



Town & Gown
OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

February 2023

Town and Gown of the University of Southern California is a nonprofit philanthropic organization whose purpose is to support USC through scholarships for students, building and campus enhancements, and cultural programs.

President's Message:



Dear Town and Gown of USC Members,
2023 has started off with a bang!

Our Town and Gown of USC Board of Directors has been busy at work in preparation for the remainder of the year.

Our March General Meeting will be robust as we conduct our Annual Business meeting and we will also be honoring our Past Presidents.

Be sure to check out our website for upcoming events. Our Instagram page is equally informative!

Looking forward to seeing you in March.

Fight On!

Beth Petak-Aaron
CEO/President 2022-2024
president@townandgownofusc.org



www.townandgownofusc.org



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PROGRAMS



Keynote speaker,
Coach Dain Blanton

Our January meeting on January 10th was a wet and rainy day that was brightened up by our keynote speaker, Dain Blanton, the Head Coach of the USC Beach Volleyball Team. Coach Blanton shared his Olympic experience as well as his coaching philosophy with us. He was accompanied by two of his players who shared with us what it is like to be a scholar athlete. It was a lovely afternoon that was full of warmth despite the weather.



Coach Blanton and
players, Audrey and
Nicole Nourse

On February 7th our Town and Gown ballroom was filled with the excitement of our Town and Gown Scholars and their families, along with our keynote speaker, Dr. Vaughn A. Starnes. It was a full ballroom with much to be celebrated. Our senior scholars received their graduation sashes and each one introduced themselves and told us about plans for their future. I believe it is safe to say that the world is in good hands with these scholars. Dr. Starnes took us on a journey through cardiovascular health and enlightened us with information of the future of cardiovascular care. He was very informative and inspirational. It was a successful day that had something for everyone in attendance.



Keynote speaker,
Dr. Vaughn A. Starnes



Senior Town and Gown
of USC Scholars



Scholar Speaker,
Dhiraj Pangal

A recording of this program is available on the Town & Gown of USC website, or [click here](#).

Congratulations to our opportunity drawing prize winners:

- January-Sharon Schmidt, \$50.00 Nordstrom Gift Card
- January-Leida Neidecker, \$250.00 Amex Gift Card
- February-Deanne Webb, Gift Basket
- February-David Cipolla, Gift Basket

A warm thank you to our generous prize donors!

UPCOMING EVENTS:



Tuesday, March 7, 2023, Monthly Meeting and Luncheon

Please join us for our March meeting and luncheon featuring keynote speaker, Bob Murrin, FAIA, Principal Partner at AC Martin Architects who will speak on: "Campus Design: Lessons Learned"

Members' Annual Meeting Honoring Town and Gown of USC Past Presidents

Please join us!

Thank you and Fight On!

Bonnie Suffridge and Debbie Wong
5th Vice Presidents, Programs



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



Alex Tse

**Marshall School of Business: BA Business Administration
with a minor in Environmental Studies**

Describe clubs or other on campus activities in which you participate.

Outside of the classroom, I'm involved with a number of different organizations here on campus. I'm a tour guide with Tommy's Tours, which gives me the opportunity to interact with children from local communities to promote higher education to traditionally marginalized communities. Being a tour guide has given me an inside look at the school I'm so proud to attend, and gives me a lot of fun facts to share with friends and family!

I'm also on the board of the Marshall Outreach Volunteer Entrepreneurs, which is a club dedicated toward the intersection of business and social good. I was the Director of Professional Events last year, bringing in speakers from startups to Disney for our bi-weekly professional events. I'll be the Vice President of External Affairs next year,

helping lead the organization and its members toward a more sustainable future.

I'm also very involved with an on-campus Christian ministry, Christian Challenge, which has been a large source of community for me here on campus. One way I plan on continuing to contribute to the USC community in the future is through Challenge, as I will be on the freshman team that specifically welcomes and seeks to include new students on campus. By spending time and developing relationships with these new students, I hope that I can build a legacy of Trojans who will continue to inspire long after I've graduated from college.

List any recent travels - either for study abroad or other USC related opportunities.

I recently did a very fun "Bookpacking New Orleans" Maymester course through the English department here at USC. Such a unique and wonderful experience in Louisiana as our class read novels of the region such as "The Awakening" and "Interview with a Vampire" as we quite literally walked the roads and experienced the book as the characters in our stories did. Having never traveled to the South before, this trip was truly a wonderful once-in-a-lifetime experience as our professor brought us to areas of Louisiana off the beaten trail to get a holistic picture of the extravagance and exuberance of New Orleans as well as the everyday beauty of the Cajun life. Please feel free to read more about our experience and the blogs we wrote as we explored the city here at:

<https://www.bookpackers.com/new-orleans>.

2023 ANNUAL BENEFIT

The 2023 Town and Gown Benefit Committee is on the bullet train charging into April! Remember that this is our largest fundraiser every year for SCHOLARSHIPS. We are excited to return to the Beverly Hills Hotel on April 4th where we will honor DEXTER HOLLAND, triple Trojan with a Ph.D in Molecular Biology and a founding member of the punk band, THE OFFSPRING.

YOU can help us make the Benefit successful. Follow this [link](#) to:

- Be a PATRON with a donation!
- Be a SPONSOR by underwriting a portion of the Benefit!
- Buy a PROGRAM AD!
- Buy OPPORTUNITY DRAWING TICKETS!
- Sign up to VOLUNTEER to work check-in or as a greeter!
- ATTEND the Benefit! (Tickets go on sale March 1st)
- Support our VENDORS at the Benefit!

See you in April!

THANK YOU and FIGHT ON!

Carol Kroesche
2023 Benefit Chair



DID YOU KNOW ...

At our January meeting, we presented our next two Past Presidents of Town and Gown.

From 1964 to 1966, Mrs. O.C. Welbourn served as President. Nancy was a very tiny, gracious lady who had to have a special platform built so she could reach the microphone to preside during meetings. Throughout her term of office, Town and Gown raised money for the Carillon at the new von KleinSmid Center for International Studies and Public Affairs building. The Carillon was a gift to honor Elisabeth (our first President of Town and Gown) and President von KleinSmid. "When the Carillon chimes each day, long standing members of Town and Gown considered it a special reminder of Mrs. Welbourn." Today all who are on campus still enjoy the sound of the Carillon. Recently this building was renamed Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow Center for International and Public Affairs.

Mrs. Raymond H. Finger, Lois served as our President from 1966 to 1968. "Helen Dedeaux, Co-Chair of the Ways and Means Committee during Lois Finger's term of office, remembers Lois as an energetic person who served with distinction and devotion." Scholarships continued to be a part of the Town and Gown programs during Lois' term and a fashion show benefit was held to raise funds for equipment and for the restoration of the Town and Gown Building." This benefit was held in the home of Edith Head, the famous fashion designer for the movies. "In October 1966, the Carillon was formally dedicated and became an ongoing symbol of Town and Gown's support for the University."

We hope you will join us at our General meetings to learn more about our outstanding leaders.

Quotes and information from Town and Gown, The First 100 Years and Town & Gown of the University of Southern California, 2022-2023 Handbook.

Kate Farlow and Lisa Up de Graff
2022-2023 Physical Facilities/History Committee Co-Chairs

FUND DEVELOPMENT

FLASH!! Important Information!

Fund Development has changed the name of one of our donor categories. Last year those members who donated \$1,000 or more to Town and Gown of USC over the regular membership requirements were named "Major Donors". After much thought the category will now be known as members of the Millennium Circle.

The requirements remain the same with all donations and support for the benefit, memorial and tribute contributions, annual giving, opportunity drawing purchases made with check or credit card, in-kind donations, Life Member payment of dues, and unspecified contributions all counting toward the total to qualify for Millennium Circle.

We are fortunate that so many of our members are extremely generous and support our endeavors with their time, talent, and treasure. We will honor and thank our Millennium Circle at a reception prior to our May luncheon meeting.

The time line for consideration is from April 30, 2023 to May 1, 2023. We welcome each and every one of you.

Carol Wright and Marilyn Kerzirian
3rd Vice Presidents, Fund Development



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Heidi Feldman Brooks (Santa Monica)

After graduating USC in 1991, Heidi worked in entertainment and fashion. She received her emergency teaching credential when there was a teaching shortage and worked in an elementary school in south central. Currently she honed in on her creative side and her photography can be seen in several stores and is a favorite among interior designers.

Betsey Dillon (San Clemente)

Betsey graduated from USC with a bachelor's degree in business administration. She spent most of her career in the fashion industry, launching her own apparel label and is now working for Nike in talent acquisition. She is a Trojan mom, a Trojan Marching Band alum who performed with Fleetwood Mac, and is proud to serve as vice president of the Trojan Marching Band Alumni Association.

Heather Francine (Orange)

Heather has been a licensed commercial real estate professional since 2004 and founding member of 1880 Capital, a real estate investment fund. She holds her real estate license at Sperry Commercial in Irvine. Heather's philanthropic involvement currently includes 44 Women for Orangewood as well as CREW OC's chairperson for their Summer Soiree, raising funds for WISEPlace. Heather is a long-time supporter of USC and football season ticket holder.

Beth Gassel (Tiburon)

Beth graduated from USC in 1991 with a BA in Journalism and English. She is a realtor with Compass selling residential property in San Francisco and Marin County. She is married with three children and enjoys hiking and skiing with the family. Beth is also an active member of National Charity League with her daughters.

Linda Geoghegan (Manhattan Beach)

In the last several years Linda has contributed much of her time to volunteer work in her children's schools and in her community including the Manhattan - Hermosa Chapter of the National Charity League. As a member of NCL she held a board member position, was VP of Ticktockers and chaired several committees. She travels often, enjoys skiing, pilates, and most of all being creative. She is experienced in floral arrangement, creating websites, has dabbled in graphic design, and is currently pursuing interior design. Her daughter is a freshman at USC and plays for the Women's Indoor Volleyball Team.

Lisa Halm (Irvine)

Lisa received her BS degree from the University of Southern California in Accounting. She later earned her Master's in Business Administration from Pepperdine University. She is working as the Director of Finance at Insyght Interactive. Lisa resides in Irvine, California with her two boys. She is busy with her boy's activities including year-round basketball and volunteering with the Boy Scouts. Her interests include playing guitar and learning Italian. Lisa loves USC football and traveling. She has traveled as far as Czechoslovakia and lived in Japan.

Jennifer Handler (San Diego)

Jennifer is a proud mother of three, including a daughter who's a Dornsife Graduate Class of 2022 and son who's a USC Dornsife Junior. As a retired elementary teacher, Jennifer has always divided her time volunteering for her kids' interests and various schools/university affiliations like the Alpha Phi Parent Club. Jennifer is a board trustee for the Oliverian school in New Hampshire, an alternative non-profit college-prep boarding school that her son graduated from in 2020 and she founded and facilitates an Oliverian support group for parents of struggling teens. Jennifer graduated from both UCLA and FIDM and she currently designs women's fashion.

Nim Mann (Brentwood)

Nim graduated from USC with a degree in international relations and global business. She recently joined Rain, an LA based fintech company, as their Head of Finance. Previously, Nim was an investor at Cerberus Capital Management. She's a member of Spinsters of Los Angeles and served as treasurer (2019-2020). Her skills include fundraising, financial planning and analysis.

Ruby Murdock (Yorba Linda)

Ruby graduated from USC with a BA degree in Psychology and has worked as a School Psychologist for more than 20 years after earning a Dual Masters in Educational Psychology and School Counseling from Loyola Marymount University. She enjoys volunteering on the board of the Mothers Club at Santa Margarita Catholic High School where her 3 children attend. Ruby looks forward to joining the special women of Town & Gown and supporting her fellow Trojans! Fight On!



Stephanie Nicolard (Santa Monica)

After graduating from USC with her BA in English, Stephanie attended graduate school across town to pursue her MA in English Literature. Currently, she teaches high school English and serves as a Class Dean at the Archer School for Girls, an all-girls independent school that aims to empower young women and educate future female leaders. She also works in Archer's College Guidance office where she helps junior and senior students find their paths forward. In her free time, Stephanie enjoys all sorts of artistic endeavors-- dance, music, poetry, and anything where beauty and wisdom might be hiding.

Mino Simantob (Beverly Hills)

Holds a BA and MA degree in Musicology from UCLA, and was active in research and teaching music. Currently, she is a Trojan parent, her daughter is in Marshall. Has years of volunteer experience and is an active Board and council member at the Children Burn Foundation, raising awareness and funds for the burn survivors and their families.

Join us in a warm welcome to all these terrific new members. We are very pleased to see our membership growing so robustly! Come by at the March meeting and say "Hi" to us at the Membership table in the Courtyard. We'd love to see you!

FIGHT ON!

D'Arcy Dietrich McLeod and Colleen Stroyke
4th Vice Presidents, Membership



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Do you have any news to share with Town and Gown of USC? Please email Kari May, karidmay@gmail.com.

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