



*Ms.*  
**Wheelchair**  
A M E R I C A

*presented by*  
**Mary Free Bed Guild**

**AUGUST 15-21, 2022 | GRAND RAPIDS, MI**

*Empowering Women of Achievement Through Leadership, Advocacy & Education*

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Ms. Wheelchair America  
2022 Christine Burke



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be there

Contestants, families, and supporters,

Welcome to the 2022 Ms. Wheelchair America competition for its 51st year.

We are so honored to host this talented group of women who represent more than 64 million Americans living with disabilities. This group of contestants advocates and educates our community near and far in order to better the lives of those who are wheelchair users.

This year's competition, and all others, is one based on advocacy, achievement, communication, and presentation. The winner will have numerous duties including promoting awareness of the need to eliminate architectural and attitudinal barriers, informing the able-bodied public of the achievements of millions with disabilities as well as being an advocate for programming across our nation.

And so, it's with great joy that the Mary Free Bed Guild has collaborated with Ms. Wheelchair America to spotlight 2022's amazing contestants. We applaud the work you do in advocacy, education, and leadership. You all play a critical role in the hope, freedom, and success of those who are wheelchair users. We thank you for your commitment to achievement and success for all.

Let the competition begin!

Amy Stuursma  
Mary Free Bed Guild President  
Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital



Mary Free Bed Guild  
Established 1891



Empowering Women of Achievement  
Through Leadership, Advocacy & Education

Since 1972

Dear Class of 2023 Titleholders,

On behalf of the Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. Board of Directors, we welcome you to Ms. Wheelchair America 2023 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This week, you will be challenged to learn about yourself and others. Encouraged to explore new ideas and activities and find unique strengths that help you understand your true value and power. Are you ready to experience, explore and excel?

Ms. Wheelchair America began in 1972 because Philip K. Wood wanted women that used wheelchairs for mobility to be recognized for their achievements and accomplishments instead of pitied. He wanted everyone to understand their incredible determination, capabilities, and talents. Ms. Wheelchair America has provided that platform.

This year, we celebrate the end of our 50th year of advocacy. For 50 years, women have gathered not just to compete for a title but to find their voice and gain the confidence to use it. Since the first competition with three contestants, there have now been over 1,000 state titleholders that have broken barriers for change. 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 and changed countless individuals in big and small ways. This year, 22 state titleholders have the opportunity to show their talents, capabilities, and determination and share a platform that has special meaning and importance to them. We want to congratulate each titleholder for the achievements that have brought them here. These titleholders truly represent why the Ms. Wheelchair America organization is essential.

Your challenge is to build a strong legacy, just like Dr. Philip K. Wood. Your legacy will require action that starts with you. Ready, set, go!

Be an Advocate,

**Shelly Loose**

President, Ms. Wheelchair America

Box 86 - Byron Center, MI 49315

616-840-7017

[www.mswheelchairamerica.org](http://www.mswheelchairamerica.org)



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II  
LT. GOVERNOR

August 15, 2022

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel  
187 Monroe Avenue NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the state of Michigan, I'd like to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 51st National Ms. Wheelchair America.

Founded in 1972, Ms. Wheelchair America has provided an opportunity for women who use wheelchairs to successfully educate and advocate for the more than 64 million Americans living with disabilities. This competition has brought together thousands of Americans to promote awareness of the need to eliminate architectural and attitudinal barriers throughout our country. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for all the work that Ms. Wheelchair America has done for our state and beyond. This work is incredibly important to promote public awareness of the importance of these issues.

I would also like to extend my deepest recognition to all those involved in the planning and preparation of this event, as well as all those visiting from other states. May you bask in all the beautiful nature that makes Michigan so special. I send my best wishes to all those participating in the competition.

Again, welcome to the 2022 National Ms. Wheelchair America. Please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable competition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gretchen Whitmer".

Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor of Michigan



# City of Grand Rapids, Michigan

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

**ROSALYNN C. BLISS**  
MAYOR

Dear Guests:

Welcome to Grand Rapids – we are delighted to host you here in our city.

While you no doubt have a full agenda, I do hope you will take time to explore Grand Rapids' downtown and its dynamic neighborhoods. From a walkable city center with restaurants, clubs and museums, to endless outdoor options such as golfing, fishing, hiking and biking, Grand Rapids is a great place to both live and visit – and we're so glad you're here.

If you're an art connoisseur, a stroll downtown will take you by our Robert Indiana LOVE sculpture, and Alexander Calder's La Grande Vitesse (more commonly referred to as "The Calder") which is the first public work of art funded in part by the National Endowment of the Arts. Or if you need a break from the bustle of downtown, look no farther than one of our 74 City-owned parks, or take a stroll on a trail alongside the Grand River. And of course, as we are referred to as "Beer City USA," a trip to Grand Rapids would not be complete without a stop at one of our many breweries that are located downtown and throughout our neighborhoods.

And that's not all we're known for – our metropolitan area is a knowledge center that boasts over a dozen colleges and universities. Plus, human medicine, medical education and health research make up our most rapidly growing economic sector – just take a walk up our Medical Mile to see this growth for yourself.

And yet, these comprise only a sliver of what makes our City so great – it is the people who live and work here who have made us who we are today and who have contributed to our success. We have been named the Best City to Raise a Family and selected among the Top U.S. Destinations to Visit. We also have been recognized among the Most Exciting Midsized Cities and Best Places to Retire.

But don't take my word for it – check it out yourself. The creative energy of our city – with its wonderfully diverse culture, vibrant downtown and dynamic neighborhoods – will inspire you. You will not find another city that matches our amenities and beautiful community spirit. Add to that the West Michigan friendliness of those who live and work here, and you will feel right at home.

On behalf of my colleagues at City Hall and all those who call Grand Rapids home, we hope you enjoy our city and have a wonderful time here.

Sincerely,

Rosalynn Bliss

## A Message from the President of Experience Grand Rapids

Dear 2022 Ms. Wheelchair America Annual National Pageant Attendees:

Welcome to Grand Rapids! We are confident that you will find our city to be not just physically attractive, but socially responsive and completely hospitable in every way. While our destination continues to emerge and one of America's "coolest cities," it is the people that create a vibe that is noticed by our visitors. Wherever you go during your stay, you'll be surrounded by friendly faces and helpful attitudes.

The Grand Rapids experience begins downtown, where you'll find eleven first-class hotels, including 3, connected via skywalk to a state-of-the-art convention center. Two of these connected hotels are AAA Four-Diamond rated. Our other downtown properties are within a 10-minute or less stroll, as are 150+ restaurants, shops and performance venues. Also within easy walking distance:

- Six premier museums: The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, Grand Rapids African American Museum & Archives, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids Public Museum, Grand Rapids Children's Museum and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts.
- A scenic riverwalk, picturesque historic home district and public art everywhere.

More than 100 additional hotels and meeting venues are located within a 15-minute drive of downtown, close to such attractions and activities as:

- Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the world's "Top 30 Must-See Museums."
  - Shopping galore, including Tanger Outlet Mall, Woodland Mall, Rivertown Shopping Center and Breton Village Mall.
- The Grand Rapids Food Trail – 30+ delectable destinations that also serve as an introduction to eight distinct "destinations within the destination."
- Quaint cities and towns, offering diverse dining, retail and endless entertainment options sure to please your own tastes.
- As Beer City USA, you'll find 60 breweries throughout greater Grand Rapids, with 8 being located downtown.

You can find information on all of this and much more at our award-winning website, [ExperienceGR.com](http://ExperienceGR.com). Search for events on specific dates, activities that match your unique interests and even special hotel deals – perfect if you want to extend your stay or make a return visit with friends and family.

On behalf of Experience Grand Rapids, our tourism partners and the entire community, I want to thank you for visiting our special city. We are committed to showing you a great time – and we hope you'll share your experience with others!

Cheers,



Douglas Small  
President & Chief Experience Officer

# *Continuing the Legacy*

For 50 years, Ms. Wheelchair America has operated and been staff by volunteers. What started with Dr. Wood and a few of his associates has grown into the Ms. Wheelchair America of today. Since 1972, there have been over 1,000 diverse state titleholders with many disabilities, from 48 states and Puerto Rico that have attended a National Competition. Behind the scenes there have only been volunteers! Dedicated volunteers of all races, ethnicities, ages, genders, backgrounds, and abilities. Bringing women together, not to simply compete for a crown, but to empower, encourage and celebrate their unique abilities to help remove barriers that have been faced by all people with disabilities.

These volunteers are the Ms. Wheelchair America legacy. Their work continues through the actions of our current volunteers. The Ms. Wheelchair America State Coordinators are a dedicated group of volunteers that play a tremendous role in the success of Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. Without the dedication and efforts of these State Coordinators, Ms. Wheelchair America could not survive.

Many have held the state title and experienced the power of Ms. Wheelchair America. They are passionate about advocating, educating, and empowering women to understand their value as a woman, not just as a woman that uses a wheelchair for mobility.

Throughout the year, a state coordinator is responsible for many aspects of leading and cultivating the program in their state. They ensure the state program operates within the policies of Ms. Wheelchair America. State coordinators recruit contestants, plan, hold a state competition, and crown a titleholder. They actively mentor, guide, and support the titleholder in all aspects of their reign, for instance, scheduling appearances, raising funds, and helping prepare them for the National Competition. These tasks require using their time, talents, and resources. State coordinators are amazing volunteers trying to positively impact people with disabilities!

It is important to recognize and thank the current group of state coordinators. Together they have accumulated more than 150 years of service to Ms. Wheelchair America. It is their work that is keeping the legacy alive.

"Leadership is about making others better as a result of your presence and making sure it lasts in your absence."

- Sheryl Sandberg



# *Ms. Wheelchair America Leadership*

## *2022 Board of Directors*

President	Shelly Loose
Vice President	Mary Zendejas
Secretary	Angela Piazza
Treasurer	Carrie Greenwood
Member at Large	Rebecca Sentell

## *2022 State Coordinators*

Arkansas	Erica Graser-Gates
Arizona	LaRhonda Hart
California	Susan Rotchy
Colorado	Christine Layne
District of Columbia	Shannon Minnick
Florida	Shari Wilson
Georgia	Nicoal Campbell
Idaho	Devyn Burdett
Indiana	Shauna Wilson
Iowa	Tasha DeGroote
Kansas	Carrie Greenwood
Kentucky	Beth Bryant
Louisiana	Karen Roy
Maryland	Robert Watson
Michigan	Shelly Loose
Minnesota	Nina Harrison
Mississippi	Rebecca Sentell
Nevada	Madonna Long
New Jersey	Kathy Ford
New York	Shameka Andrews
North Carolina	Debi Myers
Ohio	Laura Sykes
Oregon	Leslie Keller
Pennsylvania	Kristin Rebstock
Rhode Island	Ashley Cabrita
South Carolina	Angela Young
Tennessee	Bliss Welch
Texas	Angel Arrendondo
Utah	Lina Nguyen
Virginia	Emily McGrail
Washington	Krystal Monteros
Wisconsin	Autumn Neugent
Wyoming	Masha Flinn

# *The History of Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.*

In 1972 Dr. Philip 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 64 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 Organization holds a competition to select an accomplished, articulate spokeswoman for people with disabilities. The national 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, which promotes inclusion.

Ms. Wheelchair America has numerous duties. During her reign she travels visiting advocacy groups, makes public appearances, and conducts interviews. Ms. Wheelchair America promotes her chosen platform in a variety of settings with a wide range of individuals. She serves as a positive role model for the next generation of Americans with disabilities, inspiring them to have an impact and leave a positive legacy. Her commitment and personal example serve to further the mission of Ms. Wheelchair America.

This competition gathers advocates from across America to participate in a variety of activities, which develop stronger advocates to impact people in their state. These activities allow a panel of judges to spend time with each state titleholder, while allowing the competitors time together to share with each other and develop strong bonds of friendships and sisterhood. They become stronger advocates while attending a variety of interesting workshops that strengthen them. The workshops build leadership skills, heighten awareness on the issues that exist 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 several sponsors that the national titleholder can 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. All support is appreciated.



## *National Titleholders*

1973 Patricia Nevins of Michigan

1974 Caryl Jane Robinson of Texas

1975 Diana Kenderian of New Jersey

1976 Dixie Lee Etheridge of Mississippi

1977 Beverly Chapman of Florida

1978 Margie Sloan of Georgia

1979 Marge Chmielewski of Michigan

1980 Nancy Pudvin of Georgia

1981 Vivienne Thompson of Massachusetts

1982 Marian Schooling-Vessels of Maryland

1983 Barbara Crozier

1984 Gaynell Colburn of Maryland

1985 Lori Cottam of Utah

1986 Donna Cline of Nevada

1987 Sandra Honbaier of North Carolina

1988 Peggy Simpson of Alabama

1989 Jewell Massey of Georgia

1990 Kathy Garcia Farnsworth of Utah

1991 Mercedes Rodriguez-Fowler of Florida

1992 Deanna VanHook of Texas

1993 Kim Mensi of Alabama

1994 Dawn Blodgett of California

1995 Wendy Petzold of Wisconsin

1996 Amy Baxter-Ley of Texas

1997 Elaine Stefanowicz of Washington

1998 Terri Cecil of Kentucky

1999 Christina Gilmore of Wisconsin

2000 Tracy Charlton-O'Conno of South Dakota

2001 Nicki Ard of South Carolina

2002 Candy Marsh of Colorado

2003 Catherine Gugala of Wisconsin

2004 Cinda Hughes of Oklahoma

2005 Juliette Rizzo of Maryland

2006 Kristen Connors of Rhode Island

2007 Autumn Grant of Massachusetts

2008 Kristen McCosh of Massachusetts

2009 Michelle Colvard of Texas

2010 Erika Bogan of North Carolina

2011 Alexandra McArthur of North Carolina

2012 Josie Badger of Pennsylvania

2013 Mariah Kilbourne of Texas

2014 Jennifer Adams of Washington

2015 Samantha Schroth of Wisconsin

2016 Alette Coble-Temple of California

2017 Eliza McIntosh-Stauffer of Utah

2018 Sheri Melander-Smith of Minnesota

2019 Karen Roy of Louisiana

2020 Hilary Meuhlenberger of Missouri

2022 Christine Burke of California





# Ms. Wheelchair AMERICA



## Ms. Wheelchair America Creed

*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 of grace,  
warmth and dignity.*

# Farewell from Ms. Wheelchair America 2022

## Christine Burke

Wow, I cannot believe that the time has almost come to crown a new queen. It will be a bittersweet moment as this has become such an integral part of my identity that's gotten me through some tough times. While my state reign may have begun on February 28th of 2020 when I was crowned by the former Ms. Wheelchair America 2016, Alette Coble-Temple, while being cheered on by Leslie Noel Hansen and the rest of my PPF Family (extending an extra year with the effects of the pandemic), my journey was already in motion in 2019. The Peter



Pan Foundation (PPF, founded by the aforementioned Leslie Noel) is a performing nonprofit foundation that creates magic for all kinds of audiences; whether it's their annual Wish Upon A Star Disney spectacular benefiting Children's Hospital in Oakland, CA, fulfilling Make-A-Wish appearances as a child's favorite Disney character, or singing a selection of songs at local events. It was at the latter when PPF was invited to sing at the Ms. Wheelchair California 2019 competition and was invited to sing, that I could start to see how my two passions, performance and advocacy, could come together. The rest of course is history, yet I still revel in how far my path has taken me.

As MWCA 2020, I ruled on the basis of helping change how disabled people were portrayed in the media. This was my focus all throughout college and the connections I've been fortunate to make in the industry, lent me a unique position in which I could affect some small change. To this end, I was able to give talks to theater camps, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Boards, give interviews to my local publications, and even be on podcasts with amazing humans like Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins. When I was preparing for Nationals, I decided to adjust my platform slightly to a mantra that I firmly believed in: "Putting Disability Back in Diversity." This came about after enduring meeting after meeting in the corporate world where departments would brag about how diverse they were; "we have women, we're ethnically diverse, we have people in the LGBTQIA+ community... GO US!" Not quite, because at the intersection of all these identities is the indiscriminate DISABILITY. I also wanted to lend my platform as an ally to all those in the disability community who are multi minorities. So often many of my friends recount instances where they feel they have to choose their Black identity OR their disabled identity, as both are not openly included. I did what I could to elevate important issues my friends and fellow Queens posted on social media, shared campaigns that would bring these issues to light and try as much as I could to advocate for this underrepresented community in my own work at C Talent, where we represented high profile Deaf and Disabled artists of all backgrounds.



One of the biggest challenges of being a "Pandemic Queen" was that physical travel to speak with groups was suddenly, if not out of the question, exceedingly more difficult. My first event of January 2022 would have been to "Ski for Light", the hands down #1 activity that all past queens sighted as one of their favorite



events of their reign. Sadly, due to limited COVID precautions and residing in an at risk household meant that my talk had to be given virtually. However, when one door closed, I found I could take an elevator to a similar floor! I'd already had practice talking with local elementary schools locally, so why not try and reach as many states as I could virtually? I got to send messages to contestants in the MW Oregon, MW South Carolina, MW Michigan and of course present at my home state competition. I was fortunate in September of 2021 to visit my very first Queen Sister Ms. Wheelchair Nevada 2020, Angelica Bazile and her beautiful family on a trip to Vegas. We discussed how our platforms aligned as she was looking to elevate Black Disabled voices in the community and shared stories of our lives. I got to continue spreading the word and finding like minded advocates as I headed to New York City to attend the Way Awards, honoring underrepresented musicians, and seeing blind singer and C Talent client, Lachi,



take home some hardware. On this trip I also got to get on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and cap the day off at the Runway of Dreams gala, watching some amazing models show off the latest in adaptive fashion and network with some of my heroes.

One of my favorite moments happened at the NY Metro Abilities Expo where ten of the East Coast's past and present queens serendipitously crossed paths on the same day. While the bond of sisterhood was palpable during the years leading up to my reign, there was nothing like being able to hug a fellow sister in person after only seeing them in their respective Zoom boxes. Abilities Expos in General were, embarrassingly enough, new territory for me. The closest I'd been was to one in San Mateo but it didn't hold my teenage attention enough to make the annual 4 trek. It became increasingly more difficult when it moved five hours away to LA, which is such a shame because let me tell you, after that event I was HOOKED on Expos for life. Reconnecting with former college roommates and kids I coached at wheelchair sports camps, re-introducing myself to pioneer rock climber Mark Wellman, who'd spoken to my high school in 2006, and getting to meet my dance icons, the LA Rollettes were hands down some of the best moments of my life.

In the end though, it was the little moments that meant the most. Most recently, I began conversations with the local Ko'Oolina Resort Group in Oahu to get the ball rolling on creating equitable beach access. Circling back to my PPF Family, this year I inadvertently was the inspiration for fellow wheelchair user and friend Amber Clark, to audition and share the stage not only with me, but with my fellow Wheel Queen podcast host, Krystina Wray Jackson, for Wish Upon A Star. I cannot wait to head to The Rollettes Experience later this month to dance my butt off, hand out some crowns to future Queens and learn from the industry's finest advocates including Long Beach Councilwoman Mary Zendejas and none other than the Mother of the Disability movement herself, Judy Heumann. Topping off the summer by heading to Michigan where I can FINALLY get a peek into the Nationals Experience will be the cherry on top. Though my reign is ending, I will never stop fighting for our incredible community. I cannot wait to meet the newest batch of advocates who are going to change the world.



# Meet the Titleholders

## Ms. Wheelchair Arizona 2022



**Brooke Brown** – Brooke lives in Phoenix, Arizona, and volunteers at Joni and Friends Arizona and Highlands Church in Scottsdale. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication from Arizona State University. Brooke enjoys Pilates, being involved in church, and going to the movies. She has Cerebral Palsy which was diagnosed at 9 months of age. Her platform focuses on Equality in communication. Brooke describes herself as creative, determined, and observant.

## Ms. Wheelchair California 2022



**Jacquelyne Yawn** – Jacquelyne lives in Santee, California, and volunteers for the city of Santee. She received a Master of Arts in English Literature from San Diego State University and a Paralegal Certificate from the University of California San Diego. Jacquelyne enjoys reading, painting, and visiting beaches. She has a Spinal Cord Injury from an automobile accident on September 9, 1988. Her platform focuses on Disability Inclusivity in the Media. Jacquelyne describes herself as friendly, outgoing, and clever.

## Ms. Wheelchair Florida 2022



**Bryanna Tanase** – Bryanna lives in Trinity, Florida, and volunteers at Quantum Leap Farm and Emerald M Therapeutic Riding Center. She received her Master's in Healthcare Administration from South University. Bryanna enjoys horseback riding, playing video games, and writing. She was born with a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy. Her platform focuses on Awareness of and improving access to equine assisted therapy. Bryanna describes herself as hard working, empathetic, and driven.

## Ms. Wheelchair Georgia 2022



**Alesha Savannah** – Alesha lives in Atlanta, Georgia, and volunteers at Children's Hospital of Atlanta. She obtained a Master Cosmetology License at Empire Beauty School in 2011. Alesha enjoys arts & crafts, traveling, and gardening. She has a T-10-11 Spinal Cord Injury from an automobile accident on December 31, 2018. Her platform focuses on proving that disability isn't a curse, but the world being inaccessible to those with disabilities makes the world that much harder to live in. Alesha describes herself as adventurous, friendly, and empowering.

# Meet the Titleholders

## Ms. Wheelchair Idaho 2022



**Jessica Bellefeuille** – Jessica lives in Coeur D' Alene, Idaho, and volunteers at CDA ACT, Special Needs Recreation, D.D.A.R.C, and Christian Media Spotlight. She is currently working towards her Journalism and General Studies degrees at North Idaho College. Jessica enjoys playing the guitar, singing, and journaling. She has Cerebral Palsy from birth and was diagnosed with Paroxysmal Dyskinesia on August 14, 2020. Her platform focuses on workplace equity. Jessica describes herself as intelligent, considerate, and determined.

## Ms. Wheelchair Kansas 2022



**Marci Clare** – Marci lives in Abilene, Kansas, and volunteers at Davis Family Nursery & Garden. She obtained her diploma as a Licensed Practical Nurse at Manhattan Area Technical College in Manhattan, Kansas. Marci enjoys gardening, painting, and crafts. She has an Incomplete C6/C7 Spinal Cord Injury from an automobile accident on May 4, 2016. Her platform focuses on Accessible Housing for disabled. Marci describes herself as friendly, talkative, and a very strong disability advocate.

## Ms. Wheelchair Louisiana 2022



**Elizabeth Morgan** – Elizabeth lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and volunteers at Baton Rouge General Hospital and St. Alban's Chapel. She earned her Ph.D. from Louisiana State University in Workforce Development; a master's from Louisiana State University in Mass Communication; and a bachelor's from the University of Phoenix in Marketing. Elizabeth enjoys being an artist, gardening, and reading. She was diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis in 2015. In 2017, she went through a Myasthenic crisis, after which, she began using a wheelchair for mobility. Her platform focuses on Independence Through Technology. Elizabeth describes herself as creative, positive, and spiritual.

## Ms. Wheelchair Maryland 2022



**Kisha Antonette Deloris Stover** – Kisha lives in College Park, Maryland, and volunteers at Hospital for Sick Children kids in action. She obtained an associate's degree in general studies and Marketing Management from Prince George's Community College. Kisha enjoys writing, listening to music, and arts and crafts. She has a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy due to being born premature. Her platform focuses on education and homeless issues that the disabled community faces. Kisha describes herself as creative, talented, and caring.



# Meet the Titleholders

## Ms. Wheelchair Michigan 2022



**Sarah H. Nassar** – Sarah lives in Dearborn, Michigan, and volunteers as the President and Founder of the Disability Law Association. She is currently a third-year law student at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. Sarah enjoys public speaking, reading, and traveling. She has Muscular Dystrophy. Her platform focuses on inclusion, civil rights, and representation. Sarah describes herself as passionate, charismatic, and authentic.

## Ms. Wheelchair Minnesota 2022



**Linda Joyce Hood** – Linda lives in Woodbury, Minnesota, and volunteered at the Summer Olympics since 1984. Linda completed her Applied Clinical Research graduate coursework in Oncology Clinical Science at St. Cloud State University. Linda enjoys playing chess, reading mystery books, and public speaking. She is a Quadriplegia; because of Guillain-Barre Syndrome in 2018. Her platform focuses on increasing accessibility for those with disabilities. Linda describes herself as caring, adventurous and optimistic

## Ms. Wheelchair Mississippi 2022



**LaBrittany Knight** – LaBrittany lives in Indianola, Mississippi, and volunteers at Camp Dream Street. LaBrittany received her Bachelor of Science in Information Technology from Mississippi State University. LaBrittany enjoys reading, journaling, and riding horses. She has had a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy since birth. Her platform focuses on Individuals with disabilities entering the workforce. LaBrittany describes herself as ambitious, resilient, and tenacious.

## Ms. Wheelchair New Jersey 2022



**Lea Donaghy** – Lea lives in Franklinville, New Jersey, and volunteers at the Crisis Textline Hotline and Rowan University Accessibility Services. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Rowan University and is currently working on her Master of Counseling in Educational Settings at Rowan. Lea enjoys playing with the Philadelphia Flyers Powerplay, a power wheelchair hockey team and helping students be confident in their abilities! She was diagnosed around the age of two with Spinal Muscular Atrophy; a genetic disorder causing very weak muscles. Her platform focuses on helping students transition smoothly to higher education with a small focus on adaptive sports. Lea describes herself as determined, empathetic, and creative.

# Meet the Titleholders



## Ms. Wheelchair New York 2022

**Heather Horwedel** – Heather lives in Schenectady, New York, and volunteers at Spina Bifida Association of Northeastern New York and Double H Ranch. She studied Early Childhood Education at Schenectady County Community College. Heather enjoys arts & crafts, working out, and being outdoors. She was diagnosed at birth with Spina Bifida. Her platform focuses on teaching people to advocate for themselves and others while working together to make communities more accessible to everyone. Heather describes herself as resilient, creative, and determined.



## Ms. Wheelchair North Carolina 2022

**Ali Ingersoll** – Ali lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, and volunteers at North Carolina Statewide Independent Living Council and North Carolina Alliance of Disability Advocates. She received a Bachelor of Business Administration with a focus in Entrepreneurship from the University of Miami. Ali enjoys swimming, traveling, and helping others. She became a C6 quadriplegic from a shallow water diving accident on August 21st, 2010. Her platform focuses on health insurance advocacy for medically necessary equipment. Ali describes herself as persistent, determined, and passionate.



## Ms. Wheelchair Ohio 2022

**Krista Allison** – Krista lives in Berea, Ohio, and volunteers at Rise in Love. She received her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and her master's degree in Management and Public Administration from The University of Phoenix. Krista enjoys singing, volunteering, and spending time with her family and friends, she was born with Charcot Marie Tooth (CMT); a genetic variant carried by her parents. Her platform focuses on Community Accessibility. Krista describes herself as outgoing, determined, and compassionate.



## Ms. Wheelchair Oregon 2022

**Melinda Preciado** – Melinda lives in Springfield, Oregon, and volunteers as a Board Member for Power On With Limb Loss. She has received multiple licenses and certificates in the health and medical field. Melinda enjoys photography, spending time outdoors, and spending time with family and friends. She has severe arthritis, deformity of her left leg, and an amputation above her knee. Her platform focuses on Adapting America For All. Melinda describes herself as a critical thinker, compassionate and Zen.

# Meet the Titleholders

## Ms. Wheelchair Pennsylvania 2022



**Caitlin Chasar** – Caitlin lives in North Wales, Pennsylvania, and volunteers at both United Spinal and the Spina Bifida Associations. She earned Bachelor of Art in Communications and a Master of Art in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling from Edinboro University. Caitlin enjoys traveling, spending time with friends, and playing wheelchair sports. She was diagnosed at birth with Spina Bifida. Her platform focuses on creating accessible recreation spaces to promote mental and physical wellness for adults and kids with disabilities. Caitlin describes herself as friendly, determined, and sassy

## Ms. Wheelchair Rhode Island 2022



**Catherine Moretti** – Catherine lives in Cranston, Rhode Island, and volunteers at Rhode Island home rescue. She went to Aveda for nails and is currently studying American Sign Language at Rhode Island Community College. Catherine enjoys basketball, drawing, and listening to music. She was diagnosed at birth with Spina Bifida. Her platform focuses on mental health. Catherine describes herself as friendly, outgoing, and loving.

## Ms. Wheelchair South Carolina 2022



**Tatianna Davis** – Tatianna lives in Sumter, South Carolina, and volunteers at Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications from Winthrop University. Tatianna enjoys photography, blogging, and creating products for her small business, Illuminating Designz. She was diagnosed at birth with Osteogenesis Imperfecta type 3. Her platform focuses on higher education to enter the workforce. Tatianna describes herself as tenacious, inspiring, and spontaneous.

## Ms. Wheelchair Texas 2022



**Kristy Durso** – Kristy lives in San Antonio, Texas, and volunteers at Travelability, and Travel Industry Solutions. She is a certified accessible travel advocate with Special Needs Group, has certifications in both IBCCES Autism and Autism Double Checked. She founded the Spectrum of Accessibility training course for travel professionals. Kristy enjoys traveling, reading, and talking about accessibility. She has Ehlers Danlos Syndrome which is a genetic disorder that can cause Autonomic Neuropathy Disorder. Her platform focuses on Accessibility and inclusion. Kristy describes herself as tenacious, compassionate, and intense

# Meet the Titleholders

## Ms. Wheelchair Virginia 2022



**Cathy Parr** – Cathy lives in Fall Church, Virginia, and volunteers at the Civitan Club of Tyson. She attends church at Our Lady Queen of Peace and sings in the church choir. Cathy enjoys socializing, mentoring others, and sightseeing. She was born with cerebral palsy. Her platform focuses on “The Power of I Am – Look At Me”. Cathy describes herself as outgoing, self-confident, and fearless.

## Ms. Wheelchair Washington 2022



**Leylah Leonard** – Leylah lives in Tacoma, Washington, and volunteers at the Morgan Family YMCA and MultiCare Allenmore Hospital. She graduated from Henry Foss High School. Leylah enjoys going to the mall, watching movies, and talking to her friends. She has had a diagnosis since birth of Cerebral palsy and her platform focuses accessibility. Leylah describes herself as friendly, helpful, and loud.

# Ms. Wheelchair America



# Meet the Judges



*Susan L. Bloss*

Susan Bloss is the president of Lifestyle Kitchen Studio, a design studio located in Grand Rapids, Michigan where she resides. Ms. Bloss has owned her business for 38 years and is a graduate of the University of Michigan.

On a travel adventure in 2002, Susan was bitten by a mosquito. That bite changed her life forever. The resulting California Virus caused a year-long paralysis and slow recovery period. After months on a ventilator, a tracheotomy, and long-term therapy at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital Susan continues to improve. She uses a scooter for mobility. With the help of her husband, daughters, extended family and friends, her life is again rich and rewarding.

In addition to her love of family and design, Susan has been blessed to be involved in volunteer opportunities. After her hospitalization, she joined the Mary Free Bed Guild, an organization formed by women in 1911 which owns the Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital to this day. Susan has cochaired the Guild Art Committee, which oversees the MFB Art Exhibition. It is a show featuring work created by artists who have a physical disability. Susan developed the Guild Kitchen at MFB hospital, served on the Architectural Oversight Committee during renovations. She served on the Guild advisory committee developing the hospital kitchen which serves hospital patients and the café serving patients, family, and staff.

Susan is a past president of The Mary Free Bed Guild Fund, which supports the hospital and contributes to programs for the disabled. She is on the Board of the Mary Free Bed Guild, the Hospital Board of Trustees, and the First United Methodist Church Board of Trustees. That completed a renovation of the 150-year-old church's chancel, making it accessible and inclusive.



*Dan Carmichael*

Dan Carmichael is a writer, comedian, and co-owner of GT Independence: an industry-leading Financial Management Service company that helps people with long-term care needs self-direct care in their homes and communities. Through GT, Dan has started the #fairplayforall initiative, a program that provides funding and supports for advocates of inclusive playgrounds.

A popular podcast guest, Dan has been featured on Today's Autistic Moment, the Sibling Leadership Network, and others. Dan also produces the acclaimed Disability Garrison podcast, which has had many influential guests from the disability world, including Judy Heumann and ADA author Tony Coelho.

Dan is a fervent defender of disability rights, a topic that hit close to home: Dan is autistic and with his wife Holly, raises an autistic son, Dexter, and a daughter, Maggie, with a rare disease: Congenital Disorder of Glycosylation PMM2 (CDG-PMM2). Dan and Holly subsequently created Maggie's Pearl, which has developed a potential treatment for CDG-PMM2 and will start a Phase III FDA trial this fall.

In his free time Dan enjoys playing guitar, going to concerts, cooking, and woodworking.

# Meet the Judges



*Ketrina Hazell*

Ketrina (Trina) Hazell's was Ms. Wheelchair New York 2018, her platform now focuses on bringing self-advocacy into schools and teaching inclusion. A strong self-advocate, blogger and college graduate, Hazell graduated from Partners in Policymaking in 2014. She is the founder of the advocacy group, Voices of Power, and Disability Champion Mentoring Network, an organization that helps high school students with their post-secondary education transition and allows them to chart their own path.

Hazell is a self-advocacy lead working for The Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation (RCWT). She is also a contributing author at Jaro4Me, and has volunteered as a tutor with Reading Partners, as well as an assistant with ADAPT Community Network, the leading human service not-for-profit and a pioneer in providing cutting edge programs and services for people with disabilities in New York.

Hazell's motto is to empower others to discover their voices and give hope to families in the disability community through sharing her journey. She is currently a certified life coach. She specializes in serving the underserved, including people with disabilities, those of lower socioeconomic status, parents of people with disabilities and youth.



*Tayloure Richardson*

Tayloure Richardson, was Ms. Wheelchair California 2017, and runner up at Ms. Wheelchair America 2018. Since her time as a titleholder, she has continued in her advocacy role and is still doing amazing things within the disability community. She is a board member for Operation Confidence, where they provide wraparound services for veterans with disabilities, and a weekly announcer on America's Invisible Heroes talk show.

Tayloure is working on her master's degree in social work where she wants to further her knowledge and gain further understanding to the needs of military families and then advocate for those needs. She is currently an employee with the Department of Defense where she works with active-duty members and their families during times of crisis.

When asked about her experience as a former Ms. Wheelchair America contestant, she states "I am grateful for the opportunity to shed light on matters that are important to the disability community and myself. It allowed me to meet wonderful women around the country and forming lasting friendships with them."

## Meet the Judges



*Anila Jivanji*

Anila Jivanji is currently new to her role as the Director of Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging (DEIB) at Cetera. Most recently she was at Bell where she was involved with building a sound ecosystem for DEIB and a strategy that aligned with the company goals. While at Bell, she worked closely with the ERGs building a sound foundation with a structure and governance setting them for success.

Previously she was at American Airlines, where she gained diverse experience in human resources, global sales strategy and analytics, account management, and customer experience training. In her last role at American Airlines, Anila was the Inclusion and Diversity Senior Specialist responsible for developing and growing external partnerships, employee business resource group coordination, diversity advisory council leadership, and inclusion and diversity programming and project management.

She is the recipient of the Earl Graves Award for advocacy in Diversity, Inclusion and Equity, as well as the American Airlines Chairman Award of Excellence in 2016 for her exemplary commitment and dedication in advancing the inclusion and diversity narrative at American Airlines while supporting the vision and company imperatives.

She also is also the Executive Vice President for Ascend North Texas a non-profit organization invested in growth of Pan Asian professionals,

Anila continues to serve underrepresented groups through affiliations with organizations like North Texas Disability:IN; Advisory Board of Elevate, Spectrum Knowledge; and Global Champions for Out & Equal. Anila is an ardent advocate and supporter of the Ms. Wheelchair America organization by making lucrative introductions and strengthening the network.

## More on the Judging Process

Each state titleholder will receive a score in four different areas from each judge on the judging panel. The areas being scored are the titleholder application, an essay written by the titleholder, both a 10-minute and 15-minute interview with the panel of judges, and a platform speech. In addition, the top five finalists named during Saturday's Crowning Gala will be asked to answer two questions in front of the audience. The answers to those questions will also be scored. All these scores are combined. The titleholder with the highest overall score after all the judging sessions are complete will become Ms. Wheelchair America 2023.



# 2023 Competition Awards

**Ms. Wheelchair America 2023** is chosen by the judging panel. The contestant that earns the highest total score during the judging sessions will become Ms. Wheelchair America 2023.

**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** 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 contestant 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** is chosen by those in attendance on speech night for the contestant that they feel delivered the most memorable speech of the evening.

**The People's Choice Award** is presented to the contestant who receives the most votes. Votes cost \$1.00 each and can be purchased in the weeks leading up to the National Competition until August 20, 2022. This year, forty percent of the funds raised will be distributed to the award recipient's Ms. Wheelchair State Program while the remaining funds will go to the Ms. Wheelchair America Personal Care Attendant Fund.

**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 Hope and Freedom Award** is chosen by the Mary Free Bed Guild and awarded the contestant who demonstrates hope and positivity in their life, advocacy and a commitment to our mission of hope and freedom for all those living with a disability.

**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.

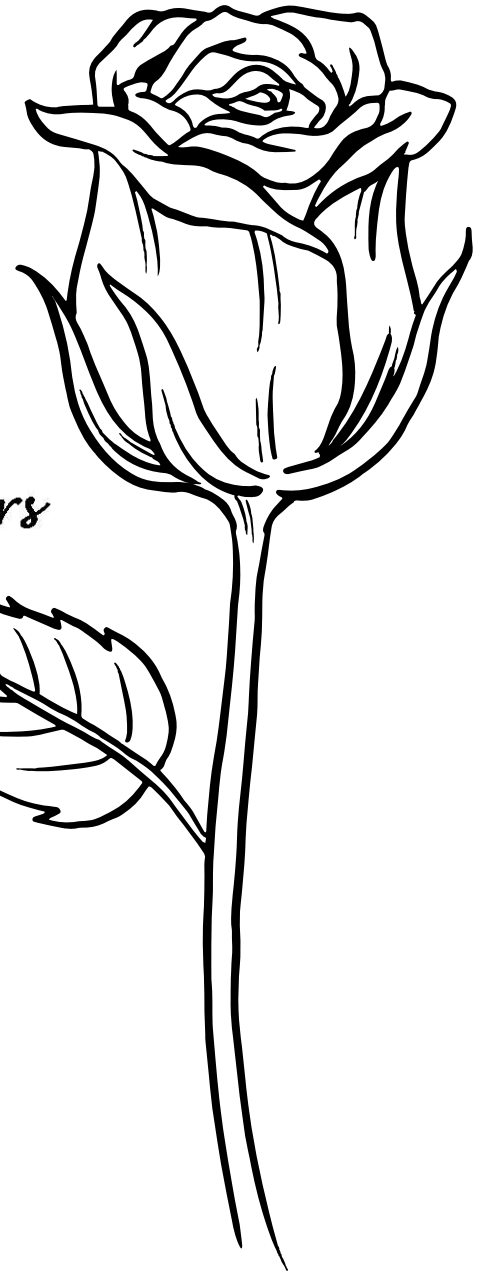
The awards will be present to the chosen recipients on Saturday, August 20, 2022 during the Ms. Wheelchair America crowning gala.



# *A Sincere Thank You!*

## *Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. Sponsors*

Mary Free Bed Guild  
Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital  
MobilityWorks  
Edward Zwilling  
Hollister  
GT Independence  
Abilities Expo  
Summit Services and Supplies  
Liberare  
AbleNow  
Experience GR  
Amway Grand Plaza  
Xability  
Country Ground Coffee Company



## *Host State Volunteers*

Caleb Anderson  
Jill Anderson  
Jane Banker  
Breen Family  
Aubree Domsic  
Kathy Domsic  
Harrison Family  
Angela Johnson  
Terri Loda  
Katherine Loose  
Ken Loose  
John Mattias  
Annette Pierce  
Amy Records  
Kathy Records  
Beth Rustin  
Wade Rustin  
Becky Wheeler  
Jean Whitmer

# 2023 Titleholder Sponsors

## *Ms. Wheelchair Arizona* **Brooke M. Brown**

United Cerebral Palsy of  
Central Arizona  
Teresa Lawler  
The Dobson Family  
Michael Celender  
Highlands Church  
Joni and Friends Arizona  
Style by Robbin (Robbin and  
Erik Jensen)  
G Media Marketing (Gillian  
BeeDie)  
Tom and Sharon Brown  
Lisa Bernier

## *Ms. Wheelchair California* **Jacquelyne Yawn**

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Ms. Wheelchair California  
Leadership Institute  
Angela Piazza  
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Senator Brian Jones  
Dr. Alette Coble-Temple  
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Lindsey Kane-Groce  
Dorinda Devito  
Michael Celender  
Michael and Tamara Yawn  
Tracy Yawn  
Luke Yawn  
Lani Yawn  
Mikaela Yawn  
Council Member Rob McNelis  
Council Member Dustin Trotter

## *Ms. Wheelchair Florida* **Bryanna Tanase**

Lee Tanase  
Gabriela Tanse  
Shari Wilson

## *Ms. Wheelchair Georgia* **Alesha Savannah**

LGBT Commerce  
Easeleigh  
The Dirty Unicorn  
The Rainbow wheelie  
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MyEverything LLC  
Jazz Forman  
Lashed By Nani  
ChyllOut Styles  
Makeup By Nina  
Get This Work  
Robin Mitchell Agency

## *Ms. Wheelchair Idaho* **Jessica Bellefeuille**

The Village Bakery  
The Kroc Center CDA  
Beau Clothing Exchange  
Luxe Beauty  
Northwest Specialty Hospital

## *Ms. Wheelchair Kansas* **Marci Clare**

Abilene Physical Therapy and  
Sports Rehab  
Stacy Lowry owner of The  
Ornament Girl  
Pinnacle Bank  
Josh Clare and Giselle Cino  
Abilene Animal Hospital  
The Honorable Robert J Dole  
Prairie Band Potawatomi  
Nation  
Amanda Haug  
Ron Genzel  
Stephanie Rowdon  
Rittles Western Wear  
The Lumber House  
The entire community of my  
hometown Abilene Kansas  
and all my family and friends  
Hilary Garrett  
Michelle and  
Damien Stephens  
John Barker Kansas  
State Representative

## *Ms. Wheelchair Louisiana* **Elizabeth Morgan**

Kendra Scott  
Mary Durusau  
Bill Avery  
Stephanie Desselle  
Erik & Sheila Lusins  
Peggy Hillburn  
Kizzy Peyton  
Kathy Finley  
Vickie Miller  
Anne Perrault  
Marlene Kroussel  
Charlene Thompson  
Lily Allen  
Jessica Stroupe  
Emily Stitch  
Anonymous  
Karen Roy  
Nealy Orillion

## *Ms. Wheelchair Maryland* **Kisha Stover**

MobilityWorks  
Disability Partnerships  
Anytime Taxi  
Robert Watson Family  
MDRelay  
Andrew A. Johnson  
Clayton Williams Jr  
Clayton Williams Sr  
Diane Richardson  
Gloria Martindale  
Gwen McDavid  
Gwen Myers  
Independence Now of  
Silver Spring Maryland  
Jacqueline Williams  
Janice Fisher  
Joe Williams  
Kathrine Hardman  
Maryland Department  
of Disabilities  
Milby Peterson  
Ms. Bobby Williams  
Reggie McDavid  
Shannon Minnick  
Sharman Monroe  
Yolonda Franklin



**“FOR WE ARE LEADERS OF  
INCLUSIVENESS AND  
COMMUNITY, OF LOVE,  
EQUITY, AND JUSTICE.”  
- JUDITH HEUMANN**

# 2023 Titleholder Sponsors

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

*— Margaret Mead*

## ***Ms. Wheelchair Michigan***

***Sarah Nassar***

Sahda Nassar

Shahrin Shomi

Aaish Aeron

Taylor Danou

Fatma Nassar

Dalia Nassar

Bahea Nassar

Zoey Harrison

Roslyn Breen

Ms. Wheelchair Michigan

Shelly Loose

## ***Ms. Wheelchair***

***Minnesota***

***Linda Hood***

Laurie Tomaszewski

Bob Jackson

Jackie Semrad

Susan Littlefield

Lisa Sahr

Gregory Stenmoe

Victoria Rosales Little

Marc Montgomery

Excess Press Magazine

M Health Fairview

Achievement Center

U.S. Bank Stadium

M health Fairview

Outpatient Therapy Center

Care 11 news

WCCO news

## ***Ms. Wheelchair***

***Mississippi***

***LaBrittany Knight***

Mary Richard

Lakisha Richard

Doretha Spears

Tressie Spears

Jerry Randle Jr.

Morris Richard

Lena Murrell

Marie Collier

Julia Hill

Jerry Randle Jr.

Cynthia Mcdaniel

Samara Ensley

Darrin Richard

Curtiso Jennings

Tatayana Grayer

## ***Ms. Wheelchair***

***New Jersey***

***Lea Donaghy***

Kelly and Dave Donaghy

Kathy Ford

The Philadelphia Flyers

Powerplay

Alex Pitts

The Pitts Family

The Howe Family

The Donaghy Family

Randi Dymond

The Shevlin's

Rowan University Student

Support Services

## ***Ms. Wheelchair***

***New York***

***Heather Horwedel***

Mr. & Mrs. Jim &

Bonita Horwedel

Family & Friends

Shameka Andrews

Michelle Miller, Corrie

Harting & McKayla Dias

Holiday Inn Saratoga

The Spina Bifida

Association of

New York State

Capital Woman Online

Magazine

Bali Moon Jewels

518 Threads

Mark Davis of Mark A.

Davis Photography LLC

Mechelle's Way Tae

Kwondo and Cardio

Kickboxing

Matthew Haynes &

Shannon Haynes

Denise Dinoto

Stephanie Canfield

Diane Vics

Deborah Neary

Alisa Serdyuk

Susan Blackburn

Anonymous Donors

## 2023 Titleholder Sponsors

### *Ms. Wheelchair North Carolina*

#### *Ali Ingersoll*

Lucy Inman  
Jeff Fink  
Kira Woods  
Mattis Ingersoll  
Ursula Ingersoll  
Jerry Stalls  
Deborah Ingersoll  
Mickie Alexander  
Sherry Essig  
Virginia Knowlton  
Joanne Hardy  
Anne Robbie  
Steven Kahn  
Christine Diaber  
Ashley Thomas  
Mary and Bill Moss  
Rosemary Mitchell  
Evan Yates  
Ooana Archard  
Pam Armbrister  
Ralph Ingersoll  
Jacqueline Holland

### *Ms. Wheelchair Ohio Krista Allison*

American Legion Parma  
Post 572  
North Olmsted Police  
Department  
Avon Lake Police Athletic  
League – Ron Warner  
Holland Management  
Surefoot Industries  
Machor Sage Insurance  
John Sindyla  
George Falldine  
Tina Misenko  
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State Farm Insurance  
Mayor Falconi - City of  
Brunswick, OH  
City Councilwoman Dawn  
Carbone-McDonald  
Mayor Castelli- City of  
Middleburg Hts, OH  
Councilman Paul  
Marnecheck  
Councilwoman Mary  
Brown  
John and Marybeth Baron  
Chief Ohlin (Brunswick  
Police)  
Steve Dockman

### *Ms. Wheelchair Oregon Melinda Preciado*

Power On with Limb Loss  
Nectar Dispensary  
Body, Mind, Soul Studios  
Slocum Orthopedics  
Runway of Dreams  
BarnHart Prosthetics  
Springfield Moose Lodge  
#1726  
Roseburg Honda  
Hearts of Gold  
Leslie Keller,  
My Family and Friends

### *Ms. Wheelchair Pennsylvania – Caitlin Chasar*

Inglis House Self  
Determination Housing  
Project  
Giant Food Store  
Disability Pride  
Philadelphia  
Laurel Medical Solutions  
Chasar Family  
O'Donnell Family



**“EMPOWERING THOSE AROUND YOU TO  
BE HEARD AND VALUED MAKES THE  
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEADER WHO  
INSTRUCTS AND ONE WHO INSPIRES”**

**- ADENA FRIENDMAN, NASDAQ CEO**



## 2023 Titleholder Sponsors

***Ms. Wheelchair  
Rhode Island  
Catherine Moretti***

Kim Moretti  
Stephen Moretti  
Bea Moretti  
Joe Moretti  
Anthony Moretti  
Joe Moretti  
Mari Megrdichian

***Ms. Wheelchair  
South Carolina  
Tatianna Davis***

Tasha Davis  
Jordan Carter  
Ladavia Ellis  
Sammie Carter  
Eartha Carter  
Mattie Butler  
Patricia Green  
Joesph Carter, Jr.  
Lily Falls

***Ms. Wheelchair Texas  
Kristy Durso***

Patricia Cantu State Farm  
Insurance  
Travel Professional News  
Hoff's Hounds  
Incredible Memories Travel  
RoomRight Travel  
Insurance  
All Star Barber Shot San  
Antonio  
Global Repair Group  
Alinker

***Ms. Wheelchair  
Virginia  
Catherine Parr***

Ms. Wheelchair Virginia  
Peter D. Jarvis  
Brooks Bridal and Ball  
Gowns Salon  
Dr. Daniel Davis

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Washington  
Leylah Leonard***

Marisa Leonard  
Klarissa Montero  
Krystal Montero  
Kyann Flint  
Alexander Ramirez  
Amin Hester  
James Williams  
Pia Gardner  
Kelly Donovan  
Samie Iverson  
Fernando Ruiz  
Melissa Leonard  
Deborah Leonard  
Jaylen Leonard  
Kiwanis Camp Casey  
Morgan YMCA  
Alexander Ramirez  
Patricia Holdren



“I THINK A HERO IS ANY PERSON  
REALLY INTENT ON MAKING THIS A  
BETTER PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE.”  
- MAYA ANGELOU







# TATIANYA DAVIS

*Ms. Wheelchair South Carolina*

*Yes we Can, Yes we Will!*

Thank you to my family and friends for the support! I love you all!  
[mswheelchairsc2022@gmail.com](mailto:mswheelchairsc2022@gmail.com)



**Ms. Wheelchair South Carolina  
is proud to be represented by Tatianna Davis  
during Ms. Wheelchair America 2023!**

**We know you are amazing!**



**Ms. Wheelchair South Carolina is a great opportunity  
for women to advocate for people with disabilities.**

**We are searching for contestants.**

**Join this great sisterhood  
of powerful advocates.**



*Caitlin Chaser*



*Congratulations  
Ms. Wheelchair  
Pennsylvania  
2022!*



Thank you for your service  
and dedication to the Ms.  
Wheelchair Pennsylvania  
Organization.

You make  
Pennsylvania proud!

Love,  
The MWPA  
Board of Directors



*Ms. Wheelchair Michigan 2022*  
*Sarah Nassar*

*Enjoy Each Moment!*



*Thank you*  
*for your*  
*advocacy!*



Congratulations to our  
beautiful butterfly girl!  
We are so proud of you and  
know that God has great things  
in store for you.  
We love you very much!  
-Mom + Dad



*Congratulations, Brooke!  
God is using you in a mighty  
way. We love you and pray  
many blessings upon you!*

*From,  
Jennifer, Pam, and September*



# Ms. Wheelchair Oregon 2022 Melinda Preciado



Mom,  
You are an inspiration to us.  
We are so proud of you!  
Love your son's,  
Uriel and Devan



Melinda,  
You have adapted and pushed through every obstacles you have faced for the last year and a half. You have become a warrior queen.

Love,  
Kristin



Melinda,  
You are a dedicated mother and friend with a passion for helping people in need. We are proud of your strength, determination, and knowledge. You are a perfect Ms. Wheelchair Oregon.

Love,  
The Prestwood Family



Melinda,  
We are proud of everything you have achieved, since losing your leg. You have never let it stop you from moving forward. You have a goal and strong desire to make life more accessible and enjoyable for those with disabilities and health challenge.

Love, Mom and Dad

*Congrats!  
&  
Best Wishes!*

**Ms. Wheelchair NC and the  
NC Spinal Cord Injury Association  
wish you the absolute best at the  
Ms. Wheelchair America Competition 2023.  
We are so proud of you and all of your  
advocacy work. We look forward to your  
continued success.**



**ALI INGERSOLL**  
**Ms. Wheelchair NC 2022**



BEST WISHES

# mwa class of 2023

**HONORING**

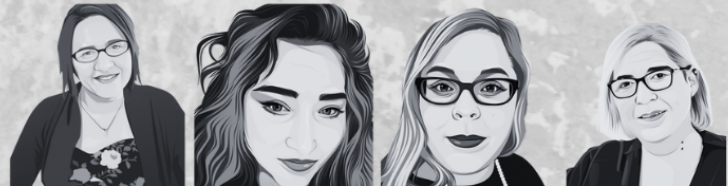
THE PAST

**EMBRACING**

THE PRESENT

**EMPOWERING**

THE FUTURE



MS. WHEELCHAIR AMERICA, INC

KEEP ROLLIN' WITH  
GRATITUDE, GRIT & GRACE.

WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!

**FROM MWA  
CLASS OF 2013**



**PERFECT FOR ALL SEASONS**

**DS Ability**



# Project Invent



Every Student Is An Innovator

GETTING SMART 

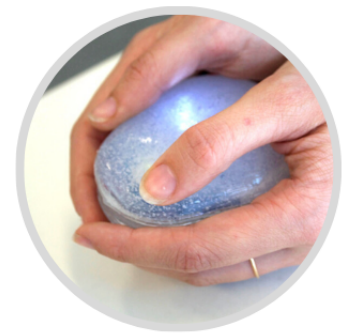
## HELP STUDENTS BUILD TECH FOR GOOD



**ADAPTPLAY** is an adaptive video game controller for gamers with limited mobility.



**ALTERTRA** is a wearable device that alerts individuals with hearing impairment to emergency situations.



**UNWIND** is a handheld pod designed to appeal to multiple senses to reduce anxiety.

84%

of Community Partners developed **meaningful relationships** with students that will live beyond the project timeline.

95%

of Community Partners agreed that students built **unique technologies** informed by their interview process.

"It's so great to see students learning to use their compassion to make a difference. **The idea that the students came up with blew me away.**

They helped me solve a problem I never thought someone could solve."

– **ABIGAYIL**,  
COMMUNITY PARTNER



### MENTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- Excited to **support high school and middle school students** with stories, encouragement, collaboration, and feedback
- Comfortable accessing **video platforms** like Zoom and Google Meet
- **No tech experience necessary**

### MENTOR COMMITMENT

- **Complete preliminary registration** and background check
- Participate in at least **three student interview sessions** between October 2022 – April 2023
- **Test student prototypes** and provide feedback as requested

VISIT [PROJECTINVENT.ORG/COMMUNITY-PARTNERS](https://projectinvent.org/community-partners) TO LEARN MORE





# The Law Office of Edward I. Zwilling, LLC

*Enriching Lives Through Advocacy*

[www.adaadvocacy.com](http://www.adaadvocacy.com)

## What I Do ...

I am dedicated to protecting the rights of people with disabilities. Most frequently, I help them obtain accessible parking, routes of travel, and restrooms in public places. In addition, I often help enforce their right to accessible housing. I generally provide these services without charge to my clients. Whether you encounter barriers to access at work, in your apartment, at a stadium or theater, at the mall, in the hospital or almost anywhere else, I can help remove them.

We are also a full service law firm. I handle a variety of legal matters from social security disability to personal injury, workers' compensation and overtime cases under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

*Contact Us For A FREE Consultation*

*205-822-2701*



[EdwardZwilling@zwillinglaw.com](mailto:EdwardZwilling@zwillinglaw.com)



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Law office of Edward I. Zwilling, LLC 4000 Eagle Point Corporate Drive Birmingham, Alabama 35242

No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers

## Live Life on Your Terms

Self-direction has many different names, but they all mean the same thing. You choose who provides your support and how you'd like to receive it.

## Your Choices Are the Heart of Self-Direction

Whether you are a person with disabilities or simply want to age at home, we're here to support your choices. This includes deciding who comes through your front door. What schedule works best for you. How to hire, fire, and manage your own caregivers. And the right to see exactly what your self-direction budget looks like, any time you want to know.

And all those administrative details like new caregiver paperwork, background checks, and making sure your Medicaid and Medicare funds are used as they should be? That's on us, your financial management service (FMS).

## How to Self-Direct Your Life With GT Independence

### Choose Your People

Hire the people you like and trust the most. In some states, those people can even be your friends or family.

### Manage Your Costs

Get support for the same or lower cost as compared to other choices you may have.

### Simplify the Details

Decide how you want to receive your support, so that you get the services that are most important to you.

### Keep Your Lifestyle

Stay in your comfortable and familiar surroundings. And keep enjoying the friendships and activities that bring you joy.



**"We have a full life, and we have care—and I give care. I think out of everything I've done in life, it may be the most important thing I've done."**

--Sherri Raeford, Daughter and Caregiver

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# FRONTLINE

## You Can Be A Roll - **MODEL**

**M**ake up your mind!

1 Timothy 4:12b

**O**thers First!

Phillipians 2:3-4

**D**on't Give Up!

Galatians 6:9

In **E**verything Give Thanks!

1 Thessalonians 5:18

**L**ift Each Other Up!

Hebrews 10:24

Titus 2:7 - And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good deeds of every kind. Let everything you do reflect integrity and seriousness of your teaching.





# The Law Office of Edward I. Zwilling, LLC

*Enriching Lives Through Advocacy*

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## What I Do ...

I am dedicated to protecting the rights of people with disabilities. Most frequently, I help them obtain accessible parking, routes of travel, and restrooms in public places. In addition, I often help enforce their right to accessible housing. I generally provide these services without charge to my clients. Whether you encounter barriers to access at work, in your apartment, at a stadium or theater, at the mall, in the hospital or almost anywhere else, I can help remove them.

We are also a full service law firm. I handle a variety of legal matters from social security disability to personal injury, workers' compensation and overtime cases under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

*Contact Us For A FREE Consultation*

*205-822-2701*



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## Empowering Women of Achievement through Leadership, Advocacy and Education Since 1972

### Our Purpose and Goals

Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc., is an advocacy, education, and leadership-based organization that focuses on raising awareness about disabilities, celebrating the accomplishments of women who use wheelchairs, and educating society on architectural and attitudinal barriers that impact the disability community.

Please Note: We are NOT a beauty pageant.

### Our Mission

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 61 million Americans living with disabilities.

### Enter a State Competition

Many states have programs that are part of the Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. organization. Each state holds an annual competition to select a spokeswoman that will successfully advocate, educate, and empower all people on a state level. The state program is a competition to select the most articulate, accomplished delegate who will serve as a role model and spokeswoman for people with disabilities in their state.

**Serve as the titleholder:** This woman of achievement will have the opportunity to travel throughout their state educating the general public, business community, legislature, and others about the issues that are of importance to people with disabilities. She will share her chosen platform (or passion) with different groups, interact with the media, and serve as a role model for youth and adults alike. She will also serve as an advocate in the disability community. Her overall message will be one of promoting diversity and breaking down stereotypes against people with disabilities. Her reign will lead to an opportunity to attend the national competition where she will compete for the title of Ms. Wheelchair America.

### Become an Independent Delegate

#### What is an Independent Delegate?

An Independent Delegate is a woman who uses a wheelchair for mobility that creates a Ms. Wheelchair Program in their state by becoming a titleholder and then serving as the State Coordinator.

#### Serve as the titleholder:

As an Independent Delegate you will have the opportunity to advocate for the need to eliminate architectural and attitudinal barriers that people with disabilities face by becoming a state titleholder for one year. You will serve as a role model for all people with disabilities and have the opportunity to develop a platform that you have passion for to raise awareness for all people with disabilities. This is done by meeting with elected officials, attending and speaking at advocacy events in your community and state. The goal is to promote inclusion for people with disabilities; by visiting expos, schools, universities, hospitals, support groups, civic clubs, and centers for independent living to discuss disability and sharing your experiences as a person with a disability.

#### Become a State Coordinator:

After you compete in the National Competition as a titleholder. You serve as the State Coordinator, build the program in your state, and hold an annual state event to crown a new titleholder every year.



If you would like more information on how to become involved with the Ms. Wheelchair America organization, please contact us by calling 1-616-840-0717 or sending an email to [director@mswheelchairamerica.org](mailto:director@mswheelchairamerica.org).



# Ms. Wheelchair America 2024

SAVE  
THE  
DATE

August 28 - September 3, 2023

Grand Rapids, Michigan



# Adapt and overcome.

23-year-old Kate Brim's life changed at age 19 when a minor surgery led to a spinal cord injury. She decided, "I'm not going to let this define where I go in life." After a year and a half of rehabilitation at Mary Free Bed, she began competing in various sports. This year, she placed in the U.S. Paracycling National Championships, and was invited to join the Team USA roster for the upcoming World Cup and World Championship.

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## Women on a mission.

Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital's roots date back to 1891, when a small group of women created a way to help people who couldn't afford health care. Today, this same spirit of generosity lives on through the Mary Free Bed Guild.

Just as Ms. Wheelchair America impacts communities across the nation by empowering women through leadership, advocacy and education, the Mary Free Bed Guild reaches Grand Rapids and beyond. At 120 women strong, the Guild supports our community with representation on all hospital boards and committees, and gifts totaling more than \$25 million to organizations that further the quality of life for people with disabilities.

[MaryFreeBed.com](http://MaryFreeBed.com)



*presented by*  
Mary Free Bed Guild