

# INSIDE NEWS

from the President

June 2025

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## Inside the Briefing Room: Reagan Reese Exposes Media Bias Under Biden and Trump



*Reagan Reese addresses a standing-room-only audience at the Luce Center.*

The Luce Center hosted **Reagan Reese**, White House correspondent for the *Daily Caller* and Luce Center advisory board member, for a powerful behind-the-scenes look at modern journalism and the evolving media landscape.

Reese—a 24-year-old journalist who graduated from **Hillsdale College** three years ago—spoke to a standing-room-only crowd at a **Conservative Network Event** covered by C-SPAN.

She offered an unflinching comparison of what it's like to report on the **Biden** and **Trump** administrations, describing the contrast between the two administrations as “night and day.” Reflecting on her early days in the White House press pool under President Biden, Reese recalled moments when objectivity seemed compromised—both in tone and in conduct. She described a culture in which some reporters appeared more eager to maintain friendly relationships with administration officials than to ask difficult questions.

“Reporters often walk a fine line between developing sources and making friends,” she said. She recounted one incident in which members of the press pool greeted Press Secretary **Karine Jean-Pierre** with hugs and compliments on her outfit just before a scheduled press event. Moments like that, she suggested, blur the boundaries of professional responsibility and raise concerns about whether the press is truly serving the public interest.



*Reese encourages the Center's 2025 summer intern class to pursue truth with integrity and courage.*





Reese shakes hands with **Emilie Santoso**, a rising Hillsdale junior who introduced her at the podium.

She described a media class more focused on protecting the administration than holding it accountable—recounting firsthand how reporters coordinated questions and suppressed stories about classified documents and scandals involving the First Lady’s staff. “There were several Biden White House stories the press corps widely knew the details of—and failed to report the scandals,” she said.

She highlighted how differently the two administrations engaged with the press. “It took Trump just a few hours in office to take more questions than President Biden did in his entire first week,” she said.

“One of Trump’s first stops after being sworn in was the Oval Office... he signed several executive orders and took 75 questions and follow-ups over the span of 48 minutes.”

By contrast, she noted that the Biden White House frequently called extended “brunch lids”—press breaks lasting four to five hours—limiting reporters’ access and reducing opportunities for direct questioning.

Drawing from personal experience, Reese reflected on the professional risks she’s taken to ask difficult questions—especially when others did not. During a press pool visit to the Oval Office, she defied her colleagues’ plan to coordinate questions and asked about the death of **Laken Riley**. “I wanted to know, had the president spoken to the family of Laken Riley?” she recalled. “No one got a question that day... but I found myself rushing to parse through the president’s mumbled remarks.”



Top (left to right): Young women spend time in conversation; A first-time guest asks Reese a question during Q&A. Bottom (left to right): President’s Club member **Richard Ryan** and his guest chat with **Catherine Hendershott**, assistant to the president; Reese speaks to a full-capacity crowd.



She also spoke candidly about the challenges new and conservative media outlets face when operating alongside legacy press. From being told where to stand to having questions dismissed, she shared examples of bias and resistance. “I personally believe that this stubbornness of the legacy media to legitimize the new media will continue to result in punishment from the Trump White House,” she said.

Reese’s path to the White House press corps began with a love for journalism that started in high school and deepened at Hillsdale College, where she studied rhetoric and public address. “I knew that this was what I wanted to do,” she said, but emphasized that real-world skills mattered more than credentials. “It became clear to me that you really just need two things to succeed in D.C.—hard work and the willingness to learn.”

She encouraged students in the audience to make the most of internships and reminded them that professional growth often comes through unexpected opportunities. “I’ve gotten to work closely with the White House press team, Trump aides, and Press Secretary **Karoline Leavitt**,” she said. “I’ve had the opportunity to ask numerous questions of President Trump, sit down with **Elon Musk** for a private briefing, and attend [Musk’s] last press conference in the Oval Office.”

Throughout her remarks, Reese spoke about the role of truth, accountability, and character in journalism—qualities she believes are essential as the next generation steps forward. “In American politics,” she concluded, “young people and young women are increasingly stepping into positions of real influence. And that’s not a liability—it’s an opportunity.”



*A young Washington, D.C. journalist poses a question during Q&A, part of a lively exchange that followed Reese’s remarks.*



*Clockwise from the top: **Fiona Williamson** and **Anastasia Shanahan** check in guests as they arrive; President’s Club member **Karen Broussard** and **Kimberly Begg**, president, listen as **Daniela Villavicencio** shares what it’s like to be a conservative at **Queens College**; Santos engages with other attendees; Interns and guests listen attentively to Reese; **Anastasia Leffas** enjoys lunch with fellow conservatives.*



# Legacy of a Trailblazer: Michelle Easton Introduces the Next Generation of Conservative Women Leaders to the Life and Ideas of Clare Boothe Luce



***Michelle Easton** shares her decades of experience with our summer interns.*

Our interns had the special opportunity to hear from Luce Center founder and board chairman **Michelle Easton**, who shared the extraordinary life and legacy of the woman for whom the Center is named: **Clare Boothe Luce**.

Easton illuminated the courage, brilliance, and complexity of Clare's life, highlighting her remarkable accomplishments as a writer, congresswoman, ambassador, wife, and mother. More than a list of titles, Clare's story is one of relentless intellectual curiosity and moral conviction.

As Easton explained, Clare was always "driving herself through some inner compulsion to know the 'why' of everything." That trait—her hunger for truth—resonated deeply with our young women, many of whom are discerning their own paths in public service, journalism, and advocacy.



***Clare Boothe Luce** is a unique source of inspiration for today's young women.*

Through her legacy at the Luce Center, Clare Boothe Luce continues to shape a new generation of bold, thoughtful women who are committed to seeking truth and standing firm in their convictions.

**Lucy Ruse**, a rising sophomore at the **University of Dallas**, captured the enthusiasm in the room: "What a joy to meet the powerhouse that is Michelle Easton! Clare's life is such an inspiration. I have my new favorite conservative woman!"

Following the presentation, Easton spent time engaging with our interns in a more informal setting, answering questions and sharing insights drawn from her decades of mentoring young women. The conversation ranged from lessons in personal integrity to the practical challenges of working in today's cultural climate.

This glimpse into Clare Boothe Luce's life offered more than historical perspective: it presented a model of womanhood marked by courage, intelligence, and principled leadership.

# Confidence on Camera, Clarity in Presentation: Interns Sharpen Their Skills at Leadership and Communications Seminar



**Beverly Hallberg** leads our interns through practical, on-camera exercises designed to build skills and confidence.

A highlight of the Luce Center's summer internship each year, our Leadership and Communications Seminar, equips young women with the confidence, presence, and skills they need to lead effectively in today's media-driven world.

Led by nationally renowned media expert and District Media Group President **Beverly Hallberg**, this two-day seminar provided intensive training in public speaking and on-camera communication. Thanks to the generosity of a great friend from **New York**, who has faithfully sponsored this program for several years, our interns had the opportunity to grow into more persuasive and polished communicators.

Day one focused on mastering the fundamentals of public speaking. Hallberg opened with dynamic instruction on delivery techniques, emphasizing posture, tone, vocal clarity, and audience connection. Each intern then took the stage to present a prepared speech, recorded for later review. After watching their recordings, our young women received personalized feedback from Hallberg and thoughtful input from their peers. Armed with practical strategies and renewed confidence, they revised and re-delivered their speeches, demonstrating clear growth in poise, articulation, and impact.

Day two turned to media training, with a focus on television and interview settings. Hallberg guided the group through the essentials of staying on message, handling challenging questions, and navigating panel dynamics. Our interns participated in mock interviews on camera, applying real-world techniques to strengthen their performance and composure.

**Ann Rodgers**, a rising junior at the **University of Florida**, reflected on the experience: "Beverly transformed the way I think about being present and energized when trying to relay a message."

Our interns will put their training into practice this summer by introducing speakers and engaging in public events, which will further prepare them for leadership roles on campus and beyond.



# Poise and Purpose: Interns Prepare for Professional Life with Etiquette Training

**Lynn Williams**, etiquette and protocol instructor and former director of the Old Dominion Cotillion, led a two-day course for our interns designed to equip them with the skills needed to carry themselves with confidence and grace in any setting. Consistently one of the most highly rated experiences of the summer, the training blends timeless principles with practical instruction to prepare young women for both social and professional environments. We are deeply grateful to our dear friend and President's Club member **Mary Lu Clark** whose generous sponsorship has made this program possible for the past several years.



*Under **Lynn Williams**' expert instruction, our interns refine their presence and learn how small gestures can make a lasting impression.*

The training combined engaging instruction with hands-on learning. Our young women practiced how to give a proper introduction, navigate formal greetings, and handle professional interactions with poise. One of the most memorable portions of the experience focused on formal dining as Williams guided students through a multi-course meal, teaching them how to interpret place settings, maintain proper posture, and carry polite conversation throughout the meal. The setting was elegant, but the tone was warm and instructive—giving our interns the confidence to carry these lessons into social and professional settings.

Through it all, the emphasis remained on intentionality—how small acts of courtesy can reflect character, build trust, and create a sense of ease for others. “I learned that etiquette is much more than just having manners,” said **Daniela Villavicencio**, a rising junior at **Queens College**. “It’s about making others feel respected and comfortable. Being in a professional environment means you have to present yourself with intention and grace in order to flourish.”

Next month, the training will culminate in a cherished tradition: the Summer Intern Tea. Our students will welcome friends, family, and supporters to the Luce Center for an elegant afternoon that will give them the opportunity to put their new skills into practice—hosting with confidence, engaging with grace, and demonstrating the poise that will serve them well in every chapter ahead.



# Writing with Purpose: Marji Ross Equips Interns to Communicate with Clarity and Confidence



***Marji Ross** brings decades of publishing experience to a dynamic writing seminar with Luce Center interns.*

Our interns learned the art of powerful communication from one of the conservative movement's most skilled voices: **Marji Ross**, Luce Center board member, marketing expert, and former president of **Regnery Publishing**. Drawing on decades of editorial leadership and messaging expertise, Ross led our young women through the fundamentals of writing with purpose, structure, and impact across a range of formats.

The seminar focused on the core principles of persuasive communication: understanding your audience, defining your purpose, and crafting a message with intention. Ross emphasized that good writing begins with good thinking.

Our young women put these lessons into practice by creating mock TV and radio scripts and experimenting with short-form content designed to “write for the ear.” Through interactive exercises and peer feedback, they refined their ability to structure arguments, avoid common pitfalls, and communicate ideas with confidence and style.

**Virginia Fehrer**, a rising senior at **Virginia Tech**, offered, “Marji's writing seminar was a testament to her absolute expertise in and passion for the subject. What a gift to glean insights from her and grow as a writer in her presence!”

The skills our interns learned from Ross will help them write with greater purpose and clarity, which will benefit them in all areas of their lives.



*(Left) President **Kimberly Begg** joins Ross at the start of the seminar. (Right) Interns dive into interactive writing exercises, sharpening their skills.*

# Rooted in Faith, Called to Lead: Kate Obenshain Keeler Inspires Luce Interns



*Sharing lessons from a life of leadership, **Kate Obenshain Keeler** inspires the next generation of conservative women.*

**Kate Obenshain Keeler**, Luce Center board member and popular conservative speaker and commentator, joined our students for a powerful and deeply personal leadership seminar. Drawing on stories from her own life, Keeler began with the legacy of her father, Senator-elect **Richard D. Obenshain**, whose tragic passing left a profound imprint on her life and ultimately shaped her calling to public service.

Throughout the seminar, Keeler emphasized that true leadership is not rooted in self-reliance, but in surrendering to God's will. She spoke candidly about her experiences breaking barriers—as the first female Chair of the **Virginia Republican Party** and later as Vice President of **Young America's Foundation**. She shared how each role, even the challenging ones, illuminated her purpose and deepened her dependence on faith.

She reflected openly on moments of both triumph and trial, reminding our interns that adversity doesn't define a leader—it refines one. She encouraged them to lead not from a desire for recognition, but with humility, conviction, and trust in God's guidance.



*Our young women gain valuable insights from Keeler about adversity, faith, and principled leadership.*

**Emilie Santoso**, a rising junior at **Hillsdale College**, reflected on the experience:

*Kate Obenshain Keeler truly has one of the most powerful testimonies I have ever heard. She not only exemplifies beauty and grace, but she is a living example of a strong conservative leader rooted in her values and identity in Christ. I learned so much just from hearing her share her story and interacting with her. What a splendid role model she is for young conservative women!*

Keeler concluded by urging our interns to embrace their unique gifts and to build their leadership on a foundation of faith, trusting that their callings will unfold in God's timing and direction.



# Bold Voices, Timeless Lessons: Learning from Mercy Otis Warren



**Brenda Hafera** engages Luce Center interns in a powerful discussion on the life and legacy of **Mercy Otis Warren**.

**Brenda Hafera**, assistant director of the **Heritage Foundation's Simon Center for American Studies**, joined our summer interns for a powerful seminar on **Mercy Otis Warren**, a lesser-known founding heroine of America.

As part of our mission to prepare and promote conservative women leaders, the Luce Center introduces interns to women who helped shape America's founding principles. Hafera brought Warren's story to life, highlighting her fierce advocacy for liberty and her conviction that the sacrifices of the revolution are central to American identity. That message struck a chord with our interns, many of whom know firsthand what it means to defend their beliefs on left-leaning campuses.

"Prior to Brenda's seminar, I had never heard of Mercy Otis Warren," said **Jenny Ryan**, a rising junior at **Muhlenberg College**. "This has definitely made me want to read more. There are so many conservative women I'm becoming exposed to through this internship that typical education doesn't teach us about, and it's made me think about how many people we don't know of who have impacted America."

Inspired by Warren's integrity and patriotism, our summer interns say they feel newly motivated to seek out the untold stories of America's founding—and to carry that same spirit of purpose into their leadership journeys ahead.

## Where History and Faith Meet: a Visit to the Museum of the Bible



*Our interns become immersed in ancient texts and modern insight at the world-class **Museum of the Bible**.*

Our interns recently visited the **Museum of the Bible** in Washington, D.C., where they explored sacred scripture's enduring influence on American history and culture.

**Mercedes Skidd**, a rising junior at the **University of Dallas**, called the experience "incredible," noting that the museum's interactive and immersive experience made the Bible stories come to life. "We loved walking through the reimagined Old Testament and remembering its significance to our founding fathers of America," she said.



# Strength and Awareness: Interns Train in Self-Defense with Grandmaster Jeffrey Cook



*Grandmaster **Jeffrey Cook** demonstrates a self-defense technique as our interns observe and practice.*

To prepare them to be strong leaders, our interns participated in a self-defense seminar led by martial arts expert Grandmaster **Jeffrey Cook**. With more than 50 years of experience—and a distinguished background training SWAT officers and special forces—Grandmaster Cook offered a rare level of expertise, blending ancient combat disciplines with modern techniques tailored for women’s self-protection.

The seminar focused on realistic, high-impact training. Rather than overwhelming students with dozens of techniques, Grandmaster Cook emphasized mastering a small set of powerful defensive movements. Interns drilled responses to wrist and arm grabs, chokeholds, and ground attacks—some of the most common real-world scenarios women may face. Through focused repetition and partner drills, they built the muscle memory and presence of mind needed to respond effectively under pressure.



*Our interns encourage and challenge each other during a high-impact training in situational awareness and self-protection.*

The training covered more than physical defense. Grandmaster Cook spent time teaching strategies for situational awareness and prevention—instilling habits of alertness and confidence that can help women avoid dangerous situations.

“What I really admired was how when we were learning falls,” Grandmaster Cook shared, “they cheered each other on, encouraged each other, and clapped when each did it well. Great to see that support for each other.”

**Ann Rodgers**, a rising junior at the **University of Florida**, credited the training with helping her develop a greater sense of personal capability. “I feel equipped with skills that will forever be valuable,” she said, noting the importance of living courageously, acting decisively, and supporting other conservative women.



# On a Personal NOTE

This summer, our interns are reading *The Rights of Women* by **Erika Bachiochi**—a bold and thoughtful reclaiming of women’s dignity and purpose, grounded not in power or image but in virtue and human excellence. In our first book club discussion, we explored how modern visions of womanhood often fall short of what young women truly seek: lives marked by meaning, integrity, and true flourishing.

As **Anastasia Leffas**, a rising senior at **Benedictine College**, reflected:

*Reading The Rights of Women felt like finally understanding what it is that my peers and I really desire for women’s success, and where we’re being undermined by current cultural feminism.*

*It’s wonderful to leave a book club meeting (with your boss!) being on fire for real, philosophically traditional feminism. I love that we take the time to dive into and seriously analyze how we as women can best thrive, achieve excellence, and lead.*



**Daniela Villavicencio** is a remarkable young woman. What an honor it is to get to know her and our other interns and play a role in their professional and intellectual formation.

That pursuit—of real excellence—shapes every moment of our interns’ experience together. Whether they are learning American history that is no longer taught in school, or training to sharpen crucial skills, our young women are forming habits of thought, discipline, and conviction that will help them become strong conservative leaders.

Equally important, they are learning that leadership isn’t about commanding attention—it’s about living with integrity and intention.

And that is what *The Rights of Women* ultimately reminds us: that the strongest women are those who choose virtue over vanity and purpose over popularity.

Thank you for making this formation possible. Your support helps us build the kind of leaders America needs—women who are intelligent, poised, and courageously conservative.

In Friendship & Freedom,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'K. Begg'.

Kimberly Begg  
President  
kimberly@cblwomen.org



# More than a Membership— a Community

Your membership opens the door to meaningful connections, unforgettable events, and a front-row seat to the shaping of the next generation of conservative women leaders.

## Become a Member

Membership begins with an annual gift of \$50 (waived for students) and includes special benefits designed to keep you connected, engaged, and inspired:

- **Inspiring updates** with stories from our students, highlights from recent events, and a first look at upcoming opportunities to get involved
- **Premier access to all Conservative Network luncheons**—plus **two complimentary guest passes** for each event
- **Invitations to our Summer Intern Tea**, a favorite annual tradition where members connect with the next generation of conservative women
- **A personalized, permanent name tag** to wear at events—showing your proud support of the Luce Center and helping you connect with fellow members



## Join President's Club

With a gift of \$1,000, or more, you can join President's Club or renew your membership to receive exclusive benefits, including:

- **Thoughtfully curated monthly mailings** featuring behind-the-scenes photos of our students, inspiring event highlights, and a personal note from President Kimberly Begg
- **A special welcome package** with custom Grizzly drinkware
- **Priority invitations to our signature National Student Summits**, including our Washington, DC Summit and College Women's Summit—next in Scottsdale, Arizona
- **Access to exclusive events**, from elegant evening receptions to intimate gatherings across the country
- **Complimentary signed books** from leading conservative authors—delivered straight to your door as a thank-you for your support



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