

DECEMBER 2023

**UNITED STATES SENATE
YOUTH ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION**

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.....	Erica Wozniak (MI 2009)
Secretary	Vacant
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,

Thank you for a wonderful year! On behalf of the USSYAA board, we wish you a wonderful holiday season and start to 2024.

This year, we were finally able to meet in person once again for the annual alumni dinner. It was a joy to see many of our alumni back at the Mayflower, catching up and hearing from our Rosalie Wynn Hearst Public Service Award winner Secretary Robert Gates, and honoring the memory of John Spisak. I was proud to address the 2023 delegates, who also celebrated Washington Week back at the Mayflower this year.

We are thrilled to be planning for the alumni association's 25th anniversary, and **hope that you will plan to join us in Washington, D.C. for the festivities on March 2**, including an annual awards dinner with a very special guest, the return of in-person mentoring tables, and board elections.



Photo by Jakub Mosur

As we near the 25th anniversary of the alumni association, I am proud to reflect on all of the great work of alumni and volunteers who have given so much to start the association and keep it going:

- Building and maintaining avenues of communication among program alumni – through in-person and virtual events since 1999
- Providing financial assistance for professional educational needs of program alumni – funding more than \$100,000 in scholarships since 1999
- Supporting the William Randolph Hearst Foundation's United States Senate Youth Program – maintaining strong relationships with the Hearst Foundations and hosting mentoring tables for USSYP delegates each year

Personally, USSYAA has played an huge role in my life, keeping me connected to great friends and memories, facilitating engagement in public service, and also helped me to pay for my graduate education. It has been an honor to serve on the board for the last seven and a half years, and I look forward to continuing to stay close to the association. I hope that you will too.

We have lots of ways that you can get involved – to help us celebrate our 25th anniversary and beyond! You can learn more about how to donate to the association, get involved with the board, host events, or share your memories with us in the 25th anniversary section of this newsletter.

Looking forward to celebrating with you soon,

Amanda Patarino (CO-12)
USSYAA President



2022 USSYAA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Providing scholarships to enable Hearst Program delegates to pursue post-graduate academic programs that will enable them to continue community service is one of the signal 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 so advocated. We are happy to announce this year’s scholarship winners:



Rosalie Wynn Hearst \$5,000 Scholarship

Out of a wonderful array of outstanding applicants, we are delighted to have awarded the most recent Rosalie Wynn Hearst Scholarship in the amount of \$5,000 to **Zhan Okuda-Lim (NV 2010)**.

Zhan is working toward a Ph.D. in policy analysis at Pardee RAND in Santa Monica, where he will be continuing his work in partnering people-with-policy in partnership with communities. Among other things, he has supported community leaders in Sitka, Alaska on community-wide composting, supported the Nevada Department of Education on understanding how other states have implemented and expanded personalized and competency-based learning to improve student outcomes, and focused on how high-quality online learning can be leveraged to address post-pandemic learning issues.

Photo by Diane Baldwin/RAND Corporation



Chandini M. Bachman \$2,500 Scholarship

A Chandini M. Bachman Scholarship of \$2,500 was awarded to **Nathanael Mickelson (AR 2012)**. Nathanael is working toward an MA in economics and Ph.D. in History at the University of Georgia.

His work focuses on probing economics and history to understand conditions required to craft effective laws. He also focuses on the relationship between Congress and a strong executive in expanding credit access to redress long-term global agricultural depression during and following the Great Depression. As he has described, “By emphasizing how the U.S. Senate drove much of the First New Deal’s success, my aim is to challenge the present preoccupation with the White House and reiterate that successful policies are the result of careful, considered Congressional debate conducted in good faith.”

Photo by Catherine Cansler Photography

TREASURER'S REPORT

DAVID ZAVADSKY (WI 1990)

USSYAA operates on a cash basis and for the period of January 1, 2023, through November 30, 2023, the year-to-date ("YTD") expenses were \$28,991.39 and consist of scholarships, our hybrid in-person/virtual annual dinner, 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. After facing capital losses in 2022, the USSYAA refocused its investment strategy to conserve capital while still participating in market gains. This strategy allowed our holdings to rebound by 34.9% YTD as of December 12, as compared 22.3% for the S&P 500 during the same period. While our total assets are still less than where they were at the end of 2021, the improvement in our financial position has been significant.

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, and have been a significant component of our financial turnaround in 2023. Tax returns are available online at <https://ussyaa.org/bylaws-tax-info/>.



TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

RYAN GAVIN (ME 2009)

In 2023, the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association (USSYAA.org) continued to maintain 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.

Our member-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 connect more easily. 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 features and update your profile!



★ 2023 ANNUAL ALUMNI DINNER ★

JOHN P. SPISAK

RECIPIENT OF THE ELEVENTH JAMES T. MOLLOY ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD



Born September 11, 1941, in Brooklyn, New York, John Philip Spisak received his business degree from Pace University in 1968 with a focus in accounting. He proudly served in the U.S. Army, achieving the rank of Sergeant First Class, and functioned as a Military Police Officer. He was honorably discharged in August 1969.

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, he 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 his retirement in 2007, to donate his time and consultation as Deputy Executive Director of the United Senate Youth Alumni Association until the time of his passing. As a member of the board and Finance Committee, he played an integral role in the USSYAA since its founding and provided critical wisdom and guidance. He tirelessly worked to protect the association's finances and ensure it invested in its important missions.

John, age 80, died peacefully, surrounded by his family, on the morning of Friday, July 1, 2022, at Huntington Hospital in Huntington, New York. He's survived by his wife, Maureen, and their two children, Michael and Michelle.



“Core to leadership is the ability to relate to people—to empathize, understand, inspire, and motivate.”

SECRETARY ROBERT M. GATES (from his book *A Passion for Leadership*)

SECRETARY ROBERT M. GATES

RECIPIENT OF THE FOURTEENTH ROSALIE WYNN HEARST DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD



Robert Gates served as the 22nd secretary of defense (2006-2011). He is the only secretary of defense in U.S. history to be asked to remain in office by a newly elected president. Dr. Gates served eight U.S. presidents across both parties. On Gates' last day in office, President Barack Obama awarded him the Presidential Medal of

Freedom, America's highest civilian honor.

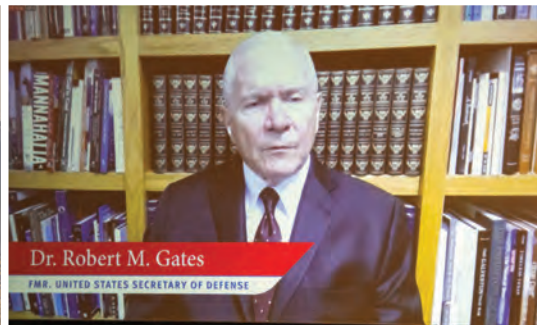
Before becoming secretary of defense in 2006, Gates was the president of Texas A&M University, one of the nation's largest universities.

Gates served in the CIA for nearly 27 years, culminating in his service as director of Central Intelligence from 1991 to

1993. He is the only career officer in the CIA's history to rise from entry-level employee to director. He spent nearly nine years on the National Security Council at the White House, serving four administrations across both parties.

Gates has been awarded the National Security Medal, the Presidential Citizens Medal, has three times received the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, and has three times received the CIA's highest award, the Distinguished Intelligence Medal.

Gates currently is a principal at the consulting firm Rice, Hadley, Gates & Manuel, LLC, with former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley. Additionally, he is Chancellor of William & Mary, his alma mater. He has served on various public boards, including Starbucks, the NCAA, the American Council on Education, and the Boy Scouts of America. Gates has authored four books, covering his experiences at the CIA and at the Pentagon, leadership, and US nonmilitary instruments of power.



Photos by Don Tanguilig

★ ALUMNI NEWS ★

Class of 1975

Carol Frost (AK 1975) was named to the Board of Directors of the British Geological Survey in March 2023 for a renewable term of three years. The responsibilities of the board mirror those of a Company board and so include setting the company's strategic aims, providing the leadership to put them into effect, supervising, supporting and challenging the management of the business, and reporting to the National Environmental Research Council on their stewardship.

Class of 1977

Alan Aldinger (OH 1977) is currently a Vice President and Manager, Media Relations at PNC Financial Services Group in Pittsburgh. He has served in media relations in one form or another his entire career.

Class of 1979

Norman Fortenberry (LA 1979) conveys, "After 11 years as executive director of the American Society for Engineering Education (the professional society for engineering faculty, staff, and leaders concerned about preparing the next generation of engineers through attention to the quality, content, and experiences of engineering education), I've moved on to the role of Chief Executive Officer of Great Minds in STEM (GMIS). An organization dedicated to ensuring that future generations of US scientists, technologists, engineers, mathematicians, and medical (STEMM) professionals is fully reflective of the rich diversity of our population, with particular attention to those currently underserved. GMIS works to recognize exemplary STEMM professionals from underserved populations, inspire the next generation of STEMM professionals, provide academic and social support to pre-college and undergraduate students, provide financial support to undergraduate and graduate students, and provide enhanced social and professional skills to STEMM professionals. In a time of increased social and legal challenges to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, I can't think of a more important endeavor to which to dedicate my time and talents."

Tom Lee (TN 1979) is now a partner in the law firm of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough in the firm's Nashville office, where he practices government relations and resolution of high-profile disputes. In 2023, he finished a four-year term as vice chair of the Tennessee Sports Wagering Council. He continues as a lay speaker in the United Methodist Church and will be a delegate to the church's global General Conference in 2024.

Class of 1989

Brian Kamoie (PA 1989) recently joined Deloitte's Government & Public Services practice as a Managing Director after nearly 20 years in federal service. He helps the firm's clients improve their emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Brian is always glad to hear from fellow alumni at kamoie@comcast.net or via LinkedIn.

Class of 1990

Lance Schupbach (NE 1990) was named 2023 Laureate by Nebraska Chapter of the American College of Physicians. Lance is working as a hospital-based Internal Medicine physician in Lincoln Nebraska, traveling with his spouse and three children, and playing around the region in his rock cover band Thirty Minute Hangover.

Class of 1992

Delvyn Case (ME 1992) relates, "I continue to serve as Professor of Music at Wheaton College Massachusetts. I'll be spending my upcoming sabbatical as a Visiting Fellowship at Exeter College, University of Oxford, where I will be working on projects exploring the intersections of music and theology."

Class of 1993

Courtney O'Donnell (PA 1993) was nominated in September by President Biden to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. (UNESCO). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/05/president-biden-announces-key-nominees-54/> She is honored to be nominated and is currently in the process of seeking Senate confirmation. She continues to be grateful for the opportunity she had as an USSYP delegate and the ways the program and its people inspired her future career in public service.

Class of 2002

Aaron Cross (WV 2002) moved from teaching Military & Strategic Studies at the United States Air Force Academy in June to take command of a Stryker Cavalry Squadron at Fort Carson, Colorado (2nd Squadron, 1st United States Cavalry Regiment). Aaron led his new squadron through a successful rotation at the National Training Center in September. Aaron and his wife, Holly, are expecting their second son in March 2024.

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Class of 2007

Nicholas Hanson (IL 2007) spent this past summer serving as a fellow on the House Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the U.S. and the CCP. He is now in the final year of the Harvard Kennedy School MPP/Harvard Business School MBA joint degree program.

Col Stacey Taylor (Military Mentor 2007) is retiring from the Marine Corps on July 31, 2023, after 30 years of service. He has not decided on his next career.

Class of 2008

Adam Smith (KS 2008) sends, "In June 2023, I was named the Director of the Villanova Initiative to Support Inclusiveness and Build Leaders (VISIBLE) at Villanova University. The VISIBLE Office was the program arm of an NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant awarded to the University in 2018. At the end of our grant period, the office and our associated programs were institutionalized at the university and transferred to internal funding. After joining the program in 2020 as the Associate Director, I was announced as the new permanent director this summer. This year, we will launch a new triennial Symposium on Leadership and Equity to Advance all Faculty, hire two full-time staff members, and make permanent our work to improve intersectional gender equity for faculty at Villanova."

Class of 2009

In 2023, **Hunter Nicholson (MS 2009)** earned a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology at the University of Edinburgh and began serving as the pastor of Columbia Presbyterian Church in Columbia, MS.

Class of 2010

Zhan Okuda-Lim (NV 2010) sends, "In December, I successfully defended my dissertation proposal and officially became ABD (All But Dissertation) for my Ph.D. in Policy Analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School! My dissertation will examine the outcomes of Nevada K-12 students enrolled in purpose-built online learning versus the outcomes of their peers who shifted from in-person learning to emergency remote teaching due to the pandemic. Through a mixed-methods approach involving both quasi-experimental analysis of statewide longitudinal data and also in-depth interviews with educators and other stakeholders, I aim to illuminate the factors that have best supported student achievement and well-being in the online modality and share these findings with policymakers and decision-makers as Nevada and other states seek to expand more K-12 online and hybrid learning options. I am deeply grateful to the USSYAA for the 2023 Rosalie Wynn and George Randolph Hearst, Sr. Alumni Scholarship.

This generous support over the past year has allowed me to focus on fostering key stakeholder partnerships, synthesizing relevant literature, and preparing my full proposal."

Class of 2011

Jordan Rasmusson (MN 2011) just finished his first session serving in the Minnesota Senate. This year, he focused on pension reform, nursing home funding, and repealing anti-competitive pricing laws. He and his wife Emma are enjoying being uncle and aunt to their 15-month-old nephew!

Class of 2012

Mariette Aborn (VT 2012) sends, "I graduated from Duke University with a Master of Public Policy in May and am grateful to have had support from the Rosalie Wynn & George Randolph Hearst Sr. Alumni Scholarship. The sunshine in NC was nice, but I always intended to return to the snow. I am happy to share that I am now working at Maine's Department of Health and Human Services on child and family well-being. Any other alumni in Maine – please reach out!"

Class of 2013

Margaret Lie (LA 2013) will complete an internal medicine residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in June 2024 and begin a pulmonary-critical care fellowship at MGH-BIDMC upon completion of her residency.

Class of 2014

This year, **Avalon Roche (DODEA 2014)** became a barred attorney and graduated with a Master of Public Policy from American University.

Class of 2015

Jordan Cozby (AL 2015) concluded his time as a Legislative Assistant for Senator Jon Ossoff in May 2023. He is now in his first year at Yale Law School.

Richard Yarrow (MD 2015) spent the last year on research fellowships in Australia, Singapore, China, and Thailand, studying Asian economic changes and policy challenges. He is glad to be back home in the U.S. for a little while, before heading to China in winter 2023-24 to study effects of the real estate downturn there.

Class of 2016

This past October, **Luke Myers (PA 2016)** was admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar after graduating from Temple Law, and now works as a Staff Attorney at Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

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In May, **Madeline Moreno (WY 2016)** graduated with a Master of Arts in Ethics, Peace, and Human Rights from American University's School of International Service. She was selected as a Presidential Management Fellowship Finalist, and started the fellowship while working as a Policy Analyst at the Congressional Research Service.

Class of 2017

Irene Fernald (NM 2017) relates, "2023 was a year to remember! I spent January-July in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan enjoying the mountains and lakes of Central Asia while studying Russian, History, and Environmental Law on an NSEP Boren Fellowship. In September I completed my MA in International Environmental Policy-Natural Resource Management and began my first "real job" in Washington, D.C. If any alumni have experience at the intersection of international relations, public service, and environmental policy, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to connect and learn about your career paths! My email is fernaldirene@gmail.com. Best wishes to everyone in 2024!"

Class of 2018

Brandon Prichard (ND 2018) was elected to the North Dakota House of Representatives, representing District 8. At the age of 22, Prichard is one of the youngest state lawmakers in American history. He also married his wife Kathryn Prichard in May of 2023.

CDR Desmond Walker (Military Mentor 2018) assumed command of USS STOUT (DDG 55), a US Navy guided missile destroyer: <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/449781/uss-stout-holds-change-command-ceremony>

Class of 2019

Catherine Daniel (AL 2019) is currently in her second year of graduate school at the University of South Alabama, where she is pursuing a degree in occupational therapy. She is president of the occupational therapy honor's society and was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi. Catherine also serves as the occupational therapy liaison for the Student-Run Free Clinic, which provides healthcare to the homeless population of Mobile. Additionally, she has created an occupational therapy fall prevention and strengthening program to help the elderly residents of the nearby Choctaw reservation.

Abe Baker-Butler (NY 2019) sends, "In February 2023, Abe testified before the Connecticut General Assembly about Operation Healthy Homefront, a novel community gun violence prevention program he and fellow Yale students designed and are working to implement in New Haven. Abe spent last summer working for U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, and since August, he has been serving as President of American Jewish Committee's (AJC) Campus Global Board."

Jarret Carnes (TX 2019) relates, "The last year has been filled with a lot of excitement and change for me! In May, I graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a BS in Political Communication and minor in Social Work. Shortly after, I boarded a plane to travel to south India to implement the project I had been managing for 10 months prior. My team worked alongside a local NGO to design, fully fund, and construct a community center in a rural area in Tamil Nadu. The primary focus of my work was to provide a short-term solution to the community's pressing needs while helping open resource channels for long-term development opportunities: increasing educational funding, bringing more teachers to the area, and connecting their community leaders with agencies/NGOs that could help them meet their needs for a longer time. Most recently, I departed for 27 months of service in the Peace Corps working in Youth and Development. I will be serving in the Philippines until December 2025 working in orphan care."

Ema Waring (TX 2019) graduated from The University of Texas at Austin, with a degree in Public Relations and a minor in Business Administration. She commissioned into the United States Navy and is now serving as a surface warfare officer in the Pacific Northwest, on board the USS Gridley. Ema is honored to follow in the footsteps of the military mentors who accompanied her throughout Washington Week. She is looking forward to a career in the fleet and gaining valuable leadership lessons while serving her country.

Class of 2020

Sawyer Rogers (NH 2020) graduated with an MPA at Syracuse University in July 2023. While at Syracuse, he was recognized as a Founders Fellow by the American Society of Public Administrators and published a paper about public housing for people with disabilities in the Princeton Journal of Public and International Affairs. He is working on an MPP at the Hertie School in Berlin, Germany, and is set to graduate in June 2024.

Class of 2021

Thomas Musgrave (IL 2021) shares, "This past summer, I served as a White House intern in the Office of Presidential Correspondence, where I helped read and respond to letters and e-mails from constituents across the US. Through this experience, I had the chance to meet the President, First Lady, Vice President, Second Gentleman, Press Secretary, and Chief of Staff! I am now completing my junior year at the University of Notre Dame while also working with the ballot access team of President Biden's re-election campaign in Indiana."

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Hamilton Sprawls (SC 2021) relates, "I am now a Junior at Clemson University in the School of Architecture. Only three more semesters to go in the undergraduate program! I am preparing to apply for graduate schools to continue my education and attain architectural licensure. My minor in nonprofit leadership is nearly complete and I successfully completed an internship with the local organization House of Hope. I learned that people from all backgrounds and careers including architecture are needed in a nonprofit even if it specifically addresses homelessness. Next semester I will be studying abroad in the coastal town of Genoa, Italy in the Clemson Architecture Foundation's villa. I am excited to experience the country's architecture, food, and language and hope to return to the states even more passionate about my career. The summer after I return, I hope to participate in a second minor program in historic preservation in Charleston, SC, where I will learn about researching and documenting architectural landmarks. As a side note, I was able to solo a plane around Oconee County Regional Airport! I am continually grateful to have been a part of the United States Senate Youth Program!"

Lucia Enriquez (TN 2021) shares, "I have been working with Columbia Daily Spectator and produced my own work regarding standardized test score inequality in New York City. I have also been accepted as an IT engineer for KPMG's 2024 summer internship, and worked as an astrophysics researcher at Columbia University this past summer with the Laidlaw Scholars program, a two-year fellowship granting undergraduate students research funding and opportunities. Next summer I will be traveling abroad to conduct an in-field research project."

Class of 2022

After graduating from high school this past spring, **Cameron Reckard (WY 2022)** started the next stage of his education at Harvard University, making the long trek from his home state of Wyoming to the East Coast. He's been settling into the Harvard community, meeting people from across the globe as well as several USSYP delegates (both from his year and others), which has been a terrific experience. Especially coming from a Washington Week Online year, the face-to-face interactions have been incredible. He is thankful for a great (and busy) year, and he is so excited for what is to come in 2024!

THANK YOU, DONORS

As the year ends, we want to thank you for the support you have shown to the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association in 2023. Your generosity has helped us to accomplish Mom Hearst's goal of keeping Senate Youth Program alumni connected in ways that we know she could not have imagined.

Donations to the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association are used to support our three-pronged mission statement:

- Building and maintaining avenues of communication among program alumni through in-person and virtual events, including our annual alumni awards, informal happy hours across the country, the launch of our jobs board, and many others.
- Providing financial assistance for professional educational needs of program alumni. We have provided more than \$100,000 in scholarship funds since 1999.
- Supporting the William Randolph Hearst Foundation's United States Senate Youth Program. We maintain strong relationships with the Hearst Foundations and host mentoring tables for USSYP delegates each year.

Between December 1, 2022, and November 30, 2023, the following individuals have made contributions to the organization. We thank everyone for their donations – without your support, the USSYAA would not be able to achieve its mission and goals.

Anonymous

Andrew Abreo (LA 2004)

Morgan Atkins (MS 2018)

John Selmon Blakley Sr. (MI 1976)

Randy Brantley (NC 1981)

Jaron Caffrey (KS 2018)

Warren Chen (NH 2022)

Laura Clubok (MA 1988)

Andrew Connery (OK 2009)

John Connolly (PA 2012)

Aaron Cross (WV 2002)

Victoria Cundiff (CO 1973)

Josh Duden (KS 2012)

Sean Dzierzanowski (MD 2007)

Norman Fortenberry (LA 1979)

Rex Gale (NH 1973)

Ryan Gavin (ME 2009)

Michael Gonzales (NM 1973)

Nicholas Hanson (IL 2007)

Sarah Herlihy (ME 1990)

John Knapp (WA 1989)

Harry Knox (GA 1979)

Linda Kramer (ND 1990)

Terrence Lee (MA 1984)

Katie Jo Lunningham (KS 2006)

Robert R. Middleton, Jr. (DC 1966)

Paul Musgrave (IN 1999)

Taylor Oster (ND 2012)

Wendy Peterson (WA 1978)

Jay Philbrick (ME 2019)

Jacob Plovanic (MT 2003)

Melanie Rice (LA 1993)

Timothy Riffe (VA 1988)

Chad Robinson (DE 2001)

Ben Schnakenberg (MO 1996)

Ben Sorkin (NY 2016)

Michael Sundermeyer (MO 1969)

Virginia Suveiu (CA 1999)

Christopher Trott (FL 1999)

James Updike (SD 2012)

Axel Urie (CO 2010)

Gil Valadez (DE 1997)

David Zavadsky (WI 1990)

★ CELEBRATE 25 YEARS ★ OF THE USSYAA WITH US!

2024 will mark the 25th anniversary of the United States Senate Youth Alumni Association.
You can celebrate this milestone with us by:

Joining us in Washington, D.C. for the annual alumni event on March 2, 2024!

This will include our annual meeting, mentoring tables, and awards dinner. More details and a registration link will be emailed and posted on our website soon.

Filling out our alumni survey.

Tell the board what you're looking for from the association and make your voice heard! You can find the survey here <https://ussyaa.org/2023/12/19/take-our-25th-anniversary-member-survey-we-want-to-hear-from-you/>

Sharing your USSYP memories.

In the new year, we will add a page on our website where you can share photos, stories, or videos where you share memories of your Washington Week experience. Help us to curate our memories for the next 25 years and beyond!

Serving the association.

Whether you're interested in joining the board in an appointed or voted position, joining a committee to read scholarship applications, or have other ideas – reach out to president@ussyaa.org to learn more!

Volunteering to be a mentor for other alumni.

We are excited to introduce a new feature to our USSYAA Jobs Board, where candidates looking for jobs can post about the type of job/internship they are looking for in a particular industry. Then, alumni who are aware of opportunities in that particular industry will reach out to candidates to share both general and specific opportunities that they know of. We will send out specific sign up information for mentors and post on our website!

Applying for the alumni scholarships.

One of the signal goals of the USSYAA is to provide scholarships to help Hearst Program delegates pursue post-graduate academic programs to help continue to provide service to the broader community. The Rosalie Wynn and George Hearst Scholarship (\$5,000) and Chandini M. Bachman Scholarship (\$2,500) are available to all eligible program participants to fund graduate studies at U.S. schools or abroad.

Hosting an alumni get-together in your city!

We can connect you with the regional director in your area to help organize.

Connecting with us!

Make sure your account is up-to-date on [USSYAA.org](https://ussyaa.org) and find us on Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Donating!

We have a goal to raise \$25,000 to mark our 25th anniversary. Can you donate \$25? Your donations fund:

- Building and maintaining avenues of communication among program alumni through in-person and virtual events.
- Providing financial assistance for professional educational needs of program alumni. We have provided more than \$100,000 in scholarship funds since 1999.
- Supporting the William Randolph Hearst Foundation's United States Senate Youth Program. We maintain strong relationships with the Hearst Foundations and host mentoring tables for USSYP delegates each year.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

AARON CROSS (WV 2002)

I have immensely enjoyed putting together the 2023 edition of our newsletter for you. I am but the most recent keeper of a trust that Mom Hearst passed on to the USSYAA, and I am honored to bring this tradition into our 25th year!

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 new year!