

# PDK Connection – Heritage News

The Heritage Society recognizes individual donors whose estate planning includes support for the PDK Educational Foundation. In this bimonthly *Kappan* column, we give current and potential donors a glimpse of the people and programs who benefit from their generosity.



## FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIR NAMED 2022 MISSOURI SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

Curtis Cain, chair of the PDK Educational Foundation Board, was named the 2022 Missouri Superintendent of the Year by the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA).

Prior to leading the PDK Education Foundation Board, Cain served with distinction as the chair of the PDK International Board of Directors. His teaching experience spans grades 7 through the university level, with an

emphasis on the social sciences, performance evaluation, and issues related to disparity and diversity. He is currently the superintendent of schools in the Wentzville School District, where he is responsible for the educational performance and well-being of close to 16,000 students and the productivity of 2,200 staff members in the fastest-growing district in Missouri. A champion for his community who has strived to be a leader throughout his career, Cain is a former member of the PDK Emerging Leader program and now serves on the Missouri Commissioner of Education Advisory Council, the Kansas/Missouri Superintendent Leadership Forum Advisory Board, and the Missouri Association of School Administrators Executive Board.

“PDK International is excited to congratulate Dr. Cain on this well-deserved achievement as he continues to be a leader in the education community,” said Joshua P. Starr, chief executive officer of PDK International.

Cain will be recognized during the American Association of School Administrators National Conference in February 2022.

The PDK Educational Foundation, started in 1966 by a generous gift from George H. Reavis, supports the philanthropic programs and services of PDK International. Gifts from PDK, Pi Lambda Theta, Educators Rising members, and other generous individuals and organizations help sustain PDK’s programs that engage educators and strengthen schools so that all students thrive. Learn more about the PDK Educational Foundation by visiting [pdkintl.org/giving-2](https://pdkintl.org/giving-2).

## SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Your gift will reach more than 100,000 current and future educators throughout their careers, by guiding young people on the path to becoming accomplished educators and supporting leaders and academics who seek to leave a lasting legacy. Your support will help PDK elevate and change the narrative about public education, inform the national discourse, and bridge research and practice.

Donation options include cash gifts, stocks and securities, legacy giving, and more. Contact us at [give@pdkintl.org](mailto:give@pdkintl.org) or 800-766-1156.

## PLANNED GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

By joining the PDK Heritage Society, you will help ensure that future generations of educators will be well prepared to provide their students with outstanding educational experiences. To leave a gift in your will, simply share this sentence with your attorney or financial planner: “I bequeath \$\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_% of my estate to PDK International, P.O. Box 13090, Arlington, VA 22219.”

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**Trust for  
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## STUDENT OFFICER SPOTLIGHT

**Ashton Petitt**

**Hometown:** Victor, WV

**School:** Fayette Institute of Technology,  
Fayette County, WV

Ashton Petitt is currently the junior class president of the Educators Rising chapter at the Fayette Institute of Technology in Fayette County, West Virginia. She is pursuing a career in education, with a mission to help all students succeed, despite disabilities, complicated home lives, or disadvantages they face due to poverty.

Her desire to teach set in after a mission trip in Jamaica, where she worked with young children in an impoverished area. She was touched by the way the children were eager to play, learn, and share their hard-earned fruit despite living with so many hardships.

Despite only being 17 years old, she already has had experiences teaching 1st-grade students about literature, 2nd-grade students about word recognition, and up to 40 students at a time at her local church. Her passion to serve the community through public education — whether locally in her hometown in West Virginia, across the world in Jamaica, or, as a future goal, in a small town in Alaska — makes her a strong and proud member of Educators Rising.



## SCHOLARSHIP WINNER SPOTLIGHT

**Keira Vida Hannon White**

**Hometown:** Rota, Spain

**School:** College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA,  
and University of St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland

Keira Vida Hannon White recently graduated from high school at Rota Naval Station Base in Cadiz, Spain. She plans to study international relations through the St. Andrews and William & Mary International Honors Joint Degree Program and hopes to work at a university as a tenured professor and to become a foreign service officer. For

her, this scholarship means continuing her family's strong academic legacy.



## IN MEMORIAM

**Donita Garza (1960-2021)**

Donita Garza, our beloved Educators Rising Texas state coordinator, passed away on Sept. 15, 2021. Garza began her role as the Texas Future Educators State Coordinator in 2014, after serving as a teacher leader for several years. She was responsible for recruiting the largest Educators Rising membership of any of our state programs and is credited for the development of three new national contests introduced at the 2021 national conference. She instilled her love for education in her daughter, Leah

Zavala, who attended national conferences with her mother, served as a national competition judge in 2019, and currently serves as an Educators Rising teacher leader.

Jose Carrillo, former Educators Rising national president, said about Garza: "The education world has just lost an amazing and inspirational person. Mrs. Garza was an inspiration to so many future educators and has made a tremendous impact in building the next generation of educators." Garza had a tremendous impact not only on her students but also on the national office staff. She will be greatly missed by all.



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