**National Legislative Seminar-2024**

**Saturday, March 9**

**Activity:** Registration **Time: 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM** **Location:** **Board Room**

**Dinner:** No Host Dinner at Hotel Pub, O’Malley’s at 6 PM

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**Sunday, March 10**

**Activity:** Registration **Time:** **12:00 PM – 2:00 PM** **Location: Foyer-Ballroom**

**4:30 PM - 5:30 PM**

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**Sunday, March 10**

**Event:** **Opening Session Time: 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Location: Ballroom**

Welcome from DC, VA, and MD State Presidents

Greetings from US Forum Chair Darlene Cook

Flag Salute: International President Debbie LeBlanc

**Speaker: Lisa Maatz**

**“Women and Education: Issues in the Upcoming Legislative Landscape”**

**Ms. Maatz**has served as director of public policy and government relations for the American Association of University Women (AAUW) since 2003. As the organization’s top policy adviser, she has lobbied on Capitol Hill and at the White House. She has done similar work for the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Older Women’s League and was a legislative aide to U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

Ms. Maatz’s honors include the Women’s Information Network’s Young Woman of Achievement Award and the Mentor Award from the Public Leadership Education Network. She has also received a mayoral appointment to the Washington, DC Commission on Women.

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**Sunday, March 10 Time: 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM Location: Ballroom**

**Activity: Table Talks- Taking Advocacy to the Next Level:**

**Presenters:** **Pat Bennett-Forman, Debbie Pajula, Bev Johns, Nancy Sheng**

**Pat Bennett-Forman** has served in many roles for the North Kitsap School District such as an instructional support teacher, director of student services, and director of curriculum and instruction. Pat also was an adjunct instructor at Western Washington University in Seattle. She is a graduate of the University of Washington and has been a key presenter at numerous Title I and Special Education Conferences. For DKG, Pat has participated in every US Forum, attended many National Legislative Seminars, and has presented at many DKG conferences and conventions. Pat Bennett-Forman is the immediate past president of the Washington State Organization. And in her spare time, she is a writer and speaker for the WA League of Women Voters.

**Debbie Pajula** is from Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and is the current DKG Legislation Co-Chair for DKG MI State Organization. She has been a member of Beta Sigma-MI Chapter since 1987, and she is the immediate chapter past president. Debbie has presented many times in Michigan on legislative advocacy and Forum presentations. She is also a member of the US Forum sub-committee, Mental Health Sub-Committee. Debbie has taught for 34 years in special education in Northeastern Wisconsin. She served as K-12 LD/ED/CD resource teacher, Program Support Consultant and Special ed & Pupil Services Director. She is a member of the NEA, WEA, WREA and was union negotiator for many years. Debbie Padjula enjoys spending time and traveling with her family. She loves nature and outdoor activies.

**Bev Johns** is the Northeast Region US Forum Representative and was the president of DKG Illinois State from 2019-2021. She has spent her career working with students with emotional and behavioral disorders and was a professional fellow at MacMurry College. Bev has chaired government relations for several organizations. She authored over 25 books and was the recipient of the 2000 Council for Exceptional Children Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Nancy Sheng** is a retired music educator, active performer, mother of five and grandmother of five. Nancy’s career spans three decades of teaching in private and public schools, a tribal school, kindergarten through university levels in California, Oregon, and Washington. Nancy joined DKG in 2011. She has served in numerous roles in DKG such as secretary and president of her chapter Lambda in Bellingham, WA. At the state level, Nancy serves on the Legislative Committee. When Nancy retired in 2016, she was inspired to become politically active. She is an active member of the League of Women Voters and Whatcom County Democrats.

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**Break for Hotel Check-in**

**and Registration: Time: 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM**

**Sunday, March 10**

**Dinner Buffet:** **Time: 5:30 pm - 6:30 PM Location: Ballroom**

**Evening Events:** **Time: 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM**  **Location: Ballroom**

**Welcome to Washington D.C.: Eboni Rose Thompson,** **President of DC Board of Education**

**Speaker: Rob Weil, Director of Field Programs, AFT**: **“The Role of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in Today’s Classroom “**

Mr. Weil is the Director of Field Programs in the Educational Issues Department of the American Federation of Teachers. Previously he was a high school mathematics teacher in Colorado. The focus of his presentation will be on understanding the role of AI systems in education and how they will impact teaching and learning in the very near future.

**State and Regions Meet & Greet: Ballroom**

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**Monday March 11 Morning**

**Registration: Time: 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM Location: Ballroom**

**Breakfast: Time: 6:15 AM - 7:30 AM**

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**Activity # 1: Time: 7:15 AM - 12:00 PM Location: Hotel Lobby**

**Arlington Cemetery: Laying of the Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**

**Transportation: Private Coach to Arlington Cemetery: Must be registered for Arlington**

**Activity # 2 (for those not attending Arlington Cemetery)**

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**Time: 8:15AM - 11:15 AM Location: Ballroom**

“**Presentations on Health Care and Historic DC Sites”**

**8:15-9:15 AM: Bev Johns: Navigating the Healthcare System**

**9:30-10:15: Patricia Ford Neal: Facts About African American Women Educators**

**10:15-10:30 AM: Break with Relaxation Strategies**

**10:30-11:15:** **Patricia Ford Neal**: **Famous Women Sites in Washington DC**

**Patricia Ford Neal** served as president of Nu Zeta Chapter and the District of Columbia State Organization President from 2019-2021. A native Washingtonian, she became a DKG member in 1985. She was educated through her master’s degree in D.C. and taught in the D.C. public schools and then in Fairfax County, Virginia. She is one of the organizers of DKG’s Virtual Teacher’s Lounge.

Patricia Ford Neal is also a member of the African American Genealogy and Historical Society of Prince George County, Maryland. She serves as the corresponding secretary of the James Dent Walker Historical Society of D.C. and chair of the Education Committee of the Prince George County Lynching Memorial Project. Patricia Ford Neal continues her community service as the coordinator-at-large for the NEA Women’s Caucus and Vice Queen of the Red Hatters “The Scarlett Threads of Largo”, Maryland Chapter.

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**Monday, March 11 Afternoon**

**Event: Lunch Buffet**: **Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**  **Location: Ballroom**

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**Activity**: **Time: 1:15 PM- 2:30 PM** **Location: Ballroom**

**Panel Presentation: “Improving Working Conditions for Teachers”**

Panelists: **Sheila Gaiser (CA), Sally Nazelrod (MD), Linda McCrary (TN), Katina Keener (VA), Bev Johns (IL- Moderator)**

**Sheila Gaiser** is from DKG CA Area 11 where she serves as Legislative Chair. She serves on the CA President’s Educational Law and Policy Committee and the US Forum Legislative Sub-committee. Sheila taught second grade for 5 years, took a break, and entered the private sector for better pay. After 30 years in the corporate world in many managerial positions, she returned to education where she was a teacher, teacher mentor, teacher trainer, grade level leader, assistant principal intern, and elected representative to both state and national conventions.

**Katina Keener** is the President of the Virginia State Organization. She lives in Gloucester, Virginia, raising kids and sheep and cows. Katina is a mother to many. She is a member of the Gamma Nu chapter since May 2011, serving her chapter in many roles. Currently, Katina Keener is the Student Services Coordinator for the Gloucester County Public Schools District. Entering her 27th year in education, Katina was a school administrator for 10 years and 14 years in the elementary school, teaching 1st and 4th grades. Katina Keener is a graduate from DKG Ignite, DKG’s Leadership Seminar in 2022.

**Linda McCrary** is a member of the NEA Board of Directors, a former DKG SE Regional Directory, and chair of the DKG Educational Foundation. Linda, from Tennessee, was a classroom teacher and librarian. She has devoted her life to philanthropy and advocacy for education, including educators and students. Linda McCrary served as the chair of the US Forum Steering Committee from 1994-1996. Under her leadership, the National Legislative Seminar was created as a US Forum Project. Linda is a wife of 60 years, a mother, and a grandmother.

**Sally Nazelrod** is the President of the Maryland State Organization. She is the retired Coordinator of Health and Physical Education for the Baltimore County Public Schools and is the current President of the Eastern Seaboard Region of the National Academy for Health and Physical Literacy (NAHPL). Sally resides in Manchester, Carroll County, Maryland. She is a proud mother of 2 sons and loving grandmother of 4.

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**Monday, March 11 Afternoon and Evening**

**Snack Break Time: 2:30 PM – 2:45 PM**

**Activity: Time: 2:45 PM – 3:45 PM** **Location: Ballroom**

**Speaker: Dr. Anita Everett, Director, SAMHSA** (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), Department of Health and Human Services

**Dr. Anita Everett** is the Director of the Center for Mental Health Services at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA) in Washington, DC. As Director, she is responsible for overseeing federal efforts to improve the nation’s mental health service systems. Previously, she directed 22 psychology programs under the auspices of The John Hopkins Hospital to provide mental health services to individuals from preschool to older adults. She has also worked on international projects that implemented mental health services to communities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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**Activity: Time: 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM Location: Ballroom**

**Speaker:** **Gwen Graham**, **Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislation**, **US Department of Education**

**Gwen Graham**, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Congressional Affairs for the US Department of Education and former member of the US House of Representatives, will bring important updates regarding public education legislation and ways to advocate on behalf of the nation’s public-school educators. In addition to serving as a member of Congress, she also held the position of Chief of Labor and Employee Relations for the Leon County School District in Florida, board member of the Florida Educational Negotiators Association, and PTA President and School Advisory Council Chair at her children’s school. Gwen is the daughter of former Florida governor, Bob Graham, and is an honorary member of DKG.

**Monday, March 11 Evening**

**Event: Dinner (plated)** **Time: 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM** **Location: Ballroom**

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**Activity: Time:** **7:30 PM - 9:00 pm Location: Ballroom**

**Speaker: Blake Kelly: “The Ins and Outs of Meeting on the Hill with Members of Congress”**

**Blake Kelly** is a Federal Strategy Director in AARP’s Government Affairs Department. Prior to joining AARP, he served as Associate Director of the Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee for Senate Majority leader Harry Reid (NV). Blake is a native of Batesville, Arkansas, and a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

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**Tuesday, March 12 Morning**

**Event: Day on the Hill**

**Breakfast: Time: 6:00-7:00 AM** **Location: Ballroom**

**Depart for Capitol Hill Time: 7 00 AM** **Location: Lobby**

**Transportation by bus**

**Return by bus: Time: 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM Sign up at time of Registration.**

**Agenda:**

**House/Senate briefings: Time: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM Location: Rayburn Building , Room 2261**

**Presenters:** **Brad Thomas**, House-Deputy Director of Education and Human Services Policy, (Committee on Education and the Workforce) and **Rebecca Howard**, Education Policy Advisor for Sen. Tim Kaine (VA), member of the HELP Committee

**Brad Thomas** will provide a briefing on current and proposed legislation in the US Congress House of Representatives. Brad formerly served as the Senior Education Policy Advisor for Representative Virginia Foxx and focused on disability policy matters.

**Rebecca Howard** will speak about legislation related to education, the workforce, and labor policy including legislation regarding Federal Student Aid and funding for minority-serving institutions.

**10:30 am-4:30 pm:** Meeting Schedule with Legislators developed by individual states.

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**Tuesday, March 12 Afternoon**

**Lunch is on your own. Many government buildings have cafes and cafeterias.**

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**3:00 PM is the early bus to return to the Holiday Inn. 5:00 PM is the late bus to return to the Holiday Inn. You must sign up for the return bus at the time of registration.**

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**Tuesday, March 12 Evening**

**Dinner at the Hotel:** **Time: 6:00 PM-7:00 PM Location: Ballroom**

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**Event:** **Time: 7:15 PM – 8:30 PM Location: Ballroom**

**Presenters: Tondra Odom and Marjorie J. Mitzner:** present “Artful Tools: **An Evening with the Arts.”**

**Tondra Odom** is the President of DKG D.C. Organization. She is a retired District of Columbia elementary school educator and is a museum educator. Tondra has numerous strategic art tools that augments teaching and learning experience for students, irrespective of demographics. Tondra’s goal is to provide every child an opportunity to have access to quality education, making a high academic outcome possible. Through art tools and these strategies, this goal is a reality.

**Marjorie Mitzner, Med, MAT** is a museum educator who believes that one does not need to be an artist to appreciate and utilize the arts, in all aspects of life. With a wealth of experience, both inside classrooms and museums, Marjorie understands the importance of self-care. She will provide us with tools to process the stressors of daily life by using thought-provoking methods and works of art.

**Wednesday, March 13**

**Event: Breakfast**

**Time: 8:00 AM - 8:45 AM** **Location: Ballroom**

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**Event: Time**: **8:45 AM - 9:45 AM** **Location: Ballroom**

**Speaker**: **Tom Nicholl**s: **“Social Security – The Program, Solvency and WEP/GPO”**

**Tom Nicholls** is a Government Affairs Director at AARP with over 20 years of federal and state retirement policy experience. He currently serves AARP’s nearly 37 million members and all older Americans nationwide as a federal lobbyist and policy expert on Social Security. He was also proud to serve America’s retired educators and school personnel for six years as a public pension and advocacy expert for NRTA, AARP’s Educator Community. Prior to joining AARP in 2009, Tom served six years as a staffer in the House of Representatives for Congressman Paul Kanjorski (PA). Tom holds a B.S. Quantitative Business Analysis from Pennsylvania State University and an M.A. in Political Management from George Washington University.

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**Activity:** **Time**: **9:45 AM -11:00 AM** **Location:** **Ballroom**

**Communication Strategies: Getting the Message Out and Sharing Day on the Hill Experiences**

**Activity**: **Time: 11 AM- 11:30 AM Location:** **Ballroom**

**Closing Remarks/ Evaluation survey**