# NCIS LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS 2022-2024 – CANDIDATE PROFILES

## Officers

### President - Linda Baines



#### Candidate biography

I'm an independent post-doctoral researcher, and a visiting researcher at Southampton Business School (SBS) at the University of Southampton, UK. I completed my PhD at SBS in 2016. In a previous life, I worked as a senior manager in different roles in the public sector, most recently in the research councils (which fund postgraduate research in the UK and run science and technology facilities).

#### Statement of candidacy

I am an independent researcher, and a visiting researcher at Southampton Business School (SBS), University of Southampton (on the south coast of England) where I completed my PhD in 2016. I now undertake research, and supervise Masters students there. My research interests include inclusive entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and the not-for-profit sector.

In a previous life, I worked as a senior manager in the government sector, most recently in the research councils (which fund postgraduate research in the UK and run science and technology facilities). I have substantive experience of commercial management, strategic and business development, and negotiating and managing large complex contracts and agreements to commercialise intellectual property. This kickstarted my fascination with research, wanting to explore and understand the issues I was encountering. Obtaining my PhD confirmed that research is where I belong.

I am an experienced chair, trustee / board member and mentor in UK not-for-profit organisations which has given me considerable experience of leadership, governance and developing effective teams in the not-for-profit sector.

### Secretary - Sandra Ham



#### Candidate biography

I am an Independent Scholar who is a generalist, working across multiple disciplines related to my background in nutrition and biostatistics (Cornell University, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), divinity (University of Chicago), and mechanical engineering (Kettering University). I am currently working on a book about solving the world's biggest problems of overpopulation, political polarization, social fragmentation, hopelessness, and climate change. I do this by critiquing modernity as a societal system and designing an alternative societal system which is a candidate for "what comes next." I use system dynamics and sociological schemas to map and synthesize liberal international governance frameworks and intellectual trajectories, conservative social critique, and international frameworks for addressing ecological destruction and the Anthropocene. The solution I propose is an alternative societal system design that has a different philosophical foundation that focuses on values, particularly pre-modern ways of being good human beings as one species coexisting with others in an ecosystem. Currently, I am also a Biostatistical Consultant at Sandra Ham Consulting in Buffalo, New York, USA. Since 2020, I have been a Co-editor of H-Scholar.

#### Statement of Candidacy

I would like to be elected Secretary. NCIS needs a Secretary who is a reliable team player and who will contribute to the existing culture of collegiality and camaraderie on the Board. This person should also be able to attend all of the committee meetings with global participants and be an organized, clear, recording secretary. I am able to fulfill the responsibilities well and, if elected, would be an asset to the organization for the following reasons. First, I enjoy contributing to light-hearted humor on collegial professional committees, and have done so consistently in my work over the past few decades. Moreover, as a biostatistician, my work involves organizing big data with attention to detail and producing clear analytic reports for colleagues, conference posters, and journal articles. These are skills for a recording secretary. Thus, I have the demeanor and skills to be a good Secretary and asset to NCIS. In addition, I have been a Co-editor of H-Scholar since 2020, helping to manage NCIS presence and offerings on the H-Net Commons. I am also the organizer of the recently-established Caucus for Independent Scholars and Contingent Faculty of the College Theology Society (CTS)---a potential source of new members.

### Treasurer - Philip Stover



#### Candidate biography

Phil Stover is a historian of religion and conflict. An independent scholar, Phil’s forty-year career included service as a senior administrator in higher education, K-12 public and private education, and a Fortune 500 company providing services to education. He retired from San Diego Unified School District as Deputy Superintendent of Business Services and Sweetwater Union High School District as Interim Superintendent of Schools.

He served as an Associate Professor of Psychology, teaching courses in the integration of psychology and theology. Phil served his denomination as a licensed and ordained minister and as headmaster of a Mennonite K-12 school. Retired, Phil now lives in Mata Ortiz Chihuahua.

Phil has written a 480-page history entitled, Religion and Revolution in Mexico’s North: Even Unto Death . . . Tengamos Fe. This book was awarded a prize in non-fiction by Writers Digest and has been adopted as a textbook at Arizona State University. Phil has published three other books and is finalizing one on the organizational behavior of American public-school districts.

Phil’s undergraduate degree is in history and Biblical studies. He holds master's degrees in psychology and education. He has additional advanced graduate study in theology, religion, education, and organizational behavior. Phil is a Ph.D. Candidate in Modern Mexican History at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England.

#### Statement of candidacy

Phil has brought his skills and experience to the role of Treasurer since being appointed to that position in 2017.  He wishes to continue serving NCIS in this capacity.

### Membership Secretary - Cindy Bylander



#### Candidate biography

Cindy Bylander is an American musicologist. A recipient of the Polish Composers’ Union’s Honorary Award and Poland’s Gloria Artis Bronze medal, her research focuses on twentieth-century Polish musical life. Her most recent book project, Engaging Cultural Ideologies: Classical Composers and Musical Life in Poland 1918–1956 will be published by Academic Studies Press later this year. Her previous publications include Krzysztof Penderecki: A Bio-Bibliography and articles in Polski Rocznik Muzykologiczny, Czarny pokój i inne pokoje: Zbiór tekstów o SEPR, Polish Review, Musical Quarterly, Musicology Today, and Polish Music Since 1945. She also served as the translation editor for the 2021 book From Poland with Music: 100 Years of Composers Abroad (1918-2018). She received her Ph.D. at The Ohio State University.

#### Statement of candidacy

I have been the interim NCIS Membership Officer since July 2022. I have enjoyed working with my colleagues at NCIS and interacting with current members and recent applicants. I would like to continue in this position as an elected officer.

## Board members

## There are 9 candidates for the Board, and you may vote for as many as you like.

### Kate Burrows

#### Candidate biography

Kate Burrows is a sociologist by training and is interested in medical and mental health sociology. She has published in a wide variety of sub-disciplines in sociology, including papers about dating and social meme theory, gender and cancer, mental health, culturally relevant teaching, and advertising and medical technology. Her most recent publication appears in the journal "Bipolar Disorders," a medical journal that rarely accepts papers from social scientists. She works for a small qualitative research firm, but also owns a small consulting business that focuses on helping early-career scholars who are either finishing their dissertations and their first publishing experience, or working with newly appointed assistant professors who are engaging in their first projects after their dissertation. She is the editor of a volume about medical technology and society: the CFP for this volume appears on her website and she is currently seeking submissions. She also was a contributor to an open-access textbook series for undergraduates, and teaches sociology classes for undergraduates and graduate students ranging from Intro, to advanced courses in Mental Health sociology, gender, disability, and classical and mid-century sociological theory. She attended a small liberal arts college in Portland, Oregon for her undergraduate degree, and did all her requirements for her PhD at Rutgers University in New Jersey, but finished her dissertation at Portland State University in Portland.

#### Statement of candidacy

I am interested in serving as a board member for NCIS because I want to be more involved in the independent scholar community. When I initially told my academic and professional advisors that I intended to not adhere to a traditional academic career, but wanted a hybrid career that iincluded independent scholarship along with a non-academic career path, I was told independent scholarship was "impossible" and I would never succeed. I have proved them wrong, and have published widely since receiving my PhD and have demonstrated that independent sociological scholarship is both indeed possible as well as rewarding. As a board member, I would seek to connect with early-career scholars and help them navigate the waters of independent scholarship.

### Helen Ross



#### Candidate biography

The complexities of my experiences working in challenging schools in the north of England with students who struggled to engage with literacy and the written word, combined with my own challenges in reading (I have dyslexia) laid the foundations for me undertaking a PhD focussing on the experiences of dyslexic young people, their families and teachers in school. Following this, I became a Special Educational Needs Coordinator and Dyslexia Specialist Assessor, to support young people and their families through the diagnostic process. This was whilst undertaking research and scholarly activity with a view to working to affect policy change outside of formal academic institutions so as to maintain my autonomy, flexibility and the focus of my research.

Now, I am an independent scholar, operating largely within the field of education, at times crossing over into sociology and development of social theory. A passion for supporting young people who experience learning challenges drives me to undertake research work that amplifies individuals’ lived experiences, drawing out positives and challenges to provide insight for policy-makers to improve education provision on the ground.

#### Statement of candidacy

I bring a breadth of governance experience with her to the Board of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. At present, I am on the board of the British Dyslexia Association and I am Chair of the Wiltshire Dyslexia Association. I chair the Education sub-committee of the British Dyslexia Association and as part of that role, I regularly liaise with Think Tanks, policy-makers, industry-players an other parties within the field of UK politics and policy. I am used to working people and organisations from different strata of society and have spent extended periods of time in several countries outside of the UK so I have had the opportunity to develop the requisite skills for working with mutli-national teams. I am fortunate enough to speak French, Spanish and German well, and have a working knowledge of Italian. As an independent scholar, having the skills to work in varied settings and I bring my diverse experiences of the world of education (as a teacher), private enterprise (as a consultant) and the third sector (as a volunteer and researcher), and my passion for robust, and well-grounded scholarship that links to real-world pragmatism to improve the lives of those around us. For me the NCIS provides a vital and invaluable support structure for that to happen holistically, through the incorporation of diverse voices and a broad range of scholarship from across the globe that might otherwise not be heard.

### [Kevin Waitkuweit](https://www.ncis.org/members/kevin-waitkuweit)

#### Candidate biography

Kevin Hans Waitkuweit has been a member of NCIS since 2020, holding a masters degree in Sociology, a bachelors degree in History with minors in Chicana/o Studies, Disability Studies, and Public Affairs, as well as associates degrees in French and Mathematics. He has presented research on panels at the American Sociological Association in 2018, 2019 and 2022. The last presentation, Mr. Waitkuweit represented NCIS. He is passionate in supporting the work of independent scholars and currently works in supporting NCIS communications as a volunteer member of the communications committee.

#### Statement of candidacy

As an independent scholar working on research projects outside of my regular work duties, I understand the importance of a robust research community. NCIS has supported my scholarship through funding support that has allowed me to purchase much needed software and attend a conference. As such, if elected to the board I will work to ensure NCIS continues its support of independent scholars. I will work to present ideas that can further advance the resources NCIS can offer to its members.

### Gloria R Montebruno Saller



#### Candidate biography

I was born and raised in Torino, Italy and moved to the USA to obtain my doctoral degree in East Asian Languages and Cultures (USC). I have lived in Italy, France, England, USA, Japan, have traveled extensively, and consider myself a Global Citizen. I am fluent in Italian, English, Japanese, French, and Russian. I taught on university campuses in Southern California for over 20 years before leaving academia and embarking on this journey that independent scholarship has become in my life. I have a passion for learning and for teaching. One of my professional strengths is networking skills. Thanks to my cultural background and my fluency in 5 languages, I can make connections with people and transform these connections into professional relationships.

I am also a registered and certified yoga instructor.

#### Statement of candidacy

I would like to add my name to the list of candidates for the NCIS Board as I consider that my organizational skills and my cultural competencies make me a perfect fit for these positions.

Currently, I am Director and Historian of the American Society of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivors. This past August, I organized and produced "The 75th Commemoration Event in Memory of the Vicitms of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Bombing." Although this event usually takes place at Koyasan Betsuin Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles, this year, it took place virtually on Zoom . I created the event agenda; I invited guest speakers from the US and Japan; I was able to bring  together members of the global community against nuclear proliferation to contribute to this important event. The video of the event can be screened here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CWrKfBUvX0

I joined the Advisory Board of the Ronin Institute of Independent Scholarship from  June to September 2020. I was the Lead of the Working Group "Events' and I was in charge of selecting and scheduling seminars for the organization. Under my leadership, weekly seminars took place, and independent scholars were able to showcase their research work and obtain the necessary feedback from the community to move forward with their projects. I created step-by-step guidelines for seminar presentations and coached scholars new to the virtual presentation world on how to be efficient when presenting to an online audience. I moderated most of the virtual seminars and I made sure the institute's schedule would allow for at least 2 seminars per month.

I am a strong believer in mentorship programs; and I do advocate on behalf of young scholars wishing to pursue independent scholarship.

### Phillip Reid



#### Candidate biography

I got my MA in maritime history and nautical archaeology (now called Maritime Studies) at East Carolina University in 1998. After that, I worked in a museum, taught history at our local community college, helped run a blues festival, wrote freelance for sailing magazines, and restored a twenty-something-year-old cruising sailboat. I went back to school in 2011 and received my doctorate in history from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 2017. Since then, I've worked as a scholar full-time. My first book came out in spring 2020 and my second is currently in production with an expected publication date of early 2023. I have also contributed several articles to the leading journals in my field; three of those are currently forthcoming.

#### Statement of candidacy

Since finishing my doctorate in 2017, I have managed to publish two books with good presses and a good handful of articles in the important journals in my field. But it has not been easy, financially; my applications for large grants have not thus far been successful, and I have had to do my research on an absolute shoestring. NCIS has provided a substantial length of that shoestring, and has been vocally supportive of my work. When I was asked if I would consider serving on the Board, I agreed, for that reason and because I now have some experience as a full-time independent scholar, so I have a good idea what the challenges are and some of the ways to overcome them. I would love to see this organization grow in membership and income, so that we can provide more resources for valuable independent research and content production and dissemination. When we consider how small the grant pool is, especially in the U.S., we have to conclude that there is a lot of worthwhile work that is just not being done for lack of support. When we also consider that the productive professor-scholar model, which today's university still pretends to support, has become yet another casualty of all that has gone wrong with today's corporate university, we realize that even more good work is not getting done. Tenured faculty do not have the time or energy to do it all; the role for independent scholars in producing original work has grown, not shrunk. There has never been a time when the purpose of this organization is more urgent.

### Andrew Jordan Lavender



Candidate biography

Jordan Lavender gained his PhD in Spanish Linguistics (SUNY 2017) for his thesis on “Code switching, lexical borrowing, and polylanguaging in Valencian Spanish: An analysis of data from conversational corpora and Twitter”. Dr Lavender is currently working full-time as a Spanish teacher, and actively publishing in sociolinguistics, code switching, bilingualism, and linguistic landscapes.

#### Statement of candidacy

I wish to be considered for continued membership in the Board of the NCIS. I came to learn about the existence of NCIS a few years ago and joined. I had recently graduated with my Ph.D. in 2017 and worked briefly as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Colby College. Due to the precarious academic job market, I was unable to continue working in traditional academia. However, **I did not stop being a scholar**. Being a scholar is part of my life, my identity. It is somethign that I couldn't stop being, regardless of my status in "traditional" academic institutions. When I learned about NCIS, I knew that I had found a group of people that I wanted to learn from and with about how to continue in the path of being a scholar outside of the confines of academia.

When I presented my research at the 2019 NCIS conference, I was able to meet members from various corners of the US, the UK, and other countries, and the common bond of scholarship brought us all together.

The NCIS has helped me to find inspiration to continue in my scholarship and even expand my interests and write about new topics; I have found the support and constructive criticism of fellow members and reviewers to be valuable in my growth as an author and scholar.

I want to be considered for the Board to share my ideas and passion for the NCIS with other members. I think that independent scholarship could be a valuable model for the future of academic work in the US and elsewhere as the current models of learning shift in response to economic and other pressures. I want to help this great organization expand and grow in whatever way I can. I am thankful to anyone who supports my candidacy and look forward to serving on the Board, if elected, for the betterment of NCIS for the future of independent scholarship.

### Annie Rehill



#### Candidate biography

A U.S.-based independent scholar and writer (Ph.D. Modern French Studies, MS Library Science, MFA Creative Nonfiction), for income I have worked as an editor and taught as an adjunct. For inspiration, I have drawn from both research and personal experience. On the academic front, my most recent publication (Comparative Literature Studies 59, no. 2 [2022]) examines differences in U.S. and Canadian literature surrounding the notion of “frontier,” as exemplified in works by James Fenimore Cooper and Joseph-Charles Taché. On the creative front, my writing of late seeks to inform personal essays with scholarly discoveries, geared toward a wider readership. To this end, I seek to build on my existing general-audience publications, which include The Apocalpyse Is Everywhere: A Popular History of America’s Favorite Nightmare (Praeger/ABC-CLIO, 2009) and “Assisting Science” (Potomac Review, no. 37 (2004).

#### Statement of candidacy

If re-elected to serve on the NCIS board, I envision continuing to liaise with our information-technology specialists, Polycot, to implement and sustain an online-journals system that can then be run by whoever should follow me in this capacity. The technology will allow for online submissions to The Independent Scholar, as well as the journal’s management and processes. Articles will be readily tracked as they make their way through peer review and production for each issue. Other desirable features include cloud space to create sharable lists of peer reviewers by specialty, as well as communication tools between editors.

### Shelby Shapiro



#### Candidate biography

San Francisco-born, I grew up on Guam. Returning after earning my BA in Anthropology, I worked for 19 years in a law office writing trial memoranda and appeal briefs, doing land title examinations, pursuing photography part-time, while hosting a Jazz & Blues program on various AM and FM stations for 9 years. Self-taught in Yiddish, I went back to school when I came to the Washington metro area, earning an MA and PhD in American Studies studying the Yiddish press and acculturation of women immigrants. I am presently revising the manuscript based on the dissertation, for publication as a book. I am the Associate Editor for Connecticut Public Records, Vol. XXII; a copy editor for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc.; and a Yiddish-to-English translator. I served as editor for the newsletter and later the small magazine of Yiddish of Greater Washington for more than a decade, continue to serve on its Board, as well as that of Operation Understanding-DC.

#### Statement of candidacy

Self-taught in Yiddish, I went back to school when I came to the Washington metro area, earning an MA and PhD in American Studies studying the Yiddish press and acculturation of women immigrants.  I am presently revising the manuscript based on my dissertation for publication.

For more than a decade, I served as editor for the newsletter and later the small magazine of Yiddish of Greater Washington, as well as being the Associate Editor For Connecticut Public Records, Vols XXI-XXIII;  and a Yiddish-to-English translator. Previously a Board membern I have served in an ex-offico capacity as General Editor of The Independent Scholar and as NCIS Book Review Editor for several years. Should I be elected to the Board I hope to continue improving The Independent Scholar and its Book Review section, as well as engage in other activities for the good of NCIS.

### Valerie Abrahamsen



#### Candidate biography

I completed masters and doctoral studies in New Testament and Early Christian Origins at Harvard Divinity School and have remained active in my fields for nearly four decades. I worked as an academic administrator at a number of colleges in Massachusetts and Vermont and retired in 2017. For three years, I conducted research on the survival of the soul after death and self-published my book, *Paranormal,* in 2015. In October 2015, I launched a website, WisdomWordsPPF, and have been posting evidence-based blogs twice a month in three areas: my scholarly research on women in antiquity, New Testament, and early church history; social justice issues from a progressive, feminist perspective; and insights from *Paranormal*. I am now giving lectures and leading discussions, retreats and workshops, and I volunteer for Estey Organ Museum in Brattleboro, Vermont; the Christ Church Guilford Society, Inc.; and the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

#### Statement of candidacy

It is my pleasure to agree to continue to serve on the Board of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. I have greatly enjoyed working with the other Board members on a number of important initiatives, and I have made some contributions in the following areas:

* I helped plan and administer the 30**th** Anniversary Conference in June 2019 at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
* I continue to serve on the Membership Committee to help vet applicants. Since April 2017, we have evaluated dozens of applicants’ CVs and statements. Communicating via email with the other two members of the Committee has been interesting, stimulating and rewarding.
* I conducted research on possible venues in the United Kingdom for conferences of the new NCIS-affiliated organizations.

I have been an NCIS member almost from its beginning, and it has been very valuable to me over the years to be able to designate myself as an “independent scholar” as I have earned my living through academic administration while continuing my research and writing in New Testament archaeology, women in antiquity, goddess religion, and early church history. I feel honored to serve on the NCIS Board, a very dedicated group of professionals.