

# LUCE LADDER

“Courage is the ladder on which all the other virtues mount.”

– Clare Boothe Luce

From the President

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## Choosing Courage: Harmeet Dhillon and Emily Jashinsky on Law, Leadership, and the Next Generation of Conservative Women



Assistant Attorney General **Harmeet Dhillon** (left) and journalist **Emily Jashinsky** (right) lead a conversation on law and leadership at the Luce Center’s Young Women’s Luncheon on Capitol Hill.

“I wore this outfit,” explained Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice **Harmeet Dhillon**, gesturing to her crimson-colored suit, “because I sued **Harvard** today for antisemitism.”

The moment drew laughter, even as it underscored the seriousness of her work. It also set the tone for the conversation that followed with **Emily Jashinsky**, Luce Center advisory board member and host of *After Party with Emily Jashinsky*, at the Luce Center’s Young Women’s Luncheon on Capitol Hill on March 20.

Dhillon was referring to a lawsuit filed that day seeking to hold Harvard accountable for violating federal civil rights law by failing to protect Jewish students from harassment tied to pro-Palestinian campus protests.



Young women working and interning across Capitol Hill, federal agencies, and prominent media and policy organizations hear from Dhillon and Jashinsky while building connections and joining the Luce Center’s nationwide network of conservatives.

Young women attendees are working or interning in the following offices:

U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Department of Treasury

Senate Judiciary Committee  
House Judiciary Committee

Senator **Jim Banks** (Indiana)  
Senator **Mike Lee** (Utah)  
Senator **Dave McCormick** (Pennsylvania)

Congressman **Ben Cline** (Virginia)  
Congressman **Richard Hudson** (North Carolina)  
Congressman **Jim Jordan** (Ohio)  
Congresswoman **Nancy Mace** (South Carolina)  
Congressman **Addison McDowell** (North Carolina)  
Congressman **Chris Smith** (New Jersey)  
Congressman **Daniel Webster** (Florida)

Committee for Human Rights in North Korea  
Convention of States Action  
*The Daily Caller*  
Herzog Foundation  
HSP Direct  
Live Action  
Red Edge LLC  
St. Gabriel Institute  
Young America's Foundation  
Zenger Group

As one of America's foremost First Amendment attorneys, she explained that protest speech is protected—but not when it becomes harassment. When protestors “link arms and prevent Jews from getting to their classrooms,” she said, it crosses the line into unlawful discrimination.

Jashinsky, a seasoned journalist, guided the conversation beyond the day's headlines to the broader questions shaping public life—covering Dhillon's path into law, the role of civil rights enforcement, and the personal courage required to pursue principled work.

From the outset, Dhillon grounded her advice in her own story. “I'm an immigrant,” she said. “My parents left India because they wanted to be free in the western world.”

She described growing up in a household where ideas mattered and public life was taken seriously: “Every day we would talk about current affairs at the dinner table... from a conservative perspective.”

That early formation shaped not only her worldview but also her willingness to take risks. “You can choose to do good with your career or you can choose to be comfortable,” she said. “And sometimes those are opposite things.”

When Jashinsky asked how Dhillon first found her way into civil rights law, she pointed to a defining moment at Dartmouth.

As editor-in-chief of *The Dartmouth Review*, she helped lead a lawsuit against the school when the administration suspended her colleagues indefinitely over a controversial article—and they won.

That experience proved decisive. After helping defend student speech against a powerful institution, she saw firsthand what the law could do. “The ability of the legal profession... to equalize the huge power disparity between students and an Ivy League institution,” she said. “That really just caught my heart.”

A career in civil rights law was not an obvious path for conservatives at the time.

As Dhillon noted, there were “really no conservative lawyers” building careers in that space. She described the work as “outside the box”: uncomfortable, risky, and necessary.

Jashinsky asked Dhillon for a “progress report” on the legal and cultural battles shaping public life. Dhillon's answer was measured but hopeful.

“On the cultural aspect... I feel like the earth is healing in a way,” she said. “I see a lot less pronouns in signature blocks. I see normal people coming out and saying they don't want boys in girls' sports.”

At the same time, she cautioned against assuming that progress is permanent. “We're winning,” she said. But those gains, she warned, are fragile—dependent on continued effort and engagement.



Throughout the conversation, Dhillon returned to the importance of adaptability and discipline.

“Always have a backup plan,” she advised. “Always be curious, always be willing to learn new skills and always be willing to adapt.” In a world being reshaped by technology and rapid change, she emphasized that flexibility is not optional: “[It’s] necessary to survive in a technology world.”

Reflecting on her own early career, she said that tasks that once required long hours of painstaking work can now be completed in minutes. The lesson, she suggested, is not to resist change, but to prepare for it.

The audience also had the opportunity to engage directly, asking questions that reflected the realities of working in Washington, D.C.

One student asked about navigating environments where it can feel difficult to speak openly. Dhillon acknowledged the challenge while reaffirming a core principle: “You shouldn’t have to hide who you are.” No one, she suggested, should feel compelled to conceal their beliefs or convictions in order to succeed.

Jashinsky added that many young professionals feel pressure to present a carefully managed version of themselves. Learning how to remain both thoughtful and authentic, she suggested, is part of the work of building a career in public life.

The conversation also explored the relationship between law and culture.

While policy often follows cultural change, Dhillon noted that the law can also shape the environment in which ideas take hold. Still, she returned to the role of individuals. Lasting change, she emphasized, depends on people willing to act with clarity and conviction.

That clarity extended to her discussion of leadership within institutions. Reflecting on her work at the Department of Justice, Dhillon described the importance of setting direction early and decisively.

“We’re going to continue to enforce the same laws, but through the lens of the president’s agenda,” she explained, emphasizing a commitment to applying the law equally. “We’re going to stop only protecting certain people. We’re going to protect all Americans.”

A question from **Kady Bedard**—a 2022 Luce Center intern who now serves at the **U.S. Department of the Treasury**—brought the conversation to a more personal level. She asked how young women should think about balancing ambitious careers with marriage and family.

Dhillon answered, “It’s a challenge in life that two things happen at the same time,” noting that the years when women are best positioned to pursue education and launch their careers often coincide with the years when they begin to think about family. But, she emphasized, “I think it’s possible to do both. You have to plan for it.”

She pointed to her own mother as proof. “I was the beneficiary of a stay-at-home mom,” she said. Though highly educated, her mother stepped away from the workforce to raise children, then returned to build on her remarkable life—managing a successful medical practice, remaining active in her community and in politics, and raising a family that remains close to her today. “She had it all,” Dhillon said.

At the same time, she pushed back on cultural messages that discourage women from pursuing serious careers. It is “folly,” she said, not to prepare for the unexpected or to “have something to fall back on.” A fulfilling career is not only a safeguard, but a source of purpose: “You should be able to have a career that accommodates your own fulfillment.”

Drawing on her own experience as a law firm owner, Dhillon also described building workplaces where women could succeed in both roles. She implemented flexible schedules and generous maternity policies, noting that it is increasingly possible “to be a mom and be a partner at a law firm” while remaining present for one’s family.

As the afternoon concluded, attendees filled out surveys indicating how they wanted to stay involved—by hosting campus speakers, attending National Student Summits, applying for internships, and more.

Notably, participants reported a perfect 10/10 score indicating they would recommend Luce Center events to their friends—evidence of an experience already shaping the next generation of conservative women leaders, the very work conservatives across the country help us advance.

# A Test of Moral Courage at Notre Dame



*Liz Wheeler encourages University of Notre Dame students to stand up for their conservative beliefs. Senior Lucy Spence (left), a 2024 Luce Center intern, and Professor Jaime O'Brien (right), stand with Wheeler after her talk.*

A test of moral courage unfolded at the **University of Notre Dame**—and senior **Lucy Spence** chose to meet it head-on. In response to the university's decision to appoint **Susan Ostermann**, an outspoken abortion advocate, to lead its Asian Studies Institute, Spence worked with the Luce Center to bring **Liz Wheeler**, host of *The Liz Wheeler Show*, to campus, turning a moment of controversy into a call to defend truth and the dignity of human life.

The lecture, part of the **Keith Work Campus Speakers Series**, grew out of Spence's leadership following the Catholic university's announcement of the appointment. A 2024 Luce Center intern and current editor-in-chief of Notre Dame's *The Irish Rover*, Spence began working to bring Wheeler to speak at the outset of the controversy. She wrote publicly, engaged media—including a national television appearance on **EWTN**—and helped rally opposition. Just weeks later, amid mounting pressure, Ostermann withdrew. Though delayed nearly nine weeks by an extended approval process, the event drew strong student attendance, underscoring its importance and impact.

Wheeler acknowledged the human weight of the issue with notable care. "I'm always highly aware... that there are people in this room who have suffered the grief of abortion," she said, emphasizing that those individuals deserve "healing" and "to feel love." She also pointed to what she described as a cultural silence around the issue, arguing that "there's been this concerted effort... to intimidate men from talking about abortion," even though men have "a duty to protect women... and to protect their children from abortion."

She warned that in public debate, "what's lost... is the reality of what abortion is." She described abortion as "a grave moral evil," adding that when institutions "fail morally," they lead others to do the same.

Throughout her remarks, Wheeler emphasized that such moments demand courage. "Each and every one of us will be called... to stand up against a culture... and do what is right," she said.



*Students engage Liz Wheeler in a thoughtful exchange, asking questions and pressing key issues during a candid conversation on life, truth, and moral courage.*

# Speaking Across Generations: Kimberly Begg at Thomas More College



*(Left) **Kimberly Begg** challenges conservatives to reconsider how the upcoming generations understands truth, language, and the future of the conservative movement. (Right) Begg and **Anastasia Shanahan**, 2025 Luce Center intern, connect on campus, highlighting the mentorship at the heart of the Luce Center's work.*

For a few weeks last fall, many adults found themselves baffled: why were young people laughing uncontrollably at the mere mention of “six” and “seven” together? Even after looking it up, some still didn’t quite get the joke. **Kimberly Begg** began her March 23 lecture at **Thomas More College** with this moment of generational confusion—an example that quickly gave way to a deeper insight.

“Younger generations use words we don’t understand because we don’t share the cultural experiences that give those words meaning,” she explained. And the disconnect, she argued, runs both ways: older conservatives often speak a language that today’s young people no longer recognize.

Begg, president of the Luce Center, delivered her talk, “Gen Z, Gen Alpha, and the Future of the Conservative Movement,” to students and community members gathered on campus. Hosted by senior **Anastasia Shanahan**, a 2025 Luce Center intern, along with President **William Fahey** and **Amy Fahey**, the evening offered a candid examination of how generational experience is reshaping the conservative movement.

At the heart of her talk was a central question: what happens “when generations share a language but not cultural memory?”

For much of the late 20th century, that language was grounded in a shared reality. “President Ronald Reagan’s tremendous successes,” she noted, included policies that “launched one of the longest periods of economic growth in American history” and helped define the modern conservative movement.

Those experiences formed the worldview of many Baby Boomers and Gen X conservatives. But that shared memory no longer exists.

For Gen Z and Gen Alpha, the cultural landscape has grown darker in ways that older generations often struggle to fully grasp.

In the aftermath of the assassination of Charlie Kirk on a college campus, she noted, young people watched as “normal people with normal jobs—elementary school teachers, college administrators, nurses—celebrated Charlie’s murder in a deeply disturbing display of virtue signaling.”

“This is an evil that many of us older conservatives can’t quite wrap our heads around,” she said. Yet for Gen Z and Gen Alpha, “it feels normal and it is not the only evil that feels normal to them.” From COVID mandates to the transgender movement that preyed on their generation, young people have repeatedly been treated like “pawns in someone else’s chess game,” pressured to deny obvious truths against their own interests.

These experiences have produced a generation that is both skeptical and searching. Yet Begg expressed confidence in them, calling Gen Z and Gen Alpha “realists and dreamers” who want to “chart their own path, rooted in purpose and common sense.”

What, then, is required of those seeking to pass on hard-earned wisdom to today’s young people? Begg proposed a recommitment to honesty and humility to “speak in ways young people can actually hear.”

# From Communist Poland to Financial Freedom: Natalie Brunell on Money, Media, and the Search for Stability



(Left) **Natalie Brunell** draws on her background in investigative journalism to examine the forces shaping today's economy. (Right) President's Club member **Mike Hardiman** opens the evening, highlighting Brunell's credibility as a trusted voice on finance and emerging technology.

President's Club members gathered at the Luce Center on March 13 for an intimate evening fostering camaraderie and intellectual engagement in an elevated setting.

Guests heard from journalist and media entrepreneur **Natalie Brunell**, who spoke on "What an Investigative Journalist Learned about Crypto," offering insights drawn from her work at the intersection of journalism, finance, and emerging technology—perspective shaped as much by lived experience as by years of reporting.

Brunell's popular podcast, *Coin Stories*, reaches more than one million viewers and listeners each month and ranks in the Top 10 of Apple Podcasts' Business News charts. Before launching her independent media career, she spent more than a decade as an award-winning television journalist and investigative reporter, earning a regional Emmy for breaking news coverage. She later taught advanced communication and visual storytelling as an adjunct professor at the University of Southern California.

The evening began with an introduction by President's Club member **Mike Hardiman**, who shared how his own interest in digital currencies led him to seek out serious, reliable voices—ultimately pointing him to Brunell's work, which he described as "the best outlet available" for making sense of a complex and often confusing space.

Brunell began the evening by reflecting on her family's experience under communism.

"I'm a first generation immigrant from Poland," Brunell said. "So I grew up with the stories of my parents growing up under communism. They had very little economic hope. There was no social mobility, and they had to wait in lines for basic necessities, including food."

Her parents came to the United States full of hope. "They asked for nothing in return," she said, "just a chance to build a better life for their kids and give them an education."

Brunell recalled arriving in the United States at age five and watching her parents work tirelessly to build that life. "When I was little," she said, "I thought you were wealthy in America if you had a garage."

Her family lived in a small apartment, and her parents sacrificed comforts so their children could have opportunities.

"We didn't have enough money or enough bedrooms for myself, my brother, and my parents," she explained. "So they slept on a sofa bed for my childhood because they were here really just to sacrifice everything for their kids."

Those experiences shaped her decision to pursue journalism—and eventually to investigate the deeper forces shaping the economy. “I decided to dig,” she said. “So I became an investigative journalist.”

During her years reporting, Brunell focused on families struggling with rising costs of living and economic uncertainty. “Americans are working harder than ever before,” she said, “but they still feel like they’re falling behind.”

Across the country, she observed the same concerns: rising housing costs, increasing grocery bills, and a growing sense that the American dream had become harder to reach.

“People are having side hustles and they still feel like they can’t keep up,” she said. “A first home feels so out of reach.”

At the same time, Brunell emphasized that most Americans share the same basic hopes. “We want to be able to provide for our families,” she said. “We want to live with a sense of dignity and feel like our work actually matters and we want to leave something better for our children.”

Those questions eventually led her to begin researching digital currencies, including Bitcoin, which first caught her attention in 2017. At first, she admitted, she was skeptical.

“I heard all the negative headlines about Bitcoin that I’m sure you’ve heard,” she said. “It’s just for the tech bros. It’s fake internet money. It’s too volatile and too risky.”

Her investigative instincts pushed her to examine the issue more closely.

“I first had to ask some fundamental questions,” she explained, including “what is money, who issues it, how does our financial system actually work?”

In exploring those questions, Brunell discovered that many Americans underestimate how inflation affects everyday life. “The truth is that our savings and the money we work so hard for...your savings are being silently taxed,” she said.

She pointed to a striking statistic: “90 percent of the dollar’s purchasing power has been lost since 1971.”

For Brunell, understanding those dynamics helped explain why younger generations often feel economically discouraged. “The American dream has really run away from them,” she said.

She also warned that economic pressures can fuel growing interest in government-centered economic solutions. “You can see why there’s so much frustration and so many calls for maybe socialist candidates who promise to help redistribute this,” she noted.

Against that backdrop, Brunell said her research led her to examine Bitcoin as a new technological development within the global financial system. She found that Bitcoin is a digital commodity, “an asset with no issuer.” Unlike traditional currencies, “there is no government, no central bank, no board of governors, no CEO behind it.”

“This journalist’s verdict,” she said, “is that Bitcoin is the first genuinely scarce digital asset in history.”

Still, she cautioned that digital currencies remain volatile and require careful understanding.

“If you’re buying Bitcoin and you think it doesn’t have the ability to fall 70 to 80 percent, I would reconsider that,” she said. “Anyone who says otherwise is not being honest with you.”

Rather than urging quick adoption, Brunell challenged guests to approach the subject with discipline—beginning with study, not speculation. The conversation did not end with her remarks. Guests lingered, continuing the discussion through questions and exchanges across the room, while Brunell remained to speak with attendees and sign copies of her book.

Looking ahead, the next President’s Club evening will offer another opportunity for thoughtful exchange and camaraderie. On July 24, the Luce Center will host **Wynton Hall**, author of the *New York Times* bestselling ***Code Red: The Left, the Right, China, and the Race to Control AI***.

Please contact **Catherine Hendershott**, membership director, at [chendershott@conservativewomen.com](mailto:chendershott@conservativewomen.com) for more information.



# An Evening of Purpose and Connection at the Belmont House



A palpable energy filled **The Belmont House**, Belmont Abbey College's new Capitol Hill location, as young professionals from across Washington gathered for an evening of professional networking. Hosted by the Luce Center, the March 20 event brought together conservative young men and women who are working and interning across government, media, law, and public policy at the following offices and organizations:

- The White House
- U.S. Department of Interior
- U.S. Senate and Congressional Offices
- Conservative Partnership Institute
- The Heritage Foundation
- New Civil Liberties Alliance
- Convention of States
- Leadership Institute
- Advancing American Freedom
- National Institute of Standards and Technology
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
- Northrop Grumman
- Lockheed Martin
- and more

In bringing young professionals together in this way, the Luce Center continues its work of preparing and promoting conservative women leaders—cultivating the relationships and formation that make lasting leadership possible.



# From Hesitation to Confidence at a Michigan Firearms Range



Young women train side by side at **Megan Vitale's Day at the Range** in Michigan—gaining hands-on experience in marksmanship and firearm safety while building confidence in a supportive, encouraging setting.

**Megan Vitale**, a young woman who attended the Luce Center's 2025 College Women's Summit in Scottsdale, Arizona, hosted a Day at the Range on March 28 for young women in Shelby Township, Michigan. Participants spent the day developing skills in marksmanship, firearms safety, and responsible handling.

Megan described the day as “phenomenal,” reporting:

*One of the girls who came hated shooting and only came because she didn't want to be left out (haha), but she is now planning on getting her Concealed Pistol License. She feels so comfortable with firearms now.*

Through Megan's leadership, the day opened the door for young women in her community to grow in confidence and, for some, to discover a new appreciation for the Second Amendment.



## Thank you for supporting conservative women

Explore sponsorship opportunities to give today's young women the conservative education and mentorship they need to become the strong conservative leaders our country needs\*



Summer Interns	\$15,000	12 total [11 already sponsored]
Semester Interns	\$7,500	

### Washington, DC Summit

June 26 - Featuring Alex Clark, Reagan Reese, Erika Donalds, and Leah Campos

Full sponsorship	\$1,000
Half Sponsorship	\$500

### College Women's Summit in San Antonio

October 16-18 - Featuring Isabel Brown, Mary Margaret Olohan, and more exciting leaders TBA

Full sponsorship	\$1,500
Half Sponsorship	\$750



\* You will hear directly from the young women you help!

# On a Personal NOTE



Dear fellow conservative,

When today's young women ask us what conservative values are, we answer: **traditional American values consistent with a free society**, including limited government, a strong national defense, and personal responsibility grounded in faith and freedom.

It's a fair question. After all, Gen Z was not even born in the same century as Ronald Reagan, William F. Buckley, Barry Goldwater, Russell Kirk, Phyllis Schlafly, Clare Boothe Luce, and the other 20<sup>th</sup> century founders and leaders of the modern conservative movement.

But values alone don't shape a nation; **men and women who live those values do.**

Today's young women live in a world of cultural confusion unmatched by anything you and I experienced in our youth. More than 60 years of relentless Marxist indoctrination targeting women in our colleges, K-12 schools, media, and culture have taken its toll.

Gen Z women are now nearly twice as likely to identify as liberal than conservative. Roughly six in ten publicly support radical leftist policies. Nearly half say they often or always feel anxious.

Perhaps most alarming: just months after the horrifying assassination of Charlie Kirk on a college campus, a new Rutgers University poll shows that **Gen Z women are 21% more likely than men to support political murder.**

In a moment like this, the defining question for today's young women is clear: **what does it mean to be conservative?** Our answer provides crucial guidance for young women navigating their way in a world burdened by unprecedented cultural confusion:

**Conservative women have a zeal for truth, an appreciation for tradition, and a passion for human and societal flourishing rooted in a love of faith, family, and freedom.**

This is not a slogan. It is a way of life. It is the conviction that truth exists and is worth seeking. It is the humility to receive hard-earned wisdom handed down by previous generations, and the courage to carry it forward. It is the belief that freedom is not license, but responsibility—lived out virtuously and patriotically in strong families, vibrant communities, and a nation worthy of gratitude and stewardship.

At the Luce Center, we see every day what happens when young women encounter this vision for the first time. They begin to think more clearly and grow in confidence, finding not only answers but a community that supports them and calls them to lead. Your support of conservative women has never been more urgent or more hopeful. Thank you for all you do.

In Friendship & Freedom,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'K. B. Beggs'.

President

P.S. America's future will be shaped by the women we form today. Thank you for helping ensure they are grounded in truth, strengthened by conservative values, and prepared to lead with courage.