

2012 DLS CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHIES

Antonio Bartoli was born in Rome (Italy). He holds a master's degree in Economics (LUISS University, Rome) and a master's degree in Security and International Relations (Science Po, Toulouse, France). He also attended a post-graduate School of Journalism in Milan, with a scholarship from leading Italian publisher Rizzoli-Corriere della Sera, and courses on Europe and world politics in the London School of Economics. He obtained honors in his Classics studies at the Jesuit school of Rome. A career diplomat, serving in the Italian Embassy in Washington, he is currently seconded to the U.S. Department of State (Near Eastern Affairs Bureau), as Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellow. He has been serving in the Foreign Minister's staff, in charge of Parliamentary relations, and before that in the Undersecretary's staff and in the Personnel Department. He was Consul in France (2000-2004) and Political counselor in Beijing (2004-2008) where, in 2006, he also coordinated the "Year of Italy in China" (more than 200 events showcasing the Italian culture). Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he had been working as a political and financial journalist (1991-1997). He had previously worked with Alitalia, Italy's flagship airline, as a business organization consultant and assistant to the marketing director. He has five daughters. His research interest lies in exploring the complex relationship between religion and politics, with a particular focus on the rise of Islamist parties in the Arab Spring countries.

Larry Creech is a Program Manager and Manager of the Litigation Support Department for the U.S. Postal Service Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He is a graduate of Georgetown University's Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies and the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies with a concentration in Humanities. Larry has completed all the teaching seminars in the Apprenticeship in Teaching Program sponsored by the Center for New Designs in Learning at Georgetown University. He has worked as a Teaching Assistant for three semesters as a graduate student and is completing a syllabus in Cultural Universality in America as part of the Apprenticeship in Teaching Program. Larry has also served one term as a member of the Georgetown BALS Advisory Committee. His interests include ancient philosophy, culture and ethics. As American culture continues to become increasingly diverse, population demographics shift, school systems become more focused on the technical aspects of a curriculum, and drastically changing economic factors influence how funding is allocated, liberal studies courses and programs in American secondary and post secondary education system are the first casualties. Larry's doctoral research will focus on the social impact of the reduction, and in some cases phasing out, of liberal studies courses and programs in the American secondary and post secondary education system.

Rebekah Dyer, originally from Greeneville, Tennessee, attained a Master's Degree in English from East Tennessee University in 1999 with a concentration in British Literature. Her thesis was entitled: "Male and Female Created He Them: Joyce, Woolf and the Androgynous Vision at the Dawn of the Women's Liberation Movement." Prior to earning her Master's degree, Ms. Dyer received a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in English and Psychology and an Associate of Arts degree in Humanities. With plans of becoming a professor of English, Ms. Dyer's career took a different path when she relocated to the Washington, DC, area in January of 2000. Ms. Dyer has a diverse career as a government contractor and most recently serves as the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Torres Advanced Enterprise Solutions, an international company that provides linguist services to the highest levels of the U.S. government, including Presidents, Vice Presidents and Secretaries of State, and security services to Embassies worldwide. Ms. Dyer's focus area for the DLS program will be in the humanities, specifically in literature.

Maureen Heath is a retired aerospace executive. She holds a baccalaureate degree in physics and a Masters Degree in Public Administration. Maureen began her aerospace career by serving six years in the United States Air Force Space Division. She and her husband Jim were one of the first married couples to complete Officer Training School together. She transitioned to private industry and became a Vice President at TRW and Northrop Grumman focusing on NASA and Civil Space contracts. She also completed a one-year Brookings Institute fellowship working in the Senate staff office of Senator Pete Domenici during her career. Last year Maureen joined the MALS program and will transition into the DLS program after completing three classes. Her thesis will focus on the advent of humanism in the Italian Renaissance. She and Jim travel widely and have been to all seven continents. They and their two dogs live in Alexandria, VA.

Anne Hoyt is a Mexican broadcast journalist and film reviewer with over 20 years of experience in major TV and radio markets in the United States and Mexico. She is the Washington correspondent for the network Grupo Radio Centro. She is also the film reviewer for Telemundo's local websites and a freelance producer for a Spanish show in Sirius/XM Radio. In 2002, she participated in the development and launch of Telemundo's first newscast from DC as an anchor and link to the Hispanic community. In March 2012, Anne was a member of the jury at the Guadalajara International Film festival. In 2011, Anne won the prize for best broadcast in the Ethnic Media Awards organized by American University and New America Media. In 2008, the University of Paris included an abbreviated version of Anne's Master thesis ("Chicano Cinema and Identity: Crossing the Border from Self to Other") in the book *Frontières, Marges et Confins: a Multidisciplinary Approach to the Border*. In 2007, Anne received a Fellowship from the National Press Foundation. Before moving to DC in 2000, Anne worked in the electronic and print media in Mexico City, mainly at Televisa, but also at the Latin American Institute of Educational Television (ILCE), local radio and several magazines. In the 90's, Anne was the film critic for Televisa's leading morning shows and hosted *Entre Butacas* (Cablevision), a one-hour daily film show for Cablevision. She also co-hosted twice the Mexican broadcast of the Oscars ceremony. Anne has a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies degree from Georgetown University. Anne has conducted exclusive interviews with personalities such as Bill Clinton, Catherine Deneuve, Alain Delon, Oprah Winfrey and Edward Albee.

Theana Kastens is a professor of English and a full-time member of the faculty at Northern Virginia Community College, the second largest community college in the nation and, with over 75,000 students, the largest institution of higher education in the commonwealth of Virginia. The majority of her college students are liberal arts majors on a four-year track to a baccalaureate degree. Theana's life work has been centered in politics, international finance, journalism and academia. She moved as a child from Pennsylvania to Washington, DC, where her late father served 24 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. The first twenty years of her adult life were New York-based, where she worked as an international financial specialist in the field of nonconvertible foreign currencies, countertrade and barter. In her 40s, she left finance to fulfill her calling in pursuit of language and began a career in journalism, writing for an English-language publication in Vienna, Austria. She later returned to the United States with her four children, earned her master's degree in English literature at George Mason University, and began teaching at Northern Virginia Community College and as an adjunct at George Mason University. In addition to her traditional campus students, Theana teaches college English to soldiers returning from the battlefronts of Iraq and Afghanistan at Ft Belvoir, under agreement between the Department of Defense and Northern Virginia Community College. She is widely published on the subject of education, describing community colleges as "the bolted joints of an increasingly educated society." Theana is on summer faculty at the historic Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, New York, where she also served on the advisory committee of the first Chautauqua Literary Prize, which was awarded during summer 2012. As a counterpoint to her life in academia, she volunteers every Sunday at Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center in Woodbridge, VA as a patient representative. In this select and sensitive ombudsmanship, she has access to all patients and medical staff. Theana's doctoral research will focus on the impact of societal cues on populist ideals through an examination and analysis of the effect of cultural anthropological mores on prevailing political ideologies.

Gina A. Petrak was awarded a Bachelor of Arts, Education (Cum Laude) from The St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas and a Master of Arts in Health Communication from The Johns Hopkins University. She presented her master's thesis, *Racial Differences in Magazine Coverage of Mammography*, at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in 2008. She is currently enrolled in a graduate certificate program, *Medicine Society & Culture*, at The George Washington University, Washington, DC. Since 1998, Ms. Petrak has been an advocate for cancer patients at the local and national levels. She successfully completed Project LEAD, the National Breast Cancer Coalition's advocacy course in 1999 and she served on the medical Institutional Review Board at The Wayne State University, Detroit, MI from 2000 - 2005. Ms. Petrak was a founding member, in 2001, of the National Cancer Institute's Consumer Advocates in Research and Related Activities program and she continues to serve as a member of the program. Gina's research interests include medical advocacy, cancer, and screening for disease. In the DLS program, she will focus on the rise of medical advocacy in America and its impact on medicine and society.

Walter Ratliff is a national religion beat team editor and content manager at the Associated Press in Washington, DC. He is also an independent filmmaker and author. His work includes projects about Muslim-Christian conflict in Nigeria, Islam in American prisons and Muslim-Christian history in Central Asia. He is the author of *Pilgrims on the Silk Road: A Muslim-Christian Encounter in Khiva*, and the producer/director of the Emmy Award-winning documentary *Through the Desert Goes Our Journey: The Mennonite Trek to Central Asia*. He is a 1993 graduate of the University of New Mexico, earning a B.A. in Religious Studies and Journalism. He also earned a master's degree in Communications from Wheaton College, Illinois, and an Master of Arts in Liberal Studies degree with a concentration in Islam & Muslim-Christian Relations from Georgetown. His DLS research will focus on the rhetoric of Christian non-governmental organizations with regard to international religious freedom. He is particularly interested in how the language used by faith-oriented NGOs influences their promotion of foreign policy and the nature of their engagement abroad.