



# RWIEF

## Young Professional Trustees

Highlighting the impacts over the last several years

BY CARMELITA DELGADO

**A**s the RWIEF grows, so does the need for continued support. One way this occurs is the selection of a new Young Professional to serve a three-year term as a Trustee each year. As many YPs know, this is a huge honor because it is a front row seat to serve out the initiatives that fund right of way education for the IRWA.

As a current Young Professional Trustee, it is my pleasure to share the impacts the Foundation has had on the lives of previous and current Young Professionals.



TAYLOR SASS

*Taylor Sass was the very first Young Professional to be selected to serve on the RWIEF. Being the first, Taylor shared her experience with us.*

As the first YP Trustee, I was timid in the beginning to share my thoughts on anything. Quickly, I realized the RWIEF's openness to hear my viewpoints. I was overwhelmed by their interest and felt part of the team. I understand that I had plenty of perspective to offer and found a confidence in myself. It was an incredible experience and I encourage Young Professionals that are looking for an opportunity to gain leadership skills to consider this role. I am beyond grateful to have had the opportunity.

**How has the RWIEF impacted your career?**

Being a YP Trustee taught me the general working functions and legalities of an actual foundation. Before sitting in the position, being a "Trustee" on a Board of Trustees for an International Foundation sounded incredibly intimidating and I was unsure what I could offer for the good of the Foundation. The YP Trustee position is an incredible way for Young Professionals to understand what the functions of a Board of Directors are and the processes and procedures involved. Being a YP Trustee on the RWIEF gave me the experience and knowledge required to accept a position on another Board of Directors/Trustees and has equipped me, I'm sure, for the rest of my career.

Secondly, the position taught me how to be a responsible steward and guardian of the Foundation's assets. I learned to understand the impact of the RWIEF and all the different opportunities that its funding affords. You realize that the Foundation can only exist because of its donors and the Trustees are responsible for whatever decisions are made. It is an incredible responsibility, but a critical notion to learn.

**Being on the Foundation, what have you learned?**

I learned the purpose of the Foundation and its function as it relates to funding educational programs and curriculums. Before being on the Foundation, I had no idea who funded IRWA Course Development, and I ignorantly just thought it existed. Without continuing the advancement of our education, our profession cannot progress. I learned that RWIEF plays a vital role in shaping the coursework of our education and it is a responsibility not taken lightly. Every decision is weighted, researched and carefully discussed.

I believe the donors of the Foundations can be incredibly proud of the decisions made by the Board of Trustees.

**What is your favorite part about the RWIEF?**

My favorite part of being a YP Trustee are the relationships with the Board of Directors Members on the Foundation and the lessons they taught me. I have the utmost respect for those individuals who selflessly give their time to this cause. The entire Board was beyond welcoming to this new YP Trustee position and equally as eager to hear my viewpoint on numerous issues. I felt like I found my professional voice and they wanted to hear me.



BRETT FARNNER

*Brett was the second Young Professional selected to serve on the Foundation.*

**How has the RWIEF impacted your career?**

The Right of Way International Education Foundation has impacted my career by expanding my network, giving me the opportunity to learn and work on new projects as well as putting me in a position to utilize leadership skills. My experience on the RWIEF showed me that a passionate team united around a common goal can accomplish great things. This influenced me to get involved in other areas of the right of way industry, in addition to exploring new opportunities in my professional life.

**What has it meant to you to be a Trustee of the RWIEF?**

Trustees on the RWIEF are nominated and selected by the Board of Trustees. Having sat on the Board for three years, I know that each year a very deserving and talented group of individuals are considered for the position. Simply being listed as a candidate was a huge honor for me, and I was more than excited to be selected. Once I was on the Board, I realized very quickly that being a Trustee is a big responsibility. With well over \$1 million in assets and a goal of full transparency in its actions, the RWIEF demands each Trustee take their role in managing the Foundations assets very seriously. Sharing that responsibility and accountability with my fellow Trustees is something I will never forget and I am very proud of my time on the Board.





### Being on the Foundation, what have you learned?

Serving on the Foundation is a great experience and you have the opportunity to learn about a lot of different things. In my three years, I sat on the Foundation's website team, worked the Foundation's exhibit hall booth, served as a volunteer for a Monday Night Event and staffed the Annual Golf Tournament. Later in my term, I became interested in the investments the Foundation was managing. Ultimately, I learned that the Board of Trustees is a great group of people working hard to improve the educational offerings for right of way professionals. They work hard in their roles, but the work is rewarding and the people are unforgettable.

### What do you want other YPs to know about the RWIEF?

Young Professionals in the right of way industry need to know that the Foundation exists and what its mission is: funding right of way education initiatives. If you know who the RWIEF is and why they are here, you are far more likely to benefit from the Foundation's work. The Board of Trustees has seen the same cycle repeat where someone benefits from the Foundation's activities early in their career and can later give back to the Foundation from their successes. This early exposure is something I am certain the RWIEF wants to continue.

### What is your favorite part about the RWIEF?

That is easy – the people.

### After your time contributing to the RWIEF as a YP, what plans do you have now?

I plan to stay involved in the right of way industry, the IRWA and maybe one day return to the Board of Trustees!



KASY BALDAUF

*Kasy was the third Young Professional chosen to serve on the Foundation.*

As the third YP selected to serve as a YP Trustee, I had some big shoes to fill behind Taylor Sass and Brett Farnier. Both had already accomplished great things for IRWA and RWIEF. During my first year, the YP term was extended from a two-year commitment to three years, so Brett and I had the ability to apply what we learned in our first years with the Foundation to the remainder of our terms. Extending the term allowed us to really dig in and contribute to the Foundation.

### What has it meant to you to be a Trustee of the RWIEF?

Being a Trustee for the Right of Way International Education Foundation has been one of the greatest honors of my career. I've learned so much about the Foundation from the other Trustees and it's opened my eyes to all the possibilities that we are so lucky to have. This group is one of the most supportive teams I've ever come across.

### Being on the Foundation, what have you learned?

This group is comprised of Trustees from all over the organization and each member brings new perspectives to the table. I believe this is the best way to learn and grow as a group to better serve the Foundation. We brainstorm and listen to one another to be able to put our best foot forward.

### What is your favorite part about the RWIEF?

During my second year as a Trustee, I was given the opportunity to play a big role during the Monday Night Event in Portland. The sub-committee that was formed to handle the live and silent auction tried many new things this past year and was part of the reason for the success. One thing about the Foundation and the Trustees is that they all pull their weight and work together as a well-oiled machine. All opinions and ideas are listened to in an environment that is encouraging to growth and development. That allows the Foundation to continue to be successful.





**After your time contributing to the RWIEF as a YP, what plans do you have now?**

I'm currently serving as President-Elect for Chapter 8 in Houston and plan to continue through the Chapter leadership roles. After that, as they say, "the world is my oyster." You'll just have to wait and see what I talk my way into next.

**How would you invite other YPs to be involved with the Foundations' volunteering efforts?**

Go meet the Trustees for your Region and ask questions. All of our contact information can be found at [rwief.org](http://rwief.org) and we are always ready to answer your call or email. Secondly, if you plan to attend the conference in Minneapolis, come to our booth and the Monday Night Event. We can't wait to meet you!



CARMELITA DELGADO

*Carmelita Delgado was the fourth Young Professional selected to serve on the Foundation.*

**When you were selected to serve, what were your first thoughts?**

I had been wanting to serve on the Foundation for several years! When they reached out to me, I was so excited, I wanted to jump out of my shoes. The reason for the excitement is because I knew how much the Foundation did for the IRWA and how they "moved mountains" for education funding. In addition, I was drawn to all the energy and passion that each Trustee shared for the Foundation.

**How has the RWIEF impacted your career?**

The RWIEF has impacted my personal growth as well as my professional growth. The Foundation Trustees have a wealth of knowledge about the history of the IRWA and the right of way industry, and they span a large network of people. I thoroughly enjoy taking it all in, learning and applying these ideas to my day-to-day tasks. Serving as a Trustee has allowed me to meet several new members and connect with current members from around the world.

**What do you want other YPs to know about the RWIEF?**

I would encourage YPs to understand what the RWIEF is, what the RWIEF's mission is and raise your hand to volunteer for RWIEF events. Getting involved with the Trustees will teach you discipline, respect and dedication in every aspect of your career.

**What is your favorite part about the RWIEF?**

Each and every Trustee is my favorite part about the RWIEF! These people are amazing. They have so many stories and history that it is mind-blowing. They have the biggest hearts and so much drive.

The RWIEF reminds me how people across the world can really achieve so much and as challenges arise, each of the Foundation Trustees support one another.

**How would you invite other YPs to be involved with the Foundations' volunteering efforts?**

Come introduce yourselves to any or all the Trustees any chance you get! At the annual IRWA Education Conference, plan to attend the Monday Night Event—they are so much fun! If you like to golf or be out on the golf course, come join us there. We want to get to know you and welcome you!



KELLY SIMMONS

*Kelly is our newest Young Professional serving on the Foundation.*

**In the time you have served on the Foundation, what have you learned?**

If I've learned anything during my first few months as a Young Professional Trustee, it's that the Foundation gets things done! The Right of Way Education Foundation is supported by a Board of Trustees from all over the country that volunteer to help generate funds by planning events such as Monday Night Event and the Annual Golf Tournament held during the International Education Conference. Trustees serve year-round by planning events to support initiatives, which allow further development of right of way education. You can't find a more committed group to the success of the right of way profession. I'm honored to serve as a Trustee and have the opportunity to learn and work with some of the most giving individuals I've ever met.

The Young Professional Trustees look forward to many future opportunities with the Foundation! ✨