnson on her research into the effectiveness and safety of blended tube feeding. This fall, Catherine started attending the University of South Alabama, where she is pursuing a master's degree in occupational therapy.

### ***Class of 2021***

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We received the following note from **Zae Brewer (GA 2021)**: "I am currently in my junior year at Kennesaw State University studying political science! Within the past year at KSU, I served as the youngest Supreme Court Justice in KSU's SGA in history, serving for a year. I was also awarded the Emerging Leader Award by KSU in the spring. Now I serve as the Chair of the KSU Democrats, President of the American Red Cross at KSU, Political Action Chair of the KSU NAACP, and the first Chancellor of Students. I plan to soon begin studying for the LSAT and the ASVAB, as I intend to go to the USAF and study law after finishing my undergraduate degree at KSU! I have made so many friends at KSU and I am involved in so much. I cannot be more grateful for all the blessings, and I look forward to seeing what comes next!"

**Emma Romano (WV 2021)** shared with us: "I am currently a Molecular and Cellular Biology major with a minor in Health and Human Values from the University of Arizona. Last spring semester, I was awarded Freshman of the Year Award for my community service engagement and academics. Currently, I am focusing on my role as President for the Honors Service Club where we have grown our numbers from 7 to 20 regular members this past semester. I have started my new position as a student committee member for the Fair Labor Association and Franke Honors Leadership Forum while continuing my work as an Honors PATH Mentor (mentoring first year students), AANHPI Students for Equity Member, and STEM Education Researcher. This next semester I will be beginning my studies for the LSAT in pursuit of a JD/MD and looking for clinical hours in my free time."

# ★ IN MEMORIAM ★

## *In Memory of Chandini Margaret Bachman (AZ 1970)*

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It is with great sadness that the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association marks the passing of **Chandini Bachman (AZ 1970)** this year. Chandini was a founding member of the USSYAA and played a role in the lives of many alumni. The Association was honored to name a scholarship in her

cancer. Chandini leaves her loving family and friends who graced her life.

Her life's passion was organizing events focused on peace, unity, and cooperation, including a National Prayer Breakfast and national and global challenge races, including America's Freedom Ride and Peace Runs. Chandini was a meditator, dancer, and runner, completing 17 New York City Marathons. She traveled globally, visiting more than 60 countries. She served as a certified interpretive tour guide in the U.S. Capitol and as an ITMI-certified tour director. She gifted her extensive collection of spiritual master Sri Chinmoy's writing to the Harvard Divinity School Library. The U.S. Senate Youth Alumni Association recently named three scholarships in her honor."

*Photo Credit to Jakub Mosur*

honor this year. An excerpt from her obituary is below:

"Chandini Margaret Bachman of Bethesda, Maryland, passed away on April 13, 2022, at Casey House Hospice in Montgomery County, MD. She had metastatic breast

## *In Memory of John Spisak*

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The United States Senate Youth Alumni Association is heartbroken to mark the passing of Mr. John Spisak this year. Mr. Spisak has played a role in the USSYAA since its founding and served as a beloved member of the board and Finance Committee. He worked at the Hearst Foundation for 32

Spisak. He received his business degree from Pace University in 1968 with a focus in accounting. He proudly served in the U.S. Army where he achieved the rank of Sergeant First Class and functioned as a Military Police Officer. He was honorably discharged in August of 1969.

"In February 1969, John married Maureen Patricia Hadzick and they resided initially in Queens, New York, and eventually in Huntington, New York, where they lived most of their married life, until his death. In 1975 John joined the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and advanced to the position of Assistant Treasurer and Controller. During his time with the Foundation, John oversaw the funding and grant gifting to countless nonprofits that address significant issues within their major areas of focus: culture, education, health and social service. In his role at the Hearst Foundation, John was proud to actively participate in the United States Senate Youth Program – providing unique educational experiences for outstanding high school students to spend a week in Washington, D.C. experiencing their national government in action. Passionate about giving back, John continued, after retirement, to donate his time and consultation as Deputy Executive Director with the Senate Youth Alumni Association until the time of his passing."

years, from 1975-2007, and was a strong supporter of the United States Senate Youth Program. Board members shared memories of John always working to protect the organization's finances, while investing in the important mission of the association. An excerpt from his obituary is below:

"John Philip Spisak, age 80, died peacefully, surrounded by his family, on the morning of Friday, July 1, 2022, at Huntington Hospital in Huntington, New York.

"John was born September 11, 1941, in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York, to John Spisak and Anna (Ivan)



# YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS OUR LIFEBLOOD

As the year comes to a close, we want to thank you for the support you've shown to the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association. With most of 2022's events in the virtual space, we know it's been more convenient than ever to interact with your fellow alumni. Your activity has helped us to accomplish Mom Hearst's goal of keeping Senate Youth Program alumni connected in ways that we know she couldn't have imagined.

Contributions from our members are the most critical component of our funding structure. Direct financial support of the association is the only consistent way we have of raising new money, and though it may seem cliché, even a small donation of \$10.00 goes a long way when combined with other, similar donations. The USSYAA has an all-volunteer Board of Directors, with people from all walks of life serving in both advisory and working capacities. Your contributions don't pay stipends to directors – they pay the very real expenses of our mission to build avenues of communication among alumni and to provide financial assistance for the professional educational needs of alumni.

Every donation brings us closer to our goal of raising \$30,000 to support our operations for the coming year,

including providing graduate scholarships to alumni, planning the Annual Awards Dinner & Reception, managing the USSYAA website and alumni database, hosting networking opportunities for alumni, and much more.

To make donations to the alumni association as streamlined as possible, we have established an online donation portal at [ussyaa.org](http://ussyaa.org) to facilitate your contribution, which you can make in convenient installments charged to your credit card if you so choose. (Look for the "pledge" option.) If you prefer the tangibility of writing a check, donations mailed to our post office box will receive a confirmation letter from our Treasurer. The USSYAA is a 501(c)(3) public charity; please inquire with your tax professional as to whether your donation is tax deductible and with your workplace as to whether matching funds are available.

Again, thank you for your participation in our activities, whether it be financial, logistical, or by your (virtual) presence at our events and meetings. You truly can and do make a difference.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

**AARON CROSS (WV 2002)**

The 2022 annual newsletter is my first as Communications Director for the USSYAA, and I have truly enjoyed putting this together for you. I am but the most recent keeper of a trust that Mom Hearst passed on to the USSYAA, and I would like to thank my predecessor David Zavadsky (WI 1990), now the USSYAA Treasurer, for his gracious help in transitioning me into my new role.

I have enjoyed reading and assembling updates from alumni, in which I get to see the many fantastic things you are doing for our nation. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve, and I look forward to the continued work to keep you informed about the USSYAA in the coming years. I wish you and yours the best in this holiday season!