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WOMEN FOR AMERICAN VALUES AND ETHICS

*presents*

LIGHT  
THE  
WAY



FOR  
CHANGE  
2021

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**HOPE INSPIRATION ACTION**

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Saturday, May 15  
7PM PST

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## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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## GUIDING LIGHTS

**Annee Della Donna**  
Attorney, Innocence Project,  
Clinical Professor, UCI Law School

**Mary Anne Foo**  
Executive Director, OCAPICA

**Arush Mehrotra**  
High School Student & Founder,  
OC Justice Project

**Michael Sean Wright**  
Documentary Filmmaker, Former EMT  
and Founder, Wound Walk

## WAVE LIGHTS THE WAY FOR CHANGE A Discussion Among Three Brave Enough to be the Light

**Dr. Pete Simi**  
Professor, Chapman University

**Megan Phelps-Roper**  
Activist and Author, *Unfollow: A Memoir of  
Loving and Leaving the Westboro Baptist Church*

**Dr. Megan Squire**  
Digital Science Professor, Elon University



\*Advisory Council Member

# OUR SPEAKERS

## Megan Phelps-Roper

Activist & Author, *Unfollow: A Memoir of Loving and Leaving the Westboro Baptist Church*

Megan Phelps-Roper was raised in the Westboro Baptist Church, the Topeka, Kansas church known internationally for its daily public protests against members of the LGBTQ community, Jews, other Christians, the military, and countless others. She participated in picketing almost daily and spearheaded the use of social media in the church. Dialogue with “enemies” online proved instrumental in her deradicalization, and she left the church and her entire way of life in November 2012. Since then she has become an advocate for people and ideas she was taught to despise — especially the value of empathy in dialogue with people across ideological lines. **Phelps-Roper’s life story exposes the dangers of black-and-white thinking and the need for true humility in a time of angry polarization.**



## Dr. Pete Simi

Associate Professor, Chapman University

Dr. Pete Simi is a member of the Executive committee for the national Counterterrorism, Innovation, Technology, and Education (NCITE) Center. He has studied political violence, hate, and extremism for over 25 years and has been embedded with white supremacist groups, racist skinheads, Klan members, neo-Nazis, and anti-government militias. He is co-author of an award-winning book *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement’s Hidden Spaces of Hate* and has published more than 60 articles and book chapters on political extremism, street gangs, and juvenile delinquency. He provides regular consultation on criminal cases involving hate crimes and domestic terrorism and volunteers in efforts to develop prevention and intervention strategies for countering violent extremism. He is currently serving as a plaintiff’s expert in the landmark civil case, *Sines v. Kessler*, to hold the organizers of the 2017 Unite the Right rally accountable for the violence they helped incite and even commit in Charlottesville, VA.

## Dr. Megan Squire

Digital Science Professor, Elon University

Dr. Squire’s main research area is applying data science techniques to understand niche and extremist online communities, particularly radical right-wing groups on social media. Dr. Squire is the author of two books on data cleaning and data mining, and over 40 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, including several Best Paper awards. In 2017, she was named the Elon University Distinguished Scholar. She currently serves as a Senior Fellow for data analytics at the Southern Poverty Law Center, and as a Senior Fellow and head of the Technical Research Unit at the Center for Analysis of the Radical Right.



## Braver Angels

Learn about the work of Braver Angels, a movement to depolarize politics and to re-imagine what it means to be an American. Inspired by the words of Abraham Lincoln, who not only called on Americans to summon the “better angels” of our nature — but called on us to find the courage needed to pursue a more perfect union, “with malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right. We must challenge ourselves to work together when we disagree. We need bravery. We must restore our bonds as Americans.” Join us, as we learn to do this.



# OUR GUIDING LIGHTS



## Annee Della Donna

Attorney, Innocence Project, Clinical Professor at UCI Law School

Providing pro bono legal services with UCI Law School students on the Innocence Project in Orange County, protecting the rights of the disadvantaged in the criminal justice system.

## Mary Anne Foo

Executive Director, OCAPICA

Advocating for access to healthcare and social justice for Asian and Pacific Islanders in Orange County, and working to combat anti-Asian hate crimes in our community.



## Arush Mehrotra

High School Student & Founder, OC Justice Project

Raising awareness of injustice in the criminal system, immigrant detention and other legal inequities.

## Michael Sean Wright

Documentary Filmmaker, Former EMT and Founder, Wound Walk

Helping people experiencing homelessness cleanse their wounds and assisting them in finding proper healthcare at local facilities.



# ABOUT



WAVE is a diverse group of over 2300 members and activists that engages, educates and empowers its members and the community to advance progressive American values and ethics. THE FUNDS RAISED THROUGH THIS EVENT will be used to support WAVE's initiatives including Environment, Government Integrity, Gun Safety, Migrant Rights, Social Justice, and Voter Mobilization.

## GUN SAFETY

WAVE's gun safety program will lobby to ban gun shows at the Orange County Fairgrounds, develop relevant gun safety literature to be distributed to local schools, educate the public and local police about Gun Violence Restraining Orders, and continue our partnerships with local groups, March for Our Lives, Moms Demand Action, and the Brady Campaign to implement common sense gun safety laws.

## VOTER MOBILIZATION

WAVE provides resources and organizational support for student engagement and mobilization. Through this program, nearly 3,000 Orange County students have become registered or pre-registered to vote. WAVE also participates in Vote Forward, a national movement to encourage voter participation in elections.

## ENVIRONMENT

WAVE addresses climate change at the local level. Partnering with other organizations, WAVE educates city councils, city managers and staff on the economic benefits of adopting sustainable energy choices.

## GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY & MIGRANT RIGHTS

WAVE has developed a unique program to assist families with undocumented parents.

Partnering with local schools and churches, WAVE provides free legal services to prepare families in the event one or more of the parents is detained or deported. WAVE also educates communities about laws affecting immigrants and advocates for inclusive and non-discriminatory legislation.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

WAVE supports events designed to educate and empower the community. This has included: (1) a political education training attended by over 800 participants; (2) a Unity Rally in response to white nationalists; (3) a protest to bring awareness to housing discrimination against the LGBTQ community; and (4) a "Families Belong Together" march attended by over 5,000 people to fight immigrant family separation.

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