

JANUARY 2010

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS

Leadership & Public Service



“To succeed, the democracy established in our Constitution requires the active participation of its citizenry. ... By fulfilling civic duties, engaging government at the local, State, and Federal level, and volunteering in our communities, individual citizens can better our country.” ~ President Barack Obama



2009-2010 White House Fellows meet President Obama



On December 16, President Obama met with the White House Fellows in the Roosevelt Room and encouraged them to “actively contribute” to the process of governing at their work placements. To watch footage from the meeting, please visit our YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/whitehousefellows

MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN



Vice President Joe Biden meets with White House Fellows in his West Wing Office, December 10, 2009. Official White House Photo by David Lienemann.

While all of us knew that our visit with the Vice President would be memorable, I don't think anyone expected such a personal experience. When several fellows got caught stuck at security, the Vice President promptly announced that he would "go out and get them." The Vice President proceeded to head out to Pennsylvania Avenue to personally escort the stranded fellows. The moment was unforgettable for everyone, including the Secret Service who were rapidly trying to adjust to the Vice President's own version of "going rogue."

The hospitality continued as he moved the meeting from the formal Roosevelt Room to his office. We sat around on the couches and chairs with the fire crackling in the background and the Christmas tree lit. The Vice President charmed us all as he spent two hours answering questions. People often talk about the magic of the White House during the holidays and that December evening, we experienced first-hand what that meant.

Contributed by Annie Maxwell

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We need your help reading applications! Reading groups will be held at the WHF office and around the country during February. Please email a host below to sign up.

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Host(s)</u>	<u>RSVP To:</u>
Feb. 8-26*	WHF Office 712 Jackson Pl. Washington, DC	Gabe Cohen	gcohen@whf.eop.gov
<i>*The office will be open weekdays from 9-5pm. Feel free to drop by and read during the day. Email to RSVP.</i>			
Feb. 8 10-4pm	Colorado Forum 511 16th Street, Suite 210 Denver, CO	Gail Klapper	gklapper@klapperfirm.com
Feb. 12 & 13 10-4pm	5304 Woodlands Blvd. Tamarac, FL	Carolyn Chin	carolynchin@yahoo.com
Feb. 13 9-4pm	2600 Lou Menk Dr. Fort Worth, TX	John Orrison	john.orrison@bnsf.com
Feb. 13 10-4pm	161 Sixth Avenue New York, NY	Kimberly Till Lou O'Neill	loneill@stanfordalumni.org
Feb. 13 10-5pm	3340 East Dobson Pl. Anne Arbor, MI	Martha Darling Gil Omenn	Madarling@aol.com
Feb 13 & 20 9-5pm	WHF Office 712 Jackson Pl.	Janet Abrams (13th) Karen Galatz (20th)	janet.abrams@mindspring.com kgalatz@yahoo.com
Feb. 20 9-5pm	Dorsey Law Columbia Center 701 Fifth Ave, Suite 6100 Seattle, WA	Nelson Dong & Steve Hill	steven.r.hill@comcast.net
Feb. 25 3-7pm	Aon Building, 80th Floor 200 East Randolph Street Chicago, IL	Anne Cohn-Donnelly & Meredith Neizer	mneizer@aol.com
Feb. 27 9-4pm	560 Mission Street, 3rd Floor San Francisco, CA	Gary Hall, Ajay Amlani & Chris Moore	gary.x.hall@jpmorgan.com
Feb. 27 9-4pm	Bridgespan Group 545 Boylston St. 10th Floor Boston, MA	Kristine Langdon & Jeri Eckhart	Kristine.langdon@kornferry.com jeri.eckhart-queenan@bridgespan.org
Feb. 27 9-4pm	Annenberg Research Park Kerckhoff Hall, USC 734 West Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA	Wally Baer & Joan Abrahamson	wbaer@usc.edu

PLACEMENT UPDATE



*Major Ken Robbins,
OPM*

Ken Robbins, U.S. Office of Personnel Management

It is difficult to believe that we are already into month five of the fellowship. The act of balancing work placement with the fellowship opportunities means little white space on the calendar, which is a great problem to have! I recall walking down E Street to the US Office of Personnel Management for my last placement interview in July. At that point, I could not imagine OPM would be the place I would spend my fellowship year. However, after walking out of that interview, I knew it was the place I wanted to be. From day one, Director John Berry and the entire senior staff welcomed me into OPM and I have complete access to the organization and attend all major policy meetings.

My military experience has allowed me to contribute in key ways on several initiatives. I joined the Veteran Wolf Pack that was looking at how to improve job opportunities for military veterans in the federal government. I am pleased to report that the President signed the executive order in November and we are now fully into the implementation phase of the initiative over the next year. Also, I work closely with a senior executive from OPM and representatives from the Departments of State, Defense, Labor and GSA on addressing pay discrepancies for our civilian workforce in combat zones. We expect to introduce comprehensive legislation on this subject in the near future. As part of this process, I am planning a visit by the Director and key members of Congress to Iraq and Afghanistan to hear directly from our civil servants. It has been a great honor to represent the men and women of the US Office of Personnel Management and I look forward to the months ahead.

Sarah Stewart Johnson, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy



*Sarah Stewart
Johnson, OSTP*

I've spent the last few months working at the White House Science Office, and they've been some of the most exciting months of my life. I had big shoes to fill, as I arrived just days after 2008-2009 White House Fellow Dan Fletcher returned to the Bioengineering Department at Berkeley. I've set up shop in his old cubical, and since my arrival, my portfolio has evolved primarily around climate, national security and global affairs. I went to Indonesia as part of the US delegation to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and have since been spearheading an interagency process to address monitoring and verification of global greenhouse gas emissions. I've also been working on science diplomacy in Muslim-majority regions, as well as the idea of transforming a massive glacier that spans the Line of Control in Kashmir into a demilitarized scientific peace park. And even though I'm not focusing on space exploration, which has long been my primary interest, I haven't forgotten entirely about it: not long ago I spent an evening stargazing with Sally Ride, Buzz Aldrin and the First Family on the South Lawn, a night I'll never forget.

But above all, my first few months as a White House Fellow are best measured by the relationships I have made, and those have been life-changing. John Holdren, the President's Science Advisor, has served as a tremendous role model for me, and his staff has done everything possible to help me contribute to the Administration's efforts. Cindy, Erika, Gabe, Annick, Lindsey, Pandora and Jamie have guided the Fellowship program in wonderful directions, and above all, the other fellows have been as inspiring as they have been supportive, and they have become some of my dearest friends.

NEW ORLEANS TRIP REPORT



*Jon Finer,
White House Chief of
Staff's office*

From Nov. 8-13, the 2009-2010 Fellows traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana for their first domestic study trip, exploring issues ranging from the recovery from Hurricane Katrina, to education reform, to the environment, to the region's economic and racial politics.

While our class initially considered combining New Orleans with other destinations like Houston or the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the Big Easy ended up providing more than enough activities, complexity and fun for five years, let alone our five allotted days.

We convened bright and early **Monday** morning for coffee and beignets from Café du Monde. Fortunately, our breakfast host, Walter Isaacson (Aspen Institute President, best-selling author, and, most importantly for our purposes, New Orleans native), was too polite to comment when some stray clumps of powdered sugar ended up on the carpet of his riverside apartment.

Broderick Bagert, a local community organizer with a Tolkien-esque name, led us on a bus tour of geographical and political landmarks. In our first formal meeting, over lunch at City Hall, Mayor Ray Nagin's wide-ranging talk touched on the "secret" to successful leadership, among other topics. After that, local FEMA officials shared their views on disaster response, past and future.

We then hustled to Tulane University where some of the country's foremost political consultants were gathered for the Bipartisan Policy Center's inaugural conference. A contentious panel discussion entitled "Assessing the Obama Presidency" demonstrated both the need for such an institute and the challenges inherent in achieving its goals. James Carville and Mary Matalin hosted us for dinner, along with other conference guests, at their stately New Orleans home. In what would become a recurring theme of the week, the feast was unsurprisingly outstanding.



Fellows on nature walk in Blue Bonnet Swamp

We spent much of **Tuesday** in Baton Rouge, better known as the hometown of classmate Marc Sternberg. That morning, a slow-gathering tropical storm gave texture to the Post-Hurricane Katrina focus of our trip, but also scuttled plans for a flyover of the region in propeller planes. Instead we went on walkabout in the lush Blue Bonnet Swamp and learned about the region's environmental challenges—as well as "man-made" components of the Katrina disaster—from the Louisiana Environmental Action Network. Afterwards, Louisiana State University Chancellor Michael Martin shared views on education reform and the National Collegiate Athletic Association, and debated academic freedom with our own resident scholar, Sarah Stewart Johnson.

We returned to New Orleans that afternoon to meet with Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu, who gave a candid introduction to local politics and was generous enough to keep taking questions well after our allotted time expired. Some of us were impressed enough to wonder whether he might make a third run for mayor next year.

(Continued on next page)

NEW ORLEANS TRIP REPORT

Our **Wednesday** morning was spent at the well-run S.J. Green Charter School and vegetable garden, where we breakfasted with adorable kindergartners before a forum on education reform with state and local officials, including Louisiana Education Superintendant Paul Pastorek and Recovery School District Superintendant Paul Vallas. The discussion was particularly salient in a city that has become a laboratory for the school reform movement, with more than half of all students currently educated in charter schools.



After a hearty lunch with Craig Taffaro, President of Katrina-ravaged St. Bernard Parish, we embarked on a Veteran's Day service project, helping rehabilitate homes with the St. Bernard Project, a local analog to Habitat for Humanity. It was debatable whether the degree to which some of us ended up coated with white dust reflected clumsiness or deep dedication to our craft.



Fellows rebuild homes in New Orleans

That evening, studies continued at the famed Maple Leaf Bar, where the Rebirth Brass Band more than lived up to the advance billing from former fellow and New Orleans native Chris Meyer (who joined us for dinner beforehand).

Undaunted by the late night, we arose **Thursday** morning for a fascinating presentation from Tulane President Scott Cowen, widely praised for helping lead the city's response to Katrina. Tulane history professor Lance Hill then offered a refreshingly contrarian critique of the "dominant narratives" we'd heard all week, leaving at least one fellow's "head spinning" as we sought to sort through the competing visions. Later John Thompson, who spent nearly 18 years on death row before being exonerated in 2003, described his ordeal and an organization he founded to help fellow-exonerees readjust to society.

In a change of pace that sun-drenched afternoon, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took us on a boat tour of a multi-billion dollar barrier wall, currently under construction at the mouth of the Mississippi, and designed to mitigate storm surge. Later, on what was the last night in town (for many of us), we dined in a private room at historic Antoine's—a first-rate meal complete with a behind-the-scenes look at some curiously anachronistic photo galleries and what is reputedly one of the world's longest wine cellars (we didn't measure).

Our visit concluded **Friday**, with a tour of the National World War II Museum hosted by members of the Greatest Generation and an effects-filled "4-D" movie screening, followed by a discussion with the editor and publisher of the *Times-Picayune* newspaper. We left New Orleans with both a wealth of new knowledge and myriad further questions—the hallmarks of any great trip.



Fellows with Army Corps of Engineers

—Contributed by Jon Finer

WHITE HOUSE HOLIDAY PARTY

The Fellows were invited to a White House Holiday Party on December 8. Many of them brought a special guest or spouse for the evening at the White House.



Ken Robbins, Cindy Moelis, Jon Finer and Alum John Tien (98-99)



First Lady Michelle Obama greets Fellows' spouses, Yogita Goyal and Sharee McKenzie



WHF staff: Lindsey Trent, Annick Febrey & Gabe Cohen



White House Christmas Tree



Rob Lyman with his wife Nancy



Adam Taylor, Mehret Mandefro and Adam's wife Sharee McKenzie



Laura Bacon and Jonathan Russell



Mehret Mandefro, Mehret's father Ayalew Mandefro and Kellee James

EDUCATION EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

Admiral Dennis Blair, Director of National Intelligence | October 22

Welcome Reception for 2009-2010 class of White House Fellows, Willard Hotel | October 22

Commissioners' Luncheon, U.S. Chamber of Commerce | October 23

Legacy of Leadership Reception and Dinner, Capitol Hilton Hotel | October 23

Holocaust Museum Tour | October 24

Tour of Ford's Theater | October 27

Ms. Valerie Jarrett, Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor, The White House |
October 28

West Wing Tour | October 29

Chancellor Michelle Rhee, District of Columbia Public Schools | October 30

Mrs. Cokie Roberts, Senior News Analyst, National Public Radio | November 4

John M. Barry, Author, Historian, and Member of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority | November 6

Domestic trip to New Orleans, LA | November 9-13

White House Situation Room Tour | November 18

Mr. Joel Klein, Chancellor, NYC Department of Education | December 1

Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft (ret.), President, The Scowcroft Group | December 4

Vice President Joseph Biden | December 10

Ms. Maya Soetoro-Ng | December 14

Secretary Gary Locke, U.S. Department of Commerce | December 15

President Barack Obama | December 16

Mr. Harold Hongju Koh, Legal Advisor of the Department of State | December 21

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT AND MRS. OBAMA



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 13, 2009

Public service is a noble calling and a founding pillar of our Nation. Today, more than ever, we need individuals who will contribute their skill, talent, and passion to solve our most difficult problems. Since its establishment by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, the White House Fellows Program has equipped emerging leaders with a depth of knowledge about governance and cultivated a lasting commitment to civic engagement.

Today's challenges cannot be met by government alone. In the 21st century, we will need new partnerships and creative leadership to succeed. Americans from all fields of study—including science, liberal arts, business, social entrepreneurship, military, non-profit, and law—will lead this charge.

Working alongside public servants at the highest levels of the Executive Branch, White House Fellows gain invaluable experience and can apply these lessons in any discipline or career. After their year in our Nation's capital, they leave with a broader perspective and renewed purpose to help their fellow citizens, to collaborate on the great challenges of their era, and to advance timeless American ideals.

As you embark on your life's journey, we hope you will consider [applying](#) to the White House Fellows Program and stepping into the current of history.

 Michelle Obama

For more information, please visit www.whitehouse.gov/fellows.

RECRUITMENT

A special thanks to all the alumni, Commissioners and friends of the WHF program who hosted and attended recruitment events this year!

<u>Host(s)</u>	<u>Location</u>
Susan Stautberg	New York, NY
Jami Floyd, Dan Fletcher & Diane Yu	UC Berkeley School of Law, Berkeley, CA
Bill Hamilton, Cindy Moelis, George Weathersby, & Nelson Diaz	Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania
Anne Cohn-Donnelly, Meredith Neizer & Don Haider	Kellogg School of Business, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
Margaret McKeown, John De Luca, Andy Barnes, Marshall Turner, Bill McGlashan, Pat Sweeney, Joan Abrahamson, Michael Klausner, Clara Shin, Mike Lynn & Dan Fletcher	U.S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit San Francisco, CA
Pat Walsh, Pierre Omidyar & Mufi Hannemann	Honolulu, HI
Nelson Dong, Chuck Hirsch, Steve Hill, Katie Hong, Travis Matheson & John McKay	Seattle, WA
Diane Yu, Sarita James, Kimberly Till & Laurie Zephyrin	New York University, NY
Carolyn Chin, Sharon Ritchie, Jim Padilla & Jocelyn White	Miami, FL
Thor Hearn, Randy Jayne & Eric Greitens	Washington University School of Law, St. Louis, MO
Tom Johnson	Atlanta, GA

WHFFA ANNUAL MEETING

Highlights taken from Bob Edmonds' final report as President of WHFF.

Our conference theme, "The Challenge of Change: Making Big Things Happen in a Democracy," was chosen to give White House Fellows and their guests a bird's eye view of how government, corporate, philanthropic and media leaders are effecting change and working to improve our country and the world. For those of you who missed the Annual Meeting program, here are some quick highlights:

Professor Larry Tribe: America's foremost constitutional lawyer and close advisor of President Obama, focused on the use of the constitution as a compass for understanding President Obama's agenda and exposed us to a line of thinking that does not appear as part of the mainstream political discourse today. Tribe outlined the President's view of our founding document and his desire to bring not just law but justice to all by streamlining and simplifying federal laws and regulations. This, in turn, helped us understand the President's agenda for change in terms of promoting the rule of law, both here at home and around the world, and its priority role in reinvigorating a pragmatic, progressive judiciary.

ADM Dennis Blair (75-76): The Director of National Intelligence provided our luncheon audience with a tour d'horizon of the tremendous challenges of protecting our country. Dennis also provided us a number of lessons in leadership – complete with an analogy of how the Blues Brothers (his self proclaimed favorite movie!) would appreciate and respond to these challenging times. For this WHF, the weight on his shoulders is mighty, and he wears it well.

Pierre Omidyar: The founder of eBay and member of the President's Commission on WHF presented us with a new format – as he was interviewed by Annie Maxwell, a member of the current class who is assigned to the Office of the Vice President. Pierre's remarks and day-to-day work clearly demonstrate the powerful positive impact of his ideas and values in changing how we think, process information, socialize and shop. His unyielding trust in people to do the right thing in person-to-person contacts and harnessing the power of connection to create a new style of leadership and philanthropy are an inspiration to the White House Fellows and caused us to think more about harnessing the power of the Internet and emerging technologies as we pursue our own professional, personal, and philanthropic interests.

Welcome Reception for the WHF Class of 2009-10: Once again, this always enjoyable event in the Crystal Room of the Willard Hotel showcased the remarkable class of 15 current Fellows, whose accomplishments and talents continue the great tradition of the very finest White House Fellows. Commission Chair John Phillips and Commission Vice Chair Cheryl Dorsey (97-98) presented the Fellows with their Presidential certificates. I was honored to present each new Fellow with a WHF lapel pin.



Members of the 2009-2010 class of White House Fellows pictured with Commission Chair John Phillips, Vice Chair Cheryl Dorsey, WHFFA President Bob Edmonds and Director Cindy Moelis.

Senator Tom Daschle: Senator Daschle's presentation on the health care reform was a tour d'force as he clarified the issues of access and coverage, cost and quality on the one hand and then worked us through the challenges of insurance reform, payment reform, delivery systems and best

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WHFFA ANNUAL MEETING

practices, and the role of government that must be addressed in reducing the current 5 bills to finally pass this important and complex legislation. His explanation of the differences between the policy and the



WHFFA President Bob Edmonds presents 2009 John W. Gardner Legacy of Leadership Award to Mrs. Marlene Richman and her sons Andrew and Robert.

budget tracks in the legislative process was most enlightening and gave our membership a good sense of how to view the ongoing debate on the Hill and the role of the congressional leadership and the President in this effort to make a significant change in the way we vie and provide health care in the world's greatest democracy.

John Phillips (Chair of the PCWHF) and Cindy Moelis (Director of the WHF Program): reminded us of the exceptional quality of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships and outlined the focus on public service with the current class of Fellows. Cindy also described the updated, online application system that will also include the capability for readers to review and grade applications for next year's class online.

Legacy of Leadership Dinner at the Capital Hilton: This year, we honored Harold A. Richman (65-66) posthumously with the 2009 John W. Gardner Legacy of Leadership Award and long-time friend Bill Moyers with the Jack Valenti Friend of the White House Fellows Award. Sadly, Harold passed away just 4 days after his selection for the Legacy of Leadership Award. We were honored by the presence of his wife, Marlene, and sons Andrew and Robert, who accepted the award for the family. Bill was recognized as the co-equal partner of Jack Valenti in ensuring that President and Mrs. Johnson's full intent was captured in the White House Fellows Program.

In addition to all of the program elements listed above, we were also treated to a preview of the new recruiting DVD that Immediate Past President Diane Yu (86-87) and New Media Mill LLC have produced. All in all, this year's Annual Meeting and Seminar was a spectacular 3 days of fellowship, learning, sharing of experiences, and optimism for the future of the White House Fellows Program.



Left: Bill Moyers accepts 2009 Jack Valenti Friend of the White House Fellows Award. Right: Bill Moyers pictured with his wife Judith, Mary Margaret Valenti and WHFFA President Bob Edmonds.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Bill Caldwell (91-92) has been reappointed to the rank of LTG and has become the Commanding General, Combined Security Transition Command/Afghanistan and Commander, NATO Training Mission/Afghanistan.

Kimberlee Cornett (96-97) has been named Director for Innovative Capital, The Kresge Foundation, in Troy, MI.

Mimi Ghez (00-01) is the Director for Development at the International Centre for Missing.

J. Nadine Gracia (08-09) is the Public Health Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Mark Hagerott (91-92) is the Director, Strategic Action Group, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan.

Greg Hess (89-90) is the Chief Medical Officer and VP for Health Economics and Outcomes Research for SDI Health in Philadelphia, PA.

Bob Johnson (87-88) is the President of the National Security Division for RAPC Computers in Paoli, PA.

Dave Jones (95-96) is the Chair of the Assembly Health Committee, California State Assembly.

David Lussier (00-01) is now the Executive Director of Educator Quality for the Austin Independent School District in Austin, TX.

Rich Morales (01-02) is an Army PhD Fellow at the Centre for Strategy and Performance, Cambridge University, England.

John Orrison (89-90) is the Assistant Vice President for Service Design and Performance, BNSF Railway Company.

Ed Rice (90-91) is the Commander of U.S. Forces Japan and Commander, 5th Air Force at Yokota Air Base, Japan.

Pat Walsh (88-89) has reported for duty as Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, headquartered in Pearl Harbor, HI.

Laurie Zephyrin (05-06) is the National Director, Reproductive Health, for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS PROGRAM UPDATES



Check out our **NEW** White House Fellows YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/whitehousefellows



Keep up with the current Fellows through our **NEW** [Flickr page](#).

You can access both sites from our website: www.whitehouse.gov/fellows

WHITE HOUSE FELLOWS COMMUNITY NEWS

Congratulations to Eyrique Miller (08-09) and his wife Lisa, on the birth of **Blake Kamryn Miller**. Blake was born on December 1, 2009 at 10:58am. She weighed 8lbs.



Congratulations to Commissioner John Hockenberry and his wife, Alison, on the birth of **Ajax Charles Hockenberry**. Ajax was born on December 4, 2009 at 4:12pm. He weighed 8lbs and 11oz.



WHFFA Reminder: Mark Your Calendars for the 45th Anniversary Celebration of the White House Fellows Program on October 21-23, 2010!

The President's Commission on White House Fellowships

The White House Fellows Program is a non-partisan leadership and public service program that offers exceptional young leaders firsthand experience working at the highest levels of the Federal government. For more information, please visit our webpage at www.whitehouse.gov/fellows.

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Please send any comments, submissions or other newsletter-related communication to WhiteHouseFellows@whf.eop.gov