



# *Forge D.C.*

## The Nation's Capital



Summer 2020



Adam with Peter Burns and Adam Magary, Chief of Staff to US Congressman Michael Cloud (TX-27)



Adam with Justin Powell, co-founder of Forge



Adam, Paul Teller, Director of Strategic Initiatives, VPOTUS



# Dear Forge Champion,

Thank you for reading this newsletter! In this edition, you will learn all about the second leg of a young person's Forge experience – their time in our Nation's Capital. Students encounter national policy and networks firsthand. During their five days in D.C., they interact with the political process from 360 degrees, meeting with Congressmen, White House staffers, advocacy groups, cultural leaders, think tank scholars, pastors, and journalists. Students discuss principles and processes during intimate roundtables with leaders from leading organizations in D.C. and each branch of government. Evening activities include a nighttime monument tour with a focus on the character and leadership of each Founder, and a private, after-hours tour of the U.S. Capitol led by Congressmen and their staff. Our students even get to honor those Americans who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our liberty by participating in a special wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery.

There are two specific pieces of feedback that I hear from students, year after year without fail, from this trip.

- “I had no idea how many different ways, roles, and jobs there are to advance conservative principles.”
- “With its proximity to power and prestige, I think of D.C. as an intimidating, dark place. I was so encouraged by how many leaders shared openly and humbly about the challenges of working here and how much their faith motivates and sustains them.”

Forge 201 massively broadens our young people's horizons and networks and reaffirms that God has a career path for each person's unique set of interests and skills. It also re-affirms that whether in their local community, at their state capitol, or even nationally or globally, God will bring other faithful men in women into their life who will challenge, encourage, and strengthen them to persevere.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Josefczyk', with a stylized, cursive script.

Adam Josefczyk  
President and Co-Founder  
Forge Leadership Network

# Lessons From Great Statesmen

Michelle Kullberg

Forge Academy Class 2018-2019

I have always loved Washington D.C. As a young person, I visited with my classmates and several times with my parents. I enjoyed the monument tours, and watching the sun set on Capitol Hill. Our nation's memorials bring history to life, and reveal how sacred it is to read the names of soldiers who sacrificed their lives to bequeath us our freedom today. The U.S. Capitol building, with its great rotunda, upholds and protects paintings of our forefathers. Its halls display statues of leaders, all of whom helped to build our nation. The Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials honor two of our greatest presidents. The Jefferson Memorial is framed by cherry blossoms in springtime, and the Lincoln Memorial welcomes visitors from around the world as it overlooks the National Mall. I love and learn from all of this.

Exploring D.C. with Forge added a more profound dimension to my love for our nation's capital. Our week was a deep dive into the organizations and the people advocating for the biblical and Constitutional principles upon which America was founded. My favorite time was the day we explored Capitol Hill.

We visited Alliance Defending Freedom, an organization dedicated to defending religious freedom, the sanctity of life, freedom of speech, and marriage and family.

We walked to the U.S. Capitol and heard from several speakers on the Hill, including U.S. Senator Josh Hawley and U.S. Congressmen such as Mark Meadows, Jim Jordan, and others. They shared with us insights on the importance of courage, hard-work, personal responsibility, and humility.

"Don't be afraid to be different," Rep. Mark Meadows told our group, "There are people willing to follow if there are people willing to speak up." He reminded us why we stand strong for what we believe. "We are conservatives because these values help more people than socialism ever did, or could."

That night, we had the honor of a private tour of the U.S. Capitol led by Congressman Warren Davidson of Ohio. Studying the faces in portraits and paintings, including the Declaration of Independence and the signing of the Constitution, I wondered what advice they would have for us today.

"If you're humble," said Congressman Meadows' Chief of Staff, Paul Fitzpatrick, "you will be willing to take risks, you will be willing to fail. We strive for excellence and humility in all things. We choose to be servant-leaders." Their words and lives inspired me to learn more.





Congressman Jim Jordan



Michelle Kullberg



Michael Farris, ADF



Congressman Mark Meadows

# Living the Dream

## Genevieve Harding

Forge Academy Class 2019-2020

During the Forge 201 trip, one experience particularly stood out to me. The evening after our day on the Hill, Congressman Warren Davidson hosted us for an tour of the United States Capitol. Around the age of 20, I was trying to figure out if a Hill internship was something that I was meant to pursue. Having the tour of the Capitol, walking the halls, and hearing from the different people who work there every day, I was able to get a behind-the-scenes look at what working on the Hill is like. It was also incredibly special to have an after-hours tour and go on the House floor – something that not many people get to do. Being able to have such a candid tour of the Capitol made the possibility of working on the Hill seem less like a faraway pursuit and more of an attainable reality. During the tour, there was a moment that the group was able to visit the Speaker's Balcony. As I stood on the balcony, I could see the Washington Monument and the District lit up amidst the dark and I thought about how much I wanted to some day call this city home. Six months later, I am living on Capitol Hill and interning in Congress. The fact that I can trace experiences I had during Forge to what I am doing now, speaks directly to the impact that Forge has and the intentionality with which they plan experiences for students.







Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial



Washington Monument



Jefferson Memorial



Lincoln Memorial

## Monuments by Moonlight

Hannah Blankenship

Forge Academy Class of 2019-2020

I've lived in the D.C. metro area for half my life but it wasn't until I joined the Forge Leadership Network's Mentorship Academy that I went on a night tour of D.C.'s impressive monuments. I thought to myself, "I've seen these monuments dozens of times, this will be cool but what else is there to know?" Turns out, there's a whole lot more. There was something about walking around D.C. on a semi-lit night in 30-degree weather that brought the stories we were told of each monument to life. Remembering the lives of the figures that each memorial was dedicated to was a powerful reminder of how much of an impact one life can have.

Hearing Adam Josefczyk describe the life of Abraham Lincoln and his lifelong struggle with depression was especially memorable to me because it reminded me that Lincoln struggled like many of us do today and that God can powerfully use each of us to make an impact on the world around us. Through that moonlight monument tour I got to see the city I've toured many times in a new light. It showed me that whether it was over 200 years ago or today, the world is shaped by women and men who choose to lead where they are and persevere for freedom, truth, and liberty.





# What Leaders Say About Forge

“As a Forge Board Member, I am proud to host the Forge Academy students on their day on Capitol Hill during their trip to Washington D.C. each year. This year they heard talks from influential members of Congress, a panel of Chiefs of Staff, and a senior staffer in a House Leadership office. By the end of the day our hope is they leave with a clear understanding of how things work in Congress and they know what it takes to be a successful staffer should they want to pursue that career path. We need more principled staffers in Congress so I am always thrilled to see Forge trained individuals decide to join the work in Washington D.C. For those who choose a different career path, we hope the experience encourages them to take an active role advocating for conservative policy in Congress even if just as a private citizen.”

– *Dan Ziegler, Executive Director of the House Republican Study Committee & Forge Board Member*

“As part of Forge 201, I enjoy hosting students on a tour of the United States Capitol. Normally, we go at night when the place is almost empty, tour the public areas, experience the view from the Speaker's balcony, and wrap up with a Q&A session on the floor of the House of Representatives. I love the program, the students, and the personal experiences I have an opportunity to share with them.”

– *US Congressman Warren Davidson (OH-8)*

“I'm proud to support the good work that Forge Leadership Network is doing to identify, train, and equip our state's best young conservatives. Together, we can empower the next generation of Ohio's conservative leadership to begin restoring our state and nation.”

– *US Congressman Jim Jordan (OH-4)*

“I was pleased to be able to join the Forge Academy students during their day on Capitol Hill this year. I enjoyed our discussion of the incredibly rewarding and challenging work of Congress. Throughout the conversation the students asked thoughtful questions that demonstrated a good grasp of how American politics, and Capitol Hill, work. They've clearly learned a lot though their Forge experience and I am thankful for the work Forge does to invest in the next generation of conservative leaders.”

– *Will Dunham, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy*





# Join us for Forge 201 D.C.

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**I get no greater joy than seeing our supporters and volunteers (our Forge “champions”) share in-person experiences with our students and alumni. After all, our champions are the reason our students and alumni are able to experience the growth and success they have. What better way for you to see the difference your investment is making? In addition to Forge-For-A-Day at the July Summit in Ohio, and the chance to travel to Israel with our students, we also have a way for you to experience Forge 201 D.C. with the next cohort of Forge students.**

**We would LOVE for you to join us this upcoming January 4-9, 2021 to take part in the experiences you’ve read about in this newsletter. Please reach out to me if you are interested in joining! – Adam**





# Lessons from the Experts

## Genevieve Harding

Forge Academy Class of 2019-2020

Something I have spent a lot of time considering and wondering about is what it is like to be a woman (especially a woman who wants to one day have a family) working in politics, a field primarily made up of men. Hearing from Rachel Bovard at Conservative Partnership Institute, I was able to learn firsthand from a woman who is working in the field and it was incredibly encouraging. I appreciated the honesty with which Ms. Bovard answered my questions about being a woman in politics. In particular, I appreciated Ms. Bovard's answer to my question about what a young woman who plans to go into politics but also wants to have a family one day, can do at the start of their career to make the transition to being a mother easier. Ms. Bovard smiled and paused before answering my question and then replied, 'You are a planner, aren't you?' I laughed and said I was. 'I can tell. I was the same way.' She proceeded to tell me that I could choose to work for employers who are supportive of working mothers, but beyond that I wouldn't be able to plan my career in politics. I would just have to take opportunities as they came and make decisions based on present circumstances, both before and when I decide to have children. Having a woman with a very successful career take a moment to directly speak to me and my apprehensions in a way that was incredibly thoughtful instilled in me a confidence that I wouldn't have to separate my career and personal goals, and that there are both women and men in the field who will support me as a whole person.

Overall, for me, Forge 201 went way beyond just a trip to D.C. – it was a defining and confirming experience in the story God is writing for my life and I am incredibly grateful to Forge for providing that experience.







## Adding International Perspective

### Douglas Simpson

Forge Academy Class of 2019-2020

*In January 2020, for the first time, Forge 201 students were hosted by a foreign embassy. We have many students who aspire to impact international relations, and even though they later experience a trip very focused on foreign affairs (Forge 301 in Israel), we were looking for a great way for our students to bolster their cross-cultural understanding while in D.C. We were also very interested in a discussion about the evolving relationships between the United States and the diverse nations in Europe. The Embassy of Hungary was incredibly generous in their hospitality and enthusiasm to host our students, many of our students had heard about Hungary's unique pro-family policies and wanted to learn more.*

As our hosts would later joke about, from the Soviet-designed exterior, it looked as if we were entering a prison. From the interior, it looked as if we had entered an exquisitely decorated Hungarian villa. My experience at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington D.C will follow me for the rest of my life. I have an interest in joining the foreign service, so learning before the trip that one of our speakers would be the Hungarian ambassador to the United States made me even more excited. Dr. László Szabó is a fascinating man. He has an unforgettable presence, utilizing his natural charm, intellect, and easy going personality to hold the attention of any audience. Even in my sleep-deprived state, I could not help but eagerly anticipate every bit of information he fed us. From discussing how diplomacy is carried out to the social and economic policies of a post-Soviet Hungary, I internally clamored to learn even more.

The insights Dr. Szabó shared with us regarding life in the foreign service has solidified my burning desire to join the State Department and continue developing my fluency in Arabic and knowledge of history in the Middle East.





Alexis Nester

## Reflections – 2019

### Alexis Nester

Forge Academy Class of 2018-2019

Many friends have asked me why I set my phone to military time. Though I wish the answer was something more honorable and valiant than just “my friends and I did it in high school and then I got used to it,” it does remind me of the sacrifices my fellow countrymen made to uphold our freedom.

With an extensive family history of military service, including my great-uncles who were a WWII pilot and infantrymen who stormed Omaha Beach on D-Day, as well as my dad who was stationed in Germany and witnessed the fall of Communist East Germany, It was an honor to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier last year and recognize the men and women who gave their lives for our freedom – especially those who left their families behind without a father, mother, brother, or sister.

Our government's response to coronavirus continues to disrupt our lives. We have lost our jobs or have been forced to work from home. We finished classes at home – I finished my last-ever semester of college in my parent's basement. Life today isn't what we are used to. But now, in particular, we must remember those whose lives were interrupted to fight for our freedom when it was under attack.

When we're all required to give some, we must remember, especially now, that some gave all.

# Reflections – 2020

## Lily Stacy

Forge Academy Class 2019-2020

I had been to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier before, but this time was different as I was given the privilege to place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in honor of my Uncle Kenton. In 2017, my Uncle was injured by an IED explosion while serving overseas, leaving him as a quadriplegic, blind in one eye and unable to speak.

I remember arriving at Arlington Cemetery before it was even open, on a quiet and cold January morning, you could feel the sacrifice these soldiers gave for our freedom. Placing the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was such an honor. It was a memorable experience and the highlight of my trip to D.C. I am grateful to Forge for inviting me to be a part of the Honor Guard and thankful to have been a part of the 2019-2020 Forge Mentorship Academy.



# Expert Dinners

## Sarah Weaver

Forge Academy Class of 2019-2020

One of the many things Forge does such a fantastic job of is connecting young conservatives with leaders who are older and wiser than themselves to look up to as they “forge” their own path in politics, business, or whatever career God places them. For me, one of the best experiences of the Forge 201 trip to D.C., was the Expert Dinner, as it did just that. All of the students were divided according to career and foodie interests and ventured off to about 6 different D.C. restaurants to meet up with a young expert in their field, someone who’s been furthering their career for the past 5-15 years. As an aspiring conservative writer, I was incredibly blessed to hear advice and tips from Rachel del Guidice, a Forge alumni and reporter at the Daily Signal. Before attending Forge, I would often feel like it was up to me and me alone to secure the position or job or career I wanted. But what Forge showed me was that there is a network of like minded people who are ready and willing to help and encourage each other along the way. The expert dinner really hit that fact home for me. Rachel eventually became my mentor through the Forge Mentorship Academy, and I have learned so much from her expertise.



Robert B. Bluey, The Heritage Foundation & The Daily Signal



Jessica Prol Smith, ADF





# Forge Alumni Impact

## Peter Burns

Forge Academy Class of 2015-2016

One of the most beneficial parts of the Forge Leadership Network to any of its alumni is the incredible network of passionate and hard working young professionals you join. Having lived and worked in politics in multiple states and now for three years in Washington D.C., I can say with a great deal of confidence that relationships are the most important asset anyone has. Whether they are friends who can keep you grounded in principle and truth in the maelstrom of politics, or mentors who can give you sound guidance and show opportunities you had never imagined, or passing acquaintances that open doors to which you had no means of access, no credential or money will compare to them. Scripture often reminds us that we become like those we spend our time with, so who we surround ourselves with is a daily choice we make about who we want to be ourselves.

All Forge Academy students visit D.C. for a week during the 201 training course, but many decide to return again for internships and job opportunities. I've had the pleasure of getting to know many of the alumni who have moved to D.C., even having three intern for me during the years I spent working at a religious freedom advocacy group. We often share meals, swap stories, and build comradery. People come and go from D.C. in a year or just a matter of a few months, so those of us who've stayed longer have started to fill the informal role of a welcoming committee to new alumni, giving tips on apartment hunting and finding a good church community.

D.C. is a transactional city and many deal in their relationships transactionally, but the Forge alumni network in D.C. has not fallen into that trap. We have invested in each other out of real care and interest in one another's well being and success. Investing the time and energy into people in this way is what leads to lasting and healthy relationships.



## What DC Alumni Say About Forge

"The Alumni Night, held during the current Academy classes 201 trip to D.C. was filled with wonderful "get-to-know-you" games, meeting the new students, and catching up with fellow alumni and staff. It was very special for me to get to meet up with my brother, who was attending 201, and to be able to get to meet his friends in his Forge cohort." – *Grayce McAllister, Forge Academy Class of 2016-2017*

"Living in Washington, D.C., I don't always have the opportunity to mix with the new classes of Forge students, many of whom call Ohio home. That's why meeting up with the latest class of the Forge Mentorship Academy during their trip to D.C. in January was so cool to me. I was able to take a night off the hustle and bustle of D.C. life to spend some time with old friends and make some new ones. Being in D.C. can be taxing on an individual but the students' optimism and bright spirits reminded me of why we prevail – for the future generations of Forge students, years down the line." – *Alec Sears, Forge Academy Class of 2016-2017*

"As a Forge alumni myself, I have been incredibly blessed by the relationships of my fellow Forge Leadership Network alums. There are numerous Forge students from my year and others that I have been connected to through the program that have not only been supportive to me in my professional career but have also become personal friends. The alumni of Forge are a stellar community who excel in being supportive from a professional standpoint, especially when it comes to networking and embarking on your career. Additionally and even more importantly, I am thankful for a community of alumni who follow and seek Christ and make Him known in their spheres of influence." – *Rachel Del Guidice, Forge Academy Class 2015-2016*

# Thank You, Champions & Sponsors!







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***Raising Up the Next Generation of Conservative Leaders in the Public Square***