Candidates for Secretary

Candidate #1

Name: Leslie Collins
Profession: Producer, C-SPAN
Years of Experience: 7



Relevant Skills and Expertise:
Writer and producer with 7 years of experience developing live and recorded content for national television audiences. Skilled in script writing, interview preparation, editorial research, stakeholder coordination, and end-to-end production management in fast-paced broadcast environments. Proven ability to translate complex public policy and political topics into clear, engaging content for broad audiences while managing multiple priorities, tight deadlines, and cross-functional collaboration.

Motivation Statement:
When I came to Washington DC, I had the same kinds of goals that I'm sure a lot of young journalists had when they were young. I wanted to be the kind of journalist that I saw in movies—chasing facts and writing big stories. I began working at C-SPAN just after graduating college and found that journalism is more than that. I began on their morning public affairs show Washington Journal, and after 7 years there, I've learned that good journalism is just as much about making connections with people as it is about objective truths. That's why I joined WABJ.

After 7 years at C-SPAN, I deeply understand the importance of clear communication, collaboration, and keeping information organized in a fast-paced environment. And since joining WABJ in June, I've been dazzled by different types of journalists and opportunities. I still have a lot to learn from the community, but I've been impressed and inspired by the intelligence, talent, and passion of those I've had the chance to meet so far. The people here have made me eager to become more involved in the organization and contribute to the community at large.

I am interested in serving as Secretary because I want the opportunity to support WABJ's leadership and help ensure the organization remains organized, connected, and engaged with its members. I would bring a thoughtful, dependable, and collaborative approach to the role, along with the energy and organizational skills I use in my work at C-SPAN.

I am excited about the opportunity to learn from the experienced professionals within WABJ while also contributing my own perspective and building my skills. I hope to help strengthen communication among members and support the organization's initiatives. I saw a recent post from the president recapping WABJ's year and its record 600 members, and I would be honored to contribute to WABJ's continued growth and success while building meaningful relationships with fellow journalists and supporting the organization's mission.

Board Experience:

For the past two years, I've been the chairwoman of C-SPAN's Gen Z Taskforce, a group assembled to analyze C-SPAN content and implement strategies to appeal to audiences aged 30 and under. I've been responsible for leading and planning meetings, assigning roles, and delegating projects to the 40+ members of our group.

Other Volunteer Experience:

Volunteered as a high school rowing coach for 5 years.

Candidate #2

Name: Ashleigh Demi
Profession: Journalist, Host, Media Personality; The Ashleigh Demi Brand LLC
Years of Experience: 16



Relevant Skills and Expertise:

As an award-winning journalist, communications thought leader, and current WABJ Board member serving as Secretary, I bring demonstrated expertise in organizational leadership, executive communications, meeting coordination, operations, and stakeholder engagement.

Throughout my tenure, I supported WABJ's mission through membership engagement, program development, meeting planning, agenda preparation, and collaboration with fellow board members. My experience across television, radio, print, and digital media has strengthened my ability to communicate with precision, manage competing priorities, maintain accurate documentation, and deliver information effectively and efficiently.

Motivation Statement:

My commitment to the Washington Association of Black Journalists is rooted in a belief that Black journalists deserve more than representation in newsrooms; we deserve access, advocacy, professional development, and meaningful opportunities to lead.

As an award-winning journalist, multimedia storyteller, and current WABJ Executive Board member serving as Secretary, I have witnessed firsthand the importance of

building a professional community that champions excellence, strengthens relationships, and creates pathways for the next generation of media professionals.

My desire to continue serving is driven by both purpose and progress. Throughout my tenure, I have contributed to membership engagement, programming initiatives, organizational planning, and collaborative efforts designed to strengthen our chapter's impact. This experience has deepened my appreciation for the institutional knowledge, accountability, and operational excellence required for this hardworking board. We work hard!

I am seeking a second elected term as Secretary to expand my contributions through transparent communication, effective board administration and preservation of our organization's institutional history. I recognize that strong leadership is not measured solely by visibility, but also by the systems, consistency, and accountability that allow an organization to operate effectively.

Having built my journalism career across television, radio, print, and digital platforms, I understand the evolving challenges facing our industry and the importance of maintaining a strong, unified voice for Black journalists throughout the Washington metropolitan area.

I remain committed to serving with integrity and intentionality while helping position WABJ for continued success. For me, board service is not simply a title; it's a responsibility to contribute and leave the organization stronger and prosperous than I found it. With the organization's expansion to 600+ members, it's evident the current board has indeed prospered.

Board Experience:

Washington Association of Black Journalists (WABJ), Executive Board Secretary (2024-Current)

—Serving on the Executive Board of a professional organization dedicated to advancing Black journalists and media professionals throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

—Contributing to strategic planning, membership initiatives, event coordination, and efforts to strengthen professional relationships and opportunities within the journalism community. My board service has provided firsthand experience in organizational governance, collaborative leadership, committee oversight, meeting administration, and

the importance of maintaining clear communication and accountability among board members.

Additional Organizational Leadership:
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® — Alpha Beta Upsilon Omega Chapter, Public Relations Chairman and Ivy Leaf Reporter | (2022-Current)
—Practicing strategic communications, committee coordination, media relations, editorial oversight, organizational reporting, and documentation of chapter programs and accomplishments.

—Collaborating with chapter officers and committee leadership on timely communication, and alignment with organizational standards.

—Providing volunteer leadership in strategic communications, public relations, media outreach, and organizational storytelling for a community service-focused chapter.

—Overseeing promotional communications, coordinating publicity efforts, reviewing marketing materials, and document chapter accomplishments for internal, regional, and international publications.

—Supporting initiatives addressing youth mentorship, educational advancement, HBCU advocacy, mental health awareness, maternal health, and community outreach. My responsibilities require editorial accuracy, deadline management, committee collaboration, discretion, and consistent communication with organizational leadership.

Other Volunteer Experience:

National Cherry Blossom Festival, Inc.
Pink Tie Party Committee | (2023–Current)

—Serving as a volunteer committee member who supports the planning, promotion, and execution of the prestigious Pink Tie Party, a signature fundraising celebration of the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C.

—Contributing professional expertise in event planning, strategic communications, public relations, guest engagement, and relationship-building to support a high-profile event that brings together corporate leaders, philanthropists, community stakeholders, and distinguished guests.

—Collaborate with fellow committee members to support event initiatives, enhance the guest experience, and advance the Festival’s mission of celebrating cultural exchange,

community engagement, and the enduring friendship between the United States and Japan.

(This volunteer experience reflects my commitment to civic engagement, cultural enrichment, philanthropy, and representing the Washington DC metropolitan area through meaningful community partnerships.)