

# WASHINGTON D.C. FIELD TRIP

POL 305D  
Women, Politics  
& Media

OCTOBER 22  
AND 23, 2014



# OUR ITINERARY

## Wednesday, Oct 22

Attended a dinner party at the home of **Susannah Wellford**, Founder and President of Running Start. Other guests included:

- **Betty Sutton**, Administrator, St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation
- **Katie Vlietstra**, Treasurer, Women Under Forty PAC
- **Sarah Simmons**, Vice President, Neilson
- **David Wasserman**, House Analyst, Cook Political Report

Toured the **Monuments** at night.

## Thursday, Oct 23

Visited the **Office of Representative Marcy Kaptur** and met her staff.

Went to the **Library of Congress**.

Had lunch at the National Press Club with **Angela Greiling Keane**, White House Correspondent for Bloomberg News.

Went to the studios of PBS' *To the Contrary* and met the host, **Bonnie Erbé**.

# OUR POL 305D CLASS, FALL 2014

## **Professor Barbara Palmer**

- Devin Sweeney
- Nicole Pishnery
- Gabrielle Bodo
- Brittany Gage
- Kyle Tyson
- Hannah Weisberg
- Courtney Dracon
- Jenna Burnett
- Rob Stammitti
- Angelica Francis
- Liz Miller
- Genna Kanago
- Juliette Barasch
- Hayley McGuirk
- Daniel Sparks

Nicole Pishnery: “There are a lot of different personalities and types of people in the professional world, and each can succeed and bring something unique and important to their position.”

Angelica Francis: “There are many opportunities in Washington, DC. It is a place where if you know people, you can get far in your career.”

Hayley McGuirk: “I learned how a multitude of academic backgrounds could lead to a career in the nation’s capital.”

Juliette Barasch: “As a political nerd, it was great to be around people who are very knowledgeable in the field and who are able to share stories and learning experiences of their own. And, of course, as a woman, it was especially wonderful to see female professionals working in high positions.”



# BETTY SUTTON

ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND  
FORMER DEMOCRATIC U.S. HOUSE MEMBER FROM  
NORTHEAST OHIO



Brittany Gage: “All of our speakers noted the lack of women in their professional fields. Betty Sutton had my favorite quote on the subject. She said, ‘if you can’t get a seat at the table, how do people know you’re starving?’”



Daniel Sparks: “[Meeting with] Administrator Sutton really hit home with me. Hearing her talk about her family, and especially her dad, was inspiring. It was powerful to hear her story, to hear her reflect on where she came from and where she’s been able to go.”

# BETTY SUTTON

The youngest of six children, Betty Sutton was born and raised in Barberton, Ohio, just outside of Akron. She graduated with a degree in Political Science from Kent State University before continuing her education at the University of Akron Law School. She actually ran for her first political office, the Barberton City Council, in 1990 while still attending law school. She won and was then appointed to fill a seat on the Summit County Council just one year later, where she served as vice president of the council.

In 1992, Sutton made history as the youngest woman ever elected to the Ohio House of Representatives at just 29 years old.

In the Ohio House, she served for the maximum of eight years until 2000, when term limits prevented her from running for reelection. Sutton then went on to work as a labor attorney in Cleveland, where she represented first responders, teachers, and members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), the union that represents dockworkers throughout the Great Lakes Seaway System.

In 2006, when Sherrod Brown left the US House of Representatives to run for the US Senate, Sutton stepped back into the political arena to run for his vacant seat, which she won. Sutton represented Ohio's 13<sup>th</sup> congressional district from 2007 to 2013.

# BETTY SUTTON

While in the US House of Representatives, Sutton was very involved in many pressing issues and was recognized as a major architect of the American Clean Energy and Security Act, a bill that passed the House in June 2009. Sutton was also a supporter of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, Sutton participated in an Occupy Wall Street rally in New York City and also supported the federal government bailout of the auto industries in 2009; she created the “Cash for Clunkers” program.

Sutton lost her 2012 reelection campaign after she was redistricted into the 16th District, losing to another incumbent, Jim Renacci, in the Republican leaning district.



# BETTY SUTTON

Sutton's current position is Administrator to the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, a government-owned corporation in the U.S. Department of Transportation. In her position, she travels throughout the Great Lakes region to promote economic development and environmental conservation, and encourages shippers to use the seaway as a fast, environmentally safe, and cost-effective alternative.

She brings to the position a local understanding and appreciation of the Great Lakes, having come from the region herself. Through her position, she hopes to change the area's image as the "Rust Belt" to the more positive and fitting image of the "Opportunity Belt."





Kyle Tyson, Jenna Burnett, Betty Sutton, & Nicole Pishnery

# SUSANNAH WELLFORD

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF RUNNING START

Liz Miller: “Susannah seems so authoritative but at the same time personable, while juggling her career and her family life as well. I am so grateful she let us use her house!”



# SUSANNAH WELLFORD

Susannah Wellford is one of the founders Women Under Forty Political Action Committee (WUF PAC). She is also the founder and president of Running Start, which was created to further the work of WUF PAC. Wellford has spoken to numerous colleges, law schools, political groups and nonprofits about the importance of having more young women in politics. She has also gone to many countries, including Kuwait, Southeast Asia, Korea, and Russia, to speak to the women in those countries about being involved in politics.

Wellford is a 1990 graduate of Davidson College and earned her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1998.

Before going to law school, Wellford worked on Hilary Clinton's Health Care Task Force, the first of its kind at the time. As a member of the Health Care "War Room" staff, she planned and executed grass-roots health care events for the Clintons and coordinated speaking events for Members of Congress and White House Staff on health care reform issues.

When asked what she thought of Hilary Clinton's possible chances for a victory in the presidential election in 2016, she responded, "I think she'll run, and I think she'll win."

# SUSANNAH WELLFORD

Wellford told us about the creation of WUFPAC and Running Start, and the difficulties that came with each. She was strongly supported by her husband, but she had immense trouble pitching the idea to other women. She was told she would “never be taken seriously,” and that she would ultimately fail. She proved her doubters wrong and founded WUFPAC in 1999 and Running Start in 2007.

WUFPAC raises money for women running for Congress who are 40 years old and younger.

Running Start primarily targets teenaged girls in high school, but also has programs for college-age women.

Wellford wants to instill confidence in girls, while helping them develop leadership skills necessary for public office, such as public speaking and team problem-solving.

She created Running Start with the recognition that women in public office were still greatly outnumbered by their male counterparts, and that most women started their political careers at older ages than men. Her main focus is to remove the often self-imposed barriers that keep women from running earlier -- or at all -- such as self doubt, a lack of feeling qualified, and a lack of understanding of the political system. Though Running Start is young, she hopes to see alumni of her program rise through the ranks of public office.

# SUSANNAH WELLFORD

A story Wellford told about a high school girl showcases what Running Start does and how they encourage girls to reach their goals and potential. One girl who participated in the organization's week-long summer program wanted to win an election at her high school, but she was very uncomfortable in social situations which was a major obstacle for her. Through Running Start, Wellford helped to empower and instruct the girl in how to overcome this obstacle. Wellford told her that when her voice cracked, that it meant she was being genuine and that nothing terrible was going to happen if she stood up to give a speech. With this encouragement, and by running her campaign like a real political campaign, the girl won the election.





Angelica Francis , Susannah Wellford, Nichole Pishnery, Julliette Barasch

# KATIE VLIETSTRA

TREASURER, WOMEN UNDER FORTY POLITICAL ACTION  
COMMITTEE

Courtney Dracon: “It was a really wonderful experience to have people much older and more experienced than me treat me as both an adult and an equal with valid opinions and interpretations of the world.”

Hayley McGuirk: “It was so interesting to hear each speaker’s take on the involvement of women in politics, and that they all seemed to conclude that, while there are a number of women entering the field of journalism and representative positions, there are still ‘not enough.’ It was a truly inspirational experience to see so many successful women defy the odds and become influential figures in positions that not only impact the present but simultaneously inspire the future.

Devin Sweeney: “Hearing about what Susannah and Katie do for their careers really made me realize how passionate people can be in what they do.”

# KATIE VLIETSTRA

Katie Vlietstra works on many fronts for the benefit of women in politics. She currently lobbies for the National Association for the Self-Employed as Vice President for Government Relations and Public Affairs, representing 23 million self-employed individuals, advocating for the many women among them.

Vlietstra also serves on the board of directors for Women Under Forty Political Action Committee, which focuses on supporting women under forty running for office.

She brings to both of these positions an extensive background in governmental affairs and is also often called upon to apply her experience in commentary in the media, with appearances in both print and television.

Vlietstra discussed with us the importance of her efforts working for the self-employed and for women. She cited her role in WUFPAAC in particular as both crucial for the cultivation of female perspectives in politics, saying that it even opened her own eyes as to the current issues women face in American politics. Having been exposed to politics early through her father's work on campaigns and fundraising, Vlietstra said she never felt as if she were not welcome as a woman in the political arena, but that something that is often misunderstood is that the difficulty does not lie only with gender, but with one's economic background, ethnicity, etc.

# KATIE VLIETSTRA

Vlietstra explained that much of what women face has less to do with explicit discrimination and more to do with politics being a “boys club,” where men simply do not expect to hear women’s voices, citing her own need to speak up while sitting on committees where she was otherwise overlooked by her male colleagues.

On the subject of the next presidential election, Vlietstra was skeptical regarding whether Hillary Clinton would actually run, stating that, in her experience, the people typically most qualified to run for office are centered enough in life that they see the process as unnecessary.

In her own view, women need to push their way into politics, but she acknowledges that the process is complex and messy enough to turn many potentially successful women off the possibility altogether.

Vlietstra had even considered running for office herself, but claimed that ultimately she had no desire to endure such a process. Satisfied with the work she has done outside of the public sector, she sees her place as a complementary one, hoping that as a forward-thinking and passionate woman in the Republican party -- who chooses to work for the benefit of those her party tends to alienate -- will help the party change for the better.



Rob Stammitti, Brittany Gage, Katie Vlietstra, Gabrielle Bodo

# SARAH SIMMONS

VICE PRESIDENT, NEILSON (HARRIS INTERACTIVE)

Daniel Sparks: "Sarah is awesome. I'm not sure how much we agree on, but it's so great to be able to have a conversation with people who can give you a different perspective. What's even better is being able to do it while telling fascinating and hilarious stories, including stories about being a strategist for both Schwarzenegger and McCain."



Jenna Burnett: "It was reassuring to hear a powerful, successful woman like her say that you can have a great career and a great family life."

# SARAH SIMMONS

Sarah Simmons, currently a Vice President at one of the largest market research and consulting firms in the world, Nielsen, has extensive experience in the American political arena. She served as Director of Strategy for John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign, where she strategically delivered the campaign's message to key voter groups via television, radio, and other outlets. In 2006, she worked on Arnold Schwarzenegger's successful gubernatorial as the Deputy Strategist, helping pull off a 16-point victory.

Simmons also served in the Office of Strategic Initiatives in the George W. Bush White House as an Associate Director.

Simmons was a Senior Project Director for Public Opinion Strategies, where she was involved in many successful local and national political campaigns. In addition to her impressive political career, she has conducted in-depth survey research and focus group projects in several countries.

Simmons earned her B.A. and M.A. in Political Science from American University in Washington, DC.



# SARAH SIMMONS

Throughout her career, Simmons has often faced the daunting circumstance of being the only (or one of the few) women in the room at Nielsen and working on Republican campaigns. Simmons stated that, “sometimes it can be intimidating, but sometimes its an advantage.” Elaborating, Simmons said that as a strategist on the campaign trail, when your are the only female in the room, it becomes easier to voice the “more obvious and uncomfortable things,” especially in those circumstances when “you’re the odd ball out.” When developing an effective campaign, this has often proved to be a crucial asset when trying to reach voters of all demographics and address situations that could have a negative impact for the candidate.

Given her experience in campaign strategy and development, when asked whether or not she would be looking to run for office herself, Simmons simply stated that becoming a candidate is “a lifestyle,” a lifestyle that she has no intention of embracing anytime soon. “You cannot run an effective campaign from one place,” she explained; you have to “move with the campaign,” and with a family and a prominent position at Nielsen, at this point, it is simply not in her career trajectory.

# SARAH SIMMONS

During our general dinner discussion, Simmons spoke about the various political campaigns she has worked on. When asked about Senator John McCain's presidential campaign, she revealed that she believed choosing Sarah Palin for the vice presidential nomination was not the best decision. Simmons actually explained that she was one of the first people working on the McCain campaign to present Palin as a possible candidate. Simmons gave her analysis of the McCain campaign, giving her opinion on what hurt McCain and Palin and what they could have possibly done better.

Speaking about Schwarzenegger's campaign, Simmons remembered it fondly. She stated that she did not work on Schwarzenegger's second campaign, because it "would not be the same experience without the same people."

During Schwarzenegger's first campaign, some of staff all stayed in the same apartment complex. She made the simile that "campaigns are like summer camp," and that was our favorite quote of the discussion. Simmons spoke about how everyone working on the campaign would see each other day and night and spend large amounts of time with each other.



Liz Miller, Sarah Simmons, Jenna Burnett, & Haley McGirk

# DAVID WASSERMAN

US HOUSE ANALYST, COOK POLITICAL REPORT

Kyle Tyson: “David Wasserman believes that the best way to handicap congressional races is to look at all of the factors pertaining to a race in a specific district. While more modern political handicapping like the Nate Silver Report only looks at the numbers (polling data), the Cook Political Report also takes into account the amount of money spent on a campaign, the messages that the candidates are saying, historical trends of voting habits in that district as well as historical campaign spending data for that district.”



# DAVID WASSERMAN

David Wasserman serves as an analyst for *The Cook Political Report*, handicapping races for the U.S. House of Representatives. Highly regarded as a non-partisan and authoritative source for political analysis, *The Cook Political Report*—and, by extension, Wasserman—are leaders in the field. In particular, Wasserman brings tremendous knowledge of political geography to his work on House races. This knowledge is evident in his publication, *Better Know a District*, which looks at the implications of 2012 redistricting, in addition to his studies at the University of Virginia on congressional redistricting standards.

Before joining Cook, Wasserman served as House Editor of *Sabato's Crystal Ball*, another well-respected political analysis newsletter. Additionally, he's provided insight both on-air and off-air for such media outlets as *NBC Nightly News*, *ABC World News*, *C-SPAN Washington Journal*, *CNN*, *NPR*, and the *BBC*. He currently also serves as an associate editor for *National Journal* and contributes regularly to other news sources.



# DAVID WASSERMAN

Wasserman knew from a very young age that he wanted a future involved in politics. He reflected on his childhood, stating that he was the “weird kid” who watched C-SPAN. Now well seasoned in his career, he found his preference for being involved in “behind the scenes,” work rather than being on camera. His career combines two of his favorite subjects: politics and geography. With every insight he shared with us, it was clear that he enjoys going to work and doing what he loves each and everyday.



# DAVID WASSERMAN

In our discussion of the 2014 election, Wasserman pointed out that only about 38 of 435 House districts are competitive. He attributes this to “unconscionable redistricting” that favors one party over another, most notably the Republican Party. This redistricting, which allowed for the Republican takeover of the House, is partially due to the fact that it eliminates the power of minority voting. Wasserman explained that many districts have been redrawn to ensure that minorities, who overwhelmingly vote Democratic, are not concentrated too heavily in one district or another. Most minorities can be found in urban districts, the heart of the Democratic base. However, the large block-vote for Democrats that is heavily concentrated in cities means that districts throughout the rest of the country have become increasingly less competitive.

The reason for this decline in competitiveness, as Wasserman asserts, is not only due to redistricting, but also due to how candidates are selected. Wasserman insists that independent panels or the courts could do a better job at drawing districts based on geography rather than political demographics.

Additionally, another area that could improve the competitiveness of our elections, and as a result improve our democracy, is based on how candidates are chosen for the general election. Currently, many states use a closed primary, in which only registered Democrats or Republicans can vote in their party's respective primary. This allows for more extreme candidates and discourages third party candidates.

# DAVID WASSERMAN

Wasserman instead advocates for open primaries, in which the candidates are chosen based on party affiliation and voters from any party are welcome to vote. Another option is the system used in California, a “top-two” or “jungle” primary, where we have the potential of seeing two Democrats or two Republicans—or even Independents—running against one another. In this scenario, it is about the best candidate winning rather than the party.

For Wasserman, open or top-two primaries paired with independent redistricting could result in a strengthened democracy.

Devin Sweeney: “It was so blatantly clear that he loves what he does. I really want that for my future, and it was a nice thing to see someone who lives that every day.”



Kyle Tyson, Dan Sparks, David Wasserman, Courtney Dracon, Devin Sweeney

JENNIFER HOLLAND,  
ALLISON JARUS, &  
JENNY PERINO

THE STAFF OF  
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE MARCY KAPTUR

Gabrielle Bodo: “Being in Representative Kaptur’s Office and having the chance to listen and ask whatever we wanted of her closest staff members was riveting.”

Nicole Pishnery: “It takes a lot of knowledge and stamina to be a staffer.”

Juliette Barasch: “Being in Marcy Kaptur’s office was a bit surreal, and it also made me feel like politicians weren’t so intimidating or non-human after all.”

Robert Stammitti: “The staff of Representative Marcy Kaptur shocked me in their articulation of political activity as actually capable of producing good for the American people.”



# REPRESENTATIVE KAPTUR'S STAFF

On Thursday morning, we went to Capitol Hill and visited the office of Representative Marcy Kaptur in the Rayburn House Office Building.

Representative Kaptur's district includes Baldwin Wallace, and she is the most senior woman in the current Congress.

We first met with Jennifer Holland, the Scheduler and Office Manager, who talked to us about how the office works and her job coordinating with the scheduler back in the district to make sure Representative Kaptur is always where she needs to be. Holland also described the special clocks in all the Member's offices, and what all the different bells mean to get House members to the floor to vote.

We also got to hear from Allison Jarus, who is from Lakewood. Jarus is a Legislative Aide and keeps Representative Kaptur informed on various issues.

Jenny Perino talked with us about her job as the Legislative Director, but also shared her experiences working on the Senate side and for a committee.

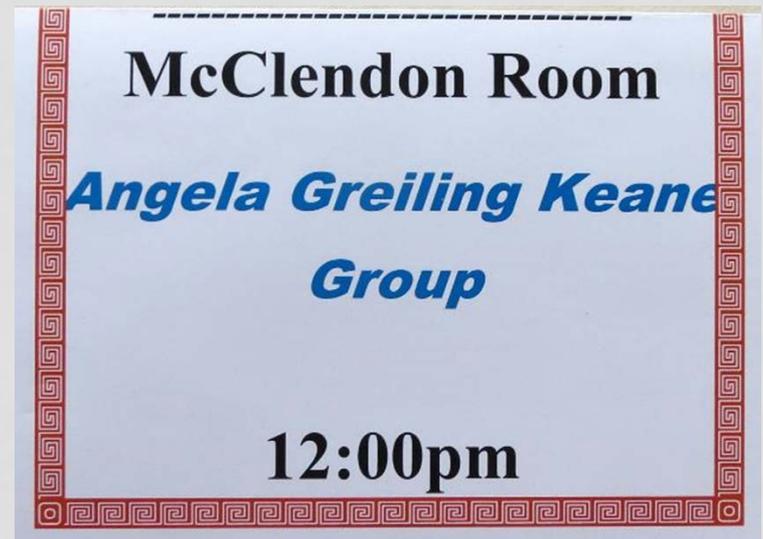
All three of these staffers gave great advice about pursuing careers on Capitol Hill and the importance of networking.



# ANGELA GREILING KEANE

WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT FOR BLOOMBERG NEWS

Kyle Tyson: “My favorite part of the trip was at the National Press Club when we walked into that room to have lunch and the long table and the server in the tux was there to serve us. Dr. Palmer introduced us to some of the most connected and respected women in the DC scene. It was all so amazing.”



Liz Miller: “When Angela explained her duties and what she actually does on the job, it seemed less glamorous and more like a really cool, more attainable career.”

Gabrielle Bodo: “The Press Club experience was one of my favorites because we were able to enjoy really good food and sat down to relax. I felt like royalty entering the building and knowing that they were expecting us.

Angelica Francis: “Fun Fact: We can fit our entire class in the elevator at the Press Club.”

# ANGELA GREILING KEANE

Angela Greiling Keane has been a White House Correspondent for Bloomberg News for the past seven years. She also served as president of the National Press Club. Greiling Keane has had a variety of jobs as a journalist throughout the country, but began as an intern for the *Roseville Focus* in Minnesota in 1992. By 2002, she was associate editor of *Traffic World*, a position she held for over four years, and specialized in covering transportation issues. Greiling Keane has accumulated over 21 years of experience working as a political, investigative, regional, and national reporter. In January 2003, she was given the Golden Quill Award by the Washington Automotive Press Association, an award that recognized her extensive work covering the auto industry.

We met Greiling Keane for lunch at the National Press Club, where she told us about her duties as a White House Press correspondent for *Bloomberg News*. Each day, there is a daily briefing at the White House, where the Press Secretary answers questions. Depending on the news outlet, journalists are placed in rows in the press room, with media sources such as *Reuters* and *Associated Press* in the front row.

Greiling Keane travels in President Obama's Press Corps, where she and a small group of reporters from other major news outlets follow the President wherever he goes. The Press Corps is even in tow when the President goes golfing. She also shared a story with us about the President going to Starbucks without informing the press.

# ANGELA GREILING KEANE

As a part of the White House Press Corps, Greiling Keane travels on Air Force One with the other major White House correspondents. When they are on the plane, the Press Secretary holds the daily briefing over the phone. The Press Corps is in a separate cabinet of Air Force One than the President, and in Greiling Keane's time as a White House correspondent, President Obama has only visited their section of the plane once. While on Air Force One, Greiling Keane and the other reporters usually watch the news or movies to pass the time. Sometimes each journalist will have their own television so they can watch what they like, but other times they have to decide as a group on what to watch.

Greiling Keane spoke of the differences between covering the White House and covering transportation. She prefers covering the White House. As a White House correspondent, there are more opportunities to learn. She travels with a large group of journalists, and she likes that she can learn from them. Greiling Keane explained the challenge of "pack journalism" when talking about the White House. Pack journalism refers to several journalists covering the same stories. To avoid this, journalists try to find different angles to the story to appeal to their specific audience. Covering the White House also motivates her to pay more attention to what is going on, not only in the White House, but within Congress and throughout the government.

# ANGELA GREILING KEANE

Greiling Keane explained that covering the Obama administration has been difficult for journalists. The messages received by the media from the White House are extremely controlled. Journalists often have to go around the White House and try to speak with others involved. For example, when she was working on a story on the Keystone Pipeline, to get more information for the story, she spoke with industry representatives that were involved and potentially affected. By visiting these other industries, she was able to receive information that did not come from the White House.

Another important element of being a journalist for the White House is credentialing. Credentialing is the receiving of a press pass. Not every journalist gets a press pass; the journalist has to be an employee of a credible news source, like *Bloomberg*. Credentialing is essential for journalists, because it determines how easy it will be to have access to a certain event in order to provide coverage.

During our interview with Greiling Keane, we asked her opinion on why it is that women are seemingly absent, or at least less involved, in journalism both as reporters, but also as sources in news stories compared to men.

# ANGELA GREILING KEANE

She explained that one of the reasons why women are not quoted as frequently is because they often say that they do not feel like they are qualified or have the required experience to answer a question compared to their (often male) colleagues.

This seemingly small, but significant, factor is also one of the many reasons why women are less likely to have a career in politics: they see themselves as less qualified than men. This is one of the many barriers women have to overcome in order to increase their involvement in politics and the media.





# BONNIE ERBÉ

HOST OF PBS' *TO THE CONTRARY*

Devin Sweeney: "It was really nice to see that she was interested in our thoughts and what we had to say."



Gabrielle Bodo: "Meeting Bonnie Erb  was a memorable experience."

# BONNIE ERBÉ

Bonnie Erbé is an award-winning American journalist and is the host of the long-running PBS news show, *To The Contrary*. Erbé has covered national politics for decades and writes weekly columns for *PoliticsDaily.com*, Scripps Howard, and works as a contributing editor for *USNews.com*.

Erbé is interested in covering issues involving women, families, communities of color, religion, and the environment. She has received over 20 awards, such as the 2008 Council on Contemporary Families Media Award for Outstanding Coverage of Family Issues and Gracie Awards from American Women in Radio and TV.

Erbé made it clear that she does not affiliate herself with the Republican or Democratic Party, nor does she consider herself progressive or conservative. Erbé finds labels tiresome and believes she represents the majority of Americans, who think for themselves and do not commit to any single party or partisan ideologies.

Hailing from New York City, Erbé is a graduate of Barnard College, Columbia University, and Georgetown University Law Center. She currently resides in Washington, D.C. and is working on a novel about religious symbolism in our nation's capital.

# BONNIE ERBÉ

*To The Contrary* was developed while Erbé was working as a political analyst in the late '80s. The concept came as a result of her seeing a lack of female voices in the political news media and aspiring to find a vehicle for these and other alternative voices. Originally, Erbé pitched the show to her producer with the working title *Majority View*, but the show did not take off. In fact, Erbé's original idea became the seed for *The View*, which she describes as "infotainment," explaining that the show is derivative of her initial concept, yet is underdeveloped and disappointing as actual journalism.

*To The Contrary* was not Erbé's first choice as a title, but she believes the show itself brings her original concept to fruition. Because it is on public television, the show is able to differentiate itself from *The View* and others like it in its ability to bring forth serious commentary from diverse perspectives of women. Indeed, Erbé believes that public television is the only place a show like *To the Contrary* can survive in the long-term. As she puts it, commercial and public television are very different, and over the course of the show, there has only been one other series like it, a testament to the fact that it is still necessary.

# BONNIE ERBÉ

The reason the show is still so relevant and important is due in large part to the underlying content of the show.

Whereas many other news sources carry homogeneous headlines and stories which are chosen for their broad appeal and potential provocative value, rather than their informational or educational relevance, *To The Contrary* goes to great lengths to find stories that are important both broadly--to women as a whole, though certainly to the country as well--but also to alternative voices who do not often see their stories told or given attention to by mainstream news sources.

For example, Erbé described an example of when her show did a story on men taking flextime in the workplace but not assuming half of housework, but during the same news cycle, CNN and other major news networks were covering a shooting that had taken place in Canada. In her view, the news is often characterized by bad news, whereas *To the Contrary* tries to focus on issues that affect women's lives.

Beyond the show, Erbé produces documentaries. Her documentary on the foreign service revealed a serious lack of women in these jobs. Like any other story she chooses to cover, this issue affects women's career opportunities, a central tenet for her topic selection.



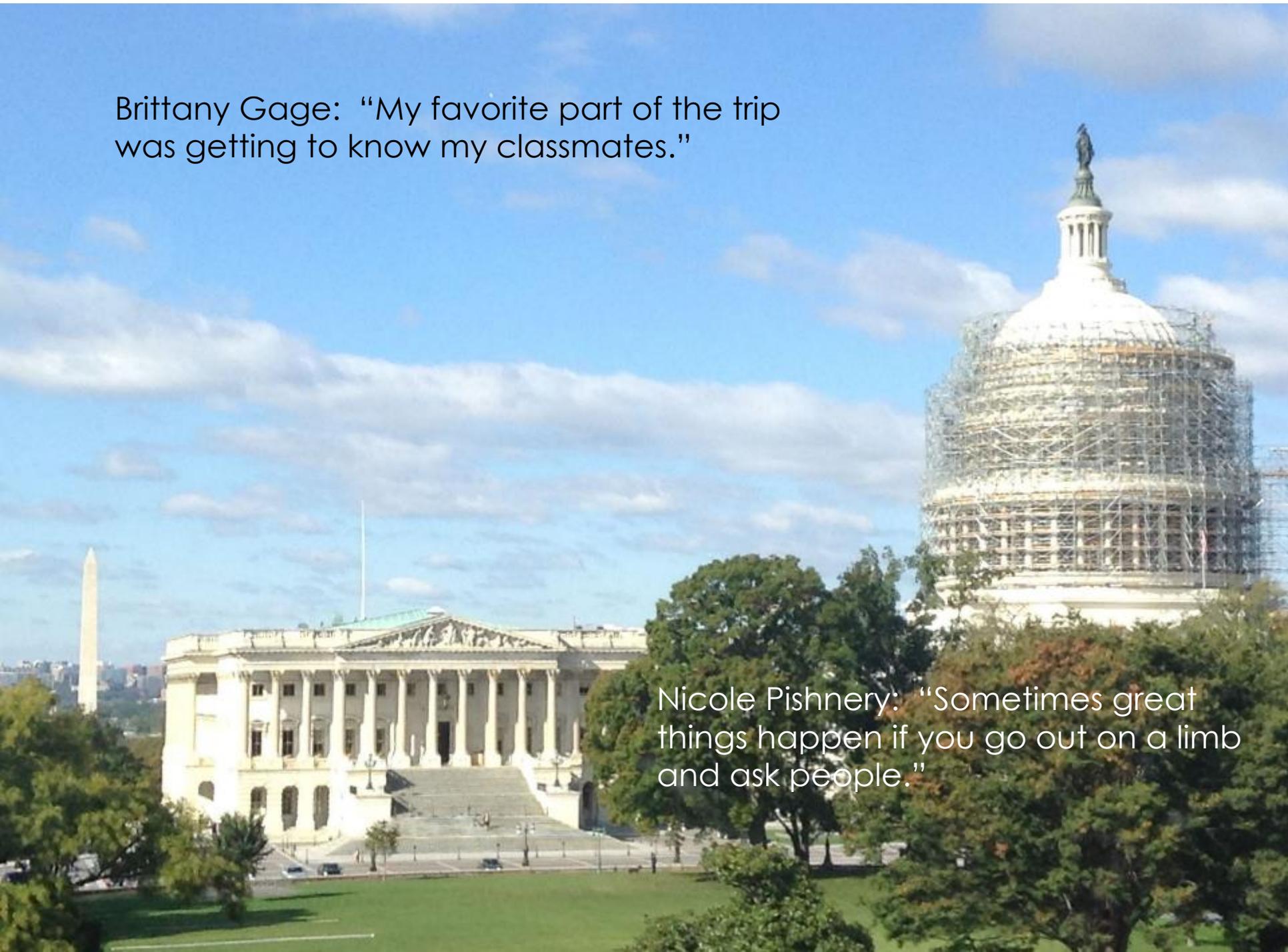
Daniel Sparks: “Not only did we learn a lot – but we had a lot of fun doing it. Even just talking on the bus on the way home, I had a great time. It appears that spending 36 hours with people forces you to get out of your comfort zone. Of course, when you get as close as we got to each other on the Metro, it’s hard not to become friends.”

Jenna Burnett: “Prior to this trip, I had never called a cab, rode a subway, eaten at the National Press Club, explored the Library of Congress, lunched with a White House Correspondent, toured a television station, conversed with a White House Administrator, stepped foot in a U.S. Representative’s Office, or marveled at the monuments at night. I can now proudly say I have done all of those things.”

Robert Stammitti: “Before going to Washington, DC, my opinion of it ranged from ambivalent to cynical to outright hateful. It does not seem to be a place where real life goes on; instead it seems like a place where all the messy political life we see in the media goes on, where narcissists and wealthy opportunists go to manipulate, cheat, scandalize, and otherwise belittle the American political process.

All of this is obviously untrue, and that was made obvious to me as we traversed the city by bus, metro and taxi, saw the diversity in peoples and neighborhoods, met individuals on both sides of the political spectrum, and heard their real, relatable, lived perspectives on life in DC.

Brittany Gage: “My favorite part of the trip was getting to know my classmates.”



Nicole Pishnery: “Sometimes great things happen if you go out on a limb and ask people.”

Kyle Tyson: “Do NOT test your flappers and wade into the reflecting pool.”

We wish to thank the  
Political Science Department  
and the  
Explorations Office  
for providing funding  
for this trip.

Library of Congress

