



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,

Happy holidays from the entire Board of Directors of Town And Gown Of USC. May your, holidays be filled with joy, love, friends and family! I look forward to seeing you all at our January general meeting where we will kick off a fabulous 2023!!

Fight On!

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



PROGRAMS

On December 6th our Town & Gown ballroom was filled with merriment and festive spirit. Members once again outdid themselves creating tabletop decor that was positively amazing! Every inch of our beautiful ballroom was decorated and full of smiles, laughter, and holiday cheer, as our sold-out crowd enjoyed a beautiful afternoon which included a quartet from the Thornton School of Music, Dicken's Carolers, a scholar speaker, and a visit from President Folt. What a day! I think it is safe to say we all had a fabulous time at our Annual Holiday Luncheon.



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

Congratulations to our opportunity drawing prize winners:

- Susan Di Benedetto-Tower of Treats
- Ann Proctor-Shopping Basket
- Heidi Brooks- Winter Fox Basket
- Karen Chima- Waterford Vase

A warm thank you to our generous prize donors!

UPCOMING EVENTS:



Tuesday, January 10, 2023, Monthly Meeting and Luncheon

Please join us for our January meeting and luncheon featuring keynote speaker, Dain Blanton, Head Coach, and two-time National Championship winning coach of USC Women's Beach Volleyball.

Honoring Past ACC Chairs and Current Chair, and Current ACC Presidents

Please join us!

Thank you and Fight On!

Bonnie Suffridge and Debbie Wong
5th Vice Presidents, Programs



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



Afifa Zaman

Rossier School of Education
Doctorate, Educational Leadership '24

What is exciting and interesting, or currently challenging you, in your major field of study?

I work full-time as a community college counselor at MiraCosta College. I also currently serve as an educational consultant in a volunteer capacity for the Uplift Afghanistan Fund, which is a non-profit organization supporting community-led, grassroots initiatives in Afghanistan. I am a current member of the Asian-American Psychological Association and a new member of the San Diego Chapter of the Association for Women in Community Colleges.

In June 2022, I completed a two-year Faculty Empowerment and Leadership Academy through the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC). I was competitively selected to participate in this academy along with 12 other faculty members from across the state. Through the program, I have worked with a leadership mentor to refine my leadership skills and knowledge through monthly meetings, professional development, and assigned work.

I would like to share that I was honored with the recognition of "Faculty Woman of the Year" by the San Diego Chapter of the Association of Women in Community Colleges in May 2022. The award was given to a small group of leaders in the community colleges within my region and recognizes my work with Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) students.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Susan (Brownfield) Beall (Laguna Beach)

Susan (BA 1987) lives in Laguna Beach with her husband, Robert Beall (undergrad, UCLA and USC, JD 1987). She has a son and three daughters. She is President of Chapter House Corporation at USC Pi Beta Phi. She is a member of NCL. Susan enjoys traveling, oil painting, beach walks and being with family. She looks forward to becoming an active member of Town and Gown.

Elizabeth Blanco (Glendora)

Elizabeth serves as the Deputy Superintendent for the Pasadena Unified School District, as an executive leader on the Superintendent's Cabinet, leading systemic change resulting in equity, access and increased student achievement for students. She holds an Ed.D. in Urban Educational Leadership from the University of Southern California; a Master of Arts in Educational Administration and a Master of Arts in Special Education from California State University, Los Angeles as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Child Development from California State University, Los Angeles. She believes her greatest accomplishment and point of pride is her family. Married for 31 years, afforded her to be the mother of six children, thirteen grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Julie Cox (Coronado)

Julie graduated from USC with a BA in Fine Arts and was an active member of the Alpha Chi Omega sorority. Julie is married to Mike, a retired Navy Commander, and they have three children. Julie met Mike, at the 1989 USC#4// Notre Dame#1 football game in South Bend. Julie was a Navy wife for 25 years and they were stationed around the world moving 18 times. An avid volunteer, Julie's been involved with multiple Naval Spouses Clubs, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts of Honolulu and San Diego, and fundraising for Coronado nonprofits.

Ann Marie Jennison (Ladera Ranch)

Ann Marie graduated from USC with a BA in Cinematic Arts. She also met her husband of 29 years during the first week of freshman year, in Birnkrant Residence Hall. Besides raising 4 children, Ann Marie homeschools her freshman daughter and volunteers with National Charity League, church, and at Santa Margarita Catholic High School.



Kristen Kaplanis McGregor (Pasadena, CA)

Kristen graduated from USC with BA and Ed.D. degrees and has been a senior lecturer in the Rossier School of Education - MAT program for twelve years. She retired from a career in education most recently as a Chief Academic Officer. Current volunteer work includes 1st VP on the Altadena Town and Country Board of Directors and Philoptochos Women's Group through St. Anthony Greek Orthodox Church. Formally a Trojan Junior Auxiliary member and president, Kristen is looking forward to joining Town and Gown.

Jodi Miller (Hermosa Beach)

Jodi graduated USC with a degree in Business/ Entrepreneur program. She currently invents products and consults. She has held executive positions at Spin Master Toys and Mattel Toys. Her favorite charity is the Open Medicine Foundation that not only supports medical research but insists that the research is shared among all the researchers. She is a proud mom of triplet girls that are Freshman at USC. She nicknamed them the Trojan Triplets.

Cynthia Nissan-Vargas (South Pasadena)

Cynthia is a proud Trojan alumna, parent and spouse. She graduated from USC in 1987 with a BS in Business Administration. She plans to become involved with the scholarship and membership committees.

Kim Parker (Laguna Niguel)

Kim is a USC graduate and Trojan Parent. She has had a long career in healthcare and is currently a director of Quality with United HealthCare. Her volunteer experience began with Junior League of Orange County, National Charity League Laguna Beach and most recently her efforts are focused on a growing philanthropy, Tennis Serves Others.

Tracey Prieto Wiese (Fremont)

Tracey graduated from USC with a BA in Communications Arts and Sciences. While at USC, she was a member of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority, a USC Batgirl and volunteered on many committees on campus. Tracey has since held a long career in People Operations/Human Resources.

Cailin Stroyke (Manhattan Beach)

Cailin is a 4th generation Trojan and a 2021 graduate of the Marshall School of Business. She was a Town & Gown of USC scholar and is proud to be a new member. She works in wealth management in Century City.

Deann Webb (Redondo Beach)

In addition to holding an MSL degree (2019) from USC Gould School of Law, Deann is the Executive Assistant to the Senior Vice President for USC Communications. Deann is also a proud Trojan parent (5 of her 6 kids are Trojans). Prior to returning to full-time work, Deann was an active volunteer in her community serving many years as Vice President for Redondo Beach Youth Football and Cheer and PTSA Membership Vice President at her children's high school.

Wendy Watanabe Winter (Manhattan Beach)

Although Wendy has an undergraduate and law degree from other universities, her connection to USC includes many Trojan alumni including her father-in-law, husband, sister, niece and is now also a proud Trojan parent. She is recently retired from a lengthy career as a lawyer in private practice in Southern California affording her more time for involvement in community activities and opportunities to give back.”

A very warm welcome to the new members who joined this past month. We are very pleased to see our membership growing so robustly. Enjoy the holidays and we hope to see you in January!

FIGHT ON!

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



2023 ANNUAL BENEFIT!

The 25 wonderful Benefit Committee members are all hard at work! We are so thrilled to be honoring Dexter Holland, recipient of a PhD in Molecular Biology from USC and founding member of the punk rock band, The Offspring, on April 4th, 2023 at the Beverly Hills Hotel. This Benefit will also feature the Trojan Marching Band and the USC School of Dramatic Arts.



As you all know, this is our biggest fundraiser of the year for scholarships and campus beautification, so we are looking for your support. Opportunity Drawing packages are being assembled and we still would love to have donated sky miles and hotel accommodations. Also, fun adventures in and around Los Angeles, like TV show tapings, excursions, museum tours, and celebrity chef experiences are always popular!

Please contact Carol Styx at cstyx004@gmail.com or Bonnie Hodget at bhflasho1US@yahoo.com to donate.

On Giving Tuesday, we kicked off our Patron Drive. Click [here](#) to become a 2023 Benefit Patron.

Carol Kroesche
Benefit Chair 2023
benefitchairs@townandgownofusc.org

DID YOU KNOW ...

Our first President of Town and Gown, Elisabeth Von KleinSmid (1922-1942), was a remarkable lady who we wrote about in October. Her legacy lives on as she provided money for education and housing for needy students starting in 1922. This was quite astonishing at the time as most women only went to finishing school, if at all, and rarely a university. Also, the women's suffrage movement lasted several decades and ended with women having the right to vote in the United States in 1920. This was an amazing time for women and Elisabeth was a bold leader who was ahead of her time.

Our second President was Mrs. John Wesley (May Ormerod) Harris (1947-1962) who reluctantly agreed to take over the leadership after Elisabeth became ill. May Ormerod Harris was a quiet, gentle woman of great wealth who used her influence to raise large sums of money for expansion of the campus for buildings and improvements. She was highly supportive of the University and made many donations with little or no public notice.

Our third President, Mrs. John Davey (Margaret) Fowler (1962-1964) wrote and adopted by-laws, limiting the term of office to two years. Margaret presided at the 1962 fall breakfast meeting held in the KleinSmid's beautiful garden. Mrs. Fowler's term was truly the beginning of modern-day Town and Gown with a growing emphasis on scholarship. A benefit was held and the first scholarship was awarded from the individually endowed Mary Norcop Scholarship Fund. A new day had begun.

We of Town and Gown of USC are so proud of these first Presidents and their leadership. We will continue to write about our fabulous Presidents and their contributions to Town and Gown of USC.

Lisa Up de Graff and Kate Farlow
Physical Facilities/Historian Co-Chairs

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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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