

Meet the Next Generation: Addison Hosner

By Joshua Hardman

The chief operating officer of Young Voices reflects on his time as a Cato intern.



One of the last things David Boaz imparted was this: “As young people, it’s your job to pick up the torch that Ayn Rand, Isabel Paterson, and Rose Wilder Lane picked up and passed on to people like Milton Friedman.” Addison Hosner, the chief operating officer of Young Voices, is one of the many former Cato interns who are not just picking up that torch but kindling many more.

Hosner has helped grow Young Voices, a nonprofit organization that trains people aged 18–35 on how to get their writing published in newspapers. Many of these young writers wish to be journalists or advance liberty in other ways—and many were once Cato interns. Several Cato scholars sit on the Young Voices board, including Marian L. Tupy, founder and editor of HumanProgress.org.

Cato has long been a top draw for college-aged free thinkers who are tired of polarization and policymaking that looks only to the next 4 years rather than the next 40. And it’s not just graduates of elite schools who get their start at the Institute.

“They could have chosen anybody from nearby Georgetown to work with scholars like Clark Neily [senior vice president for legal studies],” Hosner says. At the time of his Cato internship, Hosner was a law student at Creighton University in Nebraska. “They took a chance on me, and it was an incredible validation. But I had to perform. All my legal research for Cato’s scholars had





to be an A+ effort. That professional growth was very important for me.”

At Cato.org, you can find a 2017 piece from Ilya Shapiro, a former director of the Robert A. Levy Center for Constitutional Studies, crediting Hosner with important work on arcane policies regarding the transportation of marijuana as well as research about marijuana rescheduling and the opioid crisis.

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For five years before joining Young Voices, Hosner practiced family law in his home state of Florida. The lessons he drew were not confined to the minutiae of divorce proceedings.

“I was able to get people that were so far apart from one another to come together for an agreement,” Hosner recalls. “It comes down to reframing issues for people to help them understand each other—it’s empathy, really. It also got me thinking about what I can do to bridge our partisan divides.”

Especially in his capacity as chief operating officer of Young Voices and a published writer, Hosner takes any opportunity he can to encourage people not to be pulled into the binary red-versus-blue mindset that the two-party system encourages. His own upbringing encouraged

this open-minded approach: His father listens to conservative radio, and his mother is a John F. Kennedy-type Democrat.

He believes changing minds through dialogue is as doable as ever: “I think young people are antagonized by the idea of being put into boxes, and that’s often where I start from. They want to think freely, which is what we are all about. In my experience, many people are on board with the ideas Cato is communicating; they just don’t fully realize it yet.”

Hosner is particularly passionate about holding government agents accountable. To do that, we must dissolve or vastly reform the judicial doctrine of qualified immunity, he says. Unfortunately, qualified immunity, invented by the Supreme Court in the 1960s, prevents law enforcement agents from being held accountable under the law when they violate citizens’ rights. He’s spoken frequently at events such as FreedomFest in Las Vegas and has explained the merits of a more limited government in publications such as *The Hill*, the *American Spectator*, and the *Orange County Register*.

He also plans to run for office someday, inspired by the legacy of David Boaz and the ideas he so tirelessly promoted.

“I still think back to the time I drove from Nebraska to Florida after law school, and I listened to *The Libertarian Mind* on audiobook the whole way. [Boaz’s] passing is a loss for our movement, but those who are coming next should feel inspired to follow his lead, take the torch, and keep it moving.” ♦

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joshua Hardman is a development communications manager and contributing writer for *Free Society*. In each capacity he is a storyteller, helping keep Cato’s Sponsors and friends up to date on Cato’s important work.