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Women's Research Institute of Nevada Newsletter

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**National Education for Women in Leadership (NEWL)
Nevada Class of 2022**

Back Row: Cesia Cordies-Ceballos, Alexis Seifert, Kaylee Freitas, Alexa Guloy, Sophia Coronel, Claudia Fernandez, Harini Wimalasekera, Katherine Graham, Katie Membreno, and Saffiya Bintali.

Front Row: Emily Diver, Michelle Mendez-Yela, Miriam Lachica, Ruby Valencia, Evelyn Garcia Morales (20th Anniversary Keynote Speaker), Melissa Jimenez, Redate Biruk, Angie Shenouda, Abigail Villa, and Cierra (Cece) Carodine.



August 2022

Improving the Lives of Women through Research and Education

Text Only Newsletter Accessibility



Barbara Agonia at Dr. Joanne Goodwin's Retirement Party (May 2022)

Barbara Agonia

Honoring a life well lived...

It is with great sadness that we share the news of Barbara Agonia's recent death. Barbara was a friend to WRIN for decades. It is often said that our accomplishments are not truly our own, as we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Barbara's impact on WRIN will resonate for years to come. Diminutive in stature yet magnanimous in spirit, Barbara served as Chair of WRIN's Inaugural Community Advisory Board (CAB) created in 2000. We were a very young institute then without much of a track record or community support. Barbara enthusiastically took the reins, brought along her Soroptimist sisters, and forged ahead - always a cheerful ambassador for our work.

Life tends to come full circle...

Barbara also mentored the young women of our NEW Leadership program for many years. At this June's 20th Anniversary NEW Leadership Keynote Dinner, Barbara and WRIN's founding director, Joanne Goodwin introduced the evening's Keynote Speaker, Evelyn Garcia Morales, one of the many young women who had been under Barbara's tutelage twenty years earlier. Evelyn shared an emotional accounting of how such relationships impacted her life. So many have benefitted from Barbara's leadership and caring heart.

Dear friend, you will be missed!

Dr. Caryll Batt Dziedziak, Director

Veterans' Voices: We're Listening

This coming year we are partnering with UNLV's Military and Veterans' Services Center to launch the "Veterans' Voices: We're Listening" Oral History Collaborative. We have a large military presence in Nevada and this project will tap into the vast experiences of these veterans and their families. We are pleased to welcome **Barbara Tabach**, Project Director, who will be joined by researcher and History Doctoral Candidate, **Angela Moor**.

Our thanks to the Eleanor Kagi Foundation, A Lynn M. Bennett Legacy for providing the funding for this project.

Two Cultures, One Family: Building Family, Finding Home



WRIN is one of many proud sponsors of the *Two Cultures, One Family: Building Family, Finding home* exhibit presented by the Majorie Barrick Museum of Art as part of the UNLV Weaving Our Cultures Arts Festival (WoCAF). With this exhibition, Dr. Erika Abad draws on her personal experience as the daughter of a historically multiracial family. The exhibit will be up from Aug. 30, 2022 through Jan. 28, 2023. WRIN's NEW Leadership Coordinator Jean Munson's art will be featured along with other local artists.

The Inaugural Women's Summit

March 2, 2022



Since 2019, we had been patiently waiting for the opportunity to once again host an in-person event for members of our community. The March 2022 Summit provided that opportunity. Our Community Advisory Board members facilitated three panels of community experts who led discussions on: **“Women in the Workforce,” “Health and Wellness,”** and **“Educational Policy & Advocacy.”** Jan Jones Blackhurst, Chief Executive in Residence of the International Gaming Institute, delivered the Luncheon Keynote Address, which focused on the critical importance of women leaders in the gaming industry and business world as a whole. NSHE Chancellor Dr. Melody Rose provided the Women's Summit closing remarks, in which she addressed the evolving role of women in education and the long legacy of Nevada women whose contributions positively impacted state and national history. WRIN also provided our Status of (Nevada) Women legislative briefs to Women's Summit attendees. Legislative brief topics included **women's mental health, education, women's political participation, Covid's impact on women, and women's safety.** The Inaugural Nevada Women's Summit engaged attendees with robust

discussions, networking opportunities, and diverse panelists who shared a variety of forward-thinking perspectives on panel topics.



Thank you to our Sponsors!



Humanities Enrichment Program for Middle School Girls funded by:

The Eleanor Kagi Foundation, A Lynn M. Bennett Legacy

Nevada Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities

Girls Athletic Leadership (GALS) "First Impressions" Workshop February 2, 2022

by Syeda Jamshed, WRIN Intern

With funding provided by our generous sponsors, the WRIN staff and Interns were able to provide a day-long "First Impressions" workshops for the middle school students. All the students were very excited and grateful to receive tips on how to shape the way they are perceived by others. They learned the importance of language, eye contact, and facial expressions. Our staff created a video and interactive activities, as well as providing fun books to reinforce first impression skills. The school faculty appreciated how their students resonated with WRIN's Interns and expressed their hope for more interactions between WRIN Interns and the middle school girls.

GALS Campus Visit on Earth Day, April 22, 2022

by Syeda Jamshed, WRIN Intern

Students of the GALS Middle School come from the neighborhoods surrounding our UNLV campus. However, most of these girls have no idea of what resources are available on the college campus right across the street from their school. Our WRIN Team decided to change that. With the funding available for the GALS with H.E.A.R.T programming, we planned a UNLV Campus Day for the entire Middle School on Earth Day, April 22, 2022.

WRIN Interns and NEWL Alumnae led campus tours visiting Lied Library, Hospitality Hall, Xeric Garden, Tonopah Housing Complex, and the Dining Complex, with volunteer tour leaders highlighting key campus resources and points of interest for the GALS students and teachers. Many students who had never thought of college expressed their growing interest in attending UNLV.

WRIN Board member **Rachael Rizzi** and her daughter Rylynne taught **HEARTMATH**, an innovative approach which incorporates breathing techniques for emotional wellbeing. **Dr. Anne Weisman** of UNLV's Kirk Kerkorian Medical School led **"Mind-Body Medicine,"** a fun interactive workshop experience that teaches the importance of utilizing grounding techniques such as meditation, dancing, and drawing to improve overall health and quality of life. Campus Day was filled with energy, enthusiasm, and lots of hope for a bright future for the girls at the GALS Middle School.

GALS visit Springs Preserve

by Tsion Mekonnen, WRIN Intern

On Monday, May 23, 2022, the GALS Middle School took a field trip to the Las Vegas Springs Preserve. The students began their day at the unique Butterfly Habitat where they were able to wander and witness the fascinating dance between free-flying butterflies, the plants that sustain them, and butterflies' important role as pollinators in the ecosystem. Both GALS students and staff were thrilled to see the 400 new butterflies that had just come in for Spring. Students gained a better understanding of the environment needed for the survival of these spectacular animals. This field trip was filled with history, pioneers, culture, and nature. Students ended their day with a lunch picnic back on their GALS Middle School Campus.



20 Year Anniversary with NEW Leadership Nevada Alumnae

NEW Leadership Nevada has trained, produced, and fostered leaders for the past 20 years. In celebrating our 20th Anniversary, we invited alumnae from all the years to reunite for our program impact. If these names sound familiar to you, you are also part of this large network of impactful and effective leadership.

Back Row (L-R): Naomi Lewis ('16), Suman Randhawa ('21), Aika Dietz ('18), Kitty Rivera ('21), Adrienne Dizon ('21), Nyin Htet Aung ('20), Luisa Alvarez ('20), Brenda Cruz ('19), Melikabella Shenouda ('19), Natividad Zintzun ('19), Jean Munson ('09), Electra Skrzydlewski ('15), Theresa Farmer ('05), Juawana Grant ('06), and Karoline Khamis ('04).

Front Row (L-R): Daisy Del Rios ('16), Stephanie Dziedziak ('06), Crystal Dandy ('03), Jennifer Stiles ('12), Frances Hampton ('19), Justine Villa ('19), Evelyn Garcia Morales ('03), Susan Taylor ('08), Monique Sulls ('07), Madina Kamolova ('18), Amanda Hite (formerly Uren) ('19), and Rubaiya Murshed ('19).

Present but not pictured: Lisa Levine ('11), Mayra Reyes ('18), Cariela Santana ('09), Moe Turbin ('15), and Regina Mitchell ('17).



**20th Anniversary KEYNOTE
SPEAKER
Evelyn Garcia Morales**

***Thank You to our 2022
Sponsors!***

Sponsors: The Eleanor Kagi Foundation, A Lynn M. Bennett Legacy; Caesar's Entertainment; Nevada International Women's Forum (NV-IWF); Everi Holdings, Inc.; Fulfillment Fund Las Vegas; Soroptimist International of Greater Las Vegas; Southwest Gas; UNLV Student Life Funding Committee; UNLV Boyd School of Law; UNLV Women's Council; and UNLV Department of History.



2021-2022 Community Advisory Board

**Our work could not be done without
the support of our Board
THANK YOU!**

2022 NEW Leadership Program Staff

We express huge gratitude to this year's WRIN Summer Staff and Faculty-in-Residences (FIRs) who coordinated this year's program. We thank you for your time, talents, energy, and mentorship!



Pictured in order from Right to Left:

- **Tsion Mekonnen**, WRIN Intern
- **Aika Dietz**, WRIN Senior Researcher & NEWL Alum of 2019
- **Regina Mitchell** (FIR), Chef Instructor, Board of Directors for Blindconnect & NEWL Alum of 2017
- **Moe Turbin** (FIR), Educator, DJ, & NEWL Alum of 2015
- **Jean Munson**, NEW Leadership Program Coordinator, Publisher, Art Department Faculty, & NEWL Alum 2009
- **Dr. Vanessa Mari** (FIR), NSC Faculty
- **Rubaiya Murshed** (FIR), PhD candidate for UNLV Department of Mechanical Engineering, Nextera

This year's NEW Leadership Keynote Dinner featured **Evelyn Garcia Morales**. Evelyn graduated from our 1st NEW Leadership program in 2003. She is currently the Executive Director of the Fulfillment Fund Las Vegas and is the Vice President of the Clark County School Board of Trustees. Below is an excerpt of her speech recalling her 2003 NEW Leadership experience.

*"During the training I met and learned from so many speakers, including former attorney general **Frankie Sue Del Papa** and welfare rights activist, **Ruby Duncan**. I didn't know how lucky I was to be in the room with so much greatness..."*

One of our speakers was Nevada Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa, affectionately known as Frankie Sue. As an 18-year-old, I didn't know what an attorney general was or why their role was important. Once Frankie Sue started speaking, I felt connected to her words. She had a kind of optimism that echoed in that tiny room inside of Houssels House at UNLV. She made me feel as if I was the only person in the room. She talked about the work she did as attorney general around domestic violence. I was captivated.

It was the first time I'd ever heard anyone talk about domestic violence this freely. Victims of domestic violence are often living quietly in shame, afraid of people knowing this part of our story.

We're afraid of being seen as weak. Frankie Sue helped me think of this issue differently. To hear someone of her stature say that Domestic violence is not ok and we need to fix it, made me feel seen."

Energy Research Assistant, & NEWL Alum of 2019

- **Dr. Rachel Bower** (FIR), NSC Faculty
- **Brenda Cruz Gomez**, Project Coordinator at Everi Holdings, 2022 NEWL Alum Volunteer, NEWL Alum of 2019



Alexis Seifert (NEWL 2022)

Alexis Seifert always dreamt of acquiring her Bachelor's degree as a first-generation student and is working hard to make that dream a reality. She is a Senior at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas majoring in Marketing while pursuing a Certificate in UI/UX Design through DesignLab. Seifert is also onboarding this fall as an Everi Holdings, Inc. intern.

Brenda Cruz Gomez (NEWL 2019)

Brenda Cruz Gomez graduated in 2021 from UNLV with a Bachelor's degree in Communication with a minor in Gender Studies. She interned at the Women's Research Institute of Nevada and after completing another internship at Everi Holdings, Inc. and is now working full-time at Everi as a Project Coordinator.

Amanda Hite (NEWL 2019)

Amanda Hite attends Western Governors University (WGU) and is pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Cybersecurity. She currently works as a full-time Information Security Engineer at Everi Holdings, Inc, working to stop malicious threat actors from compromising confidential company information.



(Left to Right, Top to Bottom Order: Jessica Agaloos, Daeun Cho, Emily Cummins, Emily Huerta, and Savanna Vacek)

2022 NEW Leadership Empowerment Scholarship

WRIN and Consolidated Students of University of Nevada (CSUN) have teamed up to provide (5) \$2,000 scholarships for the 2022-2023 academic year to recognize undergraduate students who work to create and support initiatives that empower women.

2022 Awardees

Jessica Agaloos

Jessica Agaloos is a Filipina-American senior majoring in kinesiology to become a physical therapist. She is the current Chapter President of Silver Wings (SW), partnering with UNLV's AFROTC Det 004 and sister organization Arnold Air Society (AAS). In April of 2022, Jessica represented UNLV in Washington D.C at AAS and SW's joint military national conclave (NATCON). At this event, she was awarded the Monica Browning Outstanding Chapter President Award. Collaborating with Det 004 and AAS, she is also helping lead Fall 2022's Regional Conclave (RCON), with UNLV hosting colleges ranging from the University of San Diego to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical. Jessica helped provide opportunities with other organizations to help the community through volunteer events such as Three Square Farmer's Market and networking with Air Force civilians, military personnel, and veterans. She empowers others around her by organizing workshops that include resume writing and leadership opportunities for members to learn and grow their leadership skills. Jessica also provides opportunities to participate in internships for the Air Force Association, Pentagon, Air

Force Civilian Service, and IronNet. She shows that both women and people of color can also lead, influence, and have success in a military organization.

Daeun Cho

Daeun Cho is a first-generation college student studying Biological Sciences here at UNLV. She is currently serving as Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED) Nevada Beta's Historian and previously served as UNLV American Medical Women's Association's (AMWA) Secretary and Vice President. During her time in AMWA, she advocated for menstrual equity and educated the general membership about period poverty. She planned and budgeted a semester-long service project where AMWA members could assemble period care packages and donate them to women's shelters. Her fight against period poverty branched outside of AMWA when she created the Community Period Basket. Located at WRIN's office in WRI A225, the basket contains free period products where people are encouraged to take as many products as they need and donate as many products as they want. Inspired by her passion for menstrual equity, CSUN Senators reached out to Daeun to create a bill that expands these baskets all across campus. She hopes the bill can be pushed out in the fall to ensure the UNLV community has access to period products on campus wherever they are.

Emily Cummins

As a non-traditional first generation student Emily will be completing a BSEG in Civil and Environmental Engineering set to graduate in fall 2022. Before pursuing her education with experience from Managing franchise hotels in Northern Michigan, she worked as an AmeriCorps volunteer for the Boys and Girls Club of Hawaii in Nanakuli by using the knowledge of for profit management to aid the nonprofit sector writing and completing grant and capital improvement projects for the clubhouse sparking an interest in the infrastructural needs within marginalized and minority communities. As a student Emily is involved as a member of several organizations including SWE, ASCE, ANTS, and served briefly as a CSUN Senator for the College of Engineering and vice chair of the Ways and Means committee working to support funding requests for student organizations across campus. She received honorable mention for Las Vegas ASCE YMF scholarship for addressing covid concerns within marginalized and disproportionately minority communities, AANAPISI STEM Spring Research Award, Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship through the Office of Undergraduate Research to present two research grants at the Undergraduate research symposium in the fall, College of Engineering Scholarships for maintaining a competitive GPA, the Professional Women in Building "Building Hope Scholarship" for 2022, and works full time as a transportation engineering intern at GCW Inc. which has enabled her passion for Civil Engineering and the opportunities she has within the field.

Emily Huerta

Emily Huerta is dual majoring in mathematics and physics at UNLV. She will be continuing onto graduate school to receive her PhD in astrophysics. With her degree, she will become a professor at a university and lead her own research group, studying space and the universe. Ever since 2017, she has been a member of the UNLV Scientista Foundation, an organization that empowers and supports women in STEM. From that point, she's been an events director, secretary, and president for the organization, exercising her passion for leadership and women in science. For four consecutive years, she has volunteered, planned, and implemented Scientista's annual Girls in STEM Day event. In this event, 100 middle school girls visit UNLV's campus and run through a series of STEM-based workshops, all with the common goal of inspiring and encouraging young girls to pursue STEM fields. Currently she is conducting research under the UNLV Department of Physics and Astronomy, specifically within the high-energy astrophysics branch on Fast Radio Bursts (FRBs) and magnetars.

Savanna Vacek

Savanna Vacek is a senior who majors in Civil Engineering. She is an undergraduate research assistant in an environmental engineering lab where she works to remove disinfection by-products from drinking water. She hopes to diminish the inequality of access to clean water through her work with low-cost, sustainable adsorbents. Savanna recognizes that engineering is a male dominated field and women need more opportunity and support to speak out so that women can thrive and be empowered in engineering. Throughout her degree, she has participated in research studies that focus on women's academic career progress in civil engineering and has created tight-knit groups to support women in her classes. Savanna has also joined women's support groups within her internships where she led sessions which discussed topics such as leadership style, work-life balance, and speaking with confidence. Outside of empowering women in engineering, Savanna chose to join a sorority to meet other like-minded women with similar values. Within her sorority, women discussed personal growth topics such as resume building, internship searching, networking, and gaining confidence. She hopes to encourage young women in engineering to be involved in their community and to never be afraid to ask questions.



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