

INSIDE NEWS

from the President

August 2025

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Marji Ross Shares Six Secrets to Success at the Largest-Ever National Conservative Student Conference



Marji Ross delivers her “six secrets to success” to hundreds of college women.

The Luce Center hosted its annual **College Women’s Luncheon** at Young America’s Foundation’s **National Conservative Student Conference**.

This year’s event was the largest in the conference’s history, drawing hundreds of college students from across the country—many of whom were attending their first Luce Center program.

At the luncheon, **Marji Ross**, a Luce Center board member and nationally recognized book publisher responsible for 85 bestsellers, including 14 #1 bestsellers, delivered a memorable talk built around what she called her “six secrets to success.” Each began with the letter “S,” giving students a simple framework they could remember and apply throughout their lives.

1. Service

Ross began with the principle of service, recalling a winter book signing with Donald Trump. The weather was bitterly cold, and she feared the line of supporters would not hold. Trump surprised her by sending staff into the crowd with hot chocolate. “What a great reminder of a service-minded approach,” Ross said. “When you think about ways to serve people instead of ways to boss them around, you not only engender a lot of affection, but you are much more likely to be successful and effective.”



Ross joins students after her talk, sharing encouragement and insight.



*Luce Center summer intern **Daniela Villavicencio** asks Ross a question during Q&A.*

2. Suck It Up

She was candid about the grit needed for leadership. “There are always going to be parts of the work that are hard, boring, or unpleasant,” she said. “You can’t skip them. You can’t hand them off. Sometimes you just have to suck it up and do the hard work anyway.”

3. Success Breeds Success

She reminded students that achievement is not a zero-sum game. “When you are surrounded by people who are successful, that actually makes you more successful—not less.” She urged them to reject envy and instead celebrate the wins of colleagues, because “their victories strengthen yours.”

4. Start well, leave well

She emphasized the importance of endings. “It’s actually more important to leave well than to start well, because everyone remembers how you leave,” she said. While most won’t recall your first two weeks, they will remember your last two.

5. Solve problems

She urged students not to stop at identifying problems. “A lot of people can identify problems,” she explained. “But what sets you apart is when you come prepared with solutions. Leaders solve problems. They don’t stop at complaining or critiquing—they think through how to make things better.”

6. Seek a Mission You Agree With

Her final “S” secret was about aligning your work with your values. “Number six on our list of six secrets to success is... seek a mission you agree with,” Ross told the students. She warned that it is hard to thrive if you don’t believe in what you are doing: “Ultimately it is very hard to be successful working for a company or being part of an organization whose mission you do not agree with.”

Guiding Women Toward Greatness

For the hundreds of college women in attendance, Ross’s talk offered an inspiring glimpse of the powerful mentorship and encouragement the Luce Center provides to prepare young women for strong, principled leadership.

Audrey Delgado, a student at **Texas A&M University**, shared with us, “I like how your mission props up women in their career journey, but retains our God-given femininity and freedom to become a wife and mother.”

The Luce Center is deeply grateful for Ross’s strong leadership on its board, where her insight and example shape and strengthen our mission to prepare young women for courageous and faithful leadership.



A college attendee takes the microphone to ask Ross a question, highlighting the interactive spirit of the luncheon.

From Interns to Leaders: The Inspiring Journeys of Luce Center Alumnae

The 2025–2026 school year is underway, and our most recent summer interns are back on campus—organizing events, hosting speakers, and rallying classmates to join us in **Scottsdale** for our **College Women's Summit**.

As we encourage and support them, we also celebrate the remarkable women who came before them. Former Luce Center interns are now attorneys, educators, business leaders, policymakers, and wives and mothers, each carrying forward the values and skills they developed through their internship into the world.

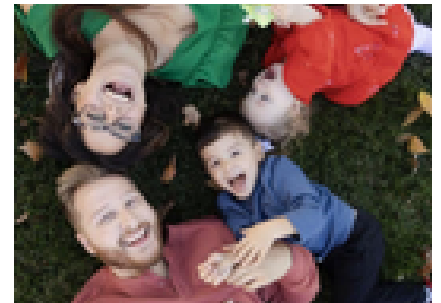
Viktoriya Chebotarev (Summer 2014)



While studying at **UC Berkeley**, Viktoriya joined the Luce Center and recalls her internship as a “pleasant culture shock” where she discovered a vibrant community of like-minded women who “actually existed.” Inspired, she pursued public service, earning her J.D. from **UC Davis School of Law**. Today, she serves as a Deputy Attorney General in the Criminal Law Section of the **California Attorney General's Office**.

Alissa Stechschulte (Summer 2016)

After graduating from **Gettysburg College** in 2017—the same year she married her husband—Alissa launched her career on **Capitol Hill** and later in lobbying. In 2021, she and her family moved to **Columbus, Ohio**, where she is raising two young children and running a subscription-based car maintenance shop. “It’s not the path I would have imagined,” she reflects, “but it has given me both purpose and the chance to make a positive impact in the community I love.”



Ellen Schutt (Summer 2017)



Ellen graduated early from the **University of Wisconsin-Madison**, then served in the state legislature for four years before winning election to the **Wisconsin State Assembly**. After one term advancing conservative values, she transitioned to serve as Executive Director of the **Wisconsin FFA Foundation**, where she champions agricultural education. Ellen, her husband, and their young son now live in **Clinton, Wisconsin**, where they are farming and raising Hereford cattle.

Hope Timoll (Summer 2021)

Hope earned her degree in media and communication studies from the **University of Maryland**, Baltimore County. Today, she is a Media Relations Coordinator at the **American Legislative Exchange Council**. She credits her Luce internship with sparking her passion for writing and communications: “One of the things I treasure from my CBL internship was the social media and writing opportunities. I get to continue that aspect of my career every single day.”



Megan Litz (Summer 2021)



Megan graduated from **Furman University** with degrees in Political and International Affairs and Chinese Studies. Today, she works in the nonprofit energy sector as a State Government and Regulatory Affairs Associate, equipping leaders across 16 states with independent information on reliability and security issues impacting the electric grid. Reflecting on her internship, Megan says: “Having other young women beside me as fellow interns modeled joyful and supportive female friendships and gave me a support system to continue the path I was going on.”

Rose Laoutaris (Summer 2018)

Rose earned both her B.A. and M.A. in Public Policy from **American University** after her internship. She is now Policy Manager of the **Center to Protect Free Speech** at the **American Legislative Exchange Council**, where she advances free speech protections on campus, online, and in donor privacy.



Rachel Moss (Summer 2017)



Rachel graduated from **James Madison University** and **Arizona State University College of Law**. She is a criminal defense attorney at the **Attorneys for Freedom Law Firm**, the only firm in the U.S. dedicated exclusively to self-defense cases. A strong advocate for the **Second Amendment**, she speaks nationwide, provides pro bono legal services, and educates the public through the Attorneys on Retainer YouTube channel. She credits her Luce Center internship with sharpening her advocacy and public speaking skills. Based in **Arizona**, she enjoys hiking, kickboxing, and time with friends—and her cat.

Natalie Engstrom (Summer 2013)

After graduating from **Elon University** in 2014 and earning her CPA license, Natalie built a successful career in corporate finance before devoting herself full-time to raising her four children. Now based outside **Charlotte, North Carolina**, she remains active in her church, leads a women’s exercise group, and volunteers in her neighborhood.



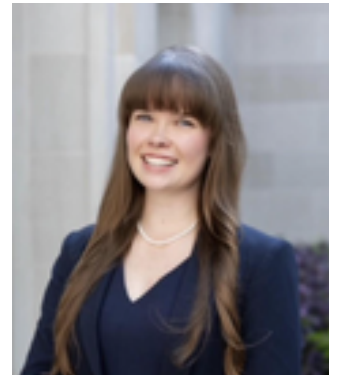
Madeline Pelletier (Summer 2021)



A **University of Dallas** graduate, Madeline now serves as Program Coordinator for the **Person and Identity Project** at the **Ethics and Public Policy Center**, working closely with **Mary Hasson**. She helps equip faith-based institutions to respond to cultural challenges around gender ideology. Madeline and her husband make their home in **Raleigh, North Carolina**.

Jordan Lamb (Summer 2021)

Jordan earned her degree in Government from the **University of Texas** at Austin, where she developed a passion for law and public policy. Now a third-year law student at the **University of Texas School of Law**, she serves as Editor-in-Chief of the **Texas Review of Law & Politics** and previously led the school's **Federalist Society** chapter. Jordan has gained valuable experience at the **Texas Attorney General's Office** and plans to join a civil defense firm after graduation, with the long-term goal of returning to politics. Based in **Austin**, she enjoys Tex-Mex, two-step dancing, and time at the gun range.



Caroline Cyr (Summer 2021)



A graduate of the **University of Dallas** with a degree in Politics and a minor in Legal Studies, Caroline first joined the Luce Center as an intern in 2021. She later returned to serve as Program Coordinator, mentoring students and strengthening our mission. Now based in **St. Louis**, she is a Paralegal Assistant at **Husch Blackwell** and continues to serve in the conservative movement through nonprofit work.

Aryssa Damron (Summer 2015)

Aryssa went on to **Yale University**, where she earned her bachelor's degree in English, followed by a master's degree in library science. Today, she serves as an elementary school librarian in the **D.C. Public School System**, where she inspires children to discover the joy of reading. Beyond her work in the classroom, Aryssa is deeply engaged in civic life through the **Daughters of the American Revolution**, the **D.C. Mayflower Society**, and the **Association for Library Service to Children**. In 2025, she was honored to serve on the prestigious **Caldecott Committee**, recognizing excellence in children's literature.



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CENTER for CONSERVATIVE WOMEN

College Women's Summit

Scottsdale, Arizona | Oct 10 - 12, 2025



Erika Donalds

Reagan Conrad

Isabel Brown

Liz Wheeler

KT McFarland

On a Personal NOTE

Your support of the Luce Center is life-changing for today's young women. It connects them with leaders whose example challenges and inspires them to aim higher—leaders like **Marji Ross**, a valued member of our board, who embodies the conviction and clarity we want our students to carry into every part of their lives.

That same spirit is alive in our alumnae: **Rachel Moss**, defending the Second Amendment in courtrooms across the country; **Madeline Pelletier**, working alongside **Mary Hasson** at the Ethics and Public Policy Center to help institutions stand strong in today's cultural battles; and **Ellen Schutt**, who brought her conservative principles to the Wisconsin legislature and now leads a statewide organization.

Your generosity makes this possible. By investing in the next generation, you are ensuring that young women not only find the courage to stand firm on their campuses today, but also become the leaders who will shape our culture and communities tomorrow.

Now we turn with excitement to our **College Women's Summit in Scottsdale, October 10–12**. Our goal is to welcome **90** courageous student leaders—but that will only be possible if the support is in place. Sponsorships are **\$1,500** per student, and every gift—whether for one sponsorship or two or more—helps open the door for young woman eager to become strong conservative leaders.

Together, we are raising up a generation of women who will not only stand firm in today's battles, but also lead our culture with courage and conviction for years to come.

In Friendship & Freedom,



President



Virginia Fehr is a senior at **Virginia Tech** and the newest member of our social media team.

P.S. Your support means so much. I welcome the chance to thank you personally. You can reach me any time at **kimberly@cblwomen.org**, **703-318-0730**, or on my cell at **703-507-9999**. I would be delighted to hear from you.