MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA NATIONAL COMPETITION

EMPOWERING WOMEN OF ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, AND EDUCATION

THE LITTLE ROCK MARRIOTT HOTEL JULY 1 - JULY 7 2019 LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS



July 1–7, 2019

As Governor, I welcome all those gathered at the Little Rock Marriott for Ms. Wheelchair America 2020. This week, the current titleholders from each state will in training, mentori and judging sess med at in e and demonstrat mendous value a gifts women with disabilities contribute to their communities and to our nation.

The basic right of all citizens to pursue full, independent, and productive lives is at the core of our democracy. Ms. Wheelchair America recognizes the incredible put of women who rely a to represent and s with disabilities. It is an honor to host a pag and accomplishments of these talented and inspirational women.

On behalf of the State of Arkansas, best wishes for a successful and memorable event!

ncere

Asa Hutchinson



FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR FRANK SCOTT, JR.

Dear Ms. Wheelchair America visitors,

As mayor of the City of Little Rock, it is my great pleasure to welcome the 2019 Ms. Wheelchair America pageant to Little Rock.

Little Rock has long been known for our welcoming people and our natural hospitality. It's my hope that as you explore our great city, you'll experience the energy and fervor of our citizens.



first hand. You'll see that their smiles are genuine and their happiness to see you is authentic.

I also hope you will be able to explore our inclusive and diverse city. We're home to such cultural treasures as the William J. Clinton Presidential Library, the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site and the Arkansas Arts Center. We also have a wide variety of unique restaurants and shopping venues that make Little Rock a great place to visit and call home.

We're so glad you're here, and I hope that the next Ms. Wheelchair America carries fine memories of Little Rock with her throughout out her reign.

Sincerely. T

CITY HALL, BUTTE KOL, 500 W. MARKHAM



Dear Ms. Wheelchair America visitors:

Welcome to Arkansas's capital city! Little Rock is excited to host the Ms. Wheelchair America competition. Little Rock is a city brimming with a diverse landscape and our own special brand of southern charm. I hope you have the chance to experience all our city has to offer while you are here.

In recent years, Little Rock has undergone a tremendous renewal. A catalyst for the city's success has been the William J. Clinton Presidential Center's 2004 opening, propelling us as a true tourist destination. World- class attractions, award-winning restaurants, amazing museums and new hotels have opened throughout the city.

If you like the outdoors, our River Trail system has over 17 miles of stair-free trails, and downtown's Riverfront Park and sculpture garden are a must-see. Our revitalized, and easily accessible, Main Street Creative Corridor, is full of dining options and cultural institutions including Ballet Arkansas and the Arkansas Reparatory Theatre. Further down Main Street you'll find the vibrant South Main neighborhood, or stroll down President Clinton Avenue through the River Market district, both areas offer stand-out dining scenes, unique shopping and late-night options.

Little Rock is known for its charm and hospitality, sincere service, genuine people and engaging experiences. Coupled with all of the great things to see and do, it's why Trivago.com has named our city a Top Ten "Best U.S. Value Destination" three consecutive years.

Whether you're a contestant, a judge, a family member or just a supporter of the incredible women on the stage, we're glad you're here and wish you a successful competition. We encourage you to discover the pleasant surprise of Little Rock, and see why the locals say, "Life is Better with a Southern Accent".

Kind Regards,

Gretchen Hall, CDME President & CEO Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau



Welcome,

On behalf of the Ms. Wheelchair America Inc. Board of Directors, I would like to welcome you to Ms. Wheelchair America 2020, in Little Rock, Arkansas. Little Rock is known for the Civil Rights issues that were brought to National attention by the Little Rock Nine in 1957. Ms. Wheelchair America wants to bring attention to the Civil Rights of people with disabilities that are still neglected today.

Our theme is "Celebrating Independence". There are many types of Independence and the need for it has a unique ability to challenge individuals in many ways. This week, everyone will be challenged to learn about themselves and others. Encouraged to explore new ideas and activities, which should push the boundaries of their comfort zone. Each person should leave different then they arrived, changed for the better. Be open to this experience, take time to explore and find your definition of independence!

Dr. Philip K. Wood saw challenge. He had devoted his career to rehabilitation, helping people use their talents, capabilities, and determination to be productive members of society. In 1972, he established Ms. Wheelchair America as a forum for change, a simple way for promoting the achievements and accomplishments of women who utilized wheelchairs for mobility. This year, the 48th Ms. Wheelchair America will be crowned. It is important that we thank Dr. Wood for being a visionary, without his passion, this organization would not exist.

Ms. Wheelchair America has challenged countless people. Now it's your turn. I want to congratulate each titleholder for everything they have achieved to get here. The titleholders truly represent what the Ms. Wheelchair America program is about. This week they will have the opportunity to show their talents, capabilities, determination and share a platform that has special meaning and importance to them.

Your challenge is to build a strong legacy, just like Dr. Philip Wood. Your legacy will require action that starts with you. Let's get started!

Shelly Loose

President, Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.

P.O. Box 86 – Byron Center, Michigan 49315 1-877-MSWHEEL (679-4335)



Hey, y'all! Welcome to Little Rock!!!!! We have been looking forward to this week for a year and a half. I can't believe it is finally here!

Hosting Nationals is a dream come true for me personally and for the Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas organization as a whole. Our mission here, at Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas, is to bridge the gap between the walking and rolling worlds through education then advocation. Hosting the 48th annual Ms. Wheelchair America Competition seems like the perfect way to help bridge that gap!

I hope that you have come prepared for the adventure of a lifetime. This week you will bond with sisters you haven't met before now. This week you will realize just how "normal" you are. This week, I hope you leave with your eyes opened to a whole new world of possibilities and opportunities. I will never forget my first experience at Nationals. More importantly, I will never forget the impact that experience had on my daughter. You see, before Nationals, her Daddy and I (and countless others) had poured into her, trying relentlessly to explain and show her just how amazingly "normal" she was. She never bought into it; although, she did put on a brave face and happened to have a loud mouth for advocacy. However, that week at Nationals everything changed. Her eyes were opened to the fact that she was normal. She was literally just like everyone around her. The only thing different was that she was faster than mom because she used wheels for mobility instead of feet. Her posture changed that week. Her outlook on life changed that week and her voice, well, her voice became louder than ever and she set some lofty goals.

I hope that when you leave here, you find a strength in your voice that you never knew existed. That voice that comes not from your mouth but from deep within. I hope that when you leave here you can say it was great to be at Nationals. As you return to your homes, I hope you all carry #therissaeffect with you and let it flow out of you. It is the ripple that will travel through time for years to come to help create the change for the future of people with disabilities that you want to see yourself.

Good luck ladies! Don't forget to breathe and be flexible. This is simply another doorway. Ms. Wheelchair America 2020 is the perfect beginning of a future you can't yet imagine. Savor it. It's going to be amazing!

We are so glad you're here!

Pamela Garner Host State Coordinator - Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas Director of Special Projects - Ms. Wheelchair America



2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND LEADERSHIP

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- Shelly Loose Mary Zendejas Megan Abrams Carrie Greenwood Beth Bryant Stephanie Deible Kelsey Kleimola Barb Zablotney Pamela Garner

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2019 INDEPENDENT DELEGATES

Arizona Indiana Missouri Nebraska New Mexico South Carolina Shawnique Cotton Shauna Wilson Hilary Muehlberger Aubrey Freeze Irene Delgado Angela Young

2019 DELEGATE COORDINATORS

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WOULD YOU LIKE TO REPRESENT YOUR STATE IN THE FUTURE?

Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. is looking for future titleholders from every state. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming involved with the organization, please call Ms. Wheelchair America Executive Director Stephanie Deible at (877)679-4335 or email <u>director@mswheelchairamerica.org</u>.

At the current time, we are looking for Independent Delegates from:

Alaska	North Dakota
Connecticut	Ohio
Delaware	Oklahoma
Georgia	Oregon
Hawaii	Puerto Rico
Idaho	South Dakota
Illinois	Utah
Maine	Vermont
Montana	West Virginia
New Hampshire	Wyoming



MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA TITLEHOLDERS

1973 Patricia Nevins 1974 Caryl Jane Robinson 1975 Diana Kenderian 1976 Dixie Lee Etheridge 1977 **Beverly Chapman** 1978 Margie Sloan 1979 Marge Chmielewski 1980 Nancy Pudvin 1981 Vivienne Thompson 1982 Marian Schooling-Vessels 1983 Barbara Crozier 1984 Gaynell Colburn 1985 Lori Cottam 1986 Donna Cline 1987 Sandra Honbaier 1988 Peggy Simpson 1989 Jewell Massey 1990 Kathy Garcia Farnsworth 1991 Mercedes Rodriguez-Fowler 1992 Deanna VanHook 1993 Kim Mensi 1994 Dawn Blodgett 1995 Wendy Petzold 1996 Amy Baxter-Ley

Michigan Texas New Jersey Mississippi Florida Georgia Michigan Georgia Massachusetts Maryland Alabama Maryland Utah Nevada North Carolina Alabama Georgia Utah Florida Texas Alabama California Wisconsin Texas

1997 **Elaine Stefanowicz** 1998 Terri Cecil 1999 Christing Gilmore 2000 Tracy Charlton-O'Connor 2001 Nicki Ard 2002 Candy Marsh 2003 Catherine Gugala 2004 Cinda Hughes 2005 Juliette Rizzo 2006 **Kristen Connors** 2007 Autumn Grant 2008 Kristen McCosh Michelle Colvard 2009 2010 Erika Bogan 2011 Alexandra McArthur 2012 Josie Badger 2013 Mariah Kilbourne 2014 Jennifer Adams 2015 Samantha Schroth 2016 Alette Coble-Temple 2017 Eliza McIntosh-Stauffer 2018 Sheri Melander-Smith 2019 Karen Roy

Washington Kentucky Wisconsin South Dakota South Carolina Colorado Wisconsin Oklahoma Maryland Rhode Island Massachusetts Massachusetts Texas North Carolina North Carolina Pennsylvania Texas Washington Wisconsin California Utah Minnesota Louisiana



THE HISTORY OF MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA, INC.

In 1972 Dr. Phillip K. Wood of Columbus, Ohio had devoted his career to treating and rehabilitating persons with functional impairments. During his practice he became aware of the talents, capabilities, determination, and courage of people with disabilities. As a result, he established Ms. Wheelchair America as a forum for promoting the achievements and accomplishments of women who utilize wheelchairs for mobility, as well as the needs of all persons with mobility challenges.

The mission of Ms. Wheelchair America is to provide an opportunity of achievement for women who happen to be wheelchair users to successfully educate and advocate for the more than 56 million Americans living with disabilities. The Ms. Wheelchair America Program is in no way a traditional beauty contest.

PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE ORGANIZATION

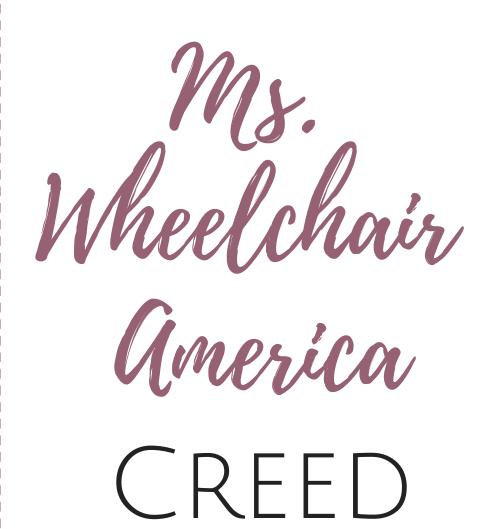
Each year the Ms. Wheelchair America Program holds a competition to select the most accomplished, articulate spokeswoman for people with disabilities. The titleholder must be able to communicate and educate the public, business community, and lawmakers regarding the dignity, productiveness, and basic value of people with disabilities. Ms. Wheelchair America continues to eliminate the architectural and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from assuming their rightful place in society.

Ms. Wheelchair America has numerous duties. During her reign she has the opportunity to travel, visit advocacy groups, make public appearances, and conduct interviews. Ms. Wheelchair America promotes her chosen platform in a variety of settings. She serves as a positive role model for the next generation of Americans with disabilities, inspiring them to leave their own legacy. Her commitment and personal example serves to further the mission of Ms. Wheelchair America.

This competition is made up of a multitude of activities. These activities allow the judging panel time with each state titleholder, while enabling the competitors an opportunity to share with each other and develop friendships. They become stronger advocates throughout the week while attending a variety of interesting workshops that strengthen them. The workshops develop skills that heighten awareness on issues within the community, and are designed to open a dialogue between the women about their thoughts, ideas, values, and experiences.

Ms. Wheelchair America, a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization, is staffed and coordinated solely by volunteers from many different community organizations, businesses, private citizens, and previous titleholders. It is through the monetary and in-kind support of many sponsors that the national titleholder is able to fulfill her duties throughout the year and travel across the country with her message of empowerment for people with disabilities. The Ms. Wheelchair America Program is actively seeking volunteers and sponsors and would appreciate any support that is offered.





As Ms. Wheelchair America, I promise to do my best to promote public awareness of people with disabilities, to use my time and efforts to this purpose, to strive to achieve the best that is within me, to offer my hand in friendship to everyone I meet,

to be cheerful, honest and loving, to give hope to the less fortunate, to set an example by my attitude, and to do all this with grace, warmth and dignity.

A FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM KAREN ROY Ms. Wheelchair America 2019

The last 11 months of my life has been no less than epic! I was honored to have won the title of Ms. Wheelchair America 2019. There were so many tremendous advocates competing that it came as a complete shock to me that I would be chosen to represent an organization with such a rich history of advocacy. I knew from the beginning that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I didn't want to waste a minute. I wanted to make sure I used every avenue now at my disposal, to share my "Stand for Life" platform. Since the time I became paralyzed, 31 years ago, I have attempted to educate people about the technologies available to help keep people with disabilities healthy. Choosing social work as a career and advocating for others with disabilities has always been my passion. It was not until I had the title of Ms. Wheelchair America that my voice was amplified, and I had the attention of influential figures across the country. I believe this was the exact intention of Dr. Philip K. Wood when he started Ms. Wheelchair America in 1972. He wanted to provide a platform for the promotion of the achievements, as well as, the needs of people with mobility impairments. The Ms.



Wheelchair America Organization has done just that over the last 47 years. I had no idea how many more people I would be able to touch as Ms. Wheelchair America 2019.

I have made 75 live appearances at universities, high schools, hospitals, rotary clubs, Abilities Expos and support groups across the country. I have been on television, national and local magazine covers, and multiple radio interviews in many states. I was able to meet with the Medical Director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid in Washington D.C with the ITEM Coalition to plead for the coverage of seat elevation and standing features to be covered for people utilizing power wheelchair. I held seven different fundraising events, visited 40 cities, and 25 States in less than a year. I attended events in some of those cities and states multiple times. I received Governor's

Citations in Maryland and Louisiana. There were four separate trips to Washington D.C. to meet with Senators and Representatives from many states to educate them about legislation impacting people with disabilities. My best efforts were given at every appearance to stress the importance of providing the proper customized equipment for individuals with disabilities. Explaining this equipment is what is necessary to be functional and for each person to reach their maximum potential.



It has been a great honor and privilege to represent the Ms. Wheelchair America Organization. My most cherished prize of all was not the crown, but the lifelong friendships I have gained in the last year. I have met the most amazing people, and their impact on my life is immeasurable. I am so grateful for the sisterhood that I heard so much about before becoming involved in MWA. It started from the first day of Nationals when we were all able to meet in person. Today I consider some of them my dearest friends. I would like to give a special thank you to two of my dearest friends, Barb Zablotney and Angel Arredondo. You have been my angels from day one! We have all learned so much from each other about becoming better advocates. Today is just the beginning of what this sisterhood can do together to make our world a better place for people with disabilities.

Thank you, to the board and the many volunteers that pour their heart and soul into Ms. Wheelchair America! I am aware of the many days and nights that they work to create the experience of a lifetime at the national competition. In addition to, the work it requires to keep the organization functioning all year. These efforts are no small





task, and I am forever grateful to Shelly, Stephanie, Pam, Carrie, Mary, Megan, Beth, and Barb.

Without the generous donations of our sponsors, none of this advocacy work would be possible. Thank you to American Airlines, MobilityWorks, Cure Medical, ABLEnow and The Abilities Expo for your support, which enables MWA to advocate for more than 58 million Americans with disabilities. I must give a special thanks to Numotion. Not only were they my largest sponsor, but they allowed me the time I needed to attend events and be the best representative I could be. My co-workers at Numotion were some of my biggest cheerleaders over the last year, and I am blessed to have them in my life.

Thank you to all of my friends and family that supported me while I have traveled across the country. To my Mom and my children, Caroline, Austin, and Joseph, thank you for holding down the fort and taking care of my fur babies during my absence. Thank you to my best friend, Anne, for traveling with me and always being my friend. Lastly, thank you to my boyfriend, Roy W. Harris for being my righthand man and best friend through this crazy journey! You stayed up late with me creating spreadsheets, expense reports, writing emails, creating donation letters, coordinating events, travel and much more. I could never have done this without you!

Always remember to **stand up** for your rights to have the technology you need to live a happy, healthy life. We all have much to offer the world. Let's fight for our right to have the same opportunities that any able-bodied person has. Let's all **Stand for Life!**

Blessings to you all,

Karen Roy

Ms. Wheelchair America 2019



MS. WHEELCHAIR ALABAMA 2019 Taria Jackson

Taria lives in Birmingham, Alabama and volunteers at the Church of the Highlands. She received her Masters of Social Work from the University of Alabama. Taria enjoys reading, writing, and watching Netflix. She has Spina Bifida and her platform focuses on equality. Taria describes herself as fearless, generous, and capable.



MS. WHEELCHAIR ARIZONA 2019

Shawnique Cotton

Shawnique lives in Mesa, Arizona and is involved with the Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council and The Arizona Statewide Emergency Preparedness Committee. She studied Psychology at Chandler Gilbert Community College and Rio Salado College. Shawnique enjoys singing, dancing, and writing. She has a spinal cord injury and her platform focuses on leadership and the importance of proper representation for people with disabilities. Shawnique describes herself as compassionate, determined and joyful.



MS. WHEELCHAIR ARKANSAS 2019 Erica Graser-Gates

Erica lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas and is a personal stylist and the owner of GSG Professional Makeup Artistry. She received her degree in Nursing from Nothwest Technical Institute and then obtained a certification in professional makeup artistry in 2015. Erica enjoys fashion, volunteering, and wheelchair dance. She has a spinal cord injury and her platform focuses on mentorship and community. Erica describes herself as positive, energetic, and gracious.



MS. WHEELCHAIR CALIFORNIA 2019

Angela Piazza

Angela lives in Redwood City, California and works with Family Housing and Adult Resources. She received her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Sacramento State University. Angela enjoys crocheting, outdoor activities, and the beach. She has Cerebral Palsy and her platform focuses on living inclusively and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Angela describes herself as caring, loving, and determined.



MS. WHEELCHAIR FLORIDA 2019 Cristine Garner

Christine lives in Pinellas Park, Florida and works for Heavendropt, a non-profit company that serves veterans and people with disabilities. She is currently studying Science and Biology at St. Petersburg College. Christine enjoys singing, cooking, and helping others. She has Cerebral Palsy, Periventricular Leukomalacia, and Kienbock's Disease, and her platform focuses on empowering individuals with disabilities to acheive though the use of companions. Christine describes herself as passionate, driven, and radiant.



MS. WHEELCHAIR INDIANA 2019 Shauna Wilson

Shauna lives in Brook, Indiana and is an Independent Consultant of Zurvita. She recieved the Zurvita Life Transformation Challenge Award from Zurvita Corporate. Shauna enjoys traveling, exercise, and roller coasters. She has a spinal cord injury and her platform focuses on the importance of building programs and providing resources for people with disabilities. Shauna describes herself as ambitious, energetic, and adventurous.



MS. WHEELCHAIR KANSAS 2019

Andrea Romero

Andrea lives in Wichita, Kansas and works as Social Worker, Transitional Living Specialist, and Language Support Aid for Children First, Mercy Home Care, and the USD 259 Public School District, respectively. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work from Wichita State University. Andrea enjoys reading, writing music or poetry, and going out to eat. She has Cerebral Palsy and her platform focuses on caring for those who care for others. Andrea describes herself as loving, kind, and honest.



MS. WHEELCHAIR KENTUCKY 2019 Megan Webb

Megan lives in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky and works for the Commonwealth of Kentucky Department of Disability Services. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Media Studies from Georgetown College. Megan enjoys spending time with her dogs, watching Disney movies, and spending time with family or friends. She has Cerebral Palsy and her platform focuses on inclusion through accessibility. Megan describes herself purposeful, helpful, and determined.



MS. WHEELCHAIR LOUISIANA 2019 Ashley Volion

Ashley lives in New Orleans, Louisiana and works as a Policy Assistant at the Advocacy Center of Louisiana. She received her Master of Arts in Sociology from the University of New Orleans and is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in Disability Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Ashley enjoys traveling, being in nature, and learning new things. She has Cerebral Palsy and her platform focuses on Medicaid home and community-based services. Ashley describes herself as passionate, driven, and adventurous.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MARYLAND 2019 Wanda Hawkins-Barber

Wanda lives in Glenarden, Maryland and works with Independence Now and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. She received her Nursing degree at the University of District of Columbia. Wanda enjoys reading, planting flowers, and helping others. She has a spinal cord injury and her platform focuses on Medicaid funded programs that help people come back into the community. Wanda describes herself as friendly, outgoing, and helpful.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MICHIGAN 2019 Jennifer Spaulding

Jennifer lives in Leslie, Michigan and is a United States Army Veteran, a mom, and an advocate. She took coursework through the military. Jennifer enjoys music, art, and advocacy. She has a spinal cord injury as well as a traumatic brain injury, and her platform focuses on unique abilities. Jennifer describes herself as compassionate, outgoing, and loyal.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MISSISSIPPI 2019

SaQueena Graves

SaQueena lives in Starkville, Mississippi and is a substitute teacher at the Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District. She received a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice from Saint Leo University. SaQueena enjoys crafting, traveling, and attending sporting events. She has Spina Bifida and her platform focuses on accessibility. SaQueena describes herself as Godfearing, determined and giving.



MS. WHEELCHAIR MISSOURI 2019 Hilary Muehlberger

Hilary lives in Greenwood, Missouri and is a Patient Account Specialist at Cerner Corporation. She studied Liberal Arts at Johnson County Community College. Hilary enjoys playing tennis, surfing the shelves at half priced books, and spending time with my family and friends. She has a spinal cord injury and her platform focuses on achieving independence through adaptive sports. Hilary describes herself as resilient, motivated, and willing.



MS. WHEELCHAIR NEBRASKA 2019



Aubrey lives in Clay Center, Nebraska and is a part-time student and a fulltime mom. She is studying Business Administration and Medical Billing and Coding at Central Community College. Aubrey enjoys baking, gardening, and shopping. She has a spinal cord injury and her platform focuses on peer mentorship and disability awareness. Aubrey describes herself as organized, motivated, and compassionate.



MS. WHEELCHAIR NEW JERSEY 2019 Milagros "Millie" Gonzalez

Millie lives in Union City, New Jersey and is involved with Kean University, the Spina Bifida Resource Network, and the Alliance Center for Independence. She recieved her Master of Arts in Communication with a concentration in Disability Studies from Kean University. Millie enjoys dancing, traveling, and music. She has Spina Bifida and her platform focuses on living fiercely through self-care. Millie describes herself as passionate, humorous, and a fierce leader.



MS. WHEELCHAIR NEW MEXICO 2019 Irene Delgado

Irene lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico and serves as a volunteer at her local church. She is a graduate of Capital High School. Irene enjoys photography, Youtube, and baking. She has paralysis and her platform focuses on the idea that every disability creates new abilities. Irene describes herself as outspoken, independent, and social.



MS. WHEELCHAIR RHODE ISLAND 2019 Ashley Cabrita

Ashley lives in Johnston, Rhode Island and works at Gingersnaps Bakery. She studied Psychology at the Community College of Rhode Island. Ashley enjoys sugar cookie decorating, being outdoors, and hanging out with her family. She has Spinal Muscular Atrophy and her platform focuses on the idea that everyone has a disability, some just show it more than others. Ashley describes herself as unique, comical, and generous.



MS. WHEELCHAIR SOUTH CAROLINA 2019



Angela lives in Williamston, South Carolina and works for the South Carolina Department of Mental Health. She received her bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of South Carolina Upstate and her master's in Marriage and Family Therapy at Converse College. Angela enjoys painting, crafts, and watching Gamecock football games. She has Spina Bifida and her platform focuses on employment and community integration for those with disabilities. Angela describes herself as helpful, loving, and determined.



MS. WHEELCHAIR TENNESSEE 2019 Cyndi Leach

Cyndi lives in Pikeville, Tennessee and works for Rhea Medical Center. She is a graduate of University High School. Cyndi enjoys singing, waterskiing, and entertaining. She has paralysis due to Polio and her platform focuses on choosing hope. Cyndi describes herself as joyful, compassionate, and dependable.



MS. WHEELCHAIR TEXAS 2019

Lauren Taylor

Lauren lives in Denton, Texas and works as a Youth Transition Specialist at REACH of Denton. She received her Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation Studies at the University of North Texas. Lauren enjoys reading, painting, and bullet journaling. She has Muscular Dystrophy and her platform focuses on universal design for inclusion. Lauren describes herself as determined, strongwilled, and passionate.



MS. WHEELCHAIR VIRGINIA 2019 Vicki Varner

Vicki lives in Fredericksburg, Virginia and is a full-time babysitter. She is studying Psychology and Communications at Germanna Community College. Vicki enjoys working out, reading, and playing video games. She has a spinal cord injury and her platform focuses on breaking down societal ableist beauty standards. Vicki describes herself as strong, empathetic, and passionate.



MS. WHEELCHAIR WASHINGTON 2019 Danielle Harada

Danielle lives in Federal Way, Washington and is an aspiring artist, designer, and creator who works from home. She studied Graphic Design at the International Academy of Design and Technology in Seattle. Danielle enjoys creating art in many forms, tabletop gaming, and attending pop culture or comic book conventions. She has Spinal Muscular Atrophy and her platform focuses on increasing representation and accessibility in social settings. Danielle describes herself as creative, geeky, and resourceful.



MS. WHEELCHAIR WISCONSIN 2019 Autumn Neugent

Autumn lives in Madison, Wisconsin and is full-time volunteer, board member, and advocate with Common Wealth Development, National MS Society, UW Madison, and Madison College. She studied at Madison Area Technical College. Autumn enjoys cross country skiing, water skiing, and martial arts. She has Multiple Sclerosis and her platform focuses on ability awareness. Autumn describes herself as dynamic, driven, and as an anomaly.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL The TitleHolders!

2019 TITLEHOLDER AWARDS

Ms. Wheelchair America 2020

Ms. Wheelchair America 2020 is chosen by the judging panel. The contestant that earns the highest total score during the judging sessions will become Ms. Wheelchair America 2020.

The Lifetime Achievement Award

The Lifetime Achievement Award is chosen by the judges and given to the contestant that they believe has made the largest contribution and significant impact for people with disabilities.

The Nicki Ard Achievement Award

The Nicki Ard Achievement Award recipient is chosen by the judges and awarded to the woman who exemplifies the philosophy of Nicki Ard, which is to "always exhibit a positive attitude and be willing to serve others." The delegate receiving this award will have made an outstanding contribution to the disability community through her talents, her efforts, and her example.

The Outstanding Speech Award

The Outstanding Speech Award is chosen by those in attendance on speech night. Each individual attending receives one vote to cast for the contestant that feel delivered the most memorable speech of the evening.

The People's Choice Award

The People's Choice Award is presented to the contestant who receives the most votes. Votes cost \$1.00 each and can be purchased during the week of the competition. Forty percent of the funds raised will be distributed to the award recipient's Ms. Wheelchair State Program while the remaining funds will go into a Ms. Wheelchair America 2020 Companion Travel Fund.

The Congeniality Award

The Congeniality Award is chosen by the contestants. Each contestant cast one vote for the person that they feel was kindest, friendliest, most helpful, and caring throughout the week.

The Business Award

The Business Award is chosen by the various businesses that present workshops, attend events, or interact with the contestants. This award will be given to the contestant that the businesses feel was able to communicate on a variety of topics.

The Woman of Resilience Award

The Woman of Resilience Award is being given in memory of Ms. Wheelchair North Carolina State Coordinator, Brandee Ponder. This award is chosen by the judges and given to the contestant that they believe has demonstrated great strength, courage, and tenacity to navigate life in a positive way.

The Emerging Leader Award

The Emerging Leader Award is being given in memory of Ms. Wheelchair Nevada State Coordinator, Yvonne Manriquez. This award is given to the contestant who shows great promise and initiative, and the judges feel that she will make a great impact as she continues on her advocacy journey.

The Judy Hoit Legacy Award

The Judy Hoit Legacy Award is given in memory of former Ms. Wheelchair America Executive Board Member and Iowa State Coordinator, Judy Hoit. Judy devoted over 20 years of her life to serving the disability community and the Ms. Wheelchair America Organization. Her contributions and impact on those around her were extraordinary. The Judy Hoit Legacy Award will be given to an individual who has made a significant impact within the Ms. Wheelchair America Organization while displaying humility, selflessness, and perseverance.

PRESENTATION OF THE AWARDS

The awards will be presented to the chosen recipients on Saturday July 6, 2019 during the Ms. Wheelchair America Crowning Gala in Little Rock, Arkansas.

In Memoriam of our Beloved Coordinators



Judy Hoit 23 years

Brandee Ponder 11 years





Yvonne Manríquez 3 years

"Do what you can, with what you have where you are." Theodore Roosevelt

MEET THE JUDGING PANEL



Head Judge: Wavid Weinandy

David Weinandy is a Professor at Aquinas College where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Communication and Management.

Dr. Weinandy has earned a Bachelor of Science in Social Work, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Counseling, a Master of Arts in College Student Personnel, and a Ph.D. in Interpersonal and Public Communication. David's expertise in the communication discipline

include: public speaking training, interpersonal relationship development, and health communication.

He has conducted hundreds of seminars and workshops on such topics as public presentation, listening skill development, positive interpersonal relationships, conflict management, motivation, and customer service.

David serves as a personal communication coach for high-profile individuals and has judged numerous state Miss and Teen pageants for the Miss America Organization.

Perhaps most importantly, David is very involved in the West Michigan community as a volunteer and board member for numerous organizations. While serving the community, he has received numerous awards for his service and role as an educator.



Jennifer Biggers

Dr. Jennifer Biggers is a native of Arkansas, and she served as Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas 2007. She was born with Spina Bifida and has utilized a wheelchair for mobility since she was 5-years-old. While many may consider the use of a wheelchair limiting, Dr. Biggers believes that she has been provided many opportunities and experiences that she otherwise would not have had, and she lives life to the fullest.

Prior to her reign, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. Since her reign, she completed her master's degree in Counseling Psychology at Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Springfield, Missouri. In 2016, she obtained her Doctorate of Psychology in Clinical Psychology from The Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. Following graduation, she completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Georgia Pediatric Psychology in Atlanta, Georgia, completing psychological evaluations with children and adolescents.

In 2017, Dr. Biggers returned to Arkansas to begin her professional career. She is currently employed at Conway Psychological Assessment Center (CPAC) in Conway, where she resides. She works as a full-time clinical psychologist conducting psychological evaluations with children, adolescents, and adults. When she is not working, Jennifer enjoys being outdoors, completing races with Ainsley's Angels of Arkansas, as well as, traveling, snow skiing, and spending time with friends and family. She is also active in her local church and enjoys connecting with people in the community.



Carl Daughtery

Carl E. Daughtery is a native of North Little Rock, Arkansas. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Philander Smith College in Little Rock and earned a master's degree in Public Administration in 2001 from Webster University. He also graduated from the University of Arkansas Currents Leadership Institute in 2005.

In addition to his education, Carl has an exemplary background in business and public relation. He was appointed to his present position of

Chief of Field Service in August 2009. As Chief of Field Services, he is committed to providing leadership and guidance to Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and advocating for people with disabilities to become independent and employed.

Carl previously served as District Manager for five years in the Vocational Rehabilitation Field Services Program covering North Little Rock, Conway, Russellville, and Lonoke field offices. He is also a 13-year member of the National Rehabilitation Association, Arkansas Rehabilitation Association and National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns. He has also served as a member of the Arkansas Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities.

In addition, he has over 6 years' experience of judging Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas in the natural state. He also was a judge for Ms. Wheelchair America in 2012 and 2017. Carl and his wife, Cynthia, have one son, Carl Jr., and one daughter, Gecara. He plays a very active role as husband and father.



Autumn Grant

Autumn Grant was born, raised and continues to live in southeastern Massachusetts.

She received her Bachelor of Arts in Humanities from Providence College and a Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration from Boston College. In the fall of 2019, Autumn will begin work on a Doctor of Education from the University of Southern Mississippi. She has worked in the field of higher education for nearly two decades and currently serves

as the Associate Director for the Filene Center for Academic Advising and Career Services, coordinating the Accessibility Services Office at Wheaton College (MA).

Autumn was crowned Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts 2006 promoting a platform of "Independence through Education". Later that year she was awarded the title of Ms. Wheelchair America 2007 in Little Rock Arkansas. At the completion of her reign, Ms. Grant assumed the role of state coordinator of the Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts Foundation until 2013. In addition, she served on the Ms. Wheelchair America Inc. Board of Directors from 2008 – 2010.

In her free time, Autumn enjoys spending time with her family which includes two fur babies, Henson and Zoe. In addition, she and her finance Kenny enjoy traveling especially to foodie destinations. Autumn is deeply involved with her professional organization NACADA – the Global Community for Academic Advising and serves on several committees on the national and regional level.



Mariah Xilbourne

Mariah Kilbourne is currently employed as the Training Coordinator for the UTSA Small Business Development Center. She coordinates and organizes training workshops and assists with special events. Mariah joined the Small Business Development Center in 2015 and brings with her more than four years of experience working with the City of Seguin, Texas in Economic Development.

She has written many articles for various local publications promoting small business and economic development. Mariah earned her Bachelor of Arts in

Communication Studies from Texas Lutheran University. She is an adaptive sports enthusiast, avid concert-goer, and loves to write.

She has been honored to serve as Ms. Wheelchair Texas in 2012 and Ms. Wheelchair America in 2013. Mariah is a strong advocate for everyone to be "Inclined" for Inclusion!

MEET THE GUEST JUDGES FOR SPEECH NIGHT

The following guest judges were selected by Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. to assist the judging panel during Speech Night on Friday, July 5.

Sandra Honbaier, Ms. Wheelchair America 1987

Deanna VanHook, Ms. Wheelchair America 1992

Katherine Wood, Daughter of Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. Founder Phillip Wood

MORE ABOUT THE JUDGING PROCESS

Each state titleholder will participate in three judging sessions. These consist of two individual interview sessions with the panel of judges and the platform speech. In addition, the top five finalists named during Saturday's Crowning Gala will participate in an on-stage judging session, where they will be asked to answer two questions in front of the audience.



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Ms. Wheelchair Arizona

Paralyzed Veterans of America – Phoenix, Arizona Chapter Hands of Heaven DeShawn Thomas Vera Briscoe Cythia Battles Gordan Jenkins Steve Norton Peter Reiss LaNear Merida Leonard Smith

"Be bold enough to use your voice, brave enough to listen to your heart, and strong enough to live the life you have always imagined." – Unknown

Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas

The Family of Erica Graser-Gates Jackson, Ty Navy, Tayla, and Tana Gates Carol and the late Phill Graser May's Mission Violet's Bridal and Formal Todd, Karen Reynolds and Family Bill and Jan Hodges Cappie McBeth Coach Charms Twisted Flight Photography Bella and Kevin Schimke Matt Caldwell Village Pharmacy Bride 'N Groom Ms. Pam and the Garner Family The Judges for Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas 2019 The Facebook Family of Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas 2019 Ms. Wheelchair America The state of Arkansas And many others

Ms. Wheelchair California

ADAPTS Tammy Calderon Skyline College Hair, Make-up and Skin Care Jennifer Mitchell Sean and Nancy Kelly The Piazza Family The Fuss Family The Foresett Family Mr. Edward Coble AJ Piazza Krystina Jackson G.U.S.T.O. Wheelchair Accessories Brittany Piazza Accessories for Plum Alyse Tognotti The Center for Independent Living of San Mateo County

Ms. Wheelchair Florida

OnMed® - Instant Medical Solutions Lampert's Therapy Group JBP International, Inc. Custom Mobility, Inc. Sacred Heart Catholic Church **Parishioners** Sacred Heart Catholic Church **BINGO** players Barbra Abrahams and Family Vicky Norbert The Roldan Family The Moralas Family The Silver Queen, Inc. Jeannie Brayman Sacred Heart Sister Columbiettes Diana Carfi Jodi de Bruijn Pam Horgen and family Linda Wrenn and Pat Lee Carol and Helen SH BINGO And many others

Ms. Wheelchair Indiana

David Fagan – IUOE Financial Secretary Governor Eric Holcomb Peter N. Nielsen Beverly, Mike, and Austin Rohr Anita Cross Roger Moody **Barry Johnson** Suzette Drake **Mishell Parker** Ryan and Jennifer Kindig Cheryl Claussen Janet Woelk John and Jenni Durlacher Jamie Conatser **Regina Sanders** Nancy Bryant Tracy Rater Connie Styck Davis Amanda Sadowski

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"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

> — Theodore Roosevelt

Ms. Wheelchair Louisiana

Voleo's Seafood Restaurant Quirky Citizens Alliance NOLA Disability Pride Fest

Ms. Wheelchair Maryland

Carlton and Lisha Evans Denise M. Dockett Freedomway Missionary Baptist Church Missionaries Cheryl Barnett **Glenn Weems** Author and Lakita Coe Lisa Richardson Tonya D. Almond Marietta Daughten Rev. James and Dr. Stephanie Crenshaw Min. Ken Thomas Pastor G.A Fitzgerald and Deacons of Freedomway Missionary Baptist Church Eric and Ebony Overton Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Dockett The 5th Street DCPS ORE States Attorney Office of Aisha N. Braveboy Tara and MNCPPC Prince George's Community College United Spinal – DC Chapter TheCPGroup.org Robin Hill Farm and Vineyard

Ms. Wheelchair Michigan

The Spaulding Family The Ms. Wheelchair Michigan State Program

Ms. Wheelchair Mississippi

Young Hearts Event Planning Century Hairston Funeral Home Cricket Wireless WalMart of Starkville Dr. James Holzhauer.

Ms. Wheelchair Missouri

The Whole Person Midwest Adaptive Sports The Lunch Squad Kansas City No Coast Northland Racquet Club The City of Greenwood Greenwood Parks and Recreation Robin's Nest Beauty Salon Lucky 13 Candle Company Muehlberger Langley Concrete Construction Jake's Place Jade Photography

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Ms. Wheelchair South Carolina

Real Pizza Upstate DJ Trivia Initially Mine, LLC WSSL 100 FM Shawn Thomas of New City Real Estate

Ms. Wheelchair Tennessee

Walden's Ridge Community Center Junior and Linda Travis Scenic City OB/GYN Darrell and Glenda Ahrens Dr. and Mrs. Christopher Horton Jerry and Debbie Hightower Dayton Drug and Wellness Marcel and Liz Tart Sam and Judy Olsen Wayne and Cathy Swafford Wooden's Apple House Buddy and Joanne Cowden Kenneth and Amy Keith Walden's Ridge Baptist Church Employer, Rhea Medical Center Randy and Linda Mattoon Ron Swafford

Ms. Wheelchair Texas

The Ms. Wheelchair Texas Organization To Be Like Me Nonprofit Larry Macaluso Mark and Faith Taylor Justin and Christina Taylor-Hart Camp Craig Allen Catelyn Taylor REACH Inc. Digital Sunrise Inc.

Ms. Wheelchair Virginia

Justine St. Clair

Ms. Wheelchair Washington

Friday Afternoon Tea Karen Harada Dr. A.H. Adatia Paul and Nancy Lee Kersey Mobility Rob Huyett Pamela Genise

Ms. Wheelchair, Wisconsin

Colsac Skiers Monarch Media Designs WI-MAFC Monarch Salon and Spa

"There is nothing wrong; sad or different about being disabled. It is only when society makes people feel different that problems arise."

- Diana Kenderian,

Ms. Wheelchair America 1975

MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA & HOST STATE SPONSORS

Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc., the host state of Arkansas, and Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous donations. Without their support, the National Competition and advocacy efforts of our organization would not be possible.

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Congratulations to our 2019 titleholder





From the Ms. Wheelchair Tennessee Organization

www.mswheelchairtn.org

Good Luck, Danielle!

* Mom and Dad * Beth and Sami Schubert *
* Jennifer Aitchison * The Walker Family *
* Your Friends at Espionage Cosmetics *
* Mark Towns * The Haskett Family *
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Good Luck!

Wanda Hawkins-Barber Ms. Wheelchair Maryland 2019



Enjoy!! Learn!! Grow!!



Ms. Wheelchair Kentucky







Erica Graser-Gates

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CONGRATULATIONS ANGELA!

Ms. Wheelchair California 2019



WE ARE SO PROUD OF YOU! WISHING YOU THE BEST, ALWAYS! LOVE, DAD & MOM!



MS. WHEELCHAIR FLORIDA 2019



Praise be to God We are so proud of you, and the difference you make every day in so many lives! You are truly an Angel sent to us all. BEST WISHES AND LOVE

> Grandpa, Shawn, MOM and DAD, as well as so many others



MS. WHEELCHAIR FLORIDA 2019



We Love you Christine Garner. You are a perfect reflection of God's Love; Psalm 3:3 But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.



You inspire me everyday Christine Garner. Good Luck! Love, Jodi



Good luck Christine! You deserve this and so much more!



BEST OF LUCK CHRISTINE!!! WE LOVE YOU!!! Uncle Pete

SO PROUD OF YOU CHRISTINE!!! WE LOVE YOU!!! Aunt Cindy

> You are beautiful and 1 am very PROUD of you. Keep up the good work! Love you LOTS Sarah

CHRISTINE GARNER

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DROPt

Congratulations MS Wheelchair Florida, Christine Garner. Your work family at HEAVENDROPt is cheering you on to be MS Wheelchair America.





Christine,

I am so beyond proud of you, your whole life you've had to work harder than everyone else, and you have always persevered with a smile on your face – and what a beautiful smile that is, your presence alone can light up an entire room! Your kind and loving heart shine through you in all that you do! I know you will continue to defy all odds and accomplish anything you put your mind and heart to! I wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavors!

Love you girl!!

~ Alyssa Hedrick



God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your in strength... c 1 Cor. 10:13 Ms. Wheelchair Florida 2019, Christine Garner:

Not only a bright star and a brilliant mind,

You're always flowers and sunshine!

We love you and wish you the best of luck!

LOVE,

♥Michelle and Sharon♥







Ms. Wheelchair 2020

All of YOU Inspire ----- All of US Keep Rolling FORWARD!



Let love and faithfulness never leave you...You will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Prov. 3:3-4 CELEBRATING THE FUTURE OF ADVOCACY

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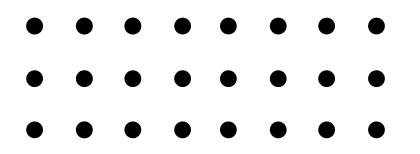
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CONGRATULATIONS STATE TITLEHOLDERS!

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PLEASE SAVE THE DATES August 8 - 15, 2020 Ms. Wheelchair America 2021

Little Rock, Arkansas

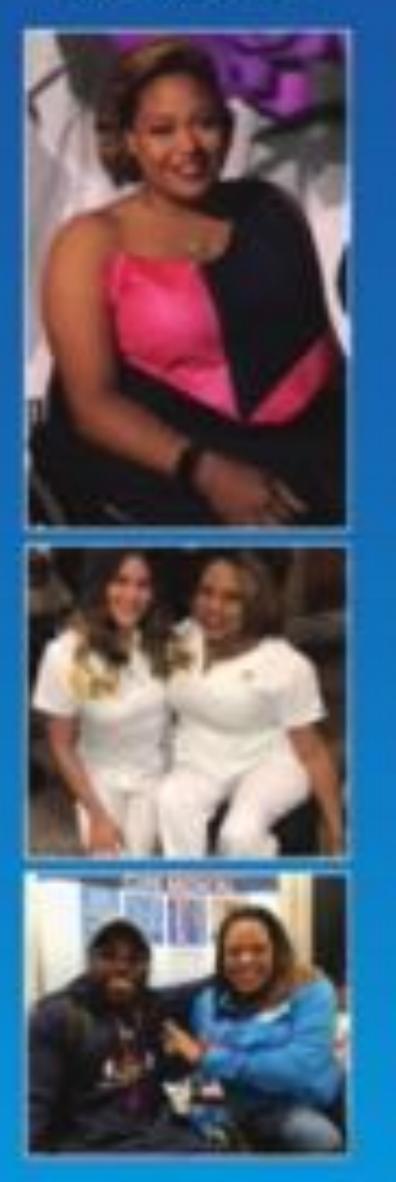
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