



MORTAR BOARD

FORUM

SUMMER 2023 ✦ VOLUME 53, NUMBER 2

**WE ARE THE
CHANGE**

Inspiration for What's Next

**+ ANNUAL AWARDS
AND CONFERENCE RECAP**

Be the
CHANGE

inside the issue

3 OF NOTE

This is not your father's Oldsmobile ...
nor your mother's Mortar Board.

5 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Stand on shoulders, be the giraffe, be the change

6 Meet your newest student representative

7 NATIONAL NEWS

National leadership changes

8 Save the dates!

9 MBNC 2023 RECAP

11 CHAPTER NEWS

2023 chapter awards

13 ALUMNI NEWS

2023 alumni awards

16 FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT

Paying it forward

17 MEMBER NEWS

20 Back to school!



Above: The University of South Alabama Sally Steadman Azalea chapter members celebrate being awarded the Ruth Weimer Mount Chapter Excellence Award - Mortar Board's highest chapter honor. Read about all of our chapter award winners on pages 11-12.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

NATIONAL COUNCIL

National President

Cassandra L. Lucas

President-Elect

Nathan Cordle

Vice President

Patience Whitworth

Secretary

Aimee Abernathy

Treasurer

Bre'una Keeton

Student Representatives at-large

Makayla Johnson

Gabrielle Tessier

Alumni Representatives at-large

Wilson Chan

Mohammed Hill

Immediate Past President

Kathryn E. Chick

Foundation Representative

Barbara J. Arnold

Executive Director

Kirsten F. Fox

SECTION COORDINATORS

Jason Baker
Cadence Ciesielski
Kathryn Gabrielson
Gabby Going
Makayla Hall
McCaleb Hart
Jaquilynn Huff
Kailey Jerome
Caitlyn Kent
Robbie Kichak
Vedant Kulkarni
Anne Mascia
Alexa Murray
Brendan Wall
Kailee Weiker

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President

Barbara J. Arnold

Vice President

Karen S. Stiner

Secretary

Janet G. Farrington

Treasurer

Craig Evers

Trustees

Mary Ruth Carleton
Joni Comstock
Susan Doss
W. David Lasater
Laura C. Simic
Bruce Ware



MORTAR BOARD

NATIONAL COLLEGE SENIOR HONOR SOCIETY

Summer 2023
Volume 53, Number 2

2023 Mortar Board, Inc.
All rights reserved.

Managing Editor
Lexie Beer

NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF

Executive Director
Kirsten F. Fox
The Ohio State University, 1996

Director of Engagement
Cara Lisenby
University of New Mexico, 2022

Director of Collegiate Success
Trish Maxwell

**Manager of Membership
and Operations**
Ben Flox

Senior Executive Assistant
Frances Kaufman
Wittenberg University, 2017

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
Mortar Board, Inc.,
1200 Chambers Road, Suite 201
Columbus, Ohio 43212



OBSERVATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE

**This is not your father's Oldsmobile
... nor your mother's Mortar Board.**

Those who know me well know I love the Olympics. (Ask me about when I met Mary Lou Retton mere weeks after her 1984 All-Around Gold Medal win!) For me, the Olympics are less about the competition, and more about the beauty of so many distinct countries coming together, united in sport, in a shared space. We get to witness hard work, dedication, teamwork, and passion. Our annual National Conference gives off a similar vibe. Chapters from all types of campuses - large and small, public and private, ivy and technical/ agricultural, come together for a few days, united in scholarship, leadership, service, and equity in a shared space. We too have large delegations and small delegations, and an opening and closing ceremony. There is even conference swag and logos! It's no surprise why we love the Mortar Board National Conference year after year.



This year's conference theme was "Be the Change," a theme you will see woven throughout next year's office communications and initiatives. Mortar Board must consider how we need to change to better meet the needs of our members, to stay relevant, and to thrive as an organization in the future. We need to (re)evaluate many aspects of our Society: member benefits, membership requirements, the value of an honor society, student shared governance, programming needs, and operations.

Coincidentally, the tagline "This is not your father's Oldsmobile" premiered during the Seoul Olympics in 1988. We often use a similar phrase around the National Office, "This is not your mother's Mortar Board." For me, this statement is exceptionally true - both figuratively and literally. My mom, **Mabel Gilbert Freeman (The Ohio State University, 1965)** is the reason I joined Mortar Board. After her collegiate membership days, she served as a Section Coordinator, a chapter advisor at The Ohio State University, Mortar Board National President, and as a member of the Foundation Board of Trustees. (But no pressure for me!) While some things have stayed the same, her experience as a collegiate member in 1965 was very different from my collegiate experience 30 years later. For many women in the 1960's, getting tapped into Mortar Board was the pinnacle of their college experience. In 1965, a large campus only had approximately 250 student organizations total. When I gave campus tours as a student in 1995, I boasted how Ohio State, for example, had "over 500 student organizations." Today at Ohio State, there are over 1,600 registered student organizations. And this is but one mere example of how the college student experience of today is very different from my Mortar Board experience 30 years ago. We barely

had email and websites, and we certainly had no social media nor cell phones. And as student privacy concerns (rightfully) increase, more and more campus registrars are not comfortable sharing student information necessary for nominations and recruitment. Not to mention, as the cost of higher education continues to soar, and we commit ourselves to creating access for all students, charging membership dues (while necessary) is often met with scrutiny. **So, how does Mortar Board today stay relevant? How does Mortar Board stand out?**

This is not my mother's Mortar Board. Nor is this my Mortar Board. Changing demographics, declining numbers in all membership organizations, the culture of busy making it harder to find and sustain volunteers ... these are just some of the things that keep me up at night. This all leads to the need for change. The national office team and I strive to find the right balance between implementing necessary changes while incorporating the strengths and traditions that have enabled our Society to exist for 105+ years. This past year, we have created new processes, procedures, and programs to better support and reinvigorate chapters such as a national application, chapter support grants, virtual initiations, and increased chapter visits. This upcoming school year we are providing more toolkits and templates, resources and collaborations, and opportunities for us - the National Office team - to take the burden off their already busy plates. For the first time in over half a decade, our membership numbers increased this past year. We installed the College of Charleston in the Spring and will be installing a new chapter at Life University in Marietta, Georgia in November. More schools will complete a supplemental fall selection process. We recently hired two full-time staff members outside of Ohio (New York and Georgia) to better support the changing needs of our office, our members, and our volunteers. We will do more virtually and digitally, but still make space for very intentional "in real life" experience. We will be launching a new association management system (member database) in the fall and we transitioned our phones to a VOiP system. We are reallocating staff time and dollars to new priorities and thinking about how we best invest our resources. And, we are asking our members, particularly our collegiate chapters, **to bring about and embrace change in their respective roles.** Mortar Board was founded by women at four campuses who were change agents. 105 years later, we too must continue to **be the change.**

For what it's worth, after the "This is not your father's Oldsmobile" campaign of the late 1980s, Oldsmobile saw success and an increase in sales in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Unfortunately, by the early 2000's, the company hit a slump and eventually closed. [USA Today](#) stated the reason was because "They simply weren't distinct enough to stand out from GM's other car lines or draw younger buyers." With our talented and dedicated members, volunteers, national leaders, and national office team, Mortar Board does not need to worry about meeting a similar fate. However, it does give reason to why we must embrace change and focus on **how we stand out and how we stay relevant to today's college students.**

Kirsten F. Fox

Kirsten F. Fox, PhD
Executive Director



president's message

STAND ON SHOULDERS, BE THE GIRAFFE, BE THE CHANGE

At the end of our 2023 Virtual National Conference (July 14-16, 2023), I had the privilege of addressing the conference delegation as part of my transition to National President. For me, it was the capstone event of a fantastic conference supported by our Conference and Standing Committees, Conference Advisory Board (CABs), Section Coordinators, Mortar Board National Foundation Board of Trustees, National Council, National Office staff, presenters, and the robust participation from our collegiate and alumni members.

One of the highlights was the keynote address by Bushra Amiwala, an award-winning activist, media icon, dynamic speaker, and the first Gen Z woman to hold elected office in the United States. She inspired attendees to do 5% more, to invite others to do more, and reminded us there's no such thing as the right time, only the right action. This resonated with me, as one of the mantras I've heard over the years is "If you want something done, ask a Mortar Board." Mortar Boards are typically the ones to do that 5% more. One of my favorite quotes by Eleanor Roosevelt is "Good leaders inspire people to have confidence in their leader. Great leaders inspire people to have confidence in themselves." Successful leaders know how to inspire and invite others to do more. And finally, her third point is a good reminder for all of us to accept opportunities that come to us, even if we think we are not ready for them or it is the wrong time. I'm grateful to Bushra's sage message that resonated with alumni and collegiate members alike.



While some of you may know me already, I want to take this opportunity to formally introduce myself. I am Dr. Cassandra Lucas. I am a first-generation college student. I am a Chicagoan and a Cubs fan. I am a Boilermaker, historian, and traveler. I am a lifelong learner and a strategic planning nerd. I am honored and humbled to be your newest National President, and I am Mortar Board.

I may be National President, but I **stand on shoulders**. I stand on the shoulders of activists who have fought for the advancement of women, who have advocated for equity, inclusion, and belonging for all peoples. I stand on the shoulders of my family and friends. I stand on the shoulders of my mentors, my cheerleaders, and my role models. I stand on the shoulders of our two most recent past presidents - Gail Harrison Corvette and Katie Chick - who are role models as servant leaders. They left big shoes to fill! I stand on the shoulders of our National Leaders, including our impressive Executive Director, Dr. Kirsten Fox, the National Council, the Board of Trustees, our Section Coordinators, and the National Office. And I stand on the shoulders of all Mortar Boards, past and present, who have answered the call to serve this organization and strive to "Be The Change." These shoulders lift me up, provide me guidance and support, and act as a solid foundation for me to build my life on.

I am grateful for all the Purdue shoulders I've been able to stand on, including Dorothy Stratton, Helen Schleman, Bev Stone, Barbara Cook, Captain Sally Watlington, Jenni Birch Szolwinski, Dr. Jane Hamblin, and Dean Betty Nelson. These remarkable women shaped who I was as a Purdue student and who I have become as a Mortar Board leader. These leaders inspired me to get involved in Mortar Board, first as a Conference Advisory Board member, then as a charter member of the Mortar Board Alumni Association, and fellowship reader. About ten years ago, they encouraged me to step into national leadership, first as a Section Coordinator, then Alumni Representative, and finally now as National President.

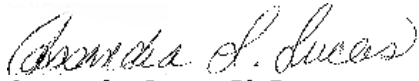
Each time I was asked, I said yes, because that's what we do as Mortar Boards - we answer the call to serve. We act as leaders of leaders, we engage in scholarship, we serve our society, our alma mater, and our community, and we build environments that create equity, inclusion, and belonging. **We are the change.**



I ask you to be one more thing: **Be a giraffe.** Yes, a giraffe. Betty Nelson, who continues to provide me with guidance and support, told me many years ago that I was a giraffe. As she shared and graciously let me borrow, there is a very clear analogy around the "care and feeding of giraffes." You see, as a giraffe:

- you are different from the rest of the crowd;
- you stand taller and see more clearly what needs to be done;
- you have a longer neck and are willing to stick it out for an issue you believe is important;
- you don't make a lot of noise, but when you do people listen.

I still have my giraffe from those days and keep it close by to remind me of these important attributes. So as I begin my term as your National President, I ask you to join me in three things: stand proudly on the shoulders that surround you, be a giraffe, and be the change.



Cassandra Lucas, Ph.D.

National President

Meet your newest Student Representative!

Gabrielle Tessier (University of Hawaii at Mānoa, 2023)

was elected to serve Mortar Board as the 2023-2025 Student Representative at-Large to the National Council. She joins Makayala Johnson (North Dakota State University, 2019) who is in the second year of her two year term.

Gabrielle is the President of the Hui Po'okela chapter at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa where she is a pre-med student and aspiring physician and researcher. Gabrielle chose to run for Student Rep because she wants to make a positive impact while representing Mortar Board and the voice of thousands of collegiate members. She believes in teamwork, active participation, a commitment to service, and supporting one another.

Hometown: Honolulu

Favorite Meal: My homemade chicken enchilada soup

Favorite Movie: The Green Mile

Hobbies: I enjoy watching comedy videos, cooking/baking, gardening, exercising, and making pottery

Post-College Plans: After college, I plan to take a gap year while preparing to apply to MD and MD/PhD programs. Also, I would like to enjoy more free time, travel with family, and gain experience volunteering or conducting research.

Favorite College Memory so Far: I entered college when the pandemic hit, so finally being in-person again was exciting! I've also had several student jobs through my years and getting to explore different positions and responsibilities has helped me grow.

What else do you want to share? Something I like to remind myself, especially as a student, is that you miss all the shots you don't take. It's better to try and fail than not to try at all. Therefore, I encourage everyone to search for opportunities available to them and be open to new experiences.



"Nationally, the responsibility to be the voice of thousands of people may seem daunting, but I am up for the task. Being an advocate is a very important role that needs to be done well since it includes speaking up for a particular issue, group, or individual in order to advance their interests or well-being. Advocacy can give a voice to those who may be overlooked or at a disadvantage, allowing for their thoughts and concerns to be heard. With this role on the National Council, I will be an advocate for my fellow collegiate members and make sure no one is marginalized."

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CHANGES AND A PASSING OF THE GAVEL

Summer marks the transition of our National Leadership positions. During each national conference, a new cohort of Section Coordinators meet their chapters, Foundation Board of Trustee members roll off and on, a new Student Representative-at-Large is elected, and the newest National Council members are officially installed into their respective two-year term.

While it's bittersweet to watch such dedicated national leaders roll off their positions, it provides the opportunity to recognize them for their contributions and service to Mortar Board. And, we know they will stay involved in a new role! The transition is also a commencement of sorts, welcoming a new leadership ready to take their place and make their mark on our Society. This year, we welcomed five new Section Coordinators, one new Trustee, three newly elected members to the National Council, and one re-elected National Council member. We also witnessed the bi-annual Presidential transition.

SECTION COORDINATORS

New to the Section Coordinator (SC) role are **Jason Baker (University of Nebraska at Kearney, 2020)**, **McCaleb Hart (Texas Tech University, 2021)**, **Kailey Jerome (University of North Dakota, 2019)**, **Caitlyn Kant (Illinois State University, 2021)**, and **Anne (Annie) Mascia (University of South Alabama, 2021)**. Despite being new to the SC role, they are all familiar faces

at the national level. Caitlyn and Kailey were both Conference Advisory Board members during 2022's National Conference, Jason and Annie are both Mortar Board Fellowship recipients, and both Annie and McCaleb served on the Standing Nominations Committee throughout this past year.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION

The National Foundation Board of Trustees welcomed **Susan Doss (University of Alabama, 1985)** as the newest Trustee. **Kathryne MacKenzie** rolled off the Foundation Board this year, but assures us she will continue to be a fellowship reader next year! You can read more about Susan and Kay in the Foundation Spotlight on page 16.

NATIONAL COUNCIL

The only election at the annual conference was the newest Student Representative at-Large to the National Council. Running amongst a very impressive and talented candidate pool, **Gabrielle Tessier (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2023)** was elected by her fellow delegates during the Mortar Board National Conference this summer. Gabrielle joins 2nd year Student Rep, **Makayla Johnson (North Dakota State University, 2019)** to officially advocate on behalf of, and represent, the collegiate members.

Three additional National Council members were elected by the student delegation in January during the Special National Conference and formally installed

onto Council during the National Conference. **Bre'una Keeton (Washington State University, 2013)** was re-elected into her role as Treasurer in January and officially began her second two-year term as of conference. We are glad to welcome Bre back to this important role!

Wilson Chan (University of Louisville, 1989) was formally installed as the newest Alumni Representative at-Large to the National Council. He fills the void left by **Jenni Birch Szolwinski (Purdue University, 1993)** who not only served as Alumni Rep at-Large, but previously served as the Secretary/Treasurer for National Council, an ex-officio member of the Foundation Board of Trustees, and a Section Coordinator.

Wilson was initiated into the Pallas chapter where he earned his degree in Information Science and Data Processing. He currently works as an Account Executive, Healthcare for Veritas Technologies, LLC. Prior to his election to National Council, Wilson served Mortar Board as a Student Advisor to the 1990 Mortar Board National Conference, the Alumni Student Advisor to the Pallas chapter, and for the past three years as a Mortar Board Section Coordinator. Welcome, Wilson!

Nathan Cordle (The University of Alabama, 2011) begins his commitment to the Mortar Board Presidential role as President Elect. Elected by the students in January, Nathan was installed as President Elect, beginning his six year commitment to the Presidential team. Nathan is an attorney and holds a degree in Business Administration and Real Estate, as well as a Law

Degree from The University of Alabama. In addition to his role as President Elect, Nathan chairs the Membership Committee. He has served Mortar Board in a variety of national roles including Alumni Representative at-Large and as a Section Coordinator. Nathan has also been a member of many standing committees. Following his two-year term as President Elect, Nathan will serve as National President from 2025 - 2027 before transitioning to the Immediate Past President role.

This Presidential team transition (President-Elect, National President, Immediate Past President) occurs every two years with the official passing of the gavel taking place during the final business meeting of the Mortar Board National Conference. This year, we witnessed President **Katie Chick (Hood College, 2006)** officially pass the gavel to President **Dr. Cassandra Lucas (Purdue University, 1994)**. Under Katie's leadership, Mortar Board hired a new Executive Director, restructured the section/region model, successfully held a post-COVID in-person conference, and expanded both the number of chapters and members compared to the previous year. Katie has been a staunch advocate for increased student participation at the national level and the importance of both hearing and incorporating the student voice. She was the leader Mortar Board needed as we faced monumental post-COVID membership challenges. The epitome of a servant-leader, Katie put countless hours of heart and talent into her term as President. Katie has officially moved into the role of Immediate Past President where she will continue to make an impact on the national level.

SAVE THE DATES

Chapter Action Plan (CAP) Deadline	September 30 (Semester Schools)
Chapter Action Plan (CAP) Deadline	October 15 (Quarter Schools)
Fall Virtual Initiation	November 5
Fellowship Applications Open	November 15
Governance Recommendations Due	December 1
Special National Conference	January 28
Mortar Board Week	February 11 - 17
Fellowship Application Deadline	March 15
Spring Virtual Initiation (early)	April 14
Awards Application Deadline	May 15
Chapter Annual Report Deadline	May 15 (Semester Schools)
Spring Virtual Initiation (late)	May 19
Governance Recommendations Due	June 1
Chapter Annual Report Deadline	June 1 (Quarter Schools)
Collegiate Awards Ceremony	Sunday, June 9

Rolling off the National Council, most recently as Immediate Past President, was **Gail Harrison Corvette (The Ohio State University, 1980)**. Mortar Board was fortunate to have Gail come back into a National Leadership Role after previously spending many years as a Board of Trustee member for the National Foundation. Answering the call to serve, Gail began her Presidential tenure as President Elect serving from 2017-2019 before moving into the National Presidency from 2019-2021. Gail steered Mortar Board through a global pandemic, the launch of our current Strategic Plan, and a much-needed rebrand for Mortar Board. She presided over our first (and second) Virtual Conference. Gail fiercely advocated for a deeper bench for volunteer leaders and was masterful at bringing back more committees to Mortar Board Inc, including the creation of our standing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) committee, which has really pushed Mortar Board into a new era of living up to our purpose to "promote equal opportunities among all peoples."

In her spare time, Gail served as our in-house yoga teacher and led the charter process to install our newest Mortar Board chapter at The College of Charleston.

The culmination of this year's National Conference was the installation of our newest President. On Sunday, July 16, 2023, Mortar Board officially welcomed **Dr. Cassandra Lucas (Purdue University, 1994)** as the 32nd National President of Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society. Prior to becoming President Elect, Cassandra served the National Council as Alumni Representative at-Large, as well as a Section Coordinator for many years. Cas is a forward-thinking and strategic-thought leader who has dedicated herself to Mortar Board for many years. It is no wonder she is both a Mortar Board fellowship recipient and was named Outstanding Section Coordinator in 2018. She has been the thoughtful steward and driver of Mortar Board's Strategic Plan, ensuring our Society's future success. Cas, you inspire us and we look forward to following your lead.

Mortar Board National Conference 2023

BE THE CHANGE

Mortar Board held its 60th National Conference virtually, July 14-16. With over 220 attendees from 90 chapters, the event was filled with collegiate members, alumni, and national leaders. Thirty-six presenters shared their knowledge of chapter operations, professional and career development, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. For over 105 years, Mortar Board has been student-led, and this conference highlighted and reinforced that. Not only was the student voice solicited throughout the conference, but students presented committee updates and were featured on the DEI&B panel.

To keep attendees active in the virtual setting, Past National President **Gail Harrison Corvette (The Ohio State University, 1980)** held a virtual yoga class and National Treasurer **Bre'una Keeton (Washington State University, 2013)** held a virtual shadow aerobics class.

BE THE CHANGE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The conference keynote was Bushra Amiwala, the first Gen Z woman to hold elected office in the US. A recent college graduate herself, Bushra shared her journey and inspired others to do more, to invite others to do more, and reminded attendees that there's no such thing as the right time - just the right action.

WHAT IS MORTAR BOARD? PANEL

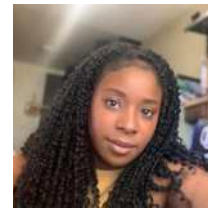
A panel of three Mortar Board leaders joined forces to share their stories and collective perspective to answer the question: What is Mortar Board?

Kathryne McKenzie (Oklahoma Baptist University, 1969) shared her perspective of Mortar Board over her fifty years of involvement. **Kailee Weiker (Ohio Northern University, 2010)** spoke about how her role as a Section Coordinator working with chapters helped her better understand what Mortar Board means to her, and to chapters across the country as well. **Vedant Kulkarni (Kansas State University, 2021)** discussed what Mortar Board means to current students and how the rich history of the Society has remained relevant over the years.

FRIDAY BUSINESS MEETING

During Friday's business meeting, attendees met three amazing student delegates running for Student Representative at-Large: **Nadra Fair (University of North Texas)**, **Kara Stogsdill (Illinois State University)**, and **Gabrielle Tessier (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa)**. Attendees asked thoughtful questions to better learn about their candidates. Voting was launched at the end of the business meeting, and

Special thanks to this year's Conference Advisory Board: **Caitlyn Kant (Illinois State University, 2021)**, **Tamika Lovelace (San Diego State University, 2021)**, and **Julia Scharff (The Ohio State University, 2022)**. They collaborated on conference giveaways, implemented ways to keep attendees engaged, and planned two evening activities for collegiate members - a virtual watch party and a Desert Island Multiple Intelligences game. Thank you, Caitlyn, Tamika, and Julia for sharing your time and talent with Mortar Board. The conference was better because of you!



Gabrielle Tessier from the Hui' Po'okela chapter at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa was elected the newest Student Representative to the National Council.

We also heard for the first time from our two conference standing committees. **Isabella Weyerman (University of Alabama, 2023)** chaired the Conference Nominating Committee, while the Resolutions and Recommendations Committee was co-chaired by **Nick Rodriguez, from Wichita State University**, and **Kara Stogsdill from Illinois State University**.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Professional Development Sessions spanned the conference, offering sessions each day of the conference. Friday, attendees could choose to learn about Work-Life Balance or Building Their Board of Directors. On Saturday, participants looked at life after college for three sessions: Hired Education, Budgeting and Financial Wellness, and Applying for National Fellowships. The sessions culminated on Sunday as national leaders shared about living and leading a Mortar Board life. All sessions were recorded.

CHAPTER OPERATIONS SESSIONS

This year the chapter operations sessions were strategically designed to offer options to meet chapters where they are - strong and excelling, struggling, and anywhere in between. The three rotations focused on areas chapters need the most: recruitment, programming, and chapter enhancement. All sessions were recorded so all members can benefit from the material shared:

Recruitment

- Increase Membership
- Selection 101
- Reactivating Your Chapter

Programming

- Servant Leadership and Community Service
- Campus Partnerships and Social Events
- Fundraising and Finances

Chapter Enhancement

- Leveraging Advisors and Section Coordinators
- Member Engagement
- Chapter Visibility

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING PANEL

After reviewing the submissions for the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (DEI&B) Awards this year, the Standing Committee realized chapters were making amazing strides that needed to be shared and celebrated. Students from three chapters shared the amazing initiatives their chapter made to support inclusion and belonging and gave tangible advice to other chapters.

Tamika Lovelace (San Diego State University, 2021)

discussed her chapter's decision to include justice as a highlight on their diversity committee (named JEDI) and shared a few events they held to expand understanding and foster dialogue around diversity. **Waleed Saoud (University of South Alabama, 2022)** shared how his chapter partnered with the diversity office on campus to hold a mock selection, which looked at practices and policies and gave feedback on how to make selection more inclusive. **Gabriella Weida (University of Montana, 2023)** explained how her chapter partnered with various diverse groups on campus to widen their outreach for recruitment to ensure the most diverse class was being selected.

ALUMNI AWARDS AND CANDLELIGHT BANQUET

Saturday evening started strong by showcasing the incredible accomplishments of our Alumni Award recipients. Several were in attendance and offered a few words of thanks and inspiration. The Alumni Awards Ceremony immediately transitioned into the Candlelight Banquet, which saw two main changes in this virtual setting. Instead of lighting a candle, participants were asked to start with their cameras turned off and to turn them on as their chapter was called. In the spirit of change, roll call was reversed from newest chapter to oldest, a departure from roll calls of the past.

CLOSING SESSION

The conference ended on Sunday as President Katie Chick passed the gavel to Dr. Cassandra Lucas. Cas shared her Mortar Board journey and highlighted the wonderful mentors she'd had along the way. She shared the story of The Giraffe and inspired others to Be a Giraffe.

To best hear the student voice, three Think Tanks were hosted to get feedback and ideas on governance, membership, and the strategic plan. Here's what the national leader hosts had to say:

Governance

Insight from Katie Chick, Immediate Past President

This year's "think tank" on governance once again reminded me how important being a collegiate-governed organization is to the lifeblood of Mortar Board. The collegiate members came interested in issues of governance, sharing great ideas about how the student representatives can engage them throughout the year, and how we can use key moments (conference and SNC) to educate and discuss key issues with the delegation more effectively. The future is bright with this generation of Mortar Board members, and I can't wait to see the innovative and creative ideas that will move our Society forward!

Membership

Insight from Nathan Cordle, President Elect

The Membership Think Tank at National Conference this year focused on the core idea of increasing membership in Mortar Board by redefining membership criteria. Collegiate members shared helpful ideas and suggestions, such as focusing on credit hours rather than "junior status" as the threshold criteria for membership, along with GPA. The idea of multi-year selections as an option for chapters was also discussed, along with increasing campus visibility beginning with organization fairs for incoming freshmen to learn about Mortar Board as soon as they step foot on campus. The work of the membership exploration committee will continue, and future conversations at the committee level will incorporate robust dialogue and shared thoughts from the think tank.

Strategic Plan / National Event

Insight from Dr. Cassandra Lucas, National President

The "think tank" on Mortar Board's Strategic Plan discussed the details of a signature event tied to our National Project "Reading is Leading," including the benefits, potential challenges, and logistics. The collegiate members shared their current chapter programs that support the National Project and/or literacy initiatives and how a signature event could tie into these programs. The group also highlighted this initiative could increase visibility, expand fundraising and local partnership opportunities, and connect chapters across the Society. Other discussion topics were the potential timing for the event (September), initial steps (pilot chapters), and chapter support (new chair/committee position and materials from the National Office). In all, the collegiate members are supportive of a more aligned effort around our National Project and look forward to next steps.

2023 COLLEGIATE AWARD WINNERS

RUTH WEIMER MOUNT CHAPTER EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sally Steadman Azalea chapter
University of South Alabama

The chapter's participation policy not only encouraged attendance by combining meetings with service projects, spin classes, and speakers, but also fostered interactions between members around a variety of topics. They partnered with campus departments to bring speakers to meetings, joined forces with athletics and student groups to elevate their events, and served at the local Boys and Girls Club by reading, tutoring, and engaging with children. They focused on enhancing communication and surveyed their members on how they like to receive information. Using the results, they utilized email, QR codes, and in-person communication to reach everyone.

FREEMAN AND FOX MOST IMPROVED CHAPTER AWARD

Senior Staff chapter
The University of Tulsa

After missing a Spring 2022 selection, the chapter was laser-focused on improvement. They used Fall as a time to build visibility on campus and recruit

the 2022 class who were initiated in early 2023. They then quickly turned around to recruit the next class by the end of the same semester. Their success can be seen in their 90 new members. What is equally impressive is the short and long-term strategic plans left for the next leaders. Current leadership understood the importance of a strong transition plan, and they created a chapter transition binder containing 1, 2, 3, and 5-year plans to ensure chapter success next year and beyond.

STARLINGTON PRIZE

Andrew Gray
The University of Tulsa
Senior Staff chapter



Andrew was inducted into Mortar Board in the fall of 2021 and served as the Chapter President this school year. As a result of COVID-19, the chapter lost its reputation on campus and almost all of the institutional memory was lost. However, under Andrew's leadership, the chapter saw a 750% increase in membership.



Tamika Lovelace
San Diego State University
Jane K. Smith Cap & Gown chapter



As a first-generation non-traditional student, Tamika was inducted in 2021 and served as her chapter's first ever Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion chair. She has served on the National Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Standing Committee since 2021, and she was also a 2023 Conference Advisory Board member.

SECTION COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR

Kailee Weiker, Region 3
Ohio Northern University



Kailee is a Section Coordinator for Region 3, working with chapters in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. She previously served as SC for

Section 9. She is a member of the Signature Event Committee and led the effort to implement two Chapter Operations sessions on recruitment and initiation.

EXCELLENCE IN ADVISING AWARDS

Martha Griffith

The University of Alabama
Hypatia chapter

Dr. Brent Marsh

University of Mississippi
Tassels chapter

Susan Sullivan

Longwood University
Geist chapter

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING AWARDS

Lyon College
Order of the Tartan chapter

San Diego State University
Jane K. Smith Cap & Gown chapter

Texas Tech University
Forum chapter

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Black Masque chapter

GOLD TORCH AWARDS

Illinois State University
Red Tassel chapter

Longwood University
Geist chapter

Lyon College
Order of the Tartan chapter

Purdue University
Barbara Cook chapter

Rhodes College
Torch chapter

San Diego State University
Jane K. Smith Cap & Gown chapter

Texas Tech University
Forum chapter

The University of Alabama
Hypatia chapter

University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Black Masque chapter

University of Nebraska at Kearney
Xi Phi chapter

The University of New Mexico
Maia chapter

University of Arizona
Pi Sigma Alpha chapter

University of Mississippi
Tassels chapter

University of San Diego
Judy Lewis Logue Alcalá chapter

University of South Alabama
Sally Steadman Azalea chapter

PROJECT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Illinois State University
Red Tassel chapter

Lyon College
Order of the Tartan chapter

San Diego State University
Jane K. Smith Cap & Gown chapter

Texas Tech University
Forum chapter

University of Mississippi
Tassels chapter

University of Montana
Penetralia chapter

University of San Diego
Judy Lewis Logue Alcalá chapter

University of South Alabama
Sally Steadman Azalea chapter

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Recruitment and Selection

Longwood University
Geist chapter

University of Maryland
Adele H. Stamp chapter

University of North Texas
Meritum chapter

Advisor Transition

Case Western Reserve University
Lux chapter

The University of Vermont
Akraia chapter

On-Campus Visibility

University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Black Masque chapter

The Ohio State University
Mabel G. Freeman chapter

Wichita State University
Fairmount chapter

Social Media and Digital Outreach

Texas Tech University
Forum chapter

University of Arizona
Pi Sigma Alpha chapter

University of Toledo
Peppers Honor Society chapter

Chapter Reinvigoration

Butler University
Scarlet Quill chapter

Hanover College
Tassels chapter

University of Richmond
Pi Alpha chapter

Chapter Communication

Illinois State University
Red Tassel chapter

University of Mississippi
Tassel chapter

The University of New Mexico
Maia chapter

2023 ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

Mortar Board is a society of scholars, leaders, and social-minded people and it's no surprise that when it comes to achieving, we have many alumni to recognize and celebrate. Every year a committee meets to review our Alumni Awards nominees and select those upon whom we will bestow our greatest honors. We select awardees in three categories:

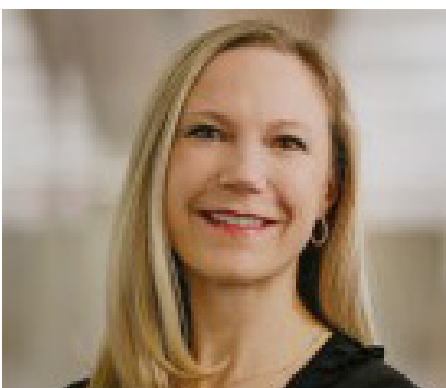
Emerging Leaders: Honors young alumni who have achieved remarkable accomplishments in their profession and have shown a commitment to the Ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service.

Alumni Achievement Award: Honors those who have achieved outstanding success in their career, provided notable service, and a continuing commitment to the Mortar Board Ideals for more than 20 years.

Distinguished Lifetime Membership: Honors alumni who has served Mortar Board over a lifetime and demonstrated outstanding leadership.

EMERGING LEADER AWARD

Dr. Corrine Kliment, MD, PhD
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



Corinne is an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She is a pulmonary and critical care physician-scientist with a proven biomedical research record. Board-certified in pulmonary medicine, critical care, and internal medicine, she has been recognized with a number of awards for her research including the Bernie Pennock Outstanding Young Investigator Award. She has participated in medical research leading to the development of potentially new cancer drugs and written about strategies for achieving gender equity and work-life integration in physician scientist training.

Mr. Dylan Aste, JD
San Diego State University, 2006



Dylan has served as Assistant United States Attorney at the United States Attorney's Office, Southern District of California since 2014. He specializes in prosecuting civil claims involving health care and procurement fraud, opioids, and service members' rights. Dylan has also led his office's Diversity Committee since 2018 as the Chair and Co-Chair. While serving as an Assistant United States Attorney, Dylan has taught several law school classes as an adjunct professor at two San Diego law schools.

James Clear

Denison University, 2007



James has been writing about decision-making and creating habits since 2012. He's the author of the New York Times bestseller, *Atomic Habits* which has sold more than 15 million copies worldwide and has been translated into more than 50 languages. His 3-2-1 newsletter has over 2 million subscribers.

WANT TO BE THE CHANGE? VOLUNTEER FOR MORTAR BOARD

Mortar Boards are service-minded people. No matter how much time you have, there's a volunteer job for you with Mortar Board. Write for the *Forum*, serve on a committee, visit a collegiate chapter, or host a networking event. Fill out the [Volunteer Interest Form](https://form.jotform.com/mortarboard/volunteer-with-mb) and you'll be serving and having fun with other leaders soon! #Service

Be the Change and volunteer for one of these open opportunities or other open positions.

- **Section Coordinator:**
A national leader who works directly with collegiate chapters
- **Alumni Engagement Committee**

You can indicate your interest in these and other opportunities at: form.jotform.com/mortarboard/volunteer-with-mb

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Dr. Alicia Caudill

Otterbein University, 1994



Alicia is the Executive Vice President for Student Affairs at The College of Charleston and was instrumental in establishing our newest chapter there. She also has adjunct faculty appointments at the College of Charleston, The Citadel, and the University of Georgia. Her research interests include women in higher education and families of college students and she has also served on the Board of Trustees of her alma mater, Otterbein University.

Amy Button Renz

Kansas State University, 2005



Amy Button Renz became an honorary member in 2005 and has had a 40-year career with the Kansas State Alumni Association and was the first female director in the Big 12 conference. She

created the Student Alumni Board, the Student Ambassadors Program, and secured millions of dollars for student scholarships. Amy is a passionate advocate for multicultural student associations and formed alliances that benefited many students. A member of the XIX chapter, Amy was thrilled to share that with her daughter Ashley, and she continues to be a champion of the chapter.

Dr. Jenna Cox Rickus

Purdue University, 1994



Jenna serves as the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning at Purdue University, where she leads the Purdue campus in undergraduate education and student success. She is a professor of Agricultural and Biological Engineering and a professor at the Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering with expertise in biofunctional materials and biosensors. Her research focuses on engineered biomaterials, and she founded the Purdue international genetically engineered machine (iGEM) undergraduate research team. In 2016, she was named a University Faculty Scholar and a Diversity Catalyst and was inducted into the Purdue Innovator's Hall of Fame.



DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Dr. Martha Lewis Starling

Kansas State University, 1962



Marty has been both National President and President of the Mortar Board National Foundation Board of Trustees. Marty has led a life of community service including for the United Way of Pennsylvania, the Downtown State College Partnership, the P.E.O. Sisterhood, and too many more to mention. Her service to Mortar Board has been devoted. She served on the State College Mortar Board Alumni Club for 43 years, including the Scholarship Committee for 23 years. She was dedicated to the Archousai chapter at Penn State and the XIX chapter at K-State. She joined the Board of Trustees in 2003 and served until 2013 when she resigned to become National President of Mortar Board, Inc. Following her service, she returned to the board of Trustees and served until term ended in 2021.

She was a relentless fundraiser for Mortar Board, establishing the Frances Aicher Lewis Endowment Fund in 2010 to promote the training of Mortar Board advisors. During her tenure, the MBNF evolved from mainly awarding fellowships to actively establishing endowments to support Mortar Board's many initiatives. She

spearheaded fundraising for the Centennial Campaign with CAPT Sally Watlington which raised over \$1.4M in endowed funds for Mortar Board. Together they inspired alumni to establish the Marty Starling and Sally Watlington Centennial Endowment, known colloquially as the Starlington Endowment, which provides a cash prize to honor collegiate leaders.

CAPT Sally Watlington
Purdue University, 1959



Commissioned in the Navy, she served many appointments and was highly decorated including being awarded the National Defense Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, and two Legion of Merit Medals.

Sally has also dedicated her time to many nonprofits in her community including the Community Foundation of Greater Lafayette, the Greater Lafayette United Way, the YWCA of Greater Lafayette, and the Franciscan Alliance Western Indiana Hospital.

Her service to Mortar Board includes acting as an advisor to the Barbara Cook chapter and serving as the treasurer for the Greater Lafayette Mortar Board Alumni chapter. She also served on the Mortar Board National Foundation's Board of Trustees for

more than three terms, including service as Secretary-Treasurer. She also continues to serve on the Investment Advisory Council and is well known for the accuracy of her records and reports.

She and Marty Starling ran the Centennial Campaign, encouraged donor stewardship, and inspired the Starlington Fund. But in addition to that, she also was responsible for the establishment of the Sally Watlington Fund and the Purdue Five Deans Fund, honoring the Purdue mentors of her youth.

IF YOU KNOW A WORTHY MORTAR BOARD ALUM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO NOMINATE FOR AN AWARD, YOU MAY [SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION HERE.](#)



foundation spotlight



PAYING IT FORWARD

By Dr. Barbara Arnold

The Mortar Board National Foundation was proud to be the Platinum Sponsor of the 2023 Mortar Board National Conference. What a pleasure it was for my fellow trustees to join me in reading the names of all 235 Mortar Board chapters over the past 105 years as part of our virtual Candlelight Banquet. That Saturday evening, we also recognized our 2023-2024 Mortar Board Fellowship Recipients and welcomed our newest Trustee, Susan Doss. Susan is an attorney and longtime fellowship reader, and we are thrilled to have her as our newest Trustee.

We also recognized and celebrated many Mortar Board's years of service and philanthropic contributions that evening. In addition to witnessing "Foundation superstars" Sally Watlington and Marty Starling receive the Distinguished Lifetime Membership award, we thanked retiring Board of Trustee member **M. Kathryn MacKenzie (Oklahoma Baptist University, 1969)** for her dedication and commitment to Mortar Board over the past 50+ years.

Kay was initiated into Mortar Board at Oklahoma Baptist University in 1969 and started her national leadership with Mortar Board as a Section Coordinator fifty years ago. She has subsequently served Mortar Board in many roles, including as National President of Mortar Board from 1991-1993. Kay most recently completed her 3rd consecutive term as a Trustee on the Mortar Board National Foundation, serving as the Fellowship Committee Chairperson for most of those years. She is also a fund founder and an MBAA Charter Member. Kay embodies what it means to be a Mortar Board member having demonstrated a lifetime of unparalleled commitment to scholarship, leadership, and service.

Kay has also always been particularly committed to her chapter at Oklahoma Baptist University. Five years ago, Kay answered the call to start a chapter endowment for the chapter. In honor of her fifty years of national leadership in Mortar Board, many of Kay's friends showed their appreciation of Kay by contributing to the chapter endowment in Kay's honor. I am proud to announce that Oklahoma Baptist University is our most recent chapter to have a fully funded chapter endowment thanks to Kay's stewardship and the many lives she has impacted over the years and her faithful service to Mortar Board.



NATIONAL CITATION

The Mortar Board National Council conferred upon **Bushra Amiwala** the National Citation Award for her work as an award-winning activist, media icon, dynamic speaker and youngest Muslim elected official in the United States. She received Mortar Board's highest honor and was granted membership in Mortar Board. Congratulations, Bushra! ¹



BELOIT COLLEGE

Seva Poitevin Mills (2020), after serving as an Americorps member in Rhode Island, is now a flight attendant with United Airlines. ²

DRURY UNIVERSITY

Katie Maltais (2006) has been appointed Managing Director of The 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle, Washington. ³

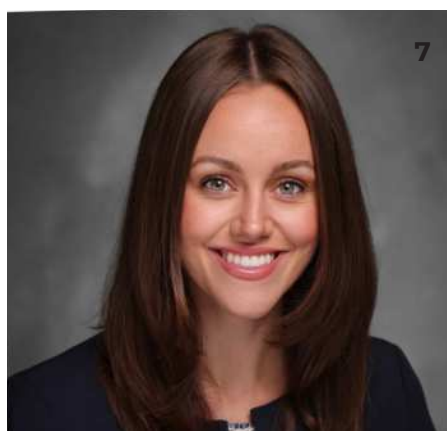


MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Renée Szostek (1986) recently had a poem included in the "Remembering Woody Guthrie" anthology published by the Moonstone Arts Center. ⁴

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, LINCOLN

Mitchell Manning (2022) has accepted a position with ADM as a Commodity Trader at their St. Louis location. ⁵



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Jack Haney (2023) will be attending Harvard Law School. ⁶

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Jennifer Garson, PharmD, (2020), a Health-System Pharmacy Administration and Leadership Resident at Duke

University Hospital, was recently appointed as the Vice Chair of the American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists, Pharmacy Administration and Leadership Residents' Collaborative, Resident Resources Workgroup. ⁷

Dr. Aaron Roberson (2004), Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, East Maine school district 63, successfully defended his dissertation and earned his Ed.D. from Vanderbilt University's Peabody College. ⁸

Jenni Birch Szolwinski (1993) accepted a new role with Miami University as Assistant Director of Employer Relations. ⁹

TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

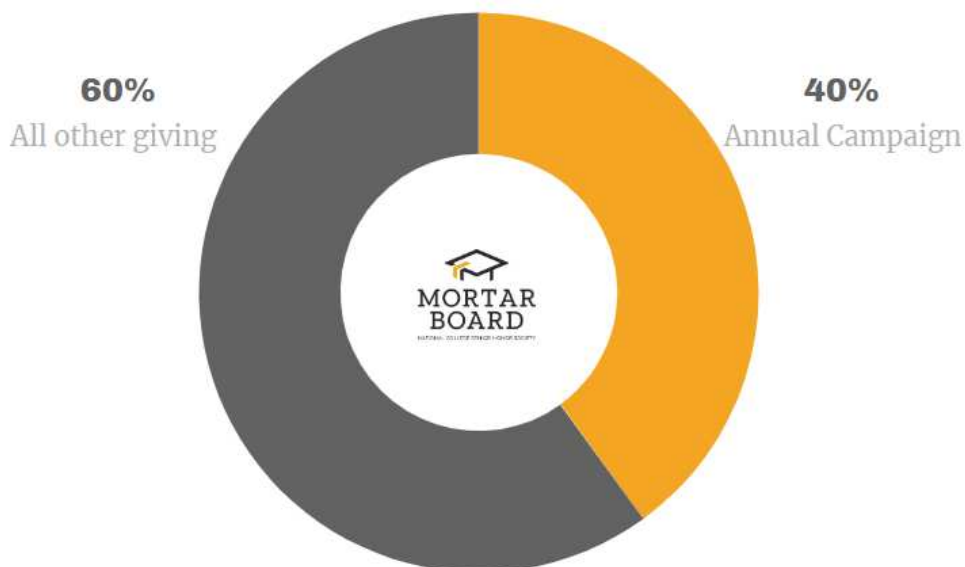
Along with his work as the Engineer Company Commander in the United States Army Reserves, **Quade Gibson (2014)** has accepted a position as Controller - MOORING Disaster Restoration and Commercial Construction. ¹⁰

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Holly Pierson Christy (1993) has been in private practice since 2000 as a naturopathic physician and acupuncturist. She founded the non-profit [Bridge Back Project](#) in 2017 and is an instructor for the Jones Institute and Counterstrain Academy, as well as adjunct faculty at Bastyr University. ¹¹



COMING SOON - 2023 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN!



In 2023, Mortar Board has achieved remarkable milestones, but there is still so much more we can accomplish together. Your year-end gift to Mortar Board will not only help us finish the year strong but helps us set the stage for an even more impactful year ahead. Year-end gifts are imperative to our mission - accounting for 40% of all donations to Mortar Board in recent years! Please be on the lookout this fall for our upcoming year-end campaign!



MORTAR BOARD
NATIONAL COLLEGE SENIOR HONOR SOCIETY



School is just around the corner.

Shopping for school supplies doesn't have to be overwhelming! ODP Business Solutions™ has a curated selection of products designed to help you quickly find the solutions you need for every class, every grade and every style. Use your 1-800-MEMBERS member-only savings and receive the following perks:

- **Shop online and get free next-business-day delivery**
Save on thousands of products and enjoy **next-business-day delivery** on qualifying orders of \$50 or more within local delivery areas.*
- **All your solutions, all in one place**
From notebooks, backpacks, pencils and pens to cleaning supplies, use your ODP Member Savings Program and **get up to 75% off on Best Value Items.**

[Shop Now](#)

Mortar Board, Inc.
1200 Chambers Road, Suite 201
Columbus, Ohio 43212

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
COLUMBUS, OH
PERMIT NO. 310



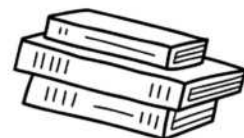
**Our Mortar Board merch and regalia
make great back-to-school gifts!**



mortarboard.org/store/



MORTAR BOARD
NATIONAL COLLEGE SENIOR HONOR SOCIETY



mortarboard.org/store/