

PHI BETA KAPPA

Alpha Association of Colorado

Summer 2023



Alpha Association Awards \$5,500 in Scholarships

The Alpha Association is pleased to announce the 2023 winners of our two scholarships for graduate studies.

Nathaniel Phillips, a 2023 *summa cum laude* graduate of Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, will receive the \$3,500 scholarship. He majored in Wildlife Health and Conservation Ecology and will begin his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree at CSU this fall. Nathaniel played on the Cornell

football team all four years as an offensive lineman and was named Cornell College Athletics Sportsman of the Year his senior year.

Na'ama Nevo, a 2023 Distinction in Mathematics and *cum laude* graduate of Colorado College, will receive the \$2,000 Scholarship. She majored in Mathematics and will begin her Ph.D. program in that field at Northeastern University in Boston. An interesting note is that she ran cross country and track her

four years at CC and in her senior year was named to the Academic All-District® Team, selected by College Sports Communicators.

Thanks to all Alpha Association members for your donations and support that make these awards possible and to the Scholarship Committee for all their hard work. This year's eleven applicants were well-qualified and had excellent credentials, and the committee completed a thorough evaluation of all candidates and their submissions before choosing the two winners. The PBK Alpha Association board approved the recommendations. The committee consisted of Chair Barbara Berryman, Tom Hall, Kate Silz-Carson, Julie DeWoody, and Amy Beth Rell.

Since 1994 the Alpha Association has awarded \$100,000 in scholarships!

Annual Meeting—Saturday, October 21, 2023, 11:30 A.M.

"PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN ASTRONAUTS" BY DR. VALERIE NEAL, FORMER CURATOR OF HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT, SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM



Through no fault of her own, Sally Ride's fame has eclipsed public awareness of other women in America's astronaut corps. Ineligible to become astronauts until 20 years after men were chosen for the job, women have lived and worked as equals in space during the past 45 years. Each one of them is quite accomplished and worthy of recognition. Many have formidable resumes and have set records as the first or only women to achieve various professional milestones. They are engineers, scientists, pilots, military officers, and leaders. They are also wives, mothers, grandmothers, divorcees, widows, and singles. Unsurprisingly, they are highly motivated, intelligent, quick to learn, and driven to excel. Fifteen of them are members of Phi Beta Kappa or Sigma Xi. Gaining perspective on these women helps us understand how NASA and society have evolved since the Space Age began to the point that women's place is now in space.

Alpha Association member Valerie Neal, Ph.D., retired from the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum after 30 years as a space history curator involved in research, writing, collecting artifacts, developing exhibits and public programs, and public service. Her portfolio was human spaceflight in the Space Shuttle and International Space Station eras. Before that, she worked with NASA for 10 years as a writer and editor for space mission publications. She was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa in 1971, the year of the chapter's installation at Texas Christian University.

Nathaniel Phillips



Growing up in Colorado, Nathaniel developed a passion for wildlife and the natural world. This led him to

pursue an individualized degree in Wildlife Health and Conservation Ecology at Cornell College. While at school, Nathaniel participated in a wide range of courses and research, including a study abroad course focused on the effects of climate change on fire corals in Belize. He also completed a fellowship at the Saint Louis Zoo

Institute for Conservation Medicine, focusing on the interface of human, animal, and environmental health through a One Health Approach. Related projects included the St. Louis Box Turtle Project and the Carnivore Conservation Initiative. Nathaniel has also worked with a wide range of species as an animal care intern and volunteer at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs.

In addition to being a starter offensive lineman on Cornell's football team, Nathaniel held multiple college work-study positions, including as a biology lab assistant, chemistry tutor, and tour guide manager. In his free time, Nathaniel enjoys painting, writing, and spending time in nature looking for wildlife.

Nathaniel hopes to pursue a career in zoo and wildlife medicine and to help inspire the next generation of veterinarians and conservationists to care for the natural world.

Na'ama Nevo



Na'ama Nevo grew up in Portland, Oregon, and graduated from Colorado College with a BA in Mathematics.

Throughout college Na'ama spent each summer participating in three different Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), which are internship programs sponsored by the National Science Foundation. This helped her gain experience in the research process and explore a variety of subjects, such as random graphs and algebraic geometry.

She also spent a semester abroad studying at the Budapest Semesters in Mathematics program, which sparked her interest in areas of combinatorics and theoretical computer science. For her thesis Na'ama chose to research algebraic coding theory because she was

interested in how error-correcting codes use discrete mathematics, a pure math subject, as a tool to optimize digital data transmission and cloud storage.

Outside of academics, Na'ama ran on the cross country and track teams at Colorado College and took piano lessons, both hobbies that she hopes to continue alongside her studies in the coming years.

Alpha Association's Mentorship Program

The Alpha Association inaugurated its mentorship program in 2019 to help mentees achieve or exceed their life goals and aspirations. Ben Palen has been the force behind our program, and he shares his experiences below, followed by the perspectives of two of his mentees.

Annual Meeting, Lunch, and Speaker — Saturday, October 21, 2023, at the Denver Athletic Club

The Alpha Association's annual meeting and lunch will be Saturday, October 21, 2023, at the Denver Athletic Club, 1325 Glenarm Pl., Denver 80204.

A short business meeting to review the past year and to elect officers for the coming year will begin at 11:30 A.M. After lunch Alpha Association member Valerie Neal will begin her talk. (Please see page 1 for more information.)

The lunch will be an Italian buffet and will cost \$35. Parking for this event at Denver Athletic Club will be \$7. As always, guests are welcome!

If you plan to attend, please return the reservation form along with a check for your lunch to the address on the form, or pay online through PayPal (treasurer@pbkcolorado.org). Reservations must be received by Monday, **October 16, 2023**. If you make a reservation but cannot attend, send an email to board@pbkcolorado.org to notify us. After October 16 we will not be able to refund the lunch cost because we are guaranteeing the number of guests.

Proposed 2023–24 Board of Directors

The following members have agreed to run for the board of directors for this coming year:

President: Diane Palese

First Vice President: George Gramer, Jr.

Second Vice President: Barbara Berryman

Secretary: Kristin Adcock

Treasurer: Greg Sorensen

Ex officio Members: Ben Palen, Alana Horwitz, and Drew Voitiv

Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

Ben Palen: Mentor Extraordinaire

The seeds of Ben's commitment to mentoring were planted several decades ago when he arrived at the University of Kansas, fresh from graduating from what was at the time the smallest high school in the state. KU had thousands of students, and it was a challenge in many ways to adjust to such a new environment. Early in his freshman year he connected with two professors who became his mentors. "Their wisdom and words of kindness carried me through some challenges, and in many ways the experiences with them shaped into the person that I still am today. I have never forgotten how helpful they were to me."

It is that same spirit that Ben brings to mentoring Phi Beta Kappa members now, especially recent initiates. "For them, I want to offer

advice, kindness, and a willingness to listen to their concerns and their goals. In other words, I try to put myself in their shoes, and to be someone that they can rely on for objective guidance provided with their best interests at heart. This is my way of ‘paying forward’ all of the good that came from my experiences years ago as a mentee.”

Two Mentees’ Experiences

Alana Horwitz

“After graduating from college during the peak of COVID, I was at a roadblock for what I should be doing. I knew I wanted to go to law school, but I was struggling with the timeline of when I wanted to attend, what I should do during the year or two before attending, and generally how to choose a school. I was lucky enough to come under the mentorship of Ben Palen, a law school graduate and a member of PBK’s alumni association in Colorado.

“From the very beginning, Ben was a supportive and reliable mentor who consistently showed his genuine interest in my success. He is very well-connected in the Denver area and beyond, and he used his network to help me learn more about the practice of law and the admissions process. For example, Ben put me in touch with an attorney at a firm in New York, as well as helped set up a meeting with the Dean of Admissions from his alma mater. Ben also set up a coffee chat between the two of us and his other mentee who plans to go to law school, where we sat for hours discussing our interests and bouncing ideas and recommendations off each other regarding the application process.

“After I moved to Florida to serve with AmeriCorps for a year, Ben still made sure to stay connected. Now, as a second-year student at the University of Virginia School of Law, I continue to speak to Ben (when time permits, as law school is no joke!). Most importantly, though, Ben has taught me

the value of mentorship. I have since taken on a new mentee from my undergraduate school who hopes to attend my law school and is looking for guidance in the process. It is so rewarding to help someone who is going through the exciting, albeit stressful, experience that I went through a few years ago.

“The value of my mentorship relationship with Ben has solidified my interest in serving as a mentor to other people. I am grateful to both the Phi Beta Kappa Alpha Association of Colorado and to Ben for instilling the importance of mentorship in my mind.”

Sarah Birkhaeuser

“I enrolled in the PBK mentoring program in 2020. I had just graduated and was taking my first shaky steps into the professional world and didn’t know how to make strategic career choices. As a first-generation graduate, I didn’t have a strong support system within my immediate family that was ready to provide this type of guidance, much less someone who could help me transition from undergrad to law school.

“The time I’ve spent in the mentorship program has been hugely beneficial to me intellectually as well as professionally. My mentor has really taken the time to see me through major professional and life changes: he helped me redirect my career path, counseled me through the law school application cycle, found connections in areas of interest for me so I could learn more about opportunities that existed outside of what I could find online, and got me connected to a broader community of like-minded individuals who helped me flesh out my path forward.

“Without the mentorship program, I’d be in a very different place today. My mentor through PBK has been instrumental in shaping my career path. This last year, after completing a Fulbright grant, I leaned on my mentor to

provide guidance about career options and to help me weigh the pros and cons between opportunities that had been offered to me at that time. Without the mentorship program, I wouldn’t have a professional in my field to ask questions to, much less have someone who could provide me with valuable connections as I transition into law school. Our PBK community is more valuable when we connect with one another, and I am so grateful that the mentorship program has allowed me to do so in a meaningful way. I hope to be able to participate as a mentor myself some time in the future.”

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If you are interested in applying for a mentorship or being a mentor, visit our mentorship website at www.pbkcolorado.org/mentorship or contact Ben Palen (benpalen@yahoo.com).

Upcoming Key Connections Event

The Alpha Association’s Key Connections event for this year will be Thursday, September 21, 2023, at Bar Max, 2412 E. Colfax Ave., which is owned by fellow PBK member Marshall Smith. Register by September 20 at www.pbk.org/Key-Connections.

In Memoriam

Oren Anderson graduated from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. He had a Ph.D. in Chemistry and was a Professor of Chemistry at CSU.

Lawrence Van Horn graduated from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and had a Ph.D. in Anthropology. For two years he was the association’s executive director and secretary.

The board has made donations to the Members’ Endowment to honor Oren and Larry.



PHI BETA KAPPA
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Dues / Mail and Email Addresses

Please check your address label to see when your dues expire. Your membership can be renewed by using the meeting reservation / renewal form in this newsletter or through PayPal (send payment to treasurer@pbkcolorado.org). If you are no longer interested in being a member, please let us know.

Send new mail or email addresses to board@pbkcolorado.org. If you have not received any recent emails from us, we do not have your current email address.

PHI BETA KAPPA • ALPHA ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO Annual Meeting, Lunch, and Speaker

Saturday, October 21, 2023
11:30 A.M.

Denver Athletic Club
1325 Glenarm Pl., Denver, CO 80204

Details about parking will be sent to those making reservations.



Program: "Perspectives on Women Astronauts"
by Dr. Valerie Neal, Former Curator of Human Spaceflight,
Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum



**Paid reservations must be received by Monday,
October 16, 2023.**