

ON THE RISE

THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF THE FORGE NETWORK



Winter 2025



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As we reflect on 2025, it's clear that God is doing incredible things through Forge graduates across America. Thanks to you, Forge Fellows aren't just joining the conservative movement—they're shaping it at its highest levels.

Because of your generosity, young conservatives are stepping boldly into the public arena—equipped with deep training, enduring networks, and a biblical foundation to lead with courage. **Like modern-day Josephs, Esthers, and Daniels, Forge grads are already advising the President, Cabinet Members, Governors, Senators, and Supreme Court Justices.**

This spring in Washington, D.C., our 2024–2025 students graduated from the Forge Academy and joined our growing Network of nearly 400 conservatives who have successfully completed the program. Then this summer, our Summits in Nashville and Columbus trained a new group of students—the top 50 of whom you'll meet in this newsletter as members of the new Academy.

Yet the real story of Forge isn't found only in our events—it's seen every day across the Network: graduates taking on major responsibilities in capitol buildings and hometowns, bold voices for truth emerging, and Fellows championing one another in and for key positions. **As one Forge grad recently told me, "Forge gave me the skills I needed in politics—and then surrounded me with an *army of friends* to pursue it alongside."**

As you read this newsletter—from Josh and Riley's journeys to the 2025–2026 Academy Class to the 'Where Are They Now?' updates—I hope you'll be as inspired as I am. **From the White House to statehouses to leading conservative organizations, your generosity is producing the leaders restoring America.**

Thank You!



ADAM JOSEFCZYK
CO-FOUNDER & PRESIDENT
FORGE LEADERSHIP NETWORK



HOW CAN YOU PARTNER WITH FORGE?

PRAY - Please pray for Forge Fellows and their work across the public arena and pray for the Forge staff who work to identify, train, and launch these leaders. God has used your generosity to transform lives and careers.

NOMINATE - 75% of Forge applicants hear about the program from graduates, elected officials, conservative professors, internship directors, and friends of Forge like you. If you know a young conservative who would be a top candidate for this network, you can nominate them for one of our 2026 Summits at ForgeLeadership.org/Nominate.

GIVE - Forge supporters like you across the country give generously to build the talent pipeline for the conservative movement. To give online or share with a friend, visit ForgeLeadership.org/Donate.



THE FORGE IMPACT

800

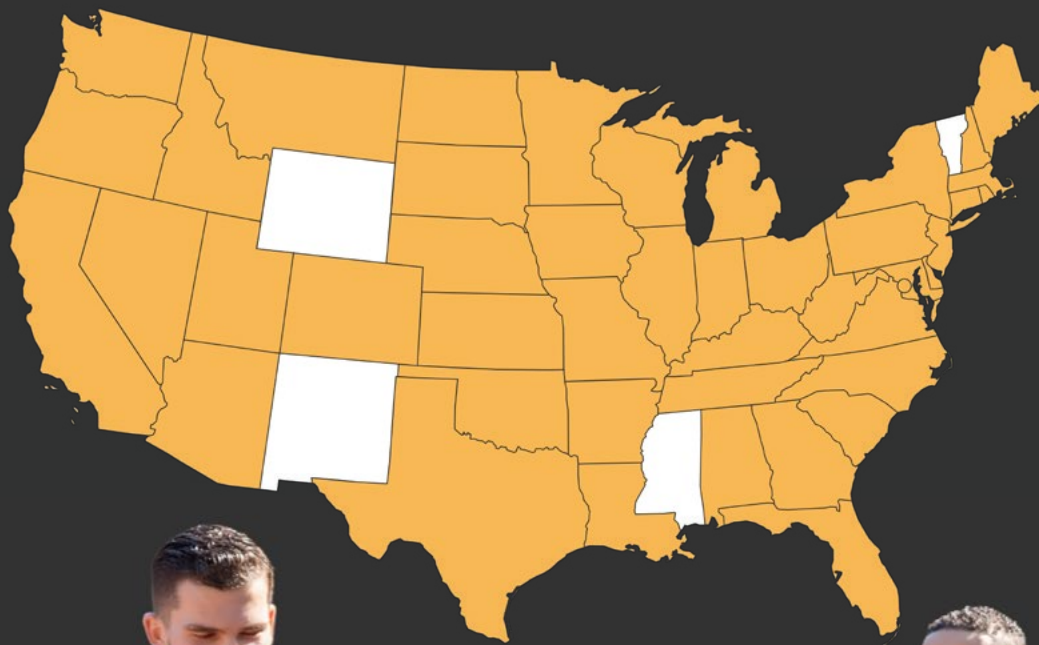
Students
Trained

400

Students
Mentored

290

Campuses



200

Graduates have worked or
interned in government,
policy, or advocacy roles

12

Graduates have served
in elected office across
six states





CALLED TO LEAD

CELEBRATING THE FORGE ACADEMY CLASS OF 2025

In the heart of Washington, D.C., a new chapter began for 43 young leaders. After a year of deep training, mentorship, and hands-on experiences, the Forge Academy Class of 2025 crossed the stage at Forge Academy Graduation and were formally welcomed into the Forge Network.

The week culminated in a powerful celebration—one that honored not just the completion of a program, but the calling, growth, and conviction of each graduate. One by one, students were recognized for successfully completing the Forge Academy, a journey designed to test and form both skills and character.

Honoring Growth, Welcoming Leaders

At graduation, Forge graduates were surrounded by a community of mentors and peers who have walked the same path. Distinguished Forge Fellows—now serving in the presidential administration, on Capitol Hill, and at leading communications and fundraising firms—returned to encourage and welcome the new graduates into the broader Network.

The evening was a reminder that Forge Academy is not the finish line but the launch pad. With their induction, these 43 graduates now join a growing community of several hundred faith-driven conservatives

advancing in influence across the country. From policy to law to communications to the marketplace, they carry with them the same unshakable mission: to lead with conviction and courage in the public arena.

The Heart Behind the Calling

Throughout the celebration, graduates spoke with clarity and passion about the impact they hope to make in their states, communities, and professions. Their words painted a vivid picture of the kind of leaders the Forge Academy shapes—leaders grounded in faith, guided by truth, and committed to serving for the good of others.



Nate Mundy — “I want to serve in local government where I can strengthen communities, build public support, and shape policies that make a tangible difference in people’s daily lives.”



Susannah Ely — “I hope to shape culture by writing and speaking truth into the public square—promoting Christian ethics and helping reorient society toward virtue.”



Carter Langhofer — “I feel called to defend constitutional rights and religious liberty—helping preserve the legal foundations that protect American families, churches, and communities.”



Fernando Bravo — “I want to build and grow businesses that contribute to the flourishing of my local community by creating opportunities for meaningful work and by strengthening Christian conservative organizations.”



Abigail Dejarnatt — “I want to help Christians confidently apply biblical truth to the cultural and political battles of our time—bringing clarity and courage into places where truth is too often ignored.”



Janae Myers — “My deepest desire is to bring Christ’s light back into American politics so that our state and nation can be led with integrity, conviction, and moral courage.”



Julia Campbell — “I want to influence education by leading, teaching, and communicating in ways that help shape curriculum, policy, and the direction of schools across my state.”



Ty Keller — “I feel called to shape state policy through the private sector—strengthening Ohio’s families, communities, and culture by advancing principled, conservative solutions.”

These testimonies were more than personal goals; they were a collective declaration of a generation ready to lead with courage and conviction.

A Network That Keeps Growing With Them

The conclusion of the 2024–2025 Forge Academy may mark the end of one chapter, but it is only the beginning of a lifelong journey for these leaders. They are not graduating from a training program, but are graduating into a Network of conservatives advancing in the public arena. Now as Forge Fellows, they will have the support, mentorship, and strategic connections of the Forge Network as they step into positions of influence across the country.

From the halls of Congress to local school boards, from national organizations to statehouses, Forge Fellows are rising. And with each new graduating class, the Network grows stronger, expanding its influence and impact in shaping the future of America.

Looking Ahead

As the Forge Academy Class of 2025 steps forward, these graduates represent not only the future of conservative leadership but also the hope that faithful, courageous men and women will shape our culture and our nation for the better.

While the celebration marked the close of a yearlong Academy, it truly signified the beginning of something greater—a pathway to leadership, moving from calling to placements of impact that will shape communities, states, and the nation for years to come.

MY FORGE STORY



Josh Hlavaty always envisioned a life in agriculture, not politics. Growing up in Jeromesville, Ohio, he had always planned to be a full-time farmer. But God's plan led him to a dual calling—co-owning his family's 20,000-bird chicken farm while also serving as the Director of Policy at Christian Healthcare Ministries.

Josh's journey into politics began with the pro-life movement, specifically the Ohio Heartbeat Bill. His parents had a personal relationship with the bill's author, which gave him a front seat to the intersection of politics and the pro-life cause. "That cracked the door to my involvement, and it snowballed when I realized there were dozens of other important issues that I cared about," Josh explained. Eager to learn more, Josh dove into local politics, attended educational seminars, and ultimately enrolled in Ashland University's Political Economy Program.

Josh first attended the Forge Leadership Summit in 2020 and was immediately struck by the high caliber of the attendees. "At Forge, I was shocked by the level of professionalism around me. My multiple trips to Congress for advocacy and campaign work were norms, not outliers. Forge surrounded me with focused peers who weren't just interested in politics but were involved."

Ever since joining the Forge Network, Josh has been sowing seeds that are unlike what he had originally envisioned. "After I was done with the Forge Summit, I decided I needed to pursue a political career and see where it takes me." And take him places it did—he went from political campaign manager to legislative aide in the Ohio House, then ran for Ohio House

BEFORE FORGE

Josh had always planned to be a
full-time farmer



Staying Rooted While Stepping Up ~Joshua Hlavaty

Representative. Josh is now the Director of Policy at Christian Healthcare Ministries. He was also recently appointed to the Apple Creek Village Council. Josh didn't have to leave the state to make a difference; He is deeply rooted in Ohio and firmly planted in his community.

"Forge solidified that I'm not going to be the type of person who stands to the side when I see that there are very clear issues in my community, in this country, in this world that need somebody to stand up and do something. I got to the point where I felt like it was my duty to get involved."

Josh's "duty to get involved" is personal as he lays down roots in Ohio and welcomed a baby boy with his wife, Heidi, this past summer.

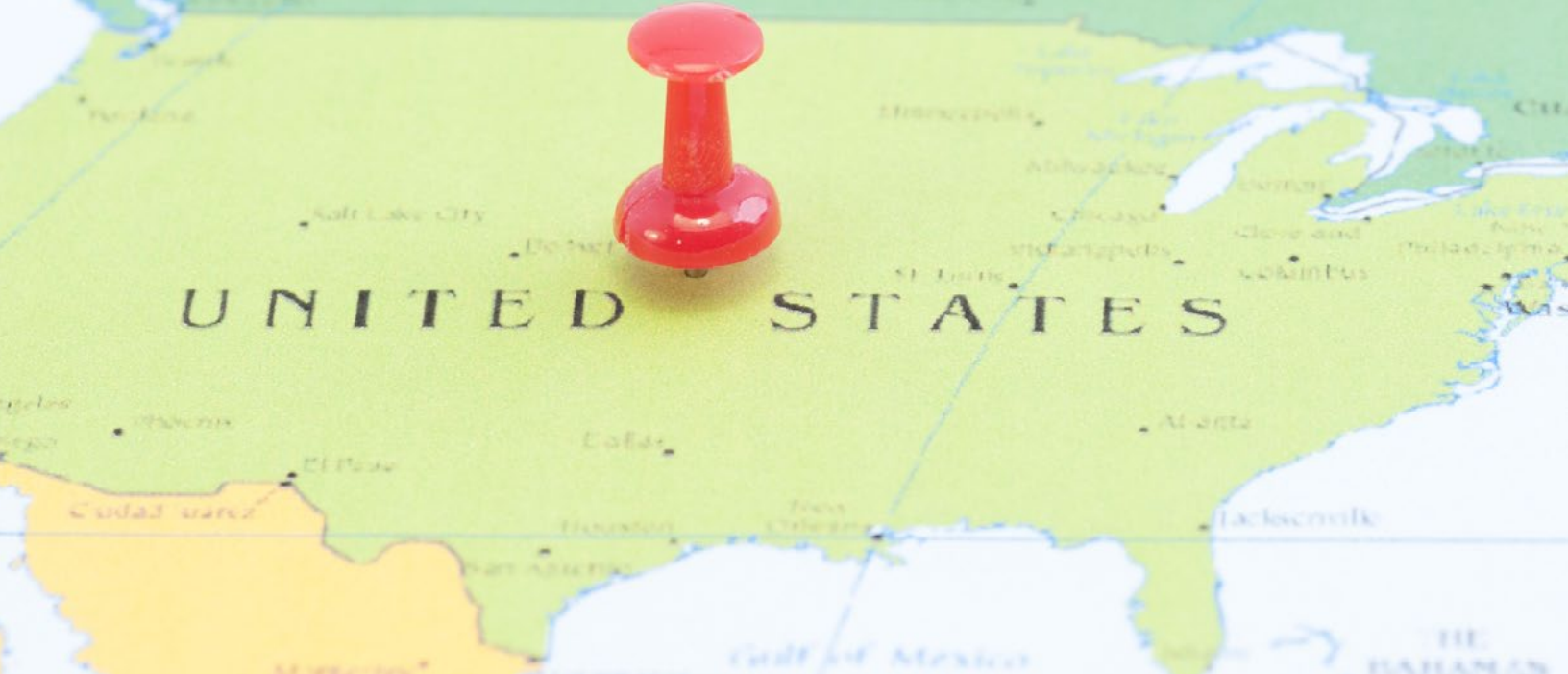
When Josh thinks of Forge, he is reminded of the biblical story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. "If I was in that situation, I know my decision to stand for what is right would be a lot easier if I had someone on my left and right." That is what Forge gave Josh: a network of courageous friends and allies advancing the conservative cause and impacting their communities.

Josh's Forge story is unique, but the transformation that occurred in his life because of Forge is common for Forge Fellows.

AFTER FORGE

God's plan led him to a dual calling—co-owning his family's chicken farm while serving on city council and as the Director of Policy at Christian Healthcare Ministries."





WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Over the last ten years, Forge has had the honor of walking alongside exceptional young men and women who love their country, live out their faith, and are prepared to make an impact. Many began their Forge journey with conviction and calling—but without the experience, connections, or community to turn that passion into real influence.

That's where Forge comes in. As a selective leadership network, Forge provides mentorship, applied training, and a pathway to influence—taking students from calling to influential placements in the public arena. Through your generosity, these young leaders experience formation that builds conviction, friendship that builds strength, and a pathway that leads to leadership and service across the nation.

This depth produces more than short-term results—it builds a lifelong network that forges conviction into capability and friendship into real influence on our nation. Those whom God calls, He equips, and through Forge, He is raising up leaders who are serving faithfully in government, policy, law, and culture.

Over the years, you've met many of these remarkable students in our newsletters. Here's a look—five years later—at where some of these leaders are today thanks to your generosity:



Peter Burns (Forge Academy Class of 2016) is continuing to make national and global impact in public service. When we first met Peter, he was championing the cause of persecuted Christians in the Middle East through nonprofits. He later reunited with former Governor Sam Brownback—whom he had served in Kansas—when Brownback became U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom during the first Trump Administration. After the administration, Peter led the International Religious Freedom Summit, which brought together thousands of leaders from hundreds of faiths and nations each year to advance global religious liberty. Today, he's back at the State Department, serving as Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of State, using his expertise to help shape U.S. foreign policy.



Jena Powell (Forge Academy '16) went from being a Forge student to serving three terms as a State Representative in the Ohio House. During her time in office, she introduced and championed the Save Women's Sports legislation in Ohio, working alongside two Forge Fellows who helped in this effort as her Legislative Aides. After four years of perseverance, she passed that legislation, which combined with a bill to outlaw transgender surgery on children. Jena now raises her family and owns her company in Southwest Ohio.



Rachel del Guidice (Forge Academy '17) began her career on Capitol Hill and as a congressional reporter and podcast host for The Daily Signal, where she covered policy issues including tax reform, healthcare and immigration. She then served as Communications Director for a Member of Congress and later for a major pro life organization. In January 2025, she joined Fox News Digital as a culture and education reporter, where she continues to write on media, policy and cultural topics, using her voice to advance the truth.



Olivia Rogers (Forge Academy '18) completed her undergrad in her native Kansas and she became a standout at Notre Dame Law School, earning her JD and serving on the prestigious Law Review. She has twice clerked for judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals.



Jordan Leatherwood (Forge Academy '18) was weighing how to best invest in his community whether through a teaching career or in the public arena. With the encouragement of his friends in the Forge Network, Jordan took the leap into state government, serving as a Legislative Aide in the Ohio House of Representatives, and now as liaison for the Ohio Secretary of State. He invests in his southern Ohio hometown as Chairman of his Pike County GOP where they recently doubled their annual attendance. Jordan has continued to invest back into the Forge Network year after year coaching new students on the legislative process.



Alexis (Nester) Anderson (Forge Academy '19) interned at the U.S. Department of Justice and graduated from Hillsdale College before she began her career as a journalist for The Washington Free Beacon. She then served as Political Director for Parents Defending Education, a powerful movement that exposed the woke influence on American public schools after the COVID-19 lockdowns. Today, she serves as a program officer in the philanthropy world, ensuring resources go to the most effective organizations addressing America's most crucial issues.



Bess Blackburn (Forge Academy '20)

During the uncertainty of 2020, Bess discovered Forge Leadership Network—and it changed the trajectory of her life. Through the Academy, she found mentors, friends, and a renewed sense of calling that inspired her to pursue law school. Since then, Bess returned to her home state of Tennessee, having served in the Office of Governor Bill Lee, working alongside the Governor's Chief Counsel, in the Tennessee Attorney General's Office within the Public Interest Division, and as adjunct faculty at her law school alma mater Liberty University. Bess now serves as Senior Policy Advisor to the Governor of Tennessee.

Ten years in, we're seeing the long-term fruit of the Forge mission. The stories above show what happens when you invest deeply in bold young leaders: years later, they're advancing greatly in influence while still leading with conviction, grounded in faith, and shaping policy and culture at every level.

Thanks to you, the skills, friendships, and opportunities they gained through Forge continue to propel them forward as they serve with courage in every sphere of public life.



MEET THE 2025-2026 FORGE ACADEMY



Skylar Baird — University of Tennessee

Skylar Baird, from Lebanon, Tennessee, is a sophomore studying Agricultural Leadership with minors in Public Affairs and International Agriculture. She has already worked on both the state and federal levels, gaining firsthand insight into policymaking. With strong conservative values and a passion for agriculture, she hopes to make a lasting impact through public service.

"This experience has been life-changing—it has strengthened my confidence, clarified my values, and fueled my commitment to serve my community and honor my faith through leadership."

Looking ahead, Skylar hopes to pursue a career in policy—possibly as a lobbyist or attorney—and eventually consider holding public office.



Elise Bender — Lipscomb University

Elise Bender, a student at Lipscomb University, is passionate about business, politics, and fundraising, and hopes to use her entrepreneurial mindset to make an impact. She dreams of a career that blends entrepreneurship with advancing conservative values.

"Forge delivered on its promise to help guide me in my career path.

This week has been truly transformative, not only in how I approach politics and business, but also in the friendships and relationships I've built."

Elise reflects:

"Words cannot fully express the profound impact Forge Leadership has had on my life. This experience has been instrumental in shaping my career path and providing invaluable wisdom to help me achieve my goals."

Meet the 2025–2026 Forge Academy Class:

For a young conservative who excels at the Forge Leadership Summit, the Forge Academy is the natural next step—a year-long on-ramp into the conservative movement that provides training, mentorship, and lifelong community.

Every year, Forge selects a cohort of top Summit attendees to participate in the year-long Academy. During the Academy, participants:

- Take part in monthly seminars and skill-building sessions
- Travel to Washington, D.C., where they'll build national connections and learn directly from policy leaders
- Travel to Arizona to study state-level policy and see firsthand how conservative reforms are shaped and advanced
- Get paired with a leading mentor in their chosen field

The top four outcomes in the lives and careers of Forge Academy graduates are:

- Professional clarity or acceleration in their field
- Fortitude and courage to "enter the fray" of public life
- Deepened, renewed, or newfound faith and identity in Christ
- Life-changing friendships, networks, and support systems

The 2025–2026 Forge Academy class has just been inducted and is ready for a year of learning, growth, and impact.

These are just a few of the incredible young leaders in the 2025–2026 Forge Academy. Together, they represent the next wave of courage, conviction, and leadership that will shape the future of our states and our nation.

We can't wait to see how God uses this year to sharpen their skills, strengthen their character, and expand their influence.

To meet the whole 2025-2026 Academy Class, visit ForgeLeadership.org/2026

Robert Tandy — Miami University

Rob Tandy is a Political Science and Communications student at Miami University. He serves as Director of Events for Miami's College Republicans and contributes to grassroots campaigns in Cincinnati. He also interned at The Heritage Foundation, where his passion for public policy and communications deepened.

"The professional development that I experienced over only five days was astounding. I had never received hands-on experience when it comes to media training, public speaking, campaign workshops, and drafting and debating legislation. Forge gave me that opportunity, and I am extremely grateful."



Garrison Bennett — University of North Georgia

Garrison Bennett is a student at the University of North Georgia, pursuing a degree in political science, as well as a full-time Consumer and Community Affairs director for Insurance Commissioner John King.

"...Forge has equipped me with the ability to structure and effectively utilize these contacts. I also have learned powerful skills in the realm of mass communication. From working a room to TV presence and public speaking, Forge has given me training in each of these spheres. I also have expanded my network through Forge into the surrounding states of my own, and I look forward to keeping these relationships strong."

Garrison is currently serving his second elected term on the State Board of the Georgia Association of College Republicans. He also serves as Vice Chairman of the Hall County Young Republicans and as Committeeman for Georgia's 9th District Republican Party.





FORMATION

The 2025 Forge Summits





Forge Nashville & Columbus Summits

In June and July, two cities—Nashville and Columbus—hosted a new class of exceptional young conservatives who stepped into a week of challenge, growth, and transformation at the Forge Summits.

From applications nationwide, 100 participants were carefully selected—50 per Summit. Both Summits had a waitlist, a reminder that young leaders are eager for mentorship, training, and a network that equips them to stand strong in an increasingly complex cultural and political environment.



High-Impact Training

Each Summit week is designed to stretch participants far beyond the classroom. Attendees sat across from sitting state legislators who not only shared lessons from their own journeys, but also offered hands-on mentorship in navigating the legislative process. Forge's signature "Campaign-in-a-Day" competition immersed students in the fast-paced world of political strategy, challenging them to think critically, work as a team, and lead under pressure.

Participants also received professional media training—learning how to communicate clearly and confidently in a world where one interview or social media clip can shape a career. And woven through every element was a biblical worldview, equipping young conservatives not just with skills, but with conviction and character to lead well in the public arena.



Beyond the Summit: The Forge Academy

As the week drew to a close, the enthusiasm in the room was unmistakable. Many participants were already setting their sights on the next step: the Forge Academy. Designed for the top Summit attendees, the Academy is a yearlong investment in leadership that builds on the Summit experience.

Over the course of a year, Academy Fellows take part in two in-person training experiences. In January, they gather in Phoenix to focus on state-level leadership opportunities. In May, they reunite in Washington, D.C., for exposure to national-level leadership and the connections needed to thrive in the nation's capital. Between these intensives, Fellows receive ongoing training, mentorship, and access to the Forge Network that opens doors to career-defining opportunities.



Looking Ahead

After the Summits, top students applied for the 2025-2026 Forge Academy. 50 were chosen and their year is underway - you can meet them in this newsletter in the centerfold.

The Forge Summits are more than just a week of training—they are the spark that ignites a lifelong journey of leadership. And as this summer proved once again, that spark is lighting fires in the hearts of young conservatives who will shape the future of our states and our nation.



ON THE RISE

Forge Fellows Serving At the Highest Levels of Government

In just a decade, Forge Leadership Network has grown from a bold vision into a vibrant movement of young leaders rising to meet the moment. Your generosity is already bearing extraordinary fruit. **In 2025 alone, Forge Fellows have stepped into some of the most strategic and influential roles in government, policy, and law.**

Their paths testify not only to their talent and preparation but also to your generosity—and to God's goodness in raising up leaders for such a time as this. The Lord has always called faithful men and women to lead in crucial moments—like the men of Issachar in the Old Testament, who “understood the times and knew what to do.” Through Forge, you are equipping the next generation of leaders to step boldly into an often-hostile public arena. Backed with the training, mentorship, and “army of friends” you’ve

made possible, these Fellows are courageously advancing truth in every corner of public life.

Thanks to you, Forge grads aren’t just joining the conservative movement—they’re shaping it at its highest levels. Because of your generosity, Forge Fellows are already advising the President, Cabinet Members, Senators, and Supreme Court Justices.

As a U.S. Senator, now-Vice President JD Vance stated, “(Forge) is doing a lot to bring basic conservative values back to our culture and young people.”



Key Roles Forge Fellows Have Stepped Into in 2025:

- Senior staff for the Vice President, White House
- Classified national security role, White House
- Special Assistant to the President
- Legislative affairs staff, White House
- Clerkship with a U.S. Supreme Court Justice
- Clerkship on the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals
- Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of State
- Special Assistant to the Secretary of War
- City council appointee, Ohio
- District Director for a U.S. Senator
- Legislative aides in Congress
- Legislative aides in Statehouses
- White House intern, Vice President's office
- Fifth Forge Fellow hired at the Center for Christian Virtue
- Full-time role at Alliance Defending Freedom

Your Generosity At Work

Your investment has equipped them with the skills, relationships, and network of support that enable them to make a faster, greater impact on our country—and one that will endure.

One of those young leaders now serving in the White House shared,

“One of the most valuable parts of Forge has been the relationships I’ve formed through these experiences. Many of my classmates remain close friends and confidants. Investing in individuals isn’t enough—that’s why Forge is building a network that will stand the test of time. For every Forge member, being part of this Network is priceless.”

And a young leader clerking on one of our nation’s highest



courts reflected:

"Forge has opened more doors for me than I can count. The mentorship and support that I have received from Adam, Justin, and the many people I've met through the Forge Network has been tremendous."

A Trusted Standard

What makes these accomplishments remarkable is not merely the prestige of the roles, but the spirit and character with which Fellows approach them. Forge grads are marked by courage, conviction, and humility. They see their work not just as a career, but as a calling. Whether serving in the White House, advising state legislators, or engaging in cultural battles through the courts, they lead with integrity and a heart to serve their fellow man.

In the book of Esther, we see God's people facing a dire moment, and Esther is called to use her position of influence for their deliverance: "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). Likewise, our Fellows feel that same call to courage and service—to stand for truth and serve others, even at personal cost.

Yet the beauty of the Forge Network is that, just as Esther had Mordecai and her people praying for her, our community surrounds one another with encouragement, accountability, and a shared call to action.

Your generosity has guided these young leaders from calling to placements in real-world positions of leadership and influence across our states and nation. From the White House to statehouses, to leading conservative organizations and everywhere in between, we're watching our Network grow in both number and influence—and we're profoundly grateful to you for fueling these rising stars.



New Guard Press

Founded by a Forge Fellow and led by a team of Forge Fellows, New Guard Press amplifies the voices of young conservatives across America. We want to introduce this emerging and award-winning publication to you! You can visit NewGuardPress.com to learn more and read their work.

Young.

Since its inception, New Guard Press has been entirely run by college students and young professionals from all across America. We seek to give a platform to the next generation of conservative leaders.

Intellectual.

New Guard Press is not a news site or an academic journal. NGP is an online magazine dedicated to thoughtful, reflective contemplation on the highest things and how they relate to our present cultural moment.

Conservative.

Our positive vision rests on the traditions of the West, rooted in Christianity, which we believe will be the bedrock of a great cultural rebirth in statesmanship, the arts, religion, and education.



KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD ATTEND A

FORGE SUMMIT?

50% OFF

TUITION FOR STUDENTS YOU NOMINATE

NOMINATE A STUDENT

SCAN BELOW OR VISIT
FORGELEADERSHIP.ORG/NOMINATE



RAISE UP THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATIVE LEADERS

Forge Leadership Network mentors, trains, and launches young conservatives, equipping them to lead in the public arena. Forge is a selective leadership network providing mentorship, applied training, and a pathway to influence in the public arena.

100% INCREASE

The number of students who report they are very likely to be actively engaged in the public arena more than DOUBLES after attending Forge.

NOMINATE STUDENTS HERE
FORGELEADERSHIP.ORG/NOMINATE



MY FORGE STORY

A large portrait of Riley Spencer, a young woman with long, wavy blonde hair and blue eyes, smiling. She is wearing a black sleeveless top with buttons and a black belt. The background is dark.

Riley Spencer always believed she was called to overseas mission work. From a young age, she pursued that calling with determination—applying for overseas trips and seeking opportunities to serve. But after eleven failed attempts to go abroad, she began to question where she was meant to make an impact. It wasn't until college, when she started a pro-life group and

the director of the local pregnancy resource center shared with her: "This is the mission field, helping serve children, mothers, and families in need" that her perspective began to shift.

Then came the 2024 Forge Leadership Summit in Nashville. For Riley, Forge brought clarity. It bridged her passion for service with a new sense of purpose: public policy as her mission field. What she once thought had been detours were actually preparing her for a calling she hadn't yet seen clearly. Through Forge, Riley discovered how her heart for ministry could thrive in the world of politics—serving families, defending conservative values, and advancing truth in her home state of Georgia.

Riley attended college at Kennesaw State University, where she co-founded the Young Women for America chapter on campus. Her husband, now a fellow legislative aide, launched the College Republicans at Kennesaw, and together, they championed conservative values in a setting where they were often challenged. Riley had already interned at the Family Research Council and heard several colleagues speak highly of Forge.

"Honestly, I thought, 'What's one more political conference? It'll be fun,'" Riley recalled. But the Forge Summit proved to be far more than she expected.

From the opening day of the Summit, Riley was struck by the level of substance. It wasn't just policy talk or networking—it was training with purpose.

"At the Summit, I expected the usual speakers and networking, but what I got was something much deeper," she said. "The mock legislature, committee work, and campaign simulations gave me



The Political Mission Field

~ Riley Spencer

hands-on experience that made policy come alive. And the people—these weren't just ambitious young conservatives. They were thoughtful, humble, and grounded in their faith."

The legislative simulation, in particular, stood out to Riley. "Participating in committees and voting on legislation on the Tennessee House Floor gave me a whole new perspective," she said. "I was in the shoes of the very Senators I now work for."

Following her Summit experience, Riley was chosen for the Forge Mentorship Academy's 2024-2025 class. With the encouragement and support of Forge mentors and peers, she stepped into her current role as a Legislative Assistant in the Georgia State Senate—something she had not anticipated just months earlier.

"The Forge Summit came right before I was hired in the Senate," she said. "I don't think I would have walked into this opportunity with the same confidence or skillset without it."

Forge didn't just prepare Riley for her job—it gave her something far more rare: a network of peers who shared her political convictions and Biblical worldview.

"One night after an Academy call, I got on the phone with some girls from Forge, and we talked for two hours," she said. "We debated ideas and challenged each other, and it struck me: this is the first time I've had friends who understand both policy and Scripture in the same way. Usually, it's one or the other."

That kind of community was game-changing.

"It warmed my heart and fueled my vision. How powerful it is to unite young people like this for a common cause. I knew then—I want to be

on this team."

"There's a real heart behind Forge. It's not about creating political celebrities. It's about shaping people of character who can lead without losing who they are."

As she continues to grow in her career, Riley is thinking long-term. She hopes to move into donor relations and nonprofit leadership in Georgia, but for now, she's investing in her state and learning the ropes of policy from the inside.

"Forge has cemented my goals and given me actionable ways to obtain those goals. It has relit a fire for Christian love in public policy in me and given me people to lean on when I begin to get burnt out in the harsh and difficult world of politics. Politics is always relational, and Forge has connected me with some of the most driven, kind, and faithful people I've ever met," she said. "It's a network I'll lean on for the rest of my life."

Riley Spencer's story is still being written, but thanks to your investment in her through Forge, she has clarity, conviction, and a team behind her.





forgeleadership.org | info@forgeleadership.org
@ForgeLeadership