SIM The Call

The Newsletter of The Society for the Increase of the Ministry

SPRING 2017

A SIMinarian Profile

Pedro Lara, Nashotah House

I was born and raised in Dallas, TX and was raised in the Episcopal Church where I am now to be ordained a Deacon and later ordained into the priesthood in the Diocese of Dallas. My wife Gloria, five-year-old daughter Leah, and one-year-old Emma are part of the journey the Lord has set for me, and together we look forward to the future ministry. I began my journey towards ordination in 2012 when my wife and I became part of the church planting team for a Spanish speaking church plant, San Francisco de Asis, in the Diocese of Dallas. My wife and I began the youth ministry. As an attempt to reach un-churched youth, I called on my multi-year experience in competitive boxing and volunteer as a US Boxing team coach to begin a boxing gym in the community.



Pedro Lara receives his Master of Divinity degree from Nashotah House on June 1, 2017.

After a year and a half of discernment, I began my studies in Nashotah House in the fall of 2014, and I am now days away from graduation. Key to my formation has been the support of **SIM**, and I am grateful for **SIM**'s desire in helping seminarians in The Episcopal Church like me. It has really allowed me to take away the anxiety of coming to seminary; and receiving the support of **SIM** gave me great comfort that the Great Commission is in safe hands for future generations of the church. I am excited and grateful for the next generation of leaders in The Episcopal Church, and I am glad to be part of this next generation that will teach and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Nací y crecí en Dallas, Texas, y fui criado en la Iglesia Episcopal donde ahora estoy para ser ordenado diácono y después ser ordenado sacerdote en la Diócesis de Dallas. Mi esposa Gloria y nuestras hijas Leah y Emma han sido parte de este viaje que el Señor nos ha puesto, y juntos esperamos con alígera nuestro el ministerio que el Señor no ah preparado. Comencé mi viaje hacia la ordenación en 2012, cuando mi esposa y yo pasamos a formar parte del equipo de lideres en San Francisco de Asís, en la Diócesis de Dallas, que inicio el ministerio de jóvenes. Como un intento de llegar a la juventud en nuestra comunidad, me experiencia de varios años en el boxeo competitivo y voluntario como entrenador del equipo de boxeo de EE.UU., iniciamos un gimnasio de boxeo.

Después de un año y medio de discernimiento, empecé mis estudios en Nashotah House en el otoño de 2014, y ahora estoy a días de la graduación.

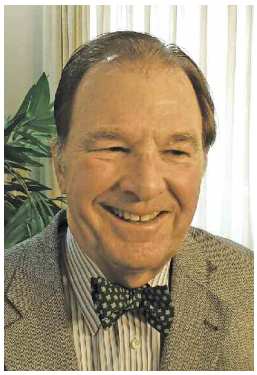
La clave de mi formación ha sido el apoyo de **SIM**, y estoy agradecido por el deseo de **SIM** de ayudar a los seminaristas en la Iglesia Episcopal como yo. Realmente me ha permitido quitarme la ansiedad de venir al seminario; Y recibir el apoyo de **SIM** me dio gran consuelo de que la Gran Comisión está en buenas manos para las futuras generaciones de la iglesia.

Estoy emocionado y agradecido por la próxima generación de líderes en la Iglesia Episcopal, y me alegro de ser parte de esta próxima generación que enseñará y proclamará la Buena Nueva de Jesucristo nuestro Señor.

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Are you ready to make a difference?

From the Executive Director (outgoing)
THOMAS MOORE



Dear Friend of **SIM**,

"Passing the baton" could not be more fulfilling for **SIM** when it is Courtney Cowart's hands into which the **SIM**'s leadership is placed. After nine years as Executive Director, I will step aside on **SIM**'s 160th birthday—October 2, 2017. To so many who have travelled with me over this time of supporting and advocating for future leaders in The Episcopal Church, we can look at a journey that began with the daunting effects of the financial crisis on not-for-profit organizations and is ending with major accomplishments in raising the awareness of the importance of **SIM**'s ministry, adapting **SIM**'s program to a dramatically changing field of theological education, and our succession planning that attracted Courtney Cowart, Th.D. to lead **SIM**'s pursuit of increasing the ministry of The Episcopal Church.

During our journey that began with eleven Episcopal seminaries and close to 600 full time residential seminarians, two seminaries terminated their Masters of Divinity programs, three seminaries sold or closed major portions of their campuses, and all now offer some form of remote theological education with various formation practicums. The full time residential seminarian count has almost been cut in half. Yet, while remaining true to its 1857 founding purpose—to find and aid gifted young individuals in acquiring a thorough education—**SIM** has adjusted its needs-based scholarship program to provide larger average grants to fewer seminary-supplied applicants and successfully launched three bishop-nominated merit-based scholarship programs—**SIM**/Mercer I&II, **SIM**/EQB scholarship at Sewanee and **SIM**/Carpenter I&II. These programs have allowed **SIM** to effectively partner with the other major sources of Episcopal seminarian financial support—dioceses and seminaries—to achieve our common goal—eliminating the need for additional debt to complete a seminary education.

Dr. Cowart brings a wealth of experience in theological education and leadership development along with strong working relationships with Episcopal leaders and major foundations investing in this formation. Her career in The Episcopal Church has been devoted to a vision of the church passionately engaged in the transformation of lives and society. Of **SIM**'s accomplishments during my tenure as Executive Director, I am most proud of attracting Courtney Cowart as my successor. I am excited about where **SIM** will go under her leadership.

Faithfully yours,

Thomas Moore III
co-Executive Director

"The assistance from SIM during my 3 years at VTS was valuable and of tremendous importance as we navigated the many exciting changes in our lives during my seminary training. Even more important was the large group of staff and SIM alumni praying for me and my fellow scholarship recipients."
– Matthew W. Rhodes, VTS '17

From the New Executive Director

DR. COURTNEY COWART

Are We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For?

Thoughts from The Missional Voices Conference



On April 20th in a large auditorium on the campus of the Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) participants in the Genesis conference for church planters and participants in the Missional Voices conference for church evangelists came together to think about what it means to be leaders of the Jesus Movement.

SIM was there to help facilitate this important conversation because The Society for the Increase of the Ministry has committed to Presiding Bishop Curry, in our 160th year of service, to build an army for the Jesus Movement.

To fulfill our promise to the Presiding Bishop will require **SIM** to partner widely and become an innovator, crowd sourcing large and small donations through our website and leveraging other technologies. Indeed, it means **SIM** must invite all of us to do a little more.

Currently, for every three merit scholars **SIM** funds, we receive ten additional nominations of people with extraordinary faith commitments needing our financial help. The number of nominees seeking **SIM** merit scholarships has more than doubled, and the credentials of those applying were more impressive than ever. We found ourselves in the painful position of turning away tremendous leaders, while aware that the enrollment count in Episcopal seminaries is barely half of what it was nine years ago. Apparently, the decrease in enrollment is not because of a shortage of impressive emerging leaders who are yearning to make The Episcopal Church their avenue of service, but simply because collectively we haven't covered the cost of education for a profession with very moderate compensation.

That night at VTS we began by listening to a Hopi Prayer that frames a kairos moment of opportunity and challenge. The prayer begins, "You have been telling the people that this is the Eleventh Hour. Now you must go back and tell the people that this is The Hour." It ends, "We are the ones we've been waiting for."

As Tom Moore recounts in his letter on page 2, it is essentially "The Hour" for a turnaround in theological education. Currently, The Episcopal Church is the only mainline Protestant denomination that has no central mechanism for fully funding the theological education of all its leaders. What we do have is **SIM**. **SIM** is the only organization raising funds nationally for all Episcopal students regardless of the seminary they choose.

If a fraction of us (Episcopalians in the pew) invested an amount equal to the year of **SIM**'s founding – $18.57/month – for training the leaders of the Jesus Movement, our denomination would close the gap between those ready, willing and able to serve and those who can afford to pay tuition. It could be as simple as clicking this link https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E77165&id=2 and for the price of your monthly Starbuck's tab changing the game completely.

I am a lifelong proponent of setting the church on fire for mission, and believe to my core that theological education and training makes the difference between a lukewarm church and a church that is awake and playing at her full weight in the world.

I know that we Episcopalians are incredible educators. We have an embarrassment of pedagogical riches. We have everything we need to set the people of God on fire to fulfill the great commission except the mechanism to channel a tiny percentage of our collective denominational abundance into scholarships for the extraordinarily inspiring leaders of the Jesus Movement.

Is this "The Hour" for a turnaround in theological education? Can we build an army of foot soldiers to lead the Jesus Movement? Are "We the ones we've been waiting for?" These are the critical questions that **SIM** is called to answer.

FROM THE CORNER OF THE
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

THE REV. DR. DONALD L. HAMER



As the Board of The Society for the Increase of the Ministry embarks on a year of self-study and discernment, the work of the Scholarship Committee is drawing to a conclusion for academic year 2017-2018. And an exciting process it has been!

In my last article, I noted that the Board's own discernment has been leading us in the direction of gradually focusing more on larger, merit-based scholarships and less on the traditionally smaller, needs-based scholarships. In part, this new focus is based in Canon III.3.3 which charges Episcopal judicatories to recruit leadership. In contrast, the requirements of traditional **SIM** needs-based grants have been that the recipient be a postulant for Holy Orders and accepted and enrolled in a traditional 3-year residential seminary.

In this transition year, the **SIM** Board took several bold steps to move more in the direction of providing funds to actually assist bishops in recruiting promising candidates irrespective of whether they are already postulants or where they are attending seminary:

The first of these was to call a one-year moratorium on new needs based scholarships while we evaluate the future of that program. At the same time, the Board committed itself to continue to support the needs-based scholars whom we are already supporting.

The second bold step was to work more collaboratively with both bishops and seminaries to maximize the benefit of our merit scholarships. This would not have been possible without the generosity of the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation of Philadelphia, which renewed its grant award to **SIM** providing a sixth merit-based scholarship. The grant allows **SIM** to provide up to $30,000 for two years, for a total of $60,000.

The Carpenter Foundation granted this award to meet two basic objectives:

- To encourage bishops to pro-actively identify, recruit (or support if already enrolled in seminary) and nominate highly gifted leaders called to become Episcopal priests.
- To encourage bishops to plan for the effective post-seminary deployment and formation of their nominees in their dioceses.

The selection criteria were as follows:

- The candidate's potential for leadership in The Episcopal Church
- The sponsoring bishop's deployment strategy for the nominee to increase the ministry in her or his diocese,

SIM received 15 nominations from bishops, and of those 15 a total of 12 applications were reviewed by the **SIM** Executive Committee enhanced by the expertise of The Revs. Virginia Army and Adam Thomas from the needs-based scholarship committee. The committee interviewed 5 extraordinary individuals. In consultation with their respective bishops and seminaries, the committee awarded a total of $30,000 for the 2017-2018 academic year to three nominees, assuring that none of them will incur academic debt for the coming two years. Read much more about their amazing stories on pages 7 & 8 in this issue of *The Call.*

This is indeed an exciting time for **SIM** and for The Episcopal Church. We encourage your continued and increased support as we continue to assist in the development of vibrant leadership in the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.

"The generosity of SIM has truly made it possible for me to continue my studies and formation at Berkeley at Yale Divinity School. I am grateful for your commitment to supporting students like me as we pursue our education and dreams for ministry."

– Holly Clark, BDS '18

ALUMNI CORNER

The Rev. Mary Balfour Van Zandt Dunlap
Associate Rector, Emmanuel Episcopal Church,
Southern Pines, NC



The Rev. James K. Polk Van Zandt, Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church Murfreesboro, TN and his daughter, The Rev. Mary Balfour Van Zandt Dunlap, Associate Rector, Emmanuel Episcopal Church Southern Pines, NC

I have a very vivid memory of sitting in my childhood home in the Mississippi Delta on the day my parents told my brothers and me that my father was going to seminary to become an Episcopal priest. That conversation would change my life. My father, The Rev. James K. Polk Van Zandt, attended the University of the South and received his Master of Divinity in 1994. While a seminary student at Sewanee, he received a **SIM** scholarship. My parents were raising three children, my mom was supporting our entire family on a small teaching salary, and my dad was a full time student. We had lots of support from family and friends, but our lifestyle had changed dramatically. The **SIM** scholarship eased some of the financial burdens my parents were facing. I had no idea what a **SIM** scholarship was at the time, but little did I know that this scholarship would effect my life greatly then and again 20 years later.

Fast forward twenty years and I found myself being called by God to become a priest. I have another memory of my father encouraging me to apply for a **SIM** scholarship as a student at the Seminary of the Southwest. I did apply and received the scholarship all three years I attended seminary. Even though my circumstances were different than the first time the **SIM** scholarship came in to my life, it was just as needed.

Our family is grateful for **SIM**. My father and I are able to be priests to the world because **SIM** helped us both. We are both very proud to be alumni of **SIM**! Because of our experiences, both my father and I make **SIM** a part of our annual giving. We are both happy to write that check every year. It is our hope that one day a **SIM** scholarship will effect someones else's life as much as it did ours. Who knows, maybe twice in a lifetime.



*SIM*INARIAN LEADERSHIP

The Woods Leadership Award is presented annually to a middler seminarian at the School of Theology – Sewanee who has successfully taken the initiative in assuming a leadership role in the class during their junior year. The 2016 award was given to M.Div. student Margaret Elizabeth Langford Farr, Sewanee 2018, from the Diocese of East Tennessee. Elizabeth is a **SIM** grant recipient.

This award defines leadership as the ability to bring people together into a cooperative community to accomplish assigned tasks and to identify and implement strategies, goals, and programs. Established by Granville Cecil Woods and James Albert Woods, the award recognizes students of the School of Theology who make a significant contribution to the quality of the community's life.



*Percy Williamson, **SIM** Office Manager, with **SIM**inarians Tamra Tucker, Aaron Klinefelter and Anil Shah at CDSP.*

FAREWELL
PERCY WILLIAMSON, **SIM** OFFICE MANAGER



*Percy Williamson, with **SIM**inarian Jeremy Carlson from the School of Theology, Sewanee, at CDSP attending a conference.*

I am writing this as **SIM**'s Office Manager, but also the editor of *The Call*. It appears that this may be my last *Call* and I just wanted to say what a wonderful journey it has been. I retired from almost 24 years in state government and coming to **SIM**, found a culture of a warm, caring and loving environment. I have never worked for an organization or with such a gracious executive director that daily makes me so happy to come to work. **SIM** was an organization I had heard of, as the offices were located here at Trinity Church for many years (before relocating back in 2013) but as a member of Trinity, I never paid it much mind. Since working for **SIM**, I have come to see what an important organization it is for the future of The Episcopal Church, and how much it has helped so many seminarians through the years (since 1857). I am constantly taken in by the wonderful stories that seminarians have shared about their journeys and their call. I feel **SIM** has been privileged to provide a little help to many who have become leaders, and to those on their way.

I have loved being in touch with seminaries, FAO's and many **SIM** Alum. I was delighted to be able to deliver spring checks to **SIM**inarians at Church Divinity School of the Pacific this past February. It was great to finally meet those grant recipients whose applications I read and whose stories I heard. We have raised up some of the brightest in their call, and it has been a joy for me to have had a small part in this. May God continue to bless **SIM** with His/Her grace as **SIM** moves forward in the future.

SIM/CARPENTER MERIT SCHOLARS



Debra Geller Rhodes is a recipient of the **SIM**/ Carpenter Merit Scholarship who will be studying for Holy Orders at CDSP beginning this June. As an adult convert to Christianity, raised in a secular Jewish home, Debbie's deep and thorough habitation of the faith is a living witness that is converting others – particularly in the Lebanon (OH) Correctional level three maximum security prison where she has led a Grief Recovery group for the past three years.

As one of Debbie's supporters wrote **SIM**, "The intolerance and sanctimony of the public face of Christianity appalls many young Americans who now count themselves as Nones (people with no religious identity). The Episcopal Church has little appeal as the Church of the Status Quo: our potential grows from our struggle to be truly inclusive and overcome our prejudices. Debbie's realism about her own failings and her irrepressible joy welling up from God's love are astonishing. I feel she would make many skeptics take a second look." **SIM** also believes that Debbie's life and ministry is a powerful and articulate witness to grace and shares Debbie's view expressed in her essay:

"I believe that the mission of today's church is to BE the church, to 'sing the Lord's song in an alien land (Ps 137).' We must demonstrate, like the first Christians did, what it means to be a community of the faithful whose actions in the world (which today would be called social justice) come from a place of deep prayer and humble worship. It means welcoming the stranger, feeding the homeless, taking care of the sick, risking ourselves – our bodies, our reputations, and our comfort – to protect the oppressed, and proclaiming the gospel to the end of the earth. And we do this because Jesus did it, because it is a sign of God's reign."

It is with great joy that **SIM** welcomes this powerful leader of the Jesus Movement into the family of The Society for the Increase of the Ministry.



Les Hegwood, recipient of a **SIM**/Carpenter Scholarship, exemplifies the kind of Christian societal leadership **SIM** intentionally supports through scholarships for theological education. Informed by thirteen years of teaching, coaching and leading in public and Episcopal schools, Les has entered seminary at The University of the South School of Theology to receive an education that will enable him to make a significant contribution to the aims of the Jesus Movement in the critical area of racial reconciliation. Upon graduating, Les will work in a dual vocational capacity serving both a parish and as founder of a new model of an inner-city Episcopal school, connecting both spheres to foster transformation in the lives of students, parents, and the wider community. Les shares this vision with his nominating bishop, the Right Reverend Brian Seage. Together they are working to facilitate equity and reconciliation in the Diocese of Mississippi through the Episcopal educational system. "Les dreams big dreams," writes Bishop Seage. The school in Mississippi is intended to be a model of what is possible throughout the system of Episcopal schools when these centers of learning are also appreciated as places where a deep sense of God's call to each of us is nurtured and supported. Les believes all our Episcopal schools can be "places where the powerful brand of Episcopal evangelism couched in the modeling of Christ's love, sharing of tradition, emphasizing tolerance and inclusivity, cause students and other stakeholders to consider their response to God's call both in school and out in the world." He hopes that as priest, educator and advocate, he will be able to help point the transformative light of Christ onto the hearts of God's people to help facilitate healing, change, justice and love among the human family. We were inspired by watching this leader of the Jesus Movement co-present *Developing Citizens, Expanding Inclusivity and Building Communities: Episcopal Schools as Agents of Change* at the National Association of Episcopal Schools Biennial Conference. Support the education of other world-changing leaders of the Jesus Movement by making a donation via our website.

continued on page 8

SIM/CARPENTER MERIT SCHOLARS



Phil Hooper, recipient of a SIM/Carpenter scholarship, is a post-Christian ministry innovator who embodies a model of faith leadership SIM actively seeks to foster through scholarships for the education of Millennial faith leaders. With a faith journey that mirrors so many of Phil's generation, Jesus is known by this remarkable young man as, "not the rock upon which I rest so much as the road which I tread…When I consider my future as a leader in the church, it is often through this metaphor of the pilgrim way." For Phil, the encounter with Jesus came "after many years of searching and struggling, so I am keenly aware of what it feels like to be a wanderer." His goal now is "to find other such wanderers, not to dictate to them where to go, but to illumine the path under their feet with the Good News of God's enduring love."

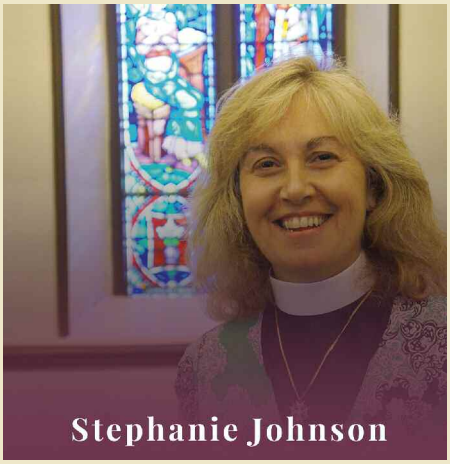
Phil's gifts as a master builder of radically welcoming Beloved Community exemplify what it means to be a leader of the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. He is not reticent about being countercultural. "And what is countercultural today?" Phil writes. "Deep listening. Presence. Silence. Patience. Thoughtful discourse." He is facilitating the co-creation of such sacred spaces and gathering communities marked by these practices both in his sponsoring diocese of Nevada where Phil founded the faith community, "Holy Doubt," and at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California, where Phil is studying for the priesthood. In funding Phil Hooper's theological education SIM is intentionally aligning the investment of our assets with the goals of our Presiding Bishop and General Convention in raising up future leaders who can foster communities of reconcilers, justice-makers, and healers who are practitioners in the way of love.

Leaders like those described by Charles Skinner as "consecrated men and women seeking a new world… who forget themselves in their passion to find the common life where the good of all is the quest of each." To support the education of a new generation of loving, liberating, life-giving faith leaders like Phil Hooper that are our future and our hope click: https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E77165&id=2

SIM ALUMNA LEADERSHIP

SIM alumna, the Reverend Stephanie Johnson, has co-authored with Jerry Cappel a three-book set, *A Life of Grace f or the Whole World*, scheduled to be released later this spring from Church Publishing. This set is a curriculum that uses the House of Bishops Pastoral Teaching on the Environment as a guide to engage participants in understanding how the call to care for Creation informs and deepens appreciation and love for God and Gods work in Creation, and how that finds expression in the faith life of individuals and churches. More can be earned at the Grace for Creation website.

In addition to being Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Riverside, CT, Reverend Johnson has been working for Environmental Justice for over 20 years. She is Co-Chair of the Episcopal Advisory Council on the Stewardship of Creation and a Convener for the New England Regional Environmental Ministries Network. While she was the Province I Energy Stewardship Minister, she organized of the ecumenical Climate Revival in Boston that was attended by over 700 people in April 2013.



Stephanie Johnson

Stephanie's leadership is one reflection of a web-based way for faith formation leaders to walk with each other – sharing hopes and frustrations – to inspire, support and renew our ministries.

RE-IMAGINING AND RE-BRANDING SIM



Dr. Courtney Cowart – new SIM Executive Director with Tom Moore, SIM's outgoing executive director, and the Rev. Dr. Donald Hamer, Scholarship Chair



The Rev. Linda Spiers, Dr. Courtney Cowart, Tom Moore, the Rev. Dr. Donald Hamer, the Rev. Moki Hino and the Rev. Stephen Holton

Congratulations to our 32 SIM Graduates

I will guide you and teach you
the way you should go
I will give you good advice and
watch over you

Psalm 32:8

Berkeley Divinity School

Emily J. Garcia	Massachusetts
Gregory D. Stark	Ohio
Dante Tavolaro	Rhode Island

Bexley Hall – Seabury Western Foundation

Stephen E. Lane	Western New York

Nashotah House

Pedro J. Lara	Dallas

Virginia Theological Seminary

Kyle J. Babin	Washington
Paul B. Moberly	Vermont
William L. Packard	Virginia
Erin N. Rath	South Dakota
Matthew W. Rhodes	Virginia
Jason Roberson	TEC in South Carolina

Seminary of the Southwest

Jean Pierre Arrossa	Rio Grande
Cristi E. Chapman	Olympia
James C. Clarkson	Western No. Carolina
Carrie B. Duncan	Mississippi
Nicholas E. Earl	Texas
Katherine S. Harper	Alabama
Caleb S. Roberts	Oklahoma
John M. Tober	Rio Grande
Michael T. Woods	West Texas

School of Theology, Sewanee

Katherine G. Dougherty	Virginia
Elizabeth A. Embler	East Tennessee
Claire T. Makins	Northwest Texas
Regan M. Schutz	Oregon
James C. Teets	Southeast Florida
Benjamin Thomas	East Tennessee
Christopher T. Wilkerson	Upper So. Carolina

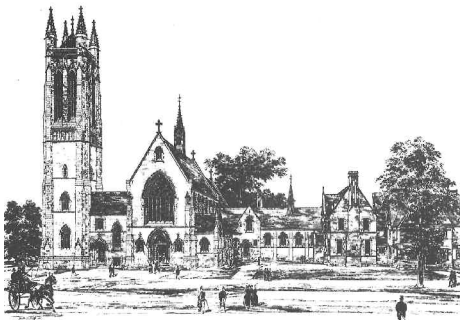
General Theological Seminary

Alisa G. Anderson	Indianapolis
Alexander D. Barton	Ohio
Michael J. Horvath	New York
Curtis A. Kennington	Central Gulf Coast
Deborah A. Lee	New York

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