

LWI LIVES

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LWI Lives Committee

Contributors to this Edition:

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LWI Lives is a regular electronic publication of the "Faces of LWI" Committee, which explores and communicates the emerging identity of LWI and its members. We have in common the commitment to being the best legal writing professors that we can be. But we are multi-dimensional people with different strengths, interests, curiosities, and gifts. By profiling individuals in our community, we hope to expand and develop our understanding of who we are and what we aspire to be.

Lance Long: Happiness is a Mountain Range to Hike



By Michael Oeser

Professor Lance N. Long exudes positivity, even framed in a Zoom window for an online interview. He seems to have mastered the very useful skill of how to take joy from life and share it with others.

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Ann Nowak: A Born Teacher



By Kathryn Falk Campbell

This is Ann Nowak. Director of the Touro College Jacob Fuchsberg Law Center's Legal Writing Center since 2008, and adjunct professor of Law Practice Management, admitted to the bar in New York, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of N.Y., and the U.S. Supreme Court, optioned screenwriter, and avid tap dancer.

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Melissa Bezanson Shultz: The Unexpected Moments in Life



By Whitney Heard

Life is made up of a series of moments. Some echo with laughter and joy, while others are difficult and sad. Like most of us, Melissa Bezanson Shultz has had her share of each. But rather than finding joy in spite of her moments of struggle, Melissa credits her hardest moments for leading her to exactly where she is today: an associate professor of law, a mother of two beautiful daughters and two naughty dogs, and a caretaker for her recently cognitively-disabled husband.

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Lance Long

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Long, a professor at Stetson University College of Law, enjoys sports, the outdoors, and music. "Those are my passions." Those passions started in Idaho's Sawtooth Mountains where he spent a good part of his childhood surrounded by forests of pine, fir, aspen, and spruce.

"Memories of living out West and being out West started my love of the mountains and the outdoors," says Long. Long, his parents, and six siblings spent two years living in a two-story log cabin with no electricity. "In the winter we had to take the snowmobile three miles to get to a plowed road," Long says laughing. "We used a fireplace for heat. We cut wood all summer to stock up to last the whole winter." Snow drifts of eight to ten feet were not uncommon.



An accomplished athlete, here Lance celebrates a marathon finish.

The area was remote, to say the least. Bears visited the homestead regularly. Long remembers the time "a bear tore the door down and got into our food as we watched from upstairs." He also recalls a time when his family heard about an abandoned mining town and decided to go see it. The five hour hike paid off. "We got there and there was literally this ghost town there. All the buildings are up. People's clothes are still hanging in closets. We found old rusted out guns and traps. Men's and women's boots. It was amazing."

The summers were filled with hiking, fishing, swimming, camping, and soaking in hot springs. The winters were filled with skiing, sledding, snow forts, and soaking in hot springs. "I loved wandering the creeks and mountains," said Long, adding he regularly walked five miles or more from home. "It was fun. It was a wonderful existence."

Long learned many outdoor skills living in Idaho, but the biggest thing he learned was where happiness comes from. "I was never as happy as when I was in the wild and dirt poor.... I realized that my happiness was completely separate from my amount of income."

Long is also an accomplished athlete. He was captain when his high school won the track conference championship his senior year. "I won the mile and 880, and set school records in both, and I had bronchitis at the time." He also played basketball and football. "I really enjoy the competition and the camaraderie." Today, Long enjoys hiking, mountain biking, skiing, surfing, and snowboarding.

And while he still loves football and basketball, he has given up contact sports at this point.

Long also got his first taste of music performance in high school, where he played trumpet and French horn. The school band director, Ms. Welch, personally asked him to join the band. She sweetened the pot by saying he could pick any instrument he wanted and she would give him individual lessons. Long accepted and reflects that Ms. Welch "literally gave me something that has so blessed my life and the lives of my children. I just can't imagine my life without her." Long has passed his love of music to his five children, who all play instruments. He and his wife of 35 years, Amy, have made playing and singing together a family tradition.

Long says his love of education blossomed in college. He went to Brigham Young University for college where he majored in economics with a minor in Italian. Along the way, he spent two years abroad in Italy. "That was amaaaazing. Loved it." Outside of class, Long played intramural basketball, softball, flag football, and [wait for it] was a member of a new wave/punk rock band in the early 80s. "We called ourselves The Boys. I played guitar and bass, and did vocals. We packed a small venue on a regular basis." Long's favorite artists at the time included Depeche Mode, The Clash, and The Smiths.

Long left the punk scene shortly after starting law school, also at BYU. His favorite subjects were Philosophy of Law and Juris-prudence, which he learned from Doug Parker and Cole Durham, respectively. But Long reflects, "the best thing about law school was meeting and marrying my wife Amy."

Before entering academia, Long practiced law for 12 years at the Orange County, California office of Morrison & Forester and two other firms. Highlights from that time include suing Mr. Potato Head for false advertising, reviewing contracts for the

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Lance Long

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bands Jane's Addiction and Nine Inch Nails, and uncovering a forged document that changed the outcome of a big case.

Sometime around the 12 year mark, Long got some interesting news. "One day I heard about an opening for a legal writing professor from an associate, and I remembered that I always wanted to be a college professor, so I applied, and got the job."

Now tenured, Long has been teaching legal writing for more than 20 years. The rise of legal writing as a profession has been a pleasure for him to watch; he definitely sees himself as a beneficiary of early trailblazers and feels honored to be counted among its members. He says that "the best advice I got that has helped me the most was 'Always assume the best intentions of your students.'"



Lance with his high school band director Ms. Welch. All of Lance's five children play instruments; playing and singing together are a family tradition.

Among his favorite memories is when a student tattooed his advice on her arm. "I tell students to 'write the wave.' Like riding a wave in surfing....It means to carry the reader through your piece with things like topic sentences and transitions. One day this student told me she got a tattoo of a wave on her forearm because of that advice."



Long says the pandemic has definitely changed teaching. "I have been lucky during the pandemic in that I have not been very negatively affected. I have learned to adapt, but I have also learned how much I enjoy being with my wife full time."

To get in touch with Lance, you can email him at: lalong@law.stetson.edu

Lance and his family at his son's wedding, held in his backyard last summer with family.

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Ann Nowak

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This is Ann Nowak, joyful and funny human, who writes comedy—screenplays and two finished novels so far. This is Ann Nowak, member of the Board of Directors of the Performing Arts Cen-

ter of Suffolk County and one of the founding directors of the Jacobson Center for the Performing Arts, where she danced and acted under the stage name of KK Malone. This is Ann Nowak who now perfects the precision of her tap-dancing sound via Zoom tap lessons in L.L. Bean shearling-lined leather bed slippers. This is Ann Nowak whose cat, Alexander, is the first animal (that we know of) to do a full-length presentation at a national law conference. This is Ann, loving and happy wife to lawyer Joe. Ann, daughter of scientists, who thought she would have a long and storied career in journalism, and for whom the law wasn't on the radar. This is Ann who says, "never pigeon-hole yourself or others; it's limiting." Ann, whose joy of learning, improving, making herself better ignites passion in her students and colleagues, and makes us all strive to do it better. This is a true teacher.

What is evident about Ann right away is the sparkle in her eyes and a little gleam of mischief too. These come from her love of writing, rhythm, dancing, music, and the theater, which are not only her joys and buoys, but also help her teach law students (and friends) the joys of verbal expression. Indeed, the joys of verbal expression have always been at the top of Ann's list. In high school, faced with a choice to study mathematics (and possibly follow in the footsteps of her scientist/professor father) or to write, the decision to write came easily and naturally. "I was good at math, but not crazy good like some of my genius classmates."

With the encouragement of teachers like Pulitzer Prize and Critics' Circle Award Winners John Updike, Ann Sexton, and John Cheever during her Masters in Creative Writing Courses at Boston University, she aimed to "write books." But life takes twists and turns, and while yes, she has finished her first two novels, and is an optioned screenwriter, the road was not straight. Ann first became a newspaper journalist on Long Island, reflecting that, "I thought I would be a journalist writing about the law."

At Newsday, she was a general assignment reporter. Newsday focused her on news and politics, and some feature articles with an emphasis on health and fitness. She wrote legal, financial, banking, retailing, and "smart money" columns. Then one day, she had a transformative experience.

"I was working at the paper, and one day I was looking for some material to write about. I had a newspaper, and ... the newspaper just fell open. I'm not kidding; it literally fell open to this new law school forming that was dedicated to public interest law. I had no interest in going to law school. But I needed stories for the week. Anyway, for some reason I started reading the story. It was so well written. And the writing pulled me into this story that I had no intention of reading, and all of sudden I felt tears in my eyes as I thought 'Oh my gosh I have to go to this school it will change my life.' ... And here I am talking to you."

It did change her life.

No one in Ann's family was a lawyer. Everyone had writing talent, but most of the family went into science. Her brother is a professor in biomedical engineering in Connecticut. Her father was an MIT-trained physicist and taught mechanical engineering at Northeastern in Boston. Her mother studied biology and chemistry, but became what we called at the time a "homemaker." It was Ann's mother who encouraged Ann to take art lessons and write. "My propensity to reside in the worlds of the arts came from my mother."

"I never in a million years thought I would be a lawyer, running my own firm, forget about being a law professor." But she followed her destiny and began the journey of the study of law. She



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Ann Nowak

learned how to take the LSAT on her own (she didn't know there were "prep courses"). Nix-(continued from page 4) on era invasions of privacy were still fairly fresh in the minds and hearts of the public, and she remembers feeling "appalled" that the test administrators took her fingerprints. It felt intrusive, as though they were treating the test-takers like criminals.

"I lucked out and did well enough to go to CUNY Law School in Queens, NY." After graduation, she practiced law and worked as an adjunct legal writing skills professor at CUNY Law School. But Newsday wanted her to focus on journalism and gave her an ultimatum: journalism or practice law.

"I'm not big on ultimatums." She left Newsday and continued in the law.

Along with practicing and teaching, Ann is still a prolific writer. Her prose has been described as "lucid and energetic," and she says she works to "keep it graceful."

When she acted in the theater, she loved playing quirky characters. She loves to write those characters as well. She writes mostly comedy. "Not pie in the face physical or slapstick comedies (though yes, I write those elements in as well). But I work from the heart. I like to write uplifting and fun pieces. There's enough sadness and angst in the world." She finished her first "lightweight" novel three summers ago, about a killer who leaves bodies on public toilets in the Hamptons, including one in Town Hall. She wrote part of it when she served on the Southampton Town Zoning Board of Appeals, and scared herself so badly that she couldn't use that restroom in Town Hall ever again. While she waits for COVID-19 to pass, she is revising a "middle grades" book, and getting ready to write her first "serious – drama" novel. She says she wants to prove to herself that she can. Like so many other endeavors that give her joy, stretching this envelope is another adventure for her.

One of Ann's screenplays has been optioned by a producer. Yes, it's quirky. It's about a "plus-sized motorcycle mechanic from Brooklyn who inherits a high-end fashion house." She wants to sell the fashion house and open a motorcycle maintenance school for women. But no one wants to pay attention to a plus-sized rough around the edges Harley Hog rider with a pig for a pet. Ann says it's a "fish out of water story, inspirational, cute, funny." I think we will all have to screen it at an LWI conference when COVID-19 is over!

We talked about grades and how Ann's own relationship with learning and grades has transformed. "I grew up in the competitive Newton, Massachusetts public school system, and went on to Barnard, and I can truthfully say that if there was an 'A' to be had, I was going to have it. It was all about the grade, and not about the learning." But later, when she went to CUNY Law School where there were no grades, life transformed, academic and otherwise.

Now that she has experienced learning with and without the pressure of grades, Ann is clear: "It's not about the grade; it's about learning." (Don't so many of us wish we could help our students see that?) She makes it all about the "fun of the learning." In her Law Practice Management class, "My focus is to teach them enough so when they finish the class, they will feel comfortable starting a firm. I also make sure that what I teach are skills that are transferable to working in someone else's firm. It's a holistic approach. We do a lot of simulation—things I did in practice or watched others do. I remember how we learned, and help the students enjoy that process."

In her Writing Center, the explorer in her comes alive. In the physical world as well as the cerebral, she loves to puzzle through things, learn new things, and go on new adventures. She's one of us gluttons for punishment who tinkers with her syllabus constantly, never content that it's right, and certainly not convinced that one syllabus will work the next year, or month, or even the next day, as the context and the students themselves change. "Teaching is not about teaching. It's about learning." The best teachers are the best learners. She takes from her own experience learning to write and uses that to help her students at the Writing Center. She enjoys using her creative and artistic knowledge to help the students learn.

She sees that each writing student has to be taught differently, uniquely. For some, this means reading their work aloud, and accompanying it with drumming on the writing table like a poetry slam, to work on rhythm and tone. "Lessons in rhythm can show students why semicolons are interesting," she says. (We both took a moment to bless our lucky stars that we work with people in LWI who understand that's real.)

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Ann Nowak

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Ann has writing coaches ("teaching assistants") who help with the Touro students in the law school's Writing Center. These assistants must be excellent writers, who have also shown a willingness and talent to teach. She and

Writing Center Assistant Director Stephanie Juliano try to keep these writing coaches on for two years, which provides consistency and knowledge.

In any event, it is clear that every student learns differently, and Ann makes sure she provides resources for all of them. And speaking of resources, learning differently in the age of COVID-19 and Zoom brought Ann's cat, Alexander, to stardom at a CALI conference where, I kid you not, the cat taught a sixteen-minute session about what to do and not to do on Zoom. Ann says, "If I do it, it sounds preachy. If Alexander does it, it's cool and funny. I thought CALI would think I am nuts, but they loved it."

Learning differently in the age of COVID-19 also brought Ann to tap dancing in her dining room wearing her LL Bean shearling lined leather bed slippers instead of her tap shoes, so she doesn't ruin the wood floor. She says it's been wonderful to continue studying tap on Zoom from her dining room on Long Island—with a teacher in Manhattan. She loves that dancing "gets me out of my head; I



Ann's cat Alexander rose to stardom this summer after he presented a lesson on "what not to do on Zoom" at a CALI conference.

love to keep challenging myself physically....Dancing in bed slippers has caused me to be a more precise tap dancer. You have to hit the heel or toe cleanly, or it sounds muffled. But I do miss the sound of the taps."

I was fascinated by the way Ann always finds inroads to better learning and improvement in everything, including this. "I love learning on Zoom! I can see the tap teacher's feet, unlike in a crowded in-person class" Ann found the pressure was off when she was learning tap on Zoom. "No one hears my mistakes. It's like in law school when there were no grades. With the pressure off to be perfect, I'm just learning and getting better at it." She stopped worrying about where her body was and how she looked, and "I let my body go. Style emerged."

The tap teacher—a former Rockette—is in a way an archetypal role model in Ann's life. Her joy and love of teaching ignite everyone in her path. Ann also admires her own mother who still worked out on the treadmill at the age of 96. Ann talks about a moment of clarity when her 96-year-old mother said, "I gave up tennis at 70, and now it would be hard to get back to it." Her father reinforced that sense. In his mid-90s in independent living, he did neurological experiments with borrowed scientific equipment. She says she learned from her parents that if you keep stretching, you will never be "too old." The lesson is that she cannot imagine not trying to do better, be better.

Ann is currently working on a grant paper, studying why young people are suffering from what's been identified as "reading disfluency." Her family's scientific background is converging here with her own love of learning theory and creative talents.

Ann is grateful that her husband Joe appreciates and supports her in this and all her varied interests. "Although he doesn't love dancing the way I do, we DID take a swing dance class together and he was really good. But dance is not in his blood. What he loves is to read." I could hear the joy in her voice as she told me this.

"Ann, is there anything you can't do?" "I can't sing well." The truth is, though, she probably could learn. In musical theater, Ann went from trying to "remember two entire dance numbers" to "someone who could do fourteen numbers a show." She stretches. She pushes her own limits and the limits of her students. She is joyful. Ann truly cannot be pigeon-holed. Her creativity, drive, graceful and fun energy, and commitment to teaching and learning are seemingly boundless. This is a born teacher.

To get in touch with Ann you can email her at: anowak@tourolaw.edu

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Melissa Bezanson Shultz

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Melissa was born and raised in the Heartland. For twelve years, she lived in Iowa City, Iowa, while her father taught constitutional law as a professor at the University of Iowa College of Law. When her father accepted an offer to serve as dean of Washington and Lee University School of Law, the family moved to Lexington, Virginia. Trading cornfields for mountains, Melissa embraced the slower pace of living offered by a small town, even if it meant fewer restaurant options. There was, however, nothing slow-paced about the Bezanson family's dinner-table conversations. Often spurred on by her father, Melissa and her family conversed less about the weather and more about controversial topics, from drug legalization, to reproductive rights, to free speech. Everyone had a strong opinion and was encouraged to argue out an issue with logic rather than emotion. Melissa credits these family dinners with her ability to think critically and speak assertively.

When it came time to start looking at colleges, Melissa's father drew a dividing line on a map of the United States with a "request" that Melissa apply to schools located on the eastern side. Fortunately, for Melissa, the eastern side had an abundance of excellent colleges. After weighing her different options, Melissa selected Grinnell College in Iowa. Grinnell offered Melissa the quintessential college experience. At Grinnell, Melissa received an extraordinary education from professors who were deeply involved in student growth while being surrounded by peers who were truly interested in learning.

During her junior year of college, Melissa traveled to Africa with a study abroad program. As an English major with a minor in Global Development Studies, Melissa seized this opportunity to spend over six months visiting different countries in Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Egypt. Melissa worked in a refugee camp for the United Nations and lived in a dung hut with a tribal family. During her time abroad, Melissa was struck by the beauty and kindness of the African culture. But, through this experience, she also started to see just how complex and complicated the world is. As Melissa's worldview expanded through exposure to various African cultures and communities, the difference between good and bad or right and wrong became blurrier. This transformative experience inspired Melissa to commit to continued exploration and appreciation of the differences (and similarities) created by culture, race, religion, education, and socio-economic background both close to home and far away.



Melissa is a mother of two beautiful daughters, Tennyson and Austen, and two naughty dogs.

In fact, after graduating from Grinnell, Melissa moved to Japan. As part

of a Japanese government program, Melissa lived in a rural community where she taught English. In addition to traveling extensively throughout Asia, Melissa enjoyed her role as sensei (teacher) and the bond she developed with both her students and her fellow teachers. However, at the time, she was reluctant to follow her father's path into teaching. Even though she jumped at the chance to help others learn, she didn't want to be a law professor who had not practiced law (as she often teased her father).

So, when it was time to leave Japan, she headed back to the United States to attend the University of Texas at Austin School of Law after which she hoped to develop an active legal practice. When she wasn't busy serving as the editor-in-chief of the Texas International Law Journal or working in the Children's Rights Clinic, Melissa spent time with a fellow law student and her future husband, Taylor.

After graduating from Texas Law, Melissa accepted a position as an associate at the Washington, D.C. office of a national

Melissa Bezanson Shultz

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law firm, which allowed her to join Taylor who was already working for a law firm there. Melissa thrived in practice, focusing on business litigation and antitrust matters. With a mentor who took her under his wing, she received challenging assignments and constructive feedback. Looking back, she finds it extraordinary that she was given so many meaningful projects, like negotiating immunity agreements with the government, as a junior associate.



Melissa met her husband Taylor when they were students at the University of Texas at Austin School of Law.

Unfortunately, like so many others, Melissa found it was difficult to be a female associate in a national law firm, especially a law firm that had been sued for sex discrimination on a few occasions, including when it asked female summer associates to participate in a wet t-shirt contest at a summer event. Wanting to succeed in practice and have a family, Melissa struggled to find female mentors who shared her professional and personal goals. While the clients and matters were interesting, Melissa didn't know anyone at the firm who was living the life that she wanted for herself. So, after five years, she decided to leave the firm to focus on her family. While Melissa and Taylor loved living in Washington, D.C., they quickly discovered it was an expensive place to raise children. So, driven by a new job opportunity for Taylor, they made the decision to move back to Taylor's home state of Texas.

Landing in San Antonio with their two young daughters, Taylor transitioned to working as in-house counsel for a multinational construction company, and Melissa cofounded a company for freelance lawyers. Then came the first (and most significant) of a series of struggles for Melissa and her family. As superstition would predict, on Friday the 13th of 2013, while traveling to Houston from San Antonio, Taylor was involved in a horrific car accident that left him comatose. Melissa rushed to Houston to be with her husband who woke up from his coma without the ability to speak or walk. For months, Melissa lived in the ICU and then a rehabilitation hospital in Houston where Taylor received therapy services and multiple surgeries related to his severe traumatic brain injury.

Realizing the medical and cognitive struggles that Taylor would continue to face even after leaving rehabilitation, Melissa decided to move her family to Dallas to be closer to her in-laws (Melissa's own parents had passed away the same year as Taylor's accident, so were unavailable to help). Melissa accepted a position at Gardere Wynne Sewell that offered her the flexibility and health insurance that she needed to take care of her family. Amid all of these overwhelming life changes, Melissa was contacted by the academic dean at the University of North Texas at Dallas College of Law to see if she would like to serve as an adjunct legal writing professor. With so many reasons to politely decline, Melissa said, "of course."

This unexpected moment of saying "yes" ultimately led to Melissa's transition to full-time academia. Part way into her semester as an adjunct, she was hired to join the faculty at UNT as the founding director of its legal writing program. At a time when so much was going wrong, joining the UNT faculty felt exceedingly right. Making a positive impact on other people's lives through teaching and mentoring at a mission-driven school like UNT provided Melissa with a daily escape from her personal struggles. The rewards of teaching and mentoring have not changed one bit since she joined the faculty at Mitchell Hamline School of Law as an Associate Professor in July of 2020.

Melissa Bezanson Shultz

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While moving to Minnesota from Texas during the pandemic was difficult, Melissa has found her soul city in St. Paul. As a progressive thinker who is open to deep conversations, she is delighted to live in a community that values her political and social beliefs. She also counts Minnesota's outstanding health insurance and medical providers as an additional benefit for her husband's ongoing needs.

Melissa and her family moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, in July of 2020, when she joined the faculty at Mitchell Hamline School of Law as an Associate Professor.

In her limited free time, Melissa enjoys staying active by running and working out at Orange Theory (when there isn't a pandemic). But, above all, Melissa treasures time spent with her family. Her older daughter, Tennyson, is a freshman in high school who loves reading, writing, and classical-ballet dancing. And her vounger daughter, Austen, is a fifth grader who loves all sports, especially soccer, and is a true extrovert who came out of the womb laughing. As much as Melissa and her family are happily settling into their new lives in Minnesota, they are lamenting the scarcity of good Tex-Mex cuisine. When it comes to tacos, tamales, queso, and salsa, it's hard to com-

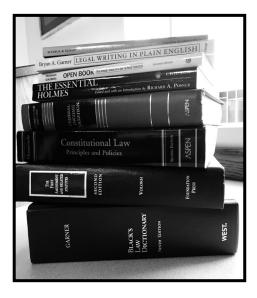
While her journey has not been without its unexpected moments of struggle, Melissa has never stopped finding joy in her life and bringing joy to the lives of others. I am beyond grateful for her generously allowing me to share her inspiring story with you.

pete with the Lone Star State.

To get in touch with Melissa, you can email her at:

melissa.shultz@mitchellhamline.edu.

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LWI Lives Selection Process

The LWI Lives Committee is organized into three teams, and each team is responsible for selecting, proposing, and writing the three profiles in each issue. To ensure a diverse newsletter, teams propose individual names to the Co-Chairs, and the Co-Chairs review the suggestions to ensure a wide range of coverage over time.

If you have someone in mind who we should put on the list for a future newsletter, please feel free to email any of the committee members listed below. If you could include a note explaining why you think the individual's profile would be particularly interesting, it will help us in developing priorities.

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