

# INSIDE NEWS

from the President

September 2025

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## From Notre Dame to *The New York Times*: Lucy Spence Honors Charlie Kirk's Legacy



Two days after the assassination of **Charlie Kirk**, **The New York Times** publishes reflections of six conservative college students, including **University of Notre Dame** student **Lucy Spence**, a 2024 Luce Center summer intern.

It's not every day that one of our college students is published in the liberal *New York Times*. **Lucy Spence**, a 2024 Luce Center summer intern, was among six students invited to reflect on **Charlie Kirk**'s legacy after his tragic assassination. One of the students even admitted that he had been wrong about Charlie.

Lucy, a sophomore at the **University of Notre Dame** and editor-in-chief of *The Irish Rover*, offered a moving reflection titled "Debating at the Front of the Line."

Here is her full essay:

*Charlie Kirk's message to the crowds that cropped up at his campus events around the country was simple: "Disagreements, come to the front of the line." Those who loved his message were welcome to speak, but those who hated it got to speak first.*

*Mr. Kirk had friends in high places who will mourn his death. But the demographic that will miss him most is college students like me. Videos now circulating show Mr. Kirk's unwearied patience as he sat for hours talking on campuses. Whether he faced vitriolic mockery or glowing approval, he gave us the same attention that he gave to leading politicians who called him their friend. We needed him desperately — conservatives and liberals alike — because he listened to us.*

*Conservatives lost a fearless spokesman, whose unabashed defense of conservative ideals made enormous headway on left-leaning college campuses. True to his belief that anyone can participate in democracy, college degree or not, Mr. Kirk preached an accessible but undiluted conservative gospel. Liberals, too, lost someone with an authentic desire for discourse across the aisle.*

*The political rifts in America — so clear on election maps, in churches and in our neighborhoods — are even more marked on college campuses. The repercussions of our divides were hideously apparent on Wednesday.*

*Now that Mr. Kirk is gone, we owe it to him and one another to keep talking and keep listening. So as he would say, if someone disagrees with you, bring them to the front of the line.*

Charlie inspired a new generation of leaders by modeling both courage and humility—standing firm in his convictions while giving others the dignity of being heard. Lucy and so many of our young women are carrying that vision into the public square.

## Luce Center Strengthens Christendom Connection on Campus Visit

The Luce Center brought our mission of forming bold, faithful leaders to **Christendom College's** campus on September 19, connecting with students about internships, speaker programs, firearms training, membership, and our upcoming **College Women's Summit** in **Scottsdale**.

We treasure our friendship with Christendom College, where so many of our young women have taken the skills they developed within our programs—whether in public speaking, activism, or leadership—and put them into practice on their campus and beyond.

**Fiona Williamson**, a 2025 summer intern and junior at Christendom College, reflected on the Luce Center's influence in her community:

*“Ever since I first discovered the Luce Center during my freshman year, I can see the impact it has made on my campus! I have had many students come up to me and express interest in the College Women's Summit and ask about my experience with the summer internship program. I am very excited to see what the future holds for us young conservative women!”*



(Left) **Rachel Hurley**, social media officer, and interns **Lucy Evich** and **Anna Wilkinson** engage with **Christendom** students about the Luce Center's life-changing programs and upcoming opportunities. (Right) **Lauren Husmann**, chief of staff, reconnects with 2025 summer intern **Fiona Williamson**, celebrating the leadership impact of young conservative women.



# At Grove City College, Kimberly Begg Highlights Christian Purpose and Conservative Renewal



(Left) **Kimberly Begg** inspires a packed audience at **Grove City College**, urging students to rediscover a Christian vision of womanhood as a force of strength and renewal. (Right) Begg joins student fellows on the **Liberty Mail** podcast, offering insights on how courage and conviction shape the next generation of leaders.

**Kimberly Begg**, president of the Luce Center, brought a powerful message to **Grove City College** on September 17 as part of The Conservative Mind lecture series, hosted by the **Institute for Faith and Freedom**. Her lecture, *The Conservative Mind & The Conservative Woman*, drew a packed audience of students, faculty, and community members eager to reflect on timeless questions of faith, freedom, and culture.

**Dr. Paul Kengor**, senior director of the Institute, invited Begg after he spoke earlier this year at the Luce Center on the *Marxist Roots of International Women's Day*.

In her address, Begg challenged the audience to reject cultural distortions that sabotage women's flourishing and instead embrace a Christian vision of womanhood as a force of strength and renewal. Drawing on the wisdom of **Edith Stein**, sacred scripture, and the lives of saintly women, Begg highlighted the unique role of women as witnesses of truth who can transform their homes, communities, and ultimately the world.

The mission of Grove City College—calling students to pursue their God-given purpose, embrace freedom of conscience, and live with joy in the truth of who they are—beautifully complements the mission of the Luce Center. Both institutions share an unwavering commitment to forming young people who will stand boldly for faith, family, and freedom.

While on campus, Begg joined student fellows for an interview on **Liberty Mail**, the Institute's podcast, offering insights on the importance of courage and conviction in an age of cultural confusion.

Following the event, several students connected with the Luce Center about internship opportunities and the upcoming **College Women's Summit** in **Scottsdale**, which continues the mission of raising up a new generation of strong, faithful conservative women.



**Dr. Paul Kengor** introduces Begg, highlighting their friendship and collaboration spanning more than 20 years.

# Meet our Fall Interns!

This fall, we are delighted to welcome two outstanding interns, **Lucy Evich** and **Anna Wilkinson**. Guided by our experienced mentors, they will contribute to every area of our mission while developing valuable skills in event planning, graphic design, activism, public speaking, and more. Through this internship, Lucy and Anna will gain the confidence to carry their leadership forward.



## Lucy Evich

**School:** Christendom College (starting in fall of 2026)

**Home State:** Virginia

**Favorite Book:** *Kristen Lavransdatter* by Sigrid Undset

**Favorite Conservative Woman:** Alex Clark



## Anna Wilkinson

**School:** Homeschooled

**Home State:** Virginia

**Favorite Book:** *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery

**Favorite Conservative Woman:** Erika Kirk

Lucy and Anna are already diving in—helping prepare for our upcoming College Women’s Summit, supporting campus events, and contributing to the early months of our new Ambassador Program. They are also assisting with communications, student outreach, and merchandise design projects.

Throughout the semester, these young women will contribute to meaningful work while receiving mentorship tailored to their individual strengths, interests, and long-term goals. They will also hear directly from leading conservatives at our monthly Conservative Network Events, attend our summit, and connect with our national network of conservative women.



(Left) **Anna Wilkinson** leads a dynamic Q&A at our Conservative Network Event, engaging the audience in thoughtful discussion. (Middle) Interns Wilkinson and **Lucy Evich** greet featured speaker **Leslie Manookian** following her powerful remarks. (Right) Evich reconnects with 2022 Luce Center summer intern **Rachel Schroder**, who is a research assistant for **Catherine Pakaluk**, associate professor of social research and economic thought at the **Catholic University of America Busch School of Business**, celebrating the lasting bonds formed through our internship program.



# Leslie Manookian Warns Against Government Threats to Medical Freedom



(Left) **Leslie Manookian** advises that government be “as small as possible” to safeguard America’s freedom.



(Right) **Nicole Hoplin**, secretary and treasurer of the Luce Center’s Board of Directors and president of Hoplin Jackson, connects with members and guests.

Medical freedom and government transparency took center stage at the Center on September 12, when **Leslie Manookian**, president of the **Health Freedom Defense Fund** (HFDF), addressed a packed room of members and guests. HFDF is a nonprofit organization that seeks to protect and advance health freedom, educate Americans on informed consent, and advocate for human rights and bodily autonomy for all people.

Drawing on her experience as both a former Wall Street executive and founder of HFDF, Manookian explained how federal agencies have been compromised by conflicts of interest. For example, she noted that the FDA now receives more than half of its drug-approval budget directly from pharmaceutical company “user fees,” a structure she said has turned the regulator into “a wholly owned subsidiary of [private companies].”

She also warned of the dangers of public-private partnerships that blur accountability and “pervert the allegiance of public servants away from the people and toward vested interests.” Transparency, she argued, is impossible when those charged with protecting the public are financially entangled with the very industries they are meant to regulate.

Manookian urged attendees to stay engaged locally and to think critically about public health claims: “Question everything—especially authority.” She added that “the word of this decade has to be discernment,” and reminded the room that “government must be limited. It must be as small as possible.” Her remarks echoed the Center’s mission to safeguard liberty by ensuring government remains within its constitutionally enumerated powers, so that Americans can make informed choices about their own lives—including their health.

The program concluded with a lively Q&A on corporate influence in federal health agencies, the risks of public-private partnerships, and practical steps families can take to pursue healthier lives. As Manookian emphasized, restoring freedom depends on restoring transparency—and that begins not in Washington, but in our own neighborhoods: “Real change starts close to home. Show up, stay informed, and keep your courage—because our freedoms are worth defending.”

The discussion resonated strongly with those in attendance. Our post-event survey recorded a perfect Net Promoter Score (10/10) both for recommending the Luce Center’s Conservative Network events to friends and for recommending Leslie Manookian as a speaker.

# On a Personal NOTE

The past weeks have been a time of grief for all of us who admired **Charlie Kirk**. His assassination is a devastating reminder that evil is real, and the voices who speak boldly for faith and freedom are often the ones evil tries hardest to silence. Charlie warned of the dangers of “assassination culture.” Now, we feel that reality in the most painful way.

And yet, even in sorrow, we see the enduring strength of his example. Charlie’s fearlessness, his love for America, and his willingness to engage in respectful debate live on in the young leaders he inspired. One of those leaders is our own 2024 summer intern, **Lucy Spence**, who carried Charlie’s message of courage and dialogue into the pages of *The New York Times* this month.

Your support makes this possible. Because of you, young women are stepping forward with conviction, prepared to carry Charlie’s legacy into their own generation. They are learning that speaking out for truth is a high calling that demands courage and perseverance—and that their voices can help their peers better understand who they are and what kind of America they want to live in.

We are committed to ensuring these young women can do this important work safely. That is why we are strengthening security at all of our events, including campus speaking events and our upcoming **College Women’s Summit** in Scottsdale.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for standing with us in this moment. Together, we will ensure that Charlie’s voice, his message, and his legacy live on through the leaders we are raising up today.

In Friendship & Freedom,

President  
kimberly@cblwomen.org

P.S. We would like to extend a huge thank you to our wonderful supporters who sponsored young women attending our upcoming College Women’s Summit in Scottsdale, October 10-11. Thanks to you, students from across the country will hear from **Isabel Brown, Alex Clark, Liz Wheeler, Reagan Conrad, Erika Donalds, and KT McFarland**. We are especially excited to welcome many members of our **President’s Club** who will be joining us for this extraordinary weekend. Together, we’re helping young women become courageous conservative leaders. Thank you!



*Three days after the assassination of **Charlie Kirk**, we opened our Conservative Network luncheon with prayer and a tribute, honoring Charlie for his courageous and principled work with college students.*