

# Inspiring Future Leaders: A Spotlight on the John Russell Paslaqua Intern Seminar Series

## Kenneth Paslaqua provides five more years of funding

A cornerstone of Cato’s mission is mentoring, motivating, and inspiring the brightest future leaders for liberty through a suite of student programs, such as the Cato Internship Program. A core component of a Cato internship—and one most often cited by former interns as transformative in deepening their knowledge and developing their views—is the John Russell Paslaqua Intern Seminar Series, which bears the name of a former intern who passed away in 2017, just two years after completing the program.

The John Russell Paslaqua Intern Seminar Series was established in 2019 by John’s father, Kenneth Paslaqua, to honor his son’s legacy. Encouraged by the success of the series in inspiring and preparing hundreds of young libertarians to embark on their careers—just as the Cato internship had for John—Kenneth is providing five more years of funding.

“We are pleased to partner with Cato to continue funding this outstanding educational series of seminars for the Institute’s interns and staff. As a continuing tribute to our son, John Russell Paslaqua, the seminar series will help to advance free, open, and civil societies in which individual liberty, limited government, free markets, and peace are key goals.”

John’s experience as a Cato intern deepened his passion for liberty, big ideas, and constitutional law—passions which he honed into professional skills while working with Cato’s Center for Constitutional Studies during his internship in 2015. Thanks to Kenneth’s generosity, nearly 430 young students had the opportunity

to follow in John’s footsteps since 2019, participating in research tutorials, professional development workshops, and deep-dive lectures on the philosophical underpinnings of libertarianism.

The seminar series curriculum covers topics ranging from public policy, economics, history, and political philosophy to writing and speaking skills, presented by Cato’s senior staff across more than 40 sessions per seminar series. Because of the unique combination of educational lectures, professional opportunities, and skills development offered through a Cato internship, the program is highly competitive, with an acceptance rate on par with some of the most selective U.S. universities.

“It was the best internship I have ever had the privilege to do. The quality of the seminars was incredible—many exceeded the quality of my college lectures,” said Madison Breshears, an associate at Davis Wright Tremaine LLP.

Former Cato interns can be found in leadership positions in business, government, academia, and media, taking the experience and skills they honed at “Global Liberty HQ” with them. A consistent refrain among these intern alumni is the impact that the intern seminars had on them.

“Speaking to Cato’s scholars and soaking in the John Russell Paslaqua Intern Seminar Series helped me refine the areas of public interest law that I’d like to advocate in and practice after attending law school. I feel even more prepared to take on egregious infringements on our rights,” said Cameron Westbrook, an undergraduate student studying criminal justice at Louisiana State University of Alexandria. ■

