

## ***PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...***



Leslie Bruce

It's been a whirlwind of a first quarter of our chapter's 40th Year with much news to share.

First, yes, it's our 40th Year! Happy Anniversary to us! Let's find ways to celebrate the whole year through. Forward your ideas to me anytime. And thanks once again to **Karen Bowden, Barbara McColl, Pattie Wellborn** and the late **Karon Luce** for committing the time and effort – back then and today – to this noble effort.

The January general meeting was uplifting in every way thanks to **Rachel Collins, Barbara Doren, Kim Doren, Sue Kalish**, and General Meetings Director **Joy Kirsch**. Have a gander at all the smiling faces in the photos below thanks to **Laurie Roeder** and the write-up by media-savvy **Barbara Bry**. At the meeting, our dear Marketing and Communications VP and *Insider* editor, **Ingrid Benirschke-Perkins** was selected as our ARCS Light Award recipient for 2024-25. (We went to extraordinary lengths to keep it a surprise; we hope it worked!) She gave a moving, heartfelt acceptance speech that so characterized all the reasons so many nominated her.

The ARCS National Board visit was definitely another highlight as you will see below. And, **Kathe Albrecht**, the leader of the intrepid committee that put together the visit, recently earned a nomination for a national ARCS Sparks award as a result! Congratulations, Kathe!

And I don't know about you, but I love reading about the ongoing careers of our Scholars. Ingrid has graced us with several juicy updates and even some news of our members as well. Grab a cup of tea and settle in for yet another great edition of the *Insider*.

Leslie K. Bruce, President  
ARCS Foundation, San Diego Chapter



## ***SDSU Scholarship Donor Appreciation Luncheon (February 24, 2025)***



Kristin Boyd, Ashley Schwartz, Leslie Bruce, Robin Luby

It was another inspiring afternoon at the annual SDSU Scholarship Donor Appreciation Luncheon celebrating the impact of philanthropy on student success. President **Leslie Bruce**, VP Fund Development **Kristin Boyd** and Member Giving Director **Robin Luby** were honored to take part in the event along with **Ashley Schwartz**, an ARCS Scholar at SDSU specializing in Computational Toxicology.

## ***ARCS National Board Visits San Diego (February 7-8, 2025)***

The San Diego Chapter of ARCS was pleased and proud to host the Foundation's National Board for its regular meeting from February 7 – 8. The chapter hosted a spectacular opening reception in the Champion Suite at the Hilton Torrey Pines where the visitors were staying. **Catie Madani**, the local VP of University Relations, outdid herself with a charcuterie board of epic proportions.



Kathe Albrecht and Beth Wainwright







## ARCS National Board Visits San Diego (February 7-8, 2025) ... Continued from Page 2



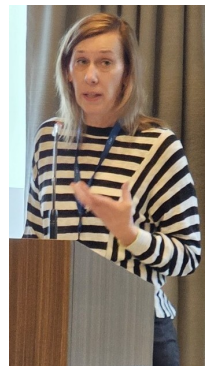
The following day began bright and early with local chapter members – and husband! – ferrying guests by car to Scripps Research (SR), one of the local chapter’s educational partners, where they met on national business for a couple of hours before enjoying the annual check presentation ceremony from the local chapter to SR.



Nancy Chambers,  
Atlanta



Sharon Feng,  
Illinois & Pittsburgh



Jill Bray,  
Phoenix

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## ARCS National Board Visits San Diego (February 7-8, 2025) ... Continued from Page 3

SR's Associate Vice President of Principal & Major Gifts, **Rohan Barrett**, and Scripps Research's Skaggs Graduate School of Chemical and Biological Sciences Dean, **Keary Engle**, spoke, expressing their gratitude for ARCS support. Local chapter president **Leslie Bruce** detailed

the ARCS origin story and its appreciation for all the lifesaving research conducted at SR. She noted that contributions to SR Scholars alone, since the chapter's founding in 1985, total almost \$1.5 million.

The highlight of the ceremony were remarks from each of SR's nine Scholars, detailing their research and their personal interests: **Roger Fleischmann III**, **Stephan Freeman**, **Catherine Li**, **Garrett Lindsey**, **Colleen Maillie**, **Michaela Medina**, **Kayla Nutsch**, **Ariana Sulpizio** and **Drason Zhang**. The audience couldn't have been more impressed with these young researchers.



Visitors were then treated to tours of the Chi-Huey Wong Lab and the Cryo-em Facility on the SR campus. SR faculty and Scholars **Kayla Nutsch** and **Colleen Maillie** fielded so many good questions! National board members were then whisked to the home of UC San Diego Professor Emeritus **Candace Kohl**, who shared her extensive collection of meteorites, moon and even Mars rocks.



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## ***ARCS National Board Visits San Diego*** (February 7-8, 2025) ... Continued from Page 4

Later, national board members were taken to dinner in a cozy room at Osteria Romantica in La Jolla Shores where they got to meet – and applaud! – San Diego Chapter founder **Pattie Wellborn**.



The following morning was the national board meeting itself, held in the spectacular southwest corner of Franklin Antonio Hall on the UC San Diego campus.



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## ARCS National Board Visits San Diego (February 7-8, 2025) ... Continued from Page 5



After a rigorous two-hour meeting, attendees were treated to box lunches in small groups all over the building and two spectacular field trips. The first involved a docent-led tour of Fallen Star, the art installation perched precariously atop the Jacobs School of Engineering.



The second, hosted by **Kit Pogliano**, Dean of Biological Sciences and **Sara Werner**, Executive Director of Strategic Programs for Biological Sciences, gave members a comprehensive look at the nearly 5,000-square-foot Goeddel Family Technology Sandbox. The facility is home to many pieces of expensive research equipment that are available to all biological researchers on the UC San Diego campus.



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## ***ARCS National Board Visits San Diego*** ***(February 7-8, 2025) ...*** Continued from Page 6

Late that afternoon, visitors were driven back to their hotel to explore other sites in San Diego or the airport to make their way home.

Thank you notes and comments from guests have been abundant ever since. The two-and-a-half-day event couldn't have been possible without the incredible leadership of **Kathe Albrecht**. The rest of the team pitched in wherever they saw a need and deepest thanks are due to **Catie Madani, Ann Hill, Rachel Collins, Margaret Dudas** and **Leslie Bruce**. Critical to our team was our own **Rob Healey** who made the tech work perfectly for the hybrid Zoom national board meeting at UC San Diego.

**Addie Ford** and **Anna Rauh** made the flow and logistics seamless at SR while **Diana Gonzalez** and **Kristin Scheiber** made our visit at UC San Diego perfect.

Thanks to all who helped plan, execute and attend this incredible event. The next chapter to host a national board meeting will have big shoes to fill!

Leslie Bruce, President

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## ***Winter General Meeting*** ***(January 28, 2025)***

On a crisp, sunny morning in late January, 50+ ARCS members and guests gathered at the La Jolla Country Club for ARCS San Diego's Winter General Meeting. President **Leslie Bruce** presided over the meeting with a very full agenda, including a toast to the chapter's 40th anniversary. ARCS member **Barbara Bry** summarized the meeting highlights in the following write-up and Laurie Roeder shared the accompanying photos. Enjoy!



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## Winter General Meeting (January 28, 2025)...

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Barbara Doren, Joy Kirsch, Nancy Rudolph



Nancy Anderson, Barbara McColl, Dottie Georgens



Marti Panarisi, Carolyn Sharp, Suzanne Dixon



Alice Brown, Gwynn Thomas, June Chocheles



Yolanda Walther-Meade, Kathe Albrecht, Sue Hylton



Leslie Bruce, Grace Valencia

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## Winter General Meeting (January 28, 2025)...

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### Ingrid Benirschke-Perkins Honored as 2024 ARCS Light for Transformative Leadership

In an emotional ceremony at La Jolla Country Club on January 28, **Ingrid Benirschke-Perkins** was celebrated as the 2025 ARCS Light, recognizing her impact on ARCS San Diego Chapter dramatically expanding its digital presence and amplifying the achievements of tomorrow's scientific leaders. Each year, ARCS chapters select one member to be recognized for providing the highest quality of long-time service. **Kimberly Miller** chaired the ARCS Light Committee, which consisted of President **Leslie Bruce** and former ARCS Light honorees **Doris Ellsworth** and **Peggy Hanley**.



Kimberly Miller, Ingrid Benirschke-Perkins



Former ARCS Light Awardees: Barbara McColl, Holly Heaton, June Chocheles, Ellen Moxham, Yolanda Walther-Meade, Doris Ellsworth, Ingrid Benirschke-Perkins, Marti Panarisi, Pattie Wellborn, Dottie Georgens, Kimberly Miller

"Ingrid possesses a wealth of qualities that make her a huge success as an ARCS colleague, mentor and leader," noted 2024 ARCS Light recipient **Kim Miller**. Beyond chairing the prestigious Scientist of the Year event, Benirschke-Perkins spearheaded the creation of a comprehensive Scholar Alumni directory.

Visibly moved upon receiving the award, Benirschke-Perkins shared, "To be thanked for what you love doing is icing on the cake. The mission resonates with my passion and interests." Her emotional response underscored the deep personal investment ARCS members bring to nurturing the next generation of scientific pioneers.



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## Winter General Meeting (January 28, 2025)...

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### Exclusive Dining Experience: President Leslie Bruce Opens Her Home to Champion ARCS Scholars

In an innovative approach to scholarship fundraising, President Leslie Bruce offered an intimate dinner experience at her home for three fortunate donors. All contributions to the scholarship fund made before February 14 would qualify for this unique opportunity to deepen connections within the ARCS community.



Leslie Bruce



Holly Heaton, Leslie Nangle

### ARCS Scholar Success Story: From Graduate Student to Biotech Vice President

**Dr. Leslie Nangle's** journey from ARCS Scholar to Vice President of Research at aTyr Pharma exemplifies the transformative power of ARCS support. Now leading groundbreaking research in rare diseases, Nangle credits ARCS with providing crucial early-career support during her PhD studies at Scripps Research.

"The support of ARCS helped propel me forward and made me feel part of a community," Nangle reflected, sharing how this foundation led to her pioneering work on treatments for pulmonary sarcoidosis, offering hope to patients currently limited to steroid treatments with severe side effects.

Drawing inspiration from Georgia O'Keeffe's words about courage in the face of fear, Nangle has risen from junior scientist to executive leadership, championing a corporate culture built on empathy, transparency, and collaboration. Her connection to ARCS runs deep - her PhD advisor, **Dr. Paul Schimmel**, 2020 ARCS Scientist of the Year, co-founded aTyr, creating a lasting legacy of scientific excellence and mentorship, and he is a major donor to the ARCS scholarship fund.







## *New Member Profile*



**Nicola D. Wilkins-Miller**, originally from the United Kingdom, spent much of her childhood in Brussels, Belgium, and later returned to the UK to attend university, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Design from Goldsmiths College, University of London, and a Master of Arts in History of Art from Oxford Brookes University. After meeting and falling in love with her American husband, she made the leap across the Atlantic to California, first settling in Berkeley, then Pasadena, and now calling San Diego home.

With over 15 years of experience in higher education and nonprofit fundraising, Nicola has built a career focused on creating donor-centric strategies to inspire engagement and giving. She is currently the Director of Philanthropy at the Scripps Research in

La Jolla, California, a biomedical non-profit research institute, where she leads initiatives to grow and deepen relationships with donors. Prior to this role, Nicola spent eight years at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), where she made significant contributions to the Advancement and Alumni Relations department. At Caltech, she played a pivotal role in building the Caltech Associates donor program through events, travel, marketing and fundraising campaigns, raising \$2M annually, launching a successful centennial fundraising initiative, and partnering on the \$3B Break Through Campaign.

Nicola's earlier work at Hillside, a child welfare nonprofit in Pasadena, CA, serving 13,000 children and families, honed her leadership in donor and volunteer engagement. She led high-profile fundraising events, while also contributing to the organization's rebranding and marketing strategy and increasing giving. Her career began with experience in design and event coordination at Gensler Architects & Design and Bodo Sperlein LTD, where she developed a keen eye for detail and a passion for impactful communication.

Nicola is deeply committed to advancing higher education and nonprofit sectors, particularly in areas that build strong and sustainable donor relationships. She thrives on connecting people with meaningful opportunities to make an impact, whether through large campaigns or personalized stewardship efforts. Through her work, she has led innovative programs and contributed to strategic initiatives, reflecting her ability to create engaging, valuable experiences that connect donors to the community.

Outside of work, Nicola enjoys spending time with her two children and two cats, exploring music, arts, food, and nature in San Diego.



## *Updates from ARCS Members*



In March 2025, The *San Diego Union-Tribune* announced the start of a new monthly column about retirement, by none other than ARCS Member **Barbara Bry**! Each month, Barbara will spotlight “the diverse and inspiring ways San Diegans are approaching their post-career lives, proving that the only thing ‘senior’ about this cohort is their inability to sit still and memories of when phones still had cords.”

You can read the first installment of Barbara’s new column here, which describes her own post-retirement story:

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2025/03/17/the-next-chapter-redefining-retirement-in-san-diego/>



**Kathe Albrecht**, Immediate Past President of the San Diego Chapter, is an ARCS Sparks Awardee, and a well-deserved honor at that! When contacted by ARCS National President, **Beth Wainwright**, about hosting the Winter 2025 National Meeting in San Diego, Kathe enthusiastically took on this task in addition to the other work she was doing for the San Diego Chapter. She convened a group of active chapter members who planned great meeting space, exceptional tours and fun social events, which are described above. Congratulations to Kathe and her team for a job well done!



In January 2025, the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* announced the formation of a new commission charged with recommending how to build more resilient communities in the face of pandemics, climate change and other interconnected global challenges. The commission is chaired by **Eliah Aronoff-Spencer, MD, PhD**, of UC San Diego and will operate over the next four years. More than 20 commissioners from fields including medicine, environmental science, economics, policy, media and technology will contribute their expertise, including ARCS member **Steffanie Strathdee, PhD**, Co-Director of the Center for Innovative Phage Applications and Therapeutics at UC San Diego School of Medicine.

You can read the full story here: <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/uc-san-diego-physician-scientist-to-lead-new-lancet-commission-on-u-s-societal-resilience>





## Updates from ARCS Scholars & Scholar Alumni



**Rayyan Gorashi (2024-2025 ARCS Scholar at UC San Diego)** was the first author of a publication in *Science Advances* that sheds new light on how a type of heart valve disease, called aortic valve stenosis, progresses differently in males and females. The research reveals that this sex-based difference can be traced to a gene on the Y chromosome.

You can read the full story here: <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/how-a-y-chromosome-gene-may-shape-the-course-of-heart-valve-disease>



**Natalie Quach (2024-2025 ARCS Scholar at UC San Diego)** took part in an important research study that found that, among smokers in the U.S., e-cigarette use does not increase smoking cessation and is actually associated with reduced tobacco abstinence. Natalie is the first author of the paper which presents these findings in the March 5 issue of *JAMA Network Open*, a high impact journal that is the third highest ranking among general medicine open access journals. Natalie will be sharing her research at our 2025 SOY Celebration on April 13 with a poster presentation.

Here's a link to the UCSD press release, which provides further information about the research study: <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/study-vaping-does-not-help-u-s-tobacco-smokers-quit>

Here's a link to the research paper itself:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2831011>



**Megan Jennings, PhD (2011-2012 ARCS Scholar at SDSU)**, a conservation ecologist at SDSU, will serve as the inaugural interim executive director for the California State University (CSU) Consortium on Climate Adaptation, which was launched in February 2025 to enhance the application of climate change adaptation and climate action education and research.

Read the full story here: <https://www.sdsu.edu/news/2025/02/csu-launches-multi-university-consortium-for-climate-adaptation>

Note that you will have the opportunity to meet Dr. Jennings **in person** when she speaks at our June 3 General Meeting at the La Jolla Country Club!



## *Scholar Alumni – Where Are They Now?*

**Albert Stricker, MS (1998-1999, SDSU)** is the Public Works Director for the City of Rancho Cordova in California. The Public Works Department continually strives to improve safety, connect communities and bring beauty to the public ways of Rancho Cordova.

Prior to joining the City's Public Works Department in March 2005, Albert worked for the City of San Diego and San Diego engineering firms Ninyo & Moore and PBS&J.

Albert earned a BS in Groundwater Hydrology and a MS in Civil Engineering, both from San Diego State University. He is a member of the American Public Works Association.

Fun Facts:

- Favorite place in Rancho Cordova: American River Parkway. We have easy access to one of the most beautiful, natural gems in the region.
- Favorite hobby: Whitewater kayaking
- Favorite quote: "Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world." – John Muir



**Thomas Battersby, PhD (1989-1990, UCSD)** is a leader and manager with extensive experience in IVD (in vitro diagnostics) and companion diagnostic development and strategy. He is currently Executive Director, Biomarker-IVD at Gilead Sciences and brings experience from previous roles in diagnostic and pharmaceutical companies ranging from a small startup to a Fortune Global 100 Company (e.g., Amgen, Genentech, Siemens Healthineers and Bayer HealthCare Diagnostics).

Dr. Battersby is a technical expert, with a significant primary author peer-reviewed publication list and several patents. He is passionate about strategic innovation and personalized healthcare and has a strong interest in the diagnostic and drug development process working under design control.

Dr. Battersby holds a BS in Chemistry from UC Davis, an MBA from St. Mary's College of California, and a PhD in Chemistry from UC San Diego. He currently resides in Orinda, California.





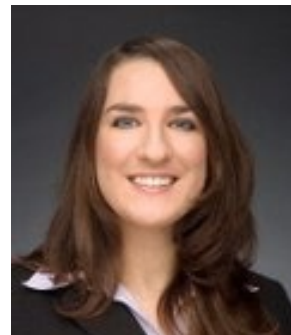


## ***Scholar Alumni – Where Are They Now?...***

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### **Lucy Muriel Stark, PhD, JD (2001-2004, Scripps Research)**

based in Washington, DC, is currently a Senior Attorney at U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Dr. Stark brings experience in litigation, legal writing, legal research, and valuation from previous roles at law firms Wiley Rein LLP (2011-2014) in DC and Irell & Manella (2007-2011) in LA. She earned a law degree at Harvard Law School and was admitted to the State Bar of California in 2007.



In 2004, Dr. Stark received a PhD in chemistry at Scripps Research, at which time she worked in Erik Sorensen's lab. During her tenure at SR, she saw the need for a mentoring program for young women in science on campus and established the Network for Women in Science (NWiS). The goals of the group were to:

- Create a supportive network of women and allies within the Scripps Research community.
- Drive awareness of issues that disproportionately affect career advancement for women, including discrimination, exclusion, harassment and child-care policies.
- Promote an inclusive culture within STEM, both in higher education and the community-at-large.

The network still exists to this day at SR. Here's the link: <https://www.scripps.edu/about/campus-resources/working-at-scripps-research/campus-interest-groups/nwis-ca/>

## ***ARCS Calendar of Events***

### **APRIL**

- Sunday, April 13 – 2025 Scientist of the Year Celebration (The Conrad Performing Arts Center)
- Tuesday, April 15 – Board Meeting (via Zoom)

### **MAY**

- Monday, May 12 – Field Trip to USD's Hahn School of Nursing & Health Science
- Tuesday, May 20 – Board Meeting (via Zoom)

### **JUNE**

- Tuesday, June 3 – Member General Meeting (La Jolla Country Club)
- Tuesday, June 17 – Board Meeting (via Zoom)