Panelist Biographies

Mr. Tom Jackman, Reporter, Washington Post

Tom Jackman has been a Metro reporter at The Washington Post since 1998, first covering police and courts issues, and then since 2011 covering all of Northern Virginia. He previously worked for 14 years as a police and courts reporter at The Kansas City Star, where he wrote a best-selling book about a serial killer and hosted a television talk show. At The Post, he has covered terrorism issues after 9/11, the D.C. sniper case, and was part of the team of reporters who won the Pulitzer Prize for The Post’s coverage of the Virginia Tech shootings.

Ms. Lisa Desjardins, Freelance political reporter, Former Capitol Hill Correspondent, CNNRadio

Lisa Desjardins is currently a freelance journalist after covering Capitol Hill and politics for nine years for CNN. Her work included coverage of the four presidential elections, multiple hurricanes and issues from the war in Iraq to the U.S. deficit. Previous to working at CNN, Desjardins worked for the Associated Press in Washington and as a State House and political reporter in South Carolina. Desjardins followed the Confederate flag debate in South Carolina and broke the news of a final compromise. Desjardins also covered the Republican presidential primary between then Texas Governor George W. Bush and Sen. John McCain. Desjardins speaks Russian and lived in Russia for two years, spending most of her time in St. Petersburg. She holds a bachelor of economics degree from the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA and is the author of “Zombie Economics: A Guide to Personal Finance”.

Dr. Solon Simmons, Interim Vice President, Office for Global Strategy, Associate Professor, S-CAR

Dr. Solon Simmons is the Interim Vice President for Global Strategy and Associate Professor of Conflict Analysis at George Mason University. A professional sociologist who specializes in American politics, Solon has taught a wide array of classes at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) including: conflict theory; global conflict; culture, identity and conflict; class inequality and conflict; and conflict in America. Solon holds a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and received his undergraduate degree in the History of Science from the University of Chicago. His publications include “The Eclipse of Equality: Arguing America” on Meet the Press and “Professors and their Politics”, co-authored with Neil Gross. He also makes frequent appearances on radio, television, and in print media, discussing issues of politics and group conflict, and his work has been discussed on most of the major national news outlets, including The New York Times, The Washington Post, Good Morning America, National Public Radio, and Meet the Press.