

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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**GUEST LIST FOR THE FIRST LADY'S BOX  
AT THE 2007 STATE OF THE UNION**

**Julie Aigner-Clark, Founder, The Baby Einstein Company; Founder, The Safe Side (Centennial, Colorado)**

Julie Aigner-Clark, a homemaker and classroom teacher, founded The Baby Einstein Company in 1997, to give her own child exposure to the arts. Julie used personal savings to launch Baby Einstein, and she operated the company for its first three years from her home. In November 2001, Julie sold The Baby Einstein Company to spend more time with her children. Two years later, Julie partnered with John Walsh of America's Most Wanted and launched *The Safe Side*, an original video series that teaches young children to make good choices in potentially dangerous situations, which generates funds for The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. On January 29, Julie will announce *The Safe Side* safety program's implementation in all Texas public schools, in part a result of her donation of an entire curriculum kit to more than 1,000 school districts statewide. In 2004, at the age of 37, Julie became a breast cancer survivor. She and her husband, Bill, have two daughters, Aspen (age 12) and Sierra (age 9). Julie continues to teach literature to middle school students.

**Aspen Clark, Daughter of Julie Aigner-Clark (Centennial, Colorado)**

**Wesley Autrey, Construction Worker (New York, New York)**

Wesley Autrey, a 50-year-old construction worker and Navy veteran, has earned uninvited fame as the Harlem superhero. The New York resident and Vietnam veteran was awarded the Bronze Medallion on January 4, 2007, by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg for jumping onto the tracks to save a man who had fallen from a seizure in a New York City subway station. The Bronze Medallion is New York's highest civilian award. Mr. Autrey has two daughters, Shuqui (age 6) and Syshe (age 4), who both witnessed his act.

**Shuqui Autrey, Daughter of Wesley Autrey (New York, New York)**

**Syshe Autrey, Daughter of Wesley Autrey (New York, New York)**

**Technical Sergeant Michelle Barefield, USAF (Goldsboro, North Carolina)**

Technical Sergeant Michelle Barefield served in Iraq from March to September 2006. While assigned to Baghdad International Airport, Technical Sergeant Barefield survived three IED attacks, provided first-aid to a wounded comrade, and successfully repulsed a coordinated enemy small arms attack with deadly accurate return fire from her M-16. She also led 80 Explosive Ordnance Disposal emergency response missions. Technical Sergeant Barefield has been awarded the Bronze Star. She and her husband Jeffrey have two daughters, Amanda (age 13) and Rachel (age 6).

**Pamela Battle, Parent, D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Students (Washington, D.C.)**

Pamela Battle, a homemaker, was among the first low-income parents to apply for scholarships under the D.C. School Choice Incentive Program, the Nation's first (and only) federally funded voucher program, enacted in 2004. Her sons, ages 11 and 15, have received scholarships for all three years of the program's existence. Ms. Battle applied for the scholarships so that her sons could escape the unsafe and unchallenging environment in their public schools. She is so pleased with the program that she hosts gatherings in her home to educate other low-income parents and encourage them to apply.

**Father Michael Boland, President and CEO, Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Chicago (Chicago, Illinois)**

Father Michael Boland and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago represent the importance of government partnerships with effective faith-based and community organizations. In 1998, Congress authorized the Veterans Affairs Loan Guarantee Program for Transitional Multifamily Housing to reduce the number of homeless veterans living in our country. The St. Leo Residence, designed and built by Catholic Charities of Chicago, is the first completed development in this loan guarantee pilot program. St. Leo's is a multi-agency holistic model of care for veterans. St. Leo Residence was opened last week and is housing 141 veterans. In addition to the residence, which has studio apartments for transitional housing, the site will include a Department of Labor job training office, a community health center, and an adjacent home for disabled veterans.

**Ambassador Nancy Brinker, Founder, Susan G. Komen for the Cure (Palm Beach, Florida)**

Ambassador Nancy Brinker established the Susan G. Komen for the Cure in 1982 to honor the memory of her sister, Susan, whom she lost to breast cancer in 1980. The Race for the Cure was created the following year and is now the largest series of 5K runs/fitness walks in the world. This year the Komen Foundation and its 110 worldwide affiliates will be celebrating 25 years of patient advocacy, building awareness and investing millions of dollars in breast cancer research, education, screening, and treatment. From 2001 to 2003, Ambassador Brinker served as the United States Ambassador to Hungary, where she notably helped raise awareness about breast cancer among Hungarian women by leading a march over the historic Chain Bridge in Budapest. The bridge was illuminated in pink for the occasion.

**Craig Cuccia, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Construction Case Manager, Café Reconcile (New Orleans, Louisiana)**

Craig Cuccia serves as Co-Founder and Executive Director of Reconcile New Orleans, a non-profit organization that enables at-risk youth to learn job and life skills and break the cycle of poverty, crime, and violence. Café Reconcile, the heart of the Reconcile New Orleans program, provides culinary training to young people, and enables them to run a small café. Following Hurricane Katrina, Café Reconcile worked quickly to reopen its doors to serve warm, nurturing mid-day meals to first-responders, construction crews, local businesses, and the returning New Orleans' citizens. Reconcile New Orleans also expanded its work to include construction training to rebuild its Central City neighborhood. Reconcile New Orleans remains true to its mission of creating jobs and supporting economic development through entrepreneurship and community-based outreach programs. Mr. Cuccia manages all Reconcile New Orleans programs and services, employees, finances and facilities, and spearheads fundraising efforts.

**Yeoman First Class, Corey Firman, USN (Alexandria, Virginia)**

Petty Officer First Class Corey Firman enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1999, where his service included Executive Division Officer, Legal Officer, Ship's Secretary, and other supervisory roles aboard the USS Mustin. In 2004, Petty Officer Firman qualified for Enlisted Surface Warfare and deployed to Iraq as a Leading Noncommissioned Officer, Awards Clerk, and Administration Assistant to the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Baghdad. He volunteered to participate in over 30 convoys and was subsequently subjected to over 180 incidents of hostile fire. Petty Officer Firman is now serving in the Office of the Secretary of the Navy as the Nominations Yeoman for the White House and Washington D.C. Placement, where he has been nominated for the Senior Sailor of the Quarter for the Secretary of the Navy. Petty Officer Firman has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, and the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal. He is married to Natacha Firman.

**Shannon Hickey, Founder, Mychal's Message (Lancaster, Pennsylvania)**

At the age of 11, Shannon Hickey started a non-profit organization to further the legacy of her favorite priest - Father Mychal Judge, a chaplain for the New York Fire Department who was killed on September 11, 2001, when he was hit by debris from the World Trade Center. Mychal's Message is dedicated to continuing the work of Father Judge by meeting the needs of the homeless and sharing his message of unconditional love with others. Mychal's Message began in January 2002, when Shannon was marking the 11th anniversary of her life-saving liver transplant when she was a baby. In lieu of gifts on her birthday she asked for socks for the homeless. "I'll give them away in memory of Father Mychal," she told her family. To date Mychal's Message has collected and distributed over 100,000 new items to the homeless and poor. Shannon is currently in 11th grade at Lancaster Catholic High School in Pennsylvania.

**Dr. Nancy Ho, Senior Research Scientist and Group Leader of Molecular Genetics Group, Laboratory of Renewable Resources Engineering, Purdue University (West Lafayette, Indiana)**

Dr. Nancy Ho has studied cellulosic biomass for over 25 years, and she has received numerous honors for her work on the genetic engineering of the Saccharomyces yeast to convert all sugars from cellulosic biomass to ethanol. She is Founder and Group Leader of the Molecular Genetics Group in the Laboratory of Renewable Resources Engineering at Purdue University. In March 2006, she established Green Tech America for facilitating the development of the cellulosic ethanol industry in the United States.

**Dan Jones, Service Engineer, Software To Go (Kansas City, Missouri)**

Dan Jones is a Service Engineer at Software To Go, a small, St. Louis-area technology firm specializing in full-service tech solutions for small businesses. Software to Go does not provide health insurance for its three full-time employees. When Dan started there, he purchased health coverage in the non-group market, but when his out-of-pocket premium costs rose to over \$4,800 per-year, he decided to forego coverage and has been without it since then. Based on his stated income level of “\$600 per week,” Dan would save \$2,272.50 in taxes under the President Bush’s proposal if he purchased a qualified plan.

**Suzanne Lewis, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park (Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming)**

In February 2002, Suzanne Lewis began her duties as the superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. She manages more than 2.2 million acres, a staff of 400, and has an annual base budget of more than \$30 million. Before coming to Yellowstone, Suzanne was superintendent at Glacier National Park. Trained as an historian, Ms. Lewis was originally a park interpreter before she moved into management.

**Sergeant Aubrey McDade, Jr., USMC (Parris Island, South Carolina)**

Sergeant Aubrey McDade served in Iraq from March 2003 to October 2003. He returned for his second tour in June 2004 through February 2005. While in Iraq, Sergeant McDade was a machine gun squad leader with the 1st Marine Division and was based in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. At age 25, he is now a drill instructor with the 1st Recruit Training Battalion at Parris Island. For his heroic actions in Iraq, Sergeant McDade received the Navy Cross medal, the second highest medal to be awarded by the Department of the Navy. Sergeant McDade enlisted in the Marine Corps in November 1999.

**Al Meginniss, Director, Behavior Health Service Center, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (Algonquin, Illinois)**

Al Meginniss works for the Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, a faith-based organization. Facing growing health insurance costs, the organization decided to switch from a traditional health plan to a high deductible health plan with Health Savings Accounts (HSA) as a cost-saving measure. Mr. Meginniss has been extremely satisfied with his HSA, which has resulted in \$2400 in savings for his family. He is also happy with his HSA because it provides a fund for future illness and allows his company to provide a higher level of insurance than would otherwise be possible.

**Alejandro Monteverde, Writer and Director, Metanoia Films (Los Angeles, California)**

Alejandro Monteverde was born in Tampico, Mexico, and came to the United States on a student visa for his last year of high school in Texas. Mr. Monteverde wanted more than anything to direct and produce films and applied to the University of Texas Film School. He was not accepted the first two times he applied, but he was accepted into the University of Texas on his third try. During his time in college, Mr. Monteverde worked hard to learn everything about film production and English, and even produced short films with his own rent money. His first film, "Bella," took top prize at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival by winning the high-coveted People's Choice Award. After Mr. Monteverde became a permanent resident, he applied for citizenship and became a citizen in 2006. He is married to former Miss USA and current actress, Ali Landry.

**Dikembe Mutombo, Center, Houston Rockets (Houston, Texas)**

Dikembe Mutombo is a recently naturalized NBA All-Star dedicated to improving the lives of others. After studying to further his interest in bringing a medical practice back to his native Democratic Republic of the Congo at Georgetown University, he was recruited onto the basketball team and has been playing ever since. Currently playing for the Houston Rockets, he spends his off-season working as an NBA ambassador for African causes. Mutombo's foundation has funded a large portion of a \$27 million dollar hospital opening in Kinshasa, which will be the first new hospital in the Congo in 40 years.

**Duncan Smith, Principal, Frankford Elementary School (Frankford, Delaware)**

Duncan Smith is in his second year as Principal of Frankford Elementary School, a small, rural school whose student body is approximately 30 percent African American and 40 percent Hispanic; 80 percent of the students are low-income. His school was awarded the "Dispelling the Myth" award last year by the non-partisan Education Trust for its remarkable progress in closing the achievement gap among its students. In Spring 2005, 100 percent of the school's students in grades three and five met state standards in reading; 95 percent met the standards in math. Mr. Smith credits the No Child Left Behind Act with setting high expectations for students and placing a premium on data and results, which has helped Frankford Elementary staff prioritize their efforts to improve student achievement.

**Boatswains Mate Nathan Thomas, Petty Officer Second Class, USCG (Hollywood, Florida)**

Since joining the military in August 2001, Boatswains Mate Nathan Thomas has conducted back-to-back USCG deployments to Iraq, spending a total of seven consecutive months in the Persian Gulf supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006. While deployed to U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Forces Southwest Asia, Bahrain, and Kuwait, he served as a primary maritime boarding officer, providing around the clock response capability in the North Arabian Gulf, protecting the two major Iraqi offshore oil terminals from potential terrorist attacks. BM2 Thomas designed a law enforcement tactics video and lesson plans to train military personnel on proper tactics, mission planning, close quarters combat, and appropriate use of force. He specifically used these resources in conducting training for over 500 foreign military servicemen including Marines and Navy personnel from Iraq and Kuwait. In addition, BM2 Thomas trained 80 U.S. Coast Guard and 60 U.S. Navy members deployed to the Persian Gulf in high-risk non-

compliant boarding procedures, thereby improving the capabilities and readiness of Coalition forces.

**Admiral Tim Ziemer, Coordinator, President's Malaria Initiative (Springfield, Virginia)**

Admiral Tim Ziemer was appointed in June 2006 to lead the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), where he directs efforts to create and expand malaria control programs to achieve the PMI goals of reducing malaria-related deaths by 50 percent in 15 target nations in Africa. He previously served as Executive Director of World Relief, which provides disaster response, community development, child/maternal health, HIV/AIDS, agricultural assistance, and micro-credit programs in over 30 countries. Admiral Ziemer retired from the U.S. Navy, where his last duty assignment was as Commander of the Navy's Mid-Atlantic Region, responsible for the 11 bases providing support to the Naval fleet in Norfolk area.

**Sergeant Tommy Rieman, USA**

Sergeant Tommy Rieman was a teenager pumping gas in Independence, Kentucky, when he enlisted in the United States Army. In December 2003, he was on a reconnaissance mission in Iraq when his team came under heavy enemy fire. From his Humvee, Sergeant Rieman returned fire – and used his body as a shield to protect his gunner. He was shot in the chest and arm, and received shrapnel wounds to his legs – yet he refused medical attention, and stayed in the fight. He helped to repel a second attack, firing grenades at the enemy's position until their guns went silent. For his exceptional courage, Sergeant Rieman was awarded the Silver Star.

**Ernie Allen, President and CEO, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (McLean, Virginia)**

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's mission is to help prevent child abduction and sexual exploitation; help find missing children; and assist victims of child abduction and sexual exploitation, their families, and the professionals who serve them. Ernie Allen came to the Center following public service in his home state of Kentucky, where he was Chief Administrative Officer of Jefferson County, Director of Public Health & Safety for the City of Louisville, and Director of the Louisville-Jefferson County Crime Commission. He is an attorney and a teacher, having held faculty positions at the University of Louisville, University of Kentucky, and Indiana University.

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