

ERKÜ XXIV ESINDUSKOGU VALIMISED

Candidates for the XXIV Estonian American National Council

ERKÜ Valimiste Peakomitee avaldab kinnitatud kandidaatide nimekirja koos kandidaatide tutvustustega Eesti Rahvuskomitee Ühendriikides (ERKÜ) XXIV Esinduskogu valimisteks. Kandidaatidel oli võimalus esitada oma tutvustus eesti keeles, inglise keeles või mõlemas keeles.

Vastavalt ERKÜ kodukorrale valitakse 37 kandidaadi seast 34 Esinduskogu liiget.

Valimisedelid koos valimisjuhiste ja kandidaatide tutvustustega saadetakse tavapostiga kõigile, kelle kontaktandmed on ERKÜ andmebaasis. Soovijad saavad liituda ERKÜ postiloendiga veebilehe kaudu: www.estosite.org/teataja

ERKÜ valimistel on võimalik osaleda ka elektrooniliselt interneti vahendusel. Selleks tuleb registreeruda veebilehel www.estosite.org. E-valimiste registreerimise ja täpsema lisainfo avaldab ERKÜ oma veebilehel juuniku alguses.

Valimisperiod algab 25. juunil ja kestab kuni 9. augustini 2026.

Valimisedeleid ja lisainfot saab ERKÜ tegevjuhilt Leelo Linaskilt:

erku@estosite.org, tel. 978-397-0020

Eesti Rahvuskomitee Ühendriikides (ERKÜ) on üleriigiline valitud Ameerika eestlaste keskorganisatsioon.

Esinduskogu koosneb kuni 50

liikmest (praegu 29), kes tegevad vabatahtlikkuse alusel ning kelle valivad Ameerika eestlased iga nelja aasta järel.

ERKÜ eesmärk on hoida ja toetada eesti keelt, kultuuri-pärandit ja kogukonnaelu Ameerika Ühendriikides, toetada eesti organisatsioone ja kultuuritegevust, tutvustada Eestit Ameerika publikule ning seista Ameerika eestlaste huvide, sealhulgas demokraatliku Eesti Vabariigi huvide eest.

ERKÜ teeb tihedat koostööd teiste sarnaselt mõtleivate organisatsioonidega, sealhulgas Ühendatud Balti Ameerika Komitee (JBANC) ja Kesk- ja Ida-Euroopa Koalitsiooniga (CEEC).

Samuti osaleb ERKÜ aktiivselt Ülemaailmse Eesti Kesknõukogu (ÜEKN) tegevuses ning esindab Ameerika eestlasi Eesti Vabariigi üleilmses Eesti koostöökomisjonis.

ERKÜ on 501(c)(3) mittetulundusühing, mille tegevus põhineb Ameerika eestlaste maksumabadel annetustel. Annetused toetavad Ameerika eestlaste organisatsioone, kogukondlikke ettevõtmisi, erinevaid projekte ning aitavad edendada ERKÜ eesmärke ja missiooni.

Loe lähemalt ERKÜ tegevusest: www.estosite.org

ERKÜ Valimiste Peakomitee esinaised

Lya Karm ja Maria Pedak-Kari
eanc2026election@estosite.org

The EANC Election Committee presents the official list of confirmed candidates for the XXIV Council of the Estonian American National Council (EANC), together with their introductions. Candidates could submit their introductions in Estonian, English, or both languages. In accordance with the EANC bylaws, 34 council members will be elected from the 37 candidates.

Election ballots, together with voting instructions and candidate information, will be mailed in the coming weeks to everyone listed in the EANC database. It is not too late to register in the database to join the EANC election.

Simply go to the EANC website: www.estosite.org/teataja

Voting in the EANC elections may also be completed electronically online. To participate in e-voting, registration is required through the website www.estosite.org. NB! Additional information and instructions regarding e-voting registration will be posted on the EANC website in early June.

The voting period begins on June 25 and concludes on August 9, 2026.



Estonian American National Council
Eesti Rahvuskomitee Ühendriikides

The Estonian American National Council (EANC) is the nationally elected central organization representing Estonian Americans. The Council could consist of up to 50 members (currently 29), who serve on a volunteer basis and are elected nationally every four years by Americans of Estonian descent.

EANC works to preserve and support the Estonian language, cultural heritage, and community life in the United States; to support Estonian organizations and cultural activities; to promote awareness of Estonia among the American public; and to advocate for the interests of Estonian Americans, including support for the democratic Republic of Estonia.

EANC works closely with other like-minded organizations, including the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) and the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), and participates actively in the Estonian World Council (ÜEKN) and represents Estonian Americans in the Global Esto-

nian Cooperation Commission.

EANC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization sustained through tax-deductible contributions from the Estonian American community. Thanks to generous donations from the community, EANC has been able to support Estonian American organizations, community initiatives, and special projects, and help advance EANC's mission and goals, including larger recent events, such as sending Estonian choirs and folk dancers from the US to the Estonian National Song and Dance Festival; sponsoring the world renowned Estonian Philharmonic Chamber choir North American tour earlier this year; and supporting the upcoming West Coast Estonian Days Festival in San Francisco.

To learn more about EANC's work and activities, visit: www.estosite.org

EANC Election Committee
co-chairs

Lya Karm and Maria Pedak-Kari
eanc2026election@estosite.org



Kristi Vuht Allpere
1943
Atlanta, GA

Being born in 1943, I survived the "Suurpõgenemine" (Mass Flight of 1944, SP '44) via small boat to Sweden and the onward journey/flight to Canada in the "Viking ships" of 1949. I have lived in Sweden, Canada, USA, Germany and Austria and am fluent in the 3 respective languages and Estonian. I was immersed in the Toronto community Estonian world of rich activities and graduated from the University of Toronto in 1966. After I married and moved to the USA, I had a career (before children) in personnel, journalism, and public relations and became a "professional volunteer" in both the Estonian and US/American world wherever I lived.

With my husband, Aadu J.

Allpere, Honorary Consul in Georgia, I have built important and meaningful relationships representing Estonia in the communities around us. From a young age to the present, I have held leadership positions in a variety of organizations, clubs, school boards, fundraising associations, political groups, and cultural organizations. My proudest accomplishment as chair and project leader of the Suurpõgenemine 1944 80th anniversary commemorations was leading a very successful worldwide campaign to establish the Suurpõgenemine '44 Memorial/Monument to honor and commemorate our parents' generation that was forced to flee west during the Soviet occupation of 1944. The monument "Puudutus" stands on the bank of the Pärnu River from where over 10,000 Estonians escaped into the night.

As a result of my 40+ years of contributions to the Estonian cause and the SP '44 monument project, I received the Estonian Presidential Order of the White Star (2025), Recognition from the Estonian Foreign Ministry on Citizens Day, the ERKÜ Achievement Award for my work on the SP '44 project in USA and worldwide, and a Certificate of

Recognition from the City of Pärnu at the unveiling of the Memorial in September 2024.

I have dedicated 12 years to ERKÜ and our ERKÜ Mission on committees. I have been an active and productive board and committees' member, organizer, representative and local spokesperson. I continue to tell the Estonian and ERKÜ story, and promote our mission. I would like to continue for an additional term.

Have been a Board Member for 12 years, committee member and participant in the Grants, Books, Films, Annual Meeting and Gala planning, speaker, nomination committee. I have been a President's Circle level donor for these years. I have attended all Annual Meetings in person, as well as a high percentage of monthly board meetings. Served as ERKÜ delegate to the Estonian World Council and attended the annual meetings.

Served as Chair/ Project Leader for the ÜEKN SP '44 80th Anniversary Memorial Project. Raised \$107,000 from Estonians in the diaspora, which funded the "Puudutus" memorial, completed in 2024. Chaired the ERKÜ committee that was the strong backbone to the worldwide project.



Kandidaadid ERKÜ XXIV Esinduskokku

Kristi Vuht Allpere
Anne-Reet Ilves
Annunziata

Kristi Austin
Mai-Liis Bartling
Marit Davey
Aarne Elias
Rasmus Erlemann
Leif Fritzell
Rose Hellat
Kristel Imeraj
Urmas Kärner
Doug Karpa
Gilda Karu
Laine Kõiva Kingo
Jüri Koll
Häly Laasme
Caroli Leiman
Merle Liivand

Maia Linask
Marja Lutsep
John Maasik
Laura-Liisa Nanits Mittal
Mati Otsmaa
Silvi Pirn
Liina Raud
Anne-Maria Riitsaar
Marju Rink-Abel
Ingrid Roosild
Tiina Sepp
Andres Simonson
Alvar Soosaar
Eric Suuberg
Tarmo Tari
Alan Tomson
Marianne Torm
Lisa Trei
Ilmar Vanderer



Anne-Reet Annunziata
1942
Burlington, MA

Born in Tallinn, I grew up in Canada and have lived in Boston since 1963. My education (Clinical Nutrition/Food Policy) includes a degree from McGill, graduate work at Boston University and a PhD - Tufts University. My career - academic and clinical nutritionist - has included teaching at various universities and consultancy in Long Term Care and Senior Health. My work in Estonia has included Editor-UNICEF Situation Analysis of Children and Families and Principal Investigator - Child Health and Nutrition Survey, with Tal Tech. Along with my career family life has always been a valued part of my days

ERKU is unique in its support for Estonian endeavors. Estonians in the US recognize ERKU as the primary resource for financial as well as promotional support. Our population here is scattered, with limited regional resources, yet events by volunteers are significant to maintain and promote our culture. ERKU's support of small community groups run by volunteers provides opportunities that would not otherwise be possible. Yet ERKU also supports significant large scale events such as the recent Arvo Pärt celebration.

I have always been active in the Estonian community, as member of the Boston Estonian Society, a folk dancer, organizer of the Centennial celebration and currently as a member of the Boston Baltic Film Festival team. The Estonian Film Institute recently acknowledged the import.

As a current member of ERKU I have attended meetings offered on line and responded to any requests for assistance aske of me. My most recent involvement in the current initiative to better connect various Estonian Societies and Organizations.

As a member of the Visnapuu Award Committee I have participated in all committee meetings in the US as well as in Estonia.

The Estonian American National Council, Inc. (EANC), is the nationally-elected central organization of Estonian Americans in the U.S.
www.estosite.org



Kristi Austin
1977
Mt. Juliet, Tennessee

Olen Eesti päritolu ettevõtja ja elan Nashville'is, Tennessee. Olen ettevõtte IGC Protection Inc. finantsjuht (CFO) ja omanik – tegemist on turva- ja liikluskorraldusettevõttega, mis tegutseb mitmes osariigis. Mul on üle 25 aasta kogemust juhtimises, äritegevuses ja finantsvaldkonnas. Olen aktiivne kogukonnaliige ning osalen USA rannavalve abiorganisatsiooni (U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary) tegevuses Floridas, keskendudes kommunikatsioonile ja avalikkuse kaasamisele. Vabal ajal huvitun psühholoogiast ja emergentsetest tehnoloogiatest, tegelen jõutreeninguga ning osalen kogukonnaüritustel.

Soovin kandideerida Esinduskokku, sest tahan aidata eestlasi kokku tuua ja tugevdada meie kogukonda ka väljaspool Eestit. Minu igapäevatöö hõlmab organisatsiooni juhtimist, kommunikatsiooni ja süsteemide ülesehitamist ning usun, et neid oskusi on vaja ka kogukonna tugevdamisel.

Eestlasena USAs hoian aktiivselt sidet Eesti ja eestlaste kogukonnaga. Olen loonud Tennessee eestlastele suunatud Facebooki lehe, kus toon inimesi kokku, jagan infot ürituste ja võimaluste kohta ning aitan tugevdada omavahelist sidet. Pean oluliseks eesti keele säilimist mitmekeelsetes peredes ning soovin, et eesti lapsed kasvaksid üles armastusega eesti keele ja kultuuri vastu.

Esinduskogus soovin panustada eelkõige kommunikatsiooni parandamisse, kaastuse suurendamisse ja praktiliste lahenduste elluviimisse.



Mai-Liis Bartling
1953
Novato, CA

Born in Germany in 1953 to Estonian parents. Grew up in Los Angeles, attending Estonian school, folkdance, scouts, and later Metsaülikool. Gra-

duated from UC Santa Barbara in 1976 with a BA in Urban Studies. In the same year, married Don Bartling, and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where we have lived ever since. We have three grown children.

Retired from a 31-year career with the National Park Service in 2009, which included serving as Deputy Superintendent of a large urban national park, and leadership roles in the transitioning of former Army lands into national parklands.

Contributing to Estonian organizations and culture is deeply important to me. Since 2013, I have served as president of the Estonian Society of San Francisco where I helped start our Keelering and choir. The SF Society supports the "Eesti by the Bay" community with a newsletter and regular activities, welcomes and connects Estonians, and keeps Estonian culture alive in the SF Bay Area. Also served on the LEP-ESTO 2013 Board, the Estonian League of the West Coast (EOLL) Heritage Board, and on Vaba Eesti Sõna's Kolleegium (Advisory Board), and helped organize the Lääneranniku Eesti Koor to go to laulupidu in 2025. I have served on the Council since 2014, because I believe in EANC's mission and its unique and important role as an inclusive national organization, able to work with like-minded others when needed, and to speak up for Estonian American interests.

I have attended every annual meeting since being elected to the Council in 2014, as well as JBANC's 2015 and 2017 conferences. I have also participated in Baltic Advocacy activities in 2017 and 2018, and virtually in 2022, when it was so important that the U.S. Congress hear Estonian American concerns over Ukraine and Baltic security, and am currently an active member of EANC's Advocacy committee.

I have been a board member since joining the Council in 2014, and began serving as vice president in 2018; was elected president in 2023.

Among the committees I have served on are:

* Strategy committee (since 2014), updating EANC's strategic plan, improving its website, taking on other projects

* Estonian Books disposition committee (2016/17)

* EANC awards gala committee (2016), bringing the event to the West Coast for the first time.

* EV103 Virtual Program committee (2021) to celebrate vabariigi aastapäev during COVID

* Virtual Fundraising Auction committee (2021) raising money for Estonian houses

and facilities

* Visnapuu Award for Arts and Letters committee (2022) to re-establish the award.

* Advocacy and Fundraising committees (2022-2026), and Investment committee (since 2023)

I am proud to have been part of EANC's work over the past 12 years and see so much that is needed in the years ahead.



Aarne Elias
1961
Bartlett, IL

I was born and raised in Chicago. I hold a bachelor's degree in chemistry and an MBA in finance, both from the University of Chicago. My professional career spans several decades in management consulting — at Coopers & Lybrand, PricewaterhouseCoopers, IBM Global Services, and my own firm — and I now work in corporate finance at ICU Medical. I serve as the Honorary Consul for Estonia in Chicago, a role I assumed in February 2026. I am a first-generation Estonian-American with deep roots in the Chicago Estonian community.

Aarne on olnud Chicago Eesti Maja nõukogu liige alates märtsist 1986. Selle aja jooksul on ta olnud sekretär, laekur, asepresident ja praegu president. Aarne on olnud Chicago Eesti Majas väga aktiivne: lapsepõlves lõpetas ta Chicago Eesti Kooli, on tantsinud rahvatantsutrupis "Mustjalg", mänginud paljudes näidendites, ta on köögis küpsetanud ja korraldanud kümneid üritusi Eesti Majas.

Aarne teab omast kogemusest, kuidas Eesti kogukond Ameerikas on muutunud. Esimese põlvkonna eesti-ameeriklasena on ta näinud, kuidas kogukonna vajadused on muutunud pagulaste kogunemispäigast kultuurikeskuseks, mis peab konkureerima mitmekultuurilise kaasaegse pere aja- ja sporditrennide, kooli ja internetiga. Ta mõistab, et internet ja sotsiaalmeedia on vähendanud vahemaad USA Eesti Majade ja seltside vahel ning me peame tegema tihedamat koostööd, et oma publikum turundada ja sisu pakkuda.

Aarne osales 2023. a. virtuaalsel aastakoosolekul ja 2023. a. toimunud kohtumistel Lakewoodis New Jerseys, Chicagos Illinoisis (2024) ja Albuquerques New Mexicos (2025).

Aarne on viimased neli aastat olnud laekurina EANC juhatuse liige. Samuti oli ta investeerimiskomitee liige ja aitas planeerida EANC aastakoosolekut Chicagos, mis toimus 2024. a. novembris.



Name: Marit Davey
1979
Rohnert Park, CA

Marit Davey grew up in Viljandi, Estonia, and graduated from the Estonian Business School in 2001 with a BA in International Business Administration. Professionally, she has worked with Booz & Co., PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, and Levi Strauss & Co. She is currently a Cybersecurity Program Manager in Product Security at Dayforce, focusing on cybersecurity, compliance, risk management, and strengthening enterprise security culture through programs and initiatives. Marit lives in California, where she is raising two boys and enjoys offering them opportunities to take part in Estonian activities. She is deeply committed to promoting Estonia and strong West Coast Estonian representation.

I would be honored to continue representing West Coast Estonians on the Estonian American National Council. I believe EANC plays an important role in keeping Estonians across the United States connected to Estonia, our culture, language, history, and civic voice.

For many years, I have supported Estonian-American activities through EANC, the San Francisco Estonian Society, LEP-ESTO 2013, and now LEP 2026 in San Francisco. My work has included event planning, fundraising, marketing, communications, business and technology programming, cultural events, and community engagement. I currently serve as President / Lead Organizer for West Coast Estonian Days 2026, helping shape a program that connects culture, education, resilience, technology, entrepreneurship, youth programming, and diaspora.

I have served as an elected member of the Estonian American National Council for the 2014–2018, 2018–2022, and 2022–2026 terms. During this time, I participated in all annual and semi-annual meetings except one, when I was ill and unable to travel. Although I could not attend in person, I

continued to support the organizing committee remotely by helping strategize, promote, and prepare meeting materials. I have also supported EANC activities, committees, and special projects throughout my terms.

During the 2022–2026 term, I served on the Fundraising and Business Connect committees and as an EANC delegate to the Estonian World Council / ÜEKN. During 2018–2022, I served on the EANC Estonian Independence Day planning committee and the ESTO|Raiser 2021 fundraising committee, helping create branding, marketing, and online auction materials that supported nearly \$15,000 in fundraising for Estonian Houses. During 2014–2018, I served on the 2016 EANC Annual Meeting in San Francisco planning committee, supporting the gala, public seminars, fundraising ideas, marketing, contracts, speakers, and programming.



Rasmus Erlemann
1992
Charlotte, NC

Born in Tallinn, Estonia, Rasmus Erlemann graduated from Audentese Spordigümnaasium before earning his mathematics degree at the University of Tartu and a PhD in Statistics from Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). His career spans data science and engineering leadership roles at Vanguard, EY, and Planet42, where he's built teams and architected enterprise platforms driving multi-million dollar impact. He continues AI and knowledge graph research at UNC Charlotte and Carnegie Mellon. Outside work, Rasmus is a Brazilian Jiu Jitsu competitor, claiming IBJJF Master Worlds, Pan American, and European Championship titles. He now calls Charlotte home, embracing the southern culture and warm climate.

Joining the Council is a natural extension of my commitment to the Estonian community. In addition to recently presenting my research at an Estonian webinar, I mentor students at the University of Tartu, and collaborate with Cybernetica in Estonia on cybersecurity work that strengthens not only the U.S. but also NATO and Estonia. Serving on the Council would let me expand this work, connecting Estonian talent and

values across borders while supporting our community here in the States.



Leif Fritzell
1982
Grand Forks, ND

Raised in Oregon by an Estonian mother and a Scandinavian father, Leif received his bachelor's degree in European Studies from Oregon State University. After briefly studying at the University of Tartu, Leif subsequently earned a master's degree from the University of British Columbia, where his work focused on Estonian security and citizenship policies. Following in his mother's footsteps, he has since found a fulfilling career in libraries and holds a Master of Library Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Now residing in North Dakota, he enjoys the great outdoors and watching his little nephews grow up in the wind and snow of the northern plains

As a four-term Council member, I have had the privilege of serving the Estonian-American community for the past 16 years. I am renewing my candidacy for the Council because I believe that my professional background and personal experience can help further the organization's commitment to serve all Estonian-Americans, regardless of where they reside. Additionally, as an American-born Estonian, I believe my presence on the Council provides our organization with a unifying intergenerational cohesion. Estonian-related issues have always been a passion of mine, so it would truly be an honor to be re-elected to the Council

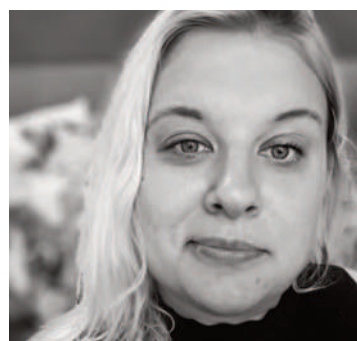
I have attended annual meetings in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023.

EANC Executive Board: Member-at-Large (2022-present); Constitution and Bylaws Committee: Committee Chair (2021-present) Member (2016-2020). Together with the wonderful Gilda Karu, I help coordinate changes to the EANC's Constitution and Bylaws.

E-Voting Ad Hoc Committee: Committee Chair (2021-2022) Our committee carried out the Council's primary investigation into incorporating and implementing e-voting for our

national elections.

In addition to these committees, I also attend informal brainstorming sessions as needed.



Rose Hellat
1988
Minneapolis, MN

I am an Estonian American with roots in southern Estonia. My mother was born in a displaced persons camp after World War II, and I have always identified strongly with my Estonian heritage. In recent years, obtaining dual citizenship and visiting Estonia several times has deepened my connection to her homeland. These experiences inspired her to become more active in the Estonian community. Rose maintains friendships with Estonians and estophiles both in the United States and abroad, and she is proud to be part of the growing and vibrant Estonian community in Minnesota today.

I would like to join the Council to strengthen my connection to the Estonian-American community and contribute to preserving and promoting Estonian culture in the United States. My experiences reconnecting with Estonia through dual citizenship and multiple visits have inspired me to become more engaged and give back to the community that has shaped my identity.

I have supported and participated in Estonian-American activities by building relationships with Estonians and Estonian enthusiasts both in the U.S. and abroad, and by actively engaging with the growing Estonian community in Minnesota. I value creating connections, sharing cultural traditions, and helping foster a sense of belonging among Estonians and those interested in Estonia.

I have not been as involved in formal Estonian-American organizations in the past, largely due to focusing on my professional and personal responsibilities. As a social worker, I have dedicated much of my time to supporting others, and also building and managing two businesses, while also helping an international Estonian business coming to MN.

At this point in my life, I have more availability and capacity, and I see becoming involved as a civic duty. I am eager to engage more deeply with the

broader Estonian-American community, contribute my skills and experience, and help strengthen the connections and cultural continuity that are so important to our shared heritage.

I believe I can meaningfully contribute to the Council's mission by helping build bridges—between generations, between Estonians and the broader American public, and between community organizations. Through my background in social work, I bring a people-centered perspective that supports inclusion, communication, and community well-being. My entrepreneurial experience allows me to think strategically about growth, outreach, and collaboration, including partnerships with non-Estonian organizations. I am also committed to supporting cultural education and connection, whether through community engagement, promoting Estonian identity and heritage, or helping amplify accurate information about Estonia's history, culture, and current affairs.



Kristel Imeraj
1981
Marietta, GA

I was born in Estonia, near Põltsamaa. I came to the States as a nanny through Au Pair in America in January 2001. I graduated from Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Business Administration, concentration in accounting. I worked in public accounting for five years and then switched over to the private manufacturing sector for 12 years. My current role is with Stand Together, a nonprofit company based in Arlington, VA as Compliance and Internal Audit Leader. I am Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional (CCEP). I am married to a war refugee from Kosovo and we have two kids.

As a kid back in Estonia, I remember listening to a radio station from Seattle, Washington that was head up by Estonians to deliver world news. It was forbidden to listen to such stations, and I was cautioned by my parents to not talk about it outside of home. I was too young to understand the topics, but having lived in the States for 25 years now, I understand the importance of advocating for Estonia's and the Baltic States' interests in America. Preserving and introducing Estonia's rich language,

literature, history and culture in America is dear to my heart. I am one of the founding members of the Atlanta Estonian Cultural Society in 2014, helping organize and host events for our small community.

I have attended all annual meetings since I started my service in 2022. The first meeting was virtual, but others (Lakewood, Chicago, and Albuquerque) I attended in person and was an active planner and participant.

I have served four years on the EANC Council of which approximately two years, I have served as a board member, leading the Grants Committee's efforts. I am also participating in the Communications (since 2022), Council Member Recruitment (2026), and Annual Meeting Planning committees (since 2023). No special projects. At the 2025 annual meeting, I presented on ideas to encourage EANC council member and board member collaboration and maintaining EANC visibility and importance.



Urmas Kärner
1955
Chappaqua, NY

I was born and raised in New York City by Estonian parents who emigrated to this country in 1949. As such I proudly enjoy American and Estonian citizenship. My academic background includes BA and MA degrees from the City University of New York, majoring in Dramatic Arts (theatre directing). I have professional experience in Direct Marketing, Consumer Package Goods brand management (including for an Estonian American "cosmeceutical" company) and in the hospitality sector (hotel / resort management) in the United States and abroad. I am married to an Estonian American. We — as well as our daughter — are fluent in Estonian.

Olen eluaeg olnud seotud tegevusega, mis tugineb Eesti maa ja rahva olemasolule ning edukale tulevikule, primaarselt Ameerika Ühendriikides. Alates 1970: Eesti Skautide Malev USAs Viiking Lipkonna "Varola" skautrühma juht, Eesti Noorte Klubi USAs asutajaliige (hiljem esimees), NYEHS-i Long Island Laste Suvokodu kasvataja, New Yorgi Eesti Meeskoori liige (hiljem esimees), New Yorgi Eesti Maleklubi liige (hiljem esimees), New Yorgi Eesti Teatri liige (hiljem esi-

mees), New Yorgi Eesti Hari-
dusseltsi juhatuse liige (hiljem
abiesimees, praegune revis-
jonikomisjoni liige). Olin ERKÜ
kunagine noorim valitud Esin-
duskogu liige (1970. dekaadi
lõpul). Olin mitu aastat Üle-
maailmse Eesti Kesknõukogu
delegaat (Suurbritanniat esin-
dades). Olin VI Ülemaailmsete
Eesti Päevade (ESTO '92 New
York) Peakomitee esimees.



Doug Karpa
1968
Mill Valley, CA

I grew up mostly in California
as the child of a WWII refugee.
He focused on being American,
so he did not speak Estonian
with us nor talk about Estonia.
Thus, my siblings and I came to
being Estonian late, but we
have revived our connection to
the Estonian community, got-
ten our citizenships, visited our
cousins, sung in Laulupidu, and
began learning Estonian.

I live in Mill Valley, California,
with my wife and daughter,
and have two adult children,
who also are budding Estoni-
ans. I practice renewable
energy law, and am active with
local environmental and com-
munity groups.

As someone who has worked
to create my connection to
Estonians from almost nothing,
I would like to give back to this
welcoming community by find-
ing ways to help other Estonian
Americans who grew up with
little to no connection to the
Estonian community forge new
ties. For us, learning a new cul-
ture, language, and traditions
has been deeply moving, but
also a challenge. I have been
fortunate to have vibrant local
community to connect with
and a local Estonian choir, with
whom I sang in Laulupidu this
last summer, but many heri-
tage Estonians may need
other ways to forge their own
connections

As a lawyer with experience
serving on boards of several
non-profits, I understand
something of the challenges
organizations face and the
legal issues that may arise. I
also have experience advocat-
ing on key issues in legislatures
and agencies, and would be
thrilled to support EANC's
advocacy efforts.



Gilda Karu
1951
Arlington Heights, IL

Pärit Lakewoodist, oli Gilda
Karu aktiivne Eesti koolis, gai-
dides, rahvatantsus ja muudes
Eesti tegevustes. Chicago Eesti
Maja ja Lakewoodi Eesti Seltsi
liige. Üle 40 aasta ERKÜ esin-
duskogu liige ja juhatuses.
Eesti Vabariigi Valgetähe V
klassi teenetemärgi omanik kui
eestluse hoidja Ameerika
Ühendriikides. Vassar College'i
A.B. kraad politoloogias ja
Chicago-Kent College of Law'st
J.D. Akadeemiliselt kuulub
Korp! Indlasse. Praegu pen-
sionär, töötas Gilda Ameerika
valitsusele ligi 35 aastat. 2013.
a. oktoobrist saadik diakon-
õpetaja ja teenib E.E.L.K.
Chicago Esimest kogudust.
Gilda on aktiivne Ameerika
kogukonnas ja rahvusvahe-
listes tegevustes. Ta elab
Chicago äärelinnas Arlington
Heights'is abikaasa Fred
Foy'ga.

I want to continue working to
represent Estonian Americans.
I am a long-time member of
the EANC and bring institutional
history and experience in
advocacy, organizing, and
working on projects. I have
been active in Estonian
American activities for most of
my life including but not limited
to eesti kool, pühapäeva-
kool, gaidid, rahvatants,
Estonian sorority Korp! Indla,
Estonian festivals, and more. I
am currently deacon pastor of
the E.E.L.K. Chicago Esimene
Kogudus. I was the proofread-
er for the history book
Estonians in America. I have
publicized Estonian events in
American media. I have given
speeches and represented the
EANC at numerous events. I
was active in promoting the
end of Soviet occupation of
Estonia and advocating for
Estonia's membership in NATO
and the European Union.

From 2018 to 2025 I have
attended all annual meetings
and have frequently been one
of the meeting directors. I
have also led the opening
prayer at the meetings and
actively participated in discus-
sions.

I have served on the board
for many years. On the current
board I am part of the execu-
tive committee as the secre-
tary. Currently an EANC dele-
gate to the Estonian World
Council. I am part of the
Advocacy Committee and
actively participate in Baltic
Calls to Action. I serve on the

by-laws committee. I organ-
ized a Rahvuskongress at the
2011 West Coast Estonian Days
in Portland. Back in the late
1970's, I was on the committee
that developed the first English
language color brochure about
Estonia and Soviet occupation.



Laine Kõiva-Kingo
1969
Columbia, Connecticut

ERKÜ liige ning selle noorte-
komitee juhataja (alates 2022.
a.). Connecticuti Eesti Seltsi
President alates 2025.a.
Revisjonikomisjoni liige Eesti
Skaudi ja Gaidi Sõprade Selt-
side Liit USA's alates 2022.a.
Connecticuti Eesti Kooli laulu-
õpetaja 1998-2022. Lapsed
laulsid 2013. a. Lääneranniku
Eesti Päevadel ja ESTO laulu-
peol San Franciscos ja 2017.a.
XII Eesti noorte laulupeol
"Mina jään" Tallinnas. Korp!
Indla vilistlane. Asedirektor
(Assistant Director, Student
Services) University of Con-
necticut MBA programmis.
Elasin Tallinnas 1992-1997 ja
töötasin Eesti Kontserdis, Eesti
üldlaulupeo direktsoonis ja
Ameerika saatkonnas. Magist-
rikraad Higher Education &
Student Affairs ja bakalaureuse
kraadid äriteaduses ja muusi-
kas University of Connecticut.

Ma olen olnud ühe ametiaja
(2022-2026) ERKÜ liige ja sellel
ajal olen USA väliseesti noori
ERKÜ ja muu tegevusse toonud.
Connecticuti Eesti Seltsi
presidendina hoian ja tugev-
dan meie kogukonda, säilitades
eesti kultuuri ja traditsioone.
Connecticuti Eesti Kooli kaua-
aegse lauluõpetajana tutvustan
lastele Eesti koorilaulu-
traditsiooni. Töötasin Eestis
esimesed aastad peale taasis-
seisvumist, kus aitasin tuua
maailmatasemel muusikuid
Eestisse ning Eesti ja välismaa
firmasid toetada Eesti laulu-
ja tantsupidusid. Töötades Ameerika
saatkonnas saatsin Eesti
hariduse juhte, õpetajaid ning
teadlasi USAse program-
midele oma teadmiste aren-
damiseks. Need kogemused
koos mu kõrghariduse ja pro-
fessionaalsete kogemustega,
annavad mulle unikaalseid ja
väärtuslikke oskusi, et ERKÜt
aidata tema missioonis.

ERKÜ aastakoosolekud –
2022, 2023, 2024, ja 2025.
Poolaasta koosolekud – 2023,
2024 ja 2025.

ERKÜ esindamine ja ürituste
korraldamine: Eesti Filhar-
moonia Kammerkoori kontser-
did New Yorgis - 2025.

6. märts 2025 – ERKÜ vir-

tuualfoorum Eesti suursaadiku-
ga USAs.

Eesti Filharoonia Kammer-
koori kontserdid New Yorgis,
Washingtonis ja Philadelphias -
2024.

23. oktoober 2023 – ERKÜ
Virtual Town Hall on Planned
Closure of Consulates.

19. mai 2023 – ERKÜ Virtual
Talk (with Q&A) with the
Ambassador of Estonia on
Issues Pertinent to Estonia
(served as moderator). Follo-
wed by a Public Town Hall on
the Future of ESTO Festivals.

Olen olnud ERKÜ noorte-
komitee juhataja 2022 - 2026,
ning algatasime ERKÜ Young
Estonian Americans Advisory
grupi, tuues USA väliseesti
noori kokku 2024. a. ERKÜ aas-
takoosolekul Chicagos ning
kuus kuud virtuaalselt. Oleme
saatnud mitmed noored osale-
ma Eesti Mäluinstituudi suve-
kooli Eestis aastal 2024 ja 2025
ning ühe noore osalema ESTO
2025 Noortekongressile Nar-
vas ja ÜEKN rahvuskongressile
Tallinnas. Aitasin kohapealsete
korraldustega ERKÜ toetatud
Eesti Filharoonia Kammer-
koori ringreisil 2024. a. New
Yorgis, Washingtonis ja Phila-
delphias ning 2025. a. New
Yorgis. Osalesin ka 2023. a.
ERKÜ Esinduskogu aasta-
koosoleku korralduskomitees ja
ka kaasneva ERKÜ Inspirat-
sioonifoorumi korralduses, mis
tõi kokku USA väliseesti noori.



Jüri Koll
1961
Venice, CA

Curator, Filmmaker, Artist.
Founder Venice Institute of
Contemporary Art.

Been serving with ERKÜ for 8
years. Showing Estonian artists
and filmmakers here in the US
since 2011.

I have attended a number of
annual meetings and partici-
pated in EANC activities.

Board Member, Culture &
Heritage Committee Chair
2018 - 2022.



Häly Laasme
1973
Upper Deerfield, NJ

Häly Laasme was born in
Pärnu, Estonia, and currently
resides in New Jersey. She
serves as the Energy Assis-
tance Director at Delaware
DHSS. Over the past four years,
she has pursued an MPH as a
Bloomberg Fellow at Johns
Hopkins, focusing on environ-
mental challenges. Häly has a
Fulbright Specialist tenure until
2028 in Public Administration,
and serves on the UNDP Global
Policy Network ExpRes Roster
for Climate Change Mitigation -
Energy. In 2025, she con-
tributed as a subject matter
expert to Delaware legislation
that linked energy access to
public health. She holds a
degree in economics from
Columbia University.

I am motivated to join the
Council to strengthen connec-
tions within the Estonian
American community and
ensure that Estonians living in
the United States feel recog-
nized, supported, and enga-
ged. I believe there is a signifi-
cant opportunity to better
understand and connect the
many Estonians who are work-
ing, studying, and building
their lives here, while also fos-
tering collaboration with non-
Estonian organizations. I also
hope to contribute to a more
inclusive approach to engage-
ment by recognizing that not
all community members have
equal financial ability to partici-
pate in Estonian-American
activities. Expanding accessi-
bility and creating opportuni-
ties for broader involvement
would help ensure that a wider
range of voices is represented.
Given my experience mentor-
ing young people nationally
and internationally, my passion
revolves around helping next
generations and women, and
helping them connect with
their culture, roots, and com-
munity.

I serve on the Youth Com-
mittee of the Estonian Ameri-
can National Council with Maia
and Laine. In this role, we
design initiatives to strengthen
engagement among young
Estonian Americans and build
community connections across
the United States. Our work
includes organizing monthly
virtual gatherings via Zoom,
creating opportunities for
youth participation and net-
working. We have also sup-
ported scholarship opportuni-
ties enabling young Estonian
Americans to attend Summer
School programs in Estonia,
strengthening cultural ties and
language development. In
addition, we organized the
Youth Advisory Group for the
Annual Meeting in Chicago
(2024), facilitating youth input
into Council activities and prio-
rities.

Eesti Rahvuskomitee
Ühendriikides (ERKÜ)

www.estosite.org



Caroli Leiman
1979
Seattle, WA

Ma olen sündinud ja kasvanud Eestis nõukogude aja lõpu poole. Mul on tore ema, kes vedas oma lapsi igale rahvatantsuüritusele või kontserdile, kuhu sai. Nii kasvasin üles tantsides ja lauldes, õppides rahvakunsti ja kuulates Eesti muinasjutte ja legende kui ka sosinaid ajaloo ja poliitikast.

Pärast Eesti iseseisumist ja ülikooli kolisin ma Seattle'isse, Seattle Eesti Seltsi võttis mind kohe omaks. Ma alustasin rahvatantsuõpetajana ja iga aastaga lisasime juurde uusi tegevusi. Nii eesti kooli kui Seattle baltlaste kogukonna tegutsemise kui ka tegime koostööd Washingtoni Ülikooliga.

Viimased kuus aastat olin ma Seattle Eesti Seltsi president ja Lääneranniku päevade peakorraldaja.

Ma olen eestlusega tegutsenud väikesest peale nagu eelnevalt mainitud.

Ma olen 20+ aastat Seattle Seltsiga tegutsenud. Selle aja jooksul on palju muutusi toimunud. Rahvatantsugrupp on tulnud ja läinud. Isegi tantsupeol sai mitu korda käidud. Lapsed, kellele kooli tegime, on üles kasvanud. Meie balti naabritega saame aastast korra või kaks kokku. Washingtoni Ülikoolile kogusime piisavalt sihtkapitali, nii et nüüd õpetatakse eesti keelt ja kultuuri põhikursusena. Ja suur mitmepäevane Eesti kultuurfestival (LEP) on ära peetud. Kuigi meie Seattle'i kogukond on väike, oleme me suuri asju teinud ja näinud. Nüüd on aeg edasi liikuda ja uutele väljakutsetele vastata.



Lady Merle Liivand
1991
Miami Beach, FL

Lady Merle Liivand on professionaalne ujuja, ettevõtja ja Eesti Teeneteristi III klassi omanik. Merle omab 10 maailmarekordit ning on valitud ka 100 kõige mõjukama inimese

nimekirja. Tema igapäevane tahe ja eesmärk on tuua tähelepanu Eesti riigile, kultuurile ja ookeanidele.

Olles ettevõtlik sportlane, on ta loonud Florida ja Eesti vahele äriõrgustiku, et aidata järgmise põlvkonna ettevõtjaid. Sellega on ta toonud tähelepanu nii Eesti riigile kui ka sinimajandusele, mille valdkonna ülemaailmsesse organisatsiooni Merle hiljuti valiti.

Esinduskogu on parim koht, kus hoida Ameerikas eesti kultuuri, teadmisi, keelt ja Eesti omapära. Kuigi meid on vähe, usun mina siiski, et Eesti on suur — seda enam üle ookeani.

Meie kultuur on üle 10 000 aasta vana ning olles sündinud 1991. aastal, Eesti taasiseseisvumise aastal, tean, kui uhke tunne on kanda Eesti lipu värve. Olgu see intervjuusid andes, Eesti eest rahvusvaheliselt võisteldes või rahvusvahelistel kohtumistel osaledes.

Lisaks olen uhke, et viimase 10 aasta jooksul olen ehitanud mitu ettevõtet just Ameerika ja Eesti vahel, sest see on toonud äripartnereid nii Eestisse kui ka Miamisse — inimesi, kellest on saanud Eesti fännid. Ma ütlen alati, et Merineitsi fännid on ka Eesti fännid!

Olen osalenud ERKÜ aasta-koosolekul ning tutvustanud ja edendanud ERKÜ tegevust nii Välisministeeriumis, Riigikogus, Kliimaministeeriumis, Kaitseministeeriumis kui ka spordivaldkonnas. Hetkel aitan Eesti riigil valida ka aukonsulit.



Maia Linask
1973
Richmond, VA

Maia Kersti Linask was born May 26, 1973 in Connecticut and currently resides in Richmond, VA. She earned her B.A. in history and literature from Harvard University in 1995, her M.A. in international relations from Johns Hopkins University (SAIS) in 2005, and her Ph.D. in economics from Johns Hopkins University in 2012. She is an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Richmond and has been named the Robins Teaching Fellow. She has previously been an active member of many Estonian organizations, including the Connecticut folkdance group Jaanik, the Connecticut Estonian Society, the Washington folkdance group Pillerkaar, and the Washington Eesti Kool. She has been a representative to the Estonian American National

Council (EANC) since 2010.

I would like to continue to serve in a leadership role in EANC in order to further our goals of supporting the activities and cooperation of Estonian American communities, introducing the country and culture of Estonia to a broader audience, and helping sustain Estonia's well-being and security through advocacy. As part of supporting and strengthening the Estonian American National Council as an organization, I aim to continue working to connect the organization with Estonians who live in places without a large community of Estonian-Americans and to draw more young Estonian-Americans into our activities.

I have participated in all of the annual meetings and other work of the organization (2012-2025) with the exception of 2018, when the annual meeting took place 2 weeks after the birth of our daughter.

I have been an active Board member since 2012, a member of multiple committees (strategy, youth, advocacy), chair of the Strategy Committee from 2014-2018 and again from 2025 to the present, and vice president since 2023. I have either directed or been an active participant in many other EANC activities, including website redesign, planning annual meetings, planning and moderating town halls on topics from ESTO to Estonia's security, chairing the 2025 rahvuskongress organizing committee, developing a strategic plan for Vaba Eesti Sõna, and serving on the Board of the Estonian World Council.



Marja Lutsep
1969
Saint Paul, MN

I grew up in the Twin Cities to Baltic parents — my father was Estonian and my mother Latvian — with the Minneapolis Estonian community as our extended family. I went to California (Stanford) for college and to North Carolina (Duke) for law school. I specialized in international tax law, and I worked for the "Big Four" accounting firm Ernst & Young and for Morgan Stanley in New York City for many years before resettling in Minnesota. I continue to work for Ernst & Young, focusing on the taxation of investment funds. I am married and have two teenage sons, Mattias and Mikael.

I am looking for a structured

way to expand awareness of the Estonian culture and political landscape. In particular, the Council offers opportunities to have influence not only within the Estonian community but more broadly as well.

I attended the Minneapolis Estonian School and have stayed involved with the Estonian community in some way my entire life - from launching a "Baltic Alliance" group at college, being a self-proclaimed Arvo Pärt groupie, bringing my son to Estonian school in NYC (and finding other occasions to visit the Estonian House) when we lived in New York, attending various cultural events, and participating in advocacy with JBANC. Most recently, I have been involved in setting up a board for an Estonian society in Minnesota.



John A. Maasik
1970
Garrison, NY

I am John Maasik, a proud Estonian-American living in New York's Hudson Valley and the son of Laine Kallas Maasik and Tõnu Maasik, who were forced to leave Estonia as children during the war and Soviet occupation. Their journey shaped my understanding of resilience and the importance of preserving our heritage. I grew up immersed in the Estonian-American community, attending Eesti Kool in New York City and carrying forward the traditions my parents protected. Today, I pass those same values on to my two sons. With a background in business leadership and community engagement, I am committed to serving the Estonian-American community through the EANC.

The Estonian-American community has played a defining role in shaping my identity and values. Joining the EANC would allow me to give back in a meaningful way by helping preserve our cultural heritage and strengthening the relationship between Estonian-Americans and a democratic Estonia. My engagement has been lifelong and multifaceted: attending Eesti Kool at the New Yorgi Eesti Maja, marching for Freedom for the Baltics, and participating in Estonian camps and cultural events across the New York area and abroad. I've served as a member of the Eesti Kool PTA and hindu leader and camp counselor, supporting youth deve-

lopment within our community. In addition, I have been an active supporter of Eesti Spordiliit USA and ESTO Ski, contributing to programs that unite through shared traditions.

While currently not an EANC member, I have participated in EANC-supported activities over the years, including cultural events, Baltic advocacy efforts, and community programs. This includes the Baltic Advocacy Days in Washington DC in 2019 with JBANC. I have been consistently engaged in EANC-related initiatives and the broader Estonian-American community.



Laura-Liisa (Nanits) Mittal
1993
Bayonne, NJ

Olen sündinud ja kasvanud Eestis, kus kujunesid minu haridus ja väärtused. Kooliajal veetsin suviti aega Ameerikas, osaledes laagrites ja kogukondlikes ettevõtmistes, mis tutvustasid mulle väliseesti elu.

Pärast keskkooli asusin õppima Ameerikasse ning jäin siia elama ka pärast ülikooli lõpetamist. Kuigi algne plaan oli naasta Eestisse, kujunes minu teekond uute võimaluste tõttu teistsuguseks.

I was born and raised in Estonia, where my education and core values were formed. During my school years, I spent summers in the United States, participating in camps and community activities that introduced me to Estonian life abroad.

After high school, I moved to the United States for university and remained here after graduation. Although my original plan was to return to Estonia, my path changed due to new opportunities.

Soovin kandideerida Esinduskokku, et panustada aktiivselt väliseesti kogukonna tugevdamisse ning eesti keele ja kultuuri kestmissse järgmiste põlvkondade seas.

Olen sellele juba järjepidevalt kaasa aidanud, õpetades kuus aastat New Yorgi Eesti Koolis, kus panustasin ajaloo ja eesti keele tundidesse ning aitasin korraldada mitmeid kogukonnäiritusi, tuues kokku kümneid peresid.

Täna on see teema minu jaoks veelgi isiklikum. Soovin, et minu laps kasvaks üles tugeva eesti keele ja identiteediga, tunneks Eesti kultuuri ja traditsioone ning oleks püsivalt se-

tud kogukonnaeluga — olgu selleks suvelaagrid, suusapuhkused või muud ühistegevused.

Usun, et just järjepidev kogukondlik side loob kuuluvustunde, hoiab häid sõpru lähedal, hoiab keele elavana ning kasvatab püsivat huvi oma juurte vastu.

Soovin panustada mitte ainult hoidmisele, vaid ka arendamisele, tuues ideid ja tegevusi, mis aitaksid muuta väliseesti kogukonnad tugevamaks, sidusamaks ja tulevikukindlamaks ka järgmiste põlvkondade jaoks.

I would like to join the Council to actively contribute to strengthening the Estonian community abroad and ensuring the continuity of the Estonian language and culture for future generations.

I have already contributed to this mission for six years by teaching at the Estonian School of New York, where I taught history and the Estonian language and helped organize several community events that brought together dozens of families.

This work is also deeply personal to me. I want my child to grow up with a strong Estonian identity, fluent in the language, connected to Estonian culture and traditions, and actively engaged in community life through summer camps, ski trips, and other activities.

I believe consistent community involvement creates a sense of belonging, sustains friendships, keeps the language alive in daily use, and nurtures a lasting interest in one's roots.

I aim not only to preserve these communities, but also to help develop them through ideas and activities that make them stronger, more connected, and future-proof for the next generations.



Mati Otsmaa
1951
Orinda, CA

Mati Otsmaa was born and raised in Los Angeles and has long been active in Estonian organizations. He earned his MBA from USC and began his career on Madison Avenue before relocating to San Francisco, where he helped launch Apple into broadcast media. This experience led to a career in new product innovation. Mati has supported se-

veral Estonian-founded Silicon Valley startups and contributed to Estonian initiatives in Toronto and Tallinn. He serves as board member of two Tallinn-based companies. Mati is married to Silvi Laan; they have two children, Mikk and Kai. He is currently Managing Director of Market Direct.

I believe it is important for West Coast representatives to take active roles in the EANC to advance the freedom, cultural, and community interests of Estonian Americans. Throughout my life, I have supported, participated in, and led numerous Estonian organizations in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York. My involvement includes serving twice as President of the SF Eesti Selts, President of Lääneranniku Eesti Päevad (LEP), four terms as an LEP Board Member, President of EOLL, and currently as an active contributor to the 2026 San Francisco LEP. I also continue to advise Estonian-founded startups on a pro bono basis and provide strategic support to global Estonian initiatives, including Keskus in Toronto. I take pride in helping bring together Estonian-born and American-born communities.

I have attended and actively participated in EANC Annual Meetings in Philadelphia (2018); Washington D.C. (2019); Virtual Meetings (2020, 2021 & 2022); Lakewood (2023); and Chicago (2024).

My role in EANC has primarily been as an active and engaged member, contributing to select special projects. These include supporting the EKKU award presentation at the 2024 Annual Meeting in Chicago and the ERKU public celebration and recognition event in Lakewood in 2023. These efforts have enhanced both the organization and community impact of EANC events.



Silvi Pirn
1965
Cleveland, OH

Olen sündinud Chicago lähedal eesti põgenike perekonnas. Kasvasin üles kodus, kus eesti keel ja kultuur olid igapäevaelu osa ning kus rahvuslikku pärandit hoiti au sees. See tugev side juurtega on suunanud nii minu haridusteed kui ka ühiskondlikku tegevust läbi kogu elu.

Soovin kandideerida, sest

minu elutee on olnud tihedalt seotud eestluse säilitamisega võõrsil. Olles õppinud rahvusvahelist poliitikat ja kesken-dunud Venemaa ning Nõukogude Liidu küsimustele, mõistan sügavalt Eesti geopoliitilist tähendust. Soovin rakendada oma teadmisi ja pikaajalist kogukonnatöö kogemust, et tugevdada eesti võrgustikke Ameerika Ühendriikides ning tagada, et meie hääl ja kultuuripärand püsiks tugevana ka tulevaste põlvkondade jaoks.

Minu suurim praktiline panus oli Chicago Eesti Kooli taas-avamine, kui minu lapsed veel väikesed olid, et siinsetel lastel oleks keele- ja kultuuriõppe võimalused. Olen aastakümneid osalenud aktiivselt kogukonnaüritustel. Kõige olulisemaks pean aga järjepidevust: olen kasvatanud oma lapsed eestimeelseteks ja keeleoskajateks, kes on veetnud aega Eestis ja kannavad meie pärandit edasi. Toetan järjepidevalt eesti üritusi ja rahvuskaaslast, hoides sidet kodumaaga elavana.



Liina Raud
1988
Chicago, IL

Liina Raud, born and raised in Türi, Estonia, began her career in Tallinn as a recognized TV actress and political candidate, running for national and European Parliament as one of Estonia's youngest candidates (SDE). She moved to the United States in 2016 and has since focused on fine art and cultural advocacy. Over the past three years, she has actively supported underrepresented artists and worked to bring Estonian art into Chicago's cultural landscape. She is passionate about contributing to and strengthening the Estonian community in Chicago.

I want to join the Council to strengthen the presence of Estonian culture in the United States through fine art and cultural diplomacy. My work focuses on bringing Estonian artists into broader public conversation and building meaningful connections between Estonia and American audiences. In October 2025, I organized the event AI in Art, Culture, and Education in Chicago in honor of the Estonian President, where we showcased the work of Estonian artist Kadi Tombak. The event brought together voices from art, technology,

and education, highlighting Estonia's innovation and creative identity. I have also collaborated with organizations such as Iglucraft, Silen, and the Embassy of Estonia in Washington, D.C. Through these efforts, I have actively supported Estonian-American initiatives and work.



Anne-Marie Riitsaar
1981
San Francisco, CA

Anne-Marie Riitsaar is an International Security Analyst at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, working at the intersection of nuclear nonproliferation, emerging technologies, and international law. She previously worked as a Safeguards Information Analyst at the International Atomic Energy Agency and, as a national expert, represented Estonia in the United Nations High-Level Group on Fissile Materials. She was awarded the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Silver Decoration of Merit for her contributions to Estonia's successful UN Security Council campaign. She holds a Master's degree in Nonproliferation from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey and is currently pursuing legal studies at UC Law San Francisco.

I seek to join the Council to strengthen Estonia's international positioning by deepening transatlantic ties in technology, education, and AI governance. I serve as a board member of the Estonian Society of San Francisco and principal organizer of the Resilience Forum on the margins of the 2026 West Coast Estonian Days, bringing together policymakers, technologists, and community leaders to explore Estonia's role as a model for resilience in the age of AI.

I aim to advance a Baltic innovation presence in Silicon Valley to strengthen transatlantic economic ties, support startups, and deepen cooperation among Baltic, Nordic, and Ukrainian partners. I believe that by accelerating innovation partnerships and regional alignment, we strengthen our resilience and help safeguard our freedom.



Marju Rink-Abel
1948
Kensington, MD

I was born in Geislingen, Germany, grew up in Wilmington, DE, and live in Kensington, MD. I graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, and have master's degrees from Columbia University and the University of Maryland. I worked for the Government Accountability Office in Washington DC for 34 years in various positions, heading the library, information services, and finally internal auditing. I have been involved in Estonian activities for most of my life.

Sündisin Geislingenis, Saksa maal ja elan praegu Kensingtonis, MD. Töötasin USA riigikontrolli ametis 34 aastat juhtivatel kohtadel. Olen olnud aktiivne eesti-ameerika ühiskonnas enamuse elust.

As a Council member since 1989, I wish to use my experience and contacts to further EANC's work representing Estonian-American interests and maintaining contacts with the government of Estonia in these difficult times. Before joining EANC I served as president of the Washington (DC) Estonian Society. During my tenure at EANC I have participated on various committees, been treasurer, and was president for almost 17 years. I represent EANC on the boards of the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC), the Central and East European Coalition, and the Estonian World Council, where I am vice president. I am on the board of the newspaper Vaba Eesti Sõna. I also served on the Estonian Foreign Ministry's Global Estonian commission.

Soovin jätkata oma tööd ERKÜs. Olin 17 aastat esimees ja varem laekur. ERKÜ töö on praegustel keerulistel aegadel väga tähtis ja tahan oma kogemusi rakendada. Esindan ERKÜ-t mitmes organisatsioonis (nimekirja ülal ing. keeles).

I have attended all annual meetings except for 2022 since 1989. As president from 2006 to 2023, I led and participated in the majority of EANC's work, and represented EANC with other organizations. I participate in the investment and advocacy committees at present, and continue representing EANC with several organizations.

Olen ERKÜ liige alates 1989. Olen osalenud kõikidel aas-

takoosolekutel v.a. 2022. Olin ERKÜ esimees 2006–2023. Juhtisin ja võtsin osa ERKÜ tegevusest ning esindasin ERKÜt teistes organisatsioonides. Praegu osalen investeerimiskomitees ja advocacy komitees ning esindan ERKÜt edasi JBANCis, CEECs ja ÜEKNiS.

Helped edit and publish the EANC's *Estonians in America, 1945-1995*. Managed and improved EANC finances and administrative processes during my time as president.



Ingrid Roosild
1973
Albuquerque, NM

Founder & CEO of Kivi Financial Group, an independent financial planning and investment management firm, since 2002. Series 24 General Securities Principal, Series 7 Securities License, Series 66 Investment Advisory Representative License, Life & Health License. Certified Retirement Counselor (CRC). MBA, University of New Mexico, 1997.

I'd like to continue my work with the Investment Committee to help advance the goal of building an endowment—one that will provide lasting financial support for the programs and initiatives of the Estonian American National Council, that are such an integral part of our Estonian American community and cultural heritage.

I've attended in-person EANC Annual Meetings of 2018-2020, 2024, 2025, virtual meetings of 2021, 2022, and events. As the Investment Committee chair and on the Fundraising Committee, I participate in quarterly meetings.



Tiina Sepp
1956
San Francisco, CA

I was born in Estonia, have a MS degree in Chemical Engineering from TalTech and completed my Ph.D. studies at

Max Planck Institute for Biochemistry in Munich, Germany, followed by a post-doctoral fellowship at UCSF in San Francisco.

I continued my research at UCSF, School of Medicine, as a staff scientist before transferring to Biotech industry, where I worked at multinational companies as well as startups in various technical and business management positions. In 2010 I founded my own consulting company and continued as a senior consulting Partner at private biotech consulting firm.

I'm a board member of Silicon Vikings since 2019.

The mission and goals of EANC ring true to my heart. I appreciate what EANC has done during its 70+ years of existence. I participated in various activities during my two terms and would like to continue to be of service.

I have volunteered at the AABS Conference in Stanford and was part of the team that brought the critically acclaimed exhibit "Estonia through 100 Pairs of Eyes" to the San Francisco World Affairs Center.

My advocacy work during annual Baltic Advocacy Days coordinated by JBANC included in-person visits of Congressional offices on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC in 2019 and virtual meetings in 2020, 2021 and 2022. I have helped to organize meetings with my local representative, (now retired) Nancy Pelosi's office and contacted other representatives as needed.

As an elected EANC delegate since 2018, I have attended all in-person meetings in 2019 and virtually in 2020 and 2021. During my second term I participated in all the meetings except one in Chicago.

I have been a member of EANC Fund Raising and Strategy Committees for two terms, member of the Investment Committee for the last term and am now also part of the new Business Connect Committee. I participate in their ongoing activities & meetings and contribute as needed.



Andres Simonson
1973
West Long Branch, NJ

My name is Andres Simonson and I am an environmental

consultant by day, parent and husband by night. I have a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and a Masters of City and Regional Planning, concentrating in Environmental Planning. I live in West Long Branch, NJ with my wife, three children, and our Havenese, Cosmo. In my free time I enjoy cooking, outdoor activities, writing, and tinkering in the garage.

I have served on the EANC for the past 12 years and on the Board of Director for two terms, and our work is unfinished. I hope to continue working with my teammates to further Estonian causes within the United States. Volunteerism is important to me personally, and because Estonian Americans are relatively few, vital for the cause. I hope to continue with various committee efforts and to help modernize the organization.

Other than serving on the EANC, I periodically write for Estonian World, an online English language webzine focusing on global Estonian issues. I am a member of the Lakewood Estonian Association and a frequent speaker at events. My children are Järve-metsa campers and enthusiasts. I have travelled with my family to Eesti twice in the past four years, to show them why Estonian Americans hold so dearly to their roots. But my most significant qualification might be that I enthusiastically eat verivorst with a dollop of lingonberry jam on Christmas Eve.

I have attended all annual meetings throughout my 12-year tenure and have frequently led discussions, participated on panels, and emceed gala events.

I served on the EANC Board during my first and third Council tenures. At various times, I have led or participated with the Strategy Committee, the Communications Committee, the Youth Committee, and the Annual Event Planning Committee. A special project I hope to rekindle and participate with the history of the EANC project.



Alvar Soosaar
1974
Narberth, PA

Volunteer:

- Honorary Consul Estonia (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and

Delaware)

- Estonian Students Fund (aka Eesti Üliõpilaste Toetusfond USAs): Board member, investment committee member, and scholarship reader, 2012-present

- ERKÜ (member and former board), 2014-present

- Rotalia Fond Eestis, US delegate, 2015-present

Former:

- NY Estonian School, teacher

- NY Estonian House (NY Estonian Educational Association), board member

Work:

- Fjond Ventures (investment in Nordic and Baltic companies), Managing Partner

- Advisor to multiple Estonian companies and investment funds

- Estonian Embassy in Washington/Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Director of US Investment and Trade, 2020-2023

- RAIT Financial Trust, Former portfolio manager

Education:

- BA, University of Virginia

- MBA, University of Oxford (UK)

I would be honored to continue my service with EANC (ERKÜ), where I currently serve on the Investment, Business Connect, and Recruitment committees, and previously also served on the Board, the Strategy committee, the mentorship group, and as delegate to ÜEKN (aka Estonian World Council). ERKÜ has a crucial role as the representative voice of Estonian-Americans in many ways:

- to the federal and state governments (particularly via JBANC)

- to other ethnic organizations in the US (eg. other Baltic-American groups)

- to the Estonian government

- to other countries' Estonian communities either directly or via ÜEKN, et al.

I want to enhance the "Business Connect" committee to strengthen Estonian-American business relations. We can support Estonian-American businesses, provide mentorship/internship opportunities for young Estonian-Americans (here and in Estonia), strengthen networking and investment opportunities for Estonian companies (bringing new Estonians into our community), and work with Baltic and Nordic business organizations to further commercial ties with Northern Europe.

I have attended all but three annual meetings in 14 years on the Council, and all but two of the monthly meetings when I

was serving on the Board.

I continue to serve on the Investment Committee (quarterly meetings plus periodic meetings with the external investment manager) and have just started with the Business Connect committee. I have advocated for some time for EANC to at least temporarily fill the role of an Estonian-American chamber of commerce, resulting in the business connect committee. I helped this group connect a US investor to both US and Estonian government officials and several investment opportunities in Estonia. As more opportunities to help arise, I expect this committee's activity to grow, hopefully spawning a new standalone chamber.



Eric Suuberg
1951
Barrington, RI

Eric Suuberg sündis New Yorgis nn vana-eestlaste perekonas (kes olid juba ümber asunud New Yorki enne Teist maailmasõda). Kõrghariduse sai ta Massachusettsi Tehnoloogiainstituudis (MIT) 1976. a. majanduses magistrikraadi ja 1978. a. keemiainseneri doktori kraadi. Suuberg on kütusekeemia ja keskkonnakaitse eriteadlane ja on töötanud külalisprofessorina Tallinna Tehnikaülikoolis (TTÜs). Ta on tihedates sidemetes TTÜ keemiateadlastega ja TTÜ audoktor 2007. aastast. Viimased kaheksa aastat on töötanud Vaba Eesti Sõna väljaandva Nordic Press, Inc. (ja selle õigusjärglase mittetulundusühingu The Nordic Press Estonian-American Publisher, Inc.) presidendina.

Olen eluaeg näinud eestlust kohustusena, mis pärineb vanavanematelt ja vanavanematelt. Nende tegevuste ja saavutuste üle olen uhke ja see on ka põhjus, miks minul on huvi edasi kanda sama vaimu. Tänu selle tagapõhjale on mul teada, millised olid USA eestlaste suhted Kodu-Eestiga rahu ajal nagu nüüdki. On selge, et on ülimalt kasulik, kui Eesti on siin maal tuntud ja hästi esindatud, mitte ainult meie ametlike diplomaatide poolt, aga ka igapäevases elus. Et oleks siin vastas rahvas ja organisatsioonid, mis võtavad lahkelt vastu need, kes Eestist siia tulevad kas pikemaks või lühemaks ajaks, ja ka kes on kursis sellega, mis toimub Eestis, et seda seletada meie USA ringkonnale.

Olen ERKÜ-s osalenud üle 27 aasta eri rollides liikmest juhatuse liikmeni ja asepresidendi.

Varem olen olnud mitu kord juhatuse liige ja aastatel 2014-2018 asepresident. Hetkel, kuna olen Vaba Eesti Sõna (s.o. The Nordic Press Estonian-American Publisher, Inc.) esimees, astusin ERKÜ juhatuse rollidest tagasi.



Tarmo Tari
2003

Chelmsford, MA

I am a Sales Development Representative at MEDITECH based in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. I recently graduated from Wheaton College with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing, where I was also a member of the basketball team. I have been actively involved in the Boston Estonian Society for several years and am fluent in both Estonian and English. I come from an Estonian family, with both of my parents having an Estonian background, and my brother currently living in Tartu. I was also recently selected as a youth delegate to attend the Estonian World Council Conference in Tallinn.

As a young Estonian American, I recently had the privilege of attending the plenary sessions of the Estonian World Council and the Global Estonian Cooperation Commission in Tallinn, which deepened my connection to my heritage and community. I have been actively involved in both the Connecticut Estonian Society and the Boston Estonian Society from a young age. Through these organizations, I learned the Estonian language, strengthened ties with family in Estonia, and developed an appreciation for my heritage and the sacrifices my grandparents made during the Great Migration. I want to join the Estonian American National Council to continue supporting and promoting Estonian culture on a broader scale. I am eager to contribute to preserving and advancing the interests of Estonian Americans.



Dr Alan Tomson, Ed.D

1953

Davis, West Virginia

Today I am in my fifth year as a mayor. In the beginning, after graduating from West Point, I served 32 years in the U.S. Army, beginning as an infantry paratrooper, advancing into Special Operations, and concluding in the intelligence community. I retired as a Colonel and later served as a Senior Executive at a level equivalent to a Major General, focusing on financial management and transformation within Army intelligence. I lead from the front, building teams grounded in shared mission, accountability, and excellence. I am known for cutting through complexity to deliver practical, effective solutions.

I am committed to strengthening the visibility and representation of Estonian Americans within the broader American community while deepening engagement within our own. I currently serve as President of the Washington Estonian Society, now in my fourth year, where I have worked to expand programs, build community connections, and preserve our cultural heritage.

My career in the military, including assignments in remote locations around the world, has at times limited my participation in Estonian activities, but it has also strengthened my leadership and global perspective.

In January 1992, I had the unique privilege to support Estonia's newly restored independence by assisting its emerging government for four months. My work included collaboration with the National Standards Board, Ministry of Industry and Energy, Estonian Chamber of Commerce, and military forces.

My lifelong commitment began in youth through Estonian Scouts, school, church, and community programs, forming the foundation of my continued service.



Marianne Torm

1991

Arlington, VA

Born and raised in Estonia, Marianne graduated from the University of Tartu with a B.A. in Theology in 2014. She moved to Austin, Texas in 2015, and after a couple of years in the Lone Star State, she found herself in Washington, D.C., which has been her home ever since.

During her ten years in the United States, she has built a successful career working in legal and operational roles across local government and bootstrapped startups, before finally landing in defense tech as a seasoned deal operations lead.

Working in defense tech in Washington, D.C. has given me a front-row seat to how policy, funding, and technology intersect to determine the fate of small nations on the front lines of Europe. That proximity has only deepened my sense of responsibility to act, not just observe. This year, I joined JBANC on the Hill to advocate for Baltic defense funding and for continued U.S. commitment to the region. It was a formative experience that made clear how much the Estonian American voice matters in Washington.

On a personal level, I have always been intentional about keeping Estonian culture alive in my daily life. Whether that's visiting our Embassy for the EU Open House or celebrating Estonian holidays with friends and loved ones and helping those around me understand our history and what makes Estonia so singular.



Lisa Trei

1959

Citrus Heights, CA

I am a third-generation Estonian-American. In 1990, I moved to Estonia to teach journalism at Tartu University and report for newspapers. I compiled Estonia's first handbook on investigative journalism and covered the exciting, chaotic years of Baltic independence during the

1990s. In 1996, my Estonian husband and I moved to California and raised three children. I worked in communications at Stanford for 26 years. After retiring in 2023, I moved back to Estonia to pursue a master's in Estonian Studies at Tallinn University. I joined Vabamu Museum as a Fulbright Specialist and have developed exhibitions about the Estonian refugees who fled from Sweden across the Atlantic in the 1940s, and about my grandparents as members of the pre-WWII "old Estonian" community in New York City.

I want to help support Estonia by participating in the advocacy work of the EANC. During my graduate studies I have lived in Estonia, which has given me a great opportunity to understand first-hand the challenges and opportunities facing the country today. National security is always top of mind, especially in the current geopolitical climate regarding Russia.

I am a member of the Estonian Society of San Francisco and helped found the Estonian Community Choir of San Francisco that participated in the 2019 laulupidu. In Estonia, I have developed two exhibitions about Estonian-Americans for Vabamu Museum and organized "põlvkondade kohtumised" in Tallinn and Pärnu that brought together väliseestlased and high school students for the 80th anniversary of the Suurpõgenemine.

I am a current EANC member. While living in Estonia, I have participated in activities with other EANC members such as ESTO 2025 in Narva and Tallinn, the ÜEKN rahvuskongress in Tallinn, and the 2025 laulupidu. While living in California, I participated in the virtual Baltic Advocacy Days organized by the American Latvian Association. Due to my graduate schedule at Tallinn University I have followed online but not been able to participate in physical annual meetings of the EANC.

Since becoming a member of the EANC, I have served on the fundraising committee.

As a consultant at Vabamu and a graduate student at Tallinn University, I have been actively researching 20th-century Estonian-American history. I have been a board member of the Estonian Society of San Francisco since 2018. In May 2024, to help build community and promote the Estonian Society of San Francisco, I jointly organized a Bay to Breakers team. About 25 people wearing Estonian society t-shirts specially designed for the event, walked across San Francisco during this iconic annual event.

I am or have presented my exhibition "Free Winds," about Baltic refugees who fled in small boats from Sweden across the Atlantic in the late 1940s, at meetings in England, Estonia, Sweden, Finland, and California.



Ilmar Vanderer

1968

Montclair, NJ

Advocate and tireless champion of Estonia and all things Estonian. Dedicated supporter of Estonian community organizations. Founder of U.S.-Baltic business consultancy featured in FORBES.

Outstanding NYEHS Eesti Kooli graduate with B.A. in political science, film, and journalism from Duke University, followed by advanced studies in International Trade and Finance at NYU School of Professional Studies. Award-winning communications strategist whose work has advanced missions of major museums, leading libraries, prolific political campaigns, and difference-making documentary films. Currently a journalist and content producer, managing digital news platform and specializing in transforming complex information into compelling stories that engage and inform audiences.

Supported congressional visits and youth participation at JBANC conferences. Supported filmmakers Jim and Maureen Tusty in fundraising and media relations for Singing Revolution documentary. My fundraising and media outreach leadership expanded the film's reach and advanced awareness of Estonia's story.

Co-founded consultancy to aid post-Soviet economic redevelopment in Estonia through trade, tourism board, and privatization.

Olen olnud ERKÜ Esinduskogu liige alates 1994. a. ja ERKÜ juhatuse liige 2002. a. – 2014. a. siis uuesti alates 2022. a. I attended numerous annual meetings throughout this time, and virtual meetings in 2020, 2021, and 2022. In addition to attending monthly EANC board meetings, I also have participated in numerous committee meetings.

In 2021, served as Fundraising Committee chair; EANC's first virtual auction, "ESTO Raiser," raised \$15,000.00.

In 2022, supported EANC's Ukraine advocacy efforts by participating in JBANC's call for U.S. cities to suspend Russian Sister City ties, successfully lobbying leaders in Montclair, NJ to terminate ties with Sister City Cherepovets, Russia on April 5, 2022.

Most recently have served on EANC Advocacy and Grants committees.

Register to vote in EANC elections at
<https://www.estosite.org/teataja-sign-up/>

Registreerige hääletamiseks aadressil
<https://www.estosite.org/teataja-sign-up/>

The voting period begins on June 25, and concludes on August 9, 2026
Valimiste periood algab 25. juunil ja kestab kuni 9. augustini 2026