



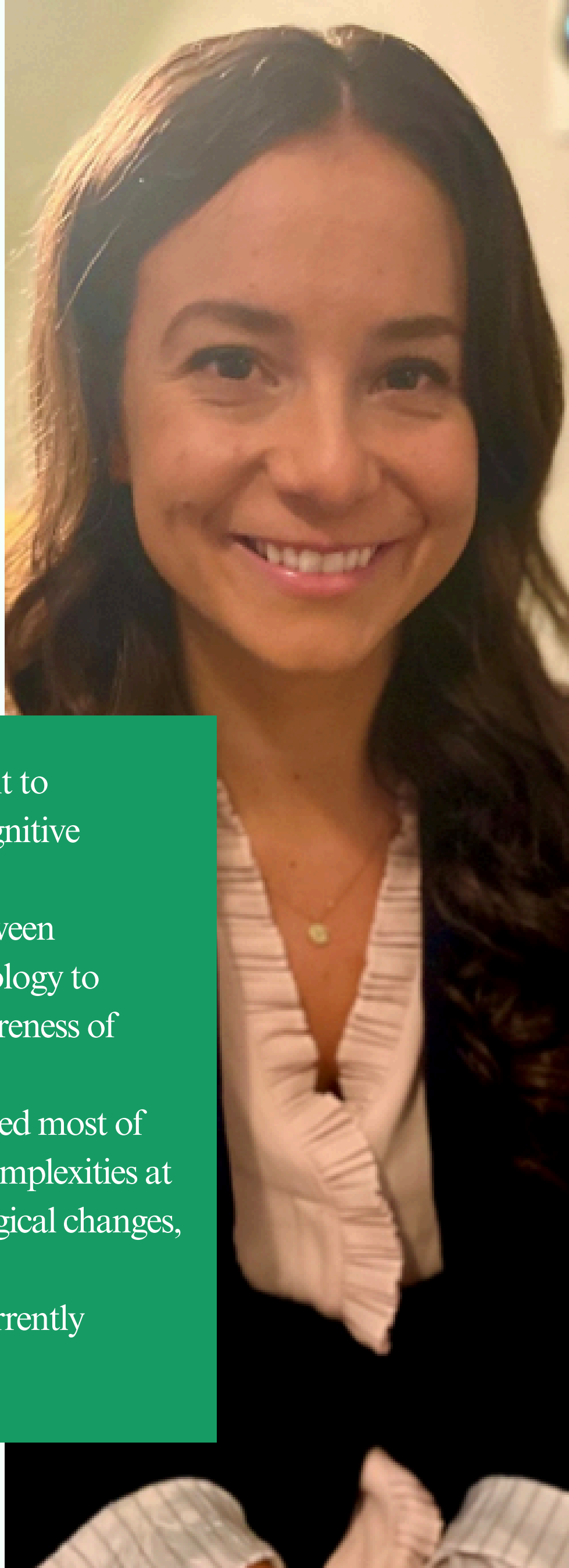
Hello COPGTP Members & future Geropsychologists

We would like to formally
introduce our 2025 officers

Rachel Wallace

CHAIR

- **Gero area of interest:** Aging with/adjustment to disability, aging with brain injury, neurocognitive disorders, end-of-life issues.
- **Goals for CoPGTP:** Build connections between generalist/specialty training and geropsychology to promote improved understanding and awareness of aging-related issues.
- **Initial Interest in Geropsychology:** I completed most of my training in VA and was drawn to the complexities at the intersection of aging, physical/psychological changes, and different identities.
- **Fun Fact:** I'm a big cross-sticher and am currently stitching a portrait of my dog, Crouton.



Patricia M. Bamonti

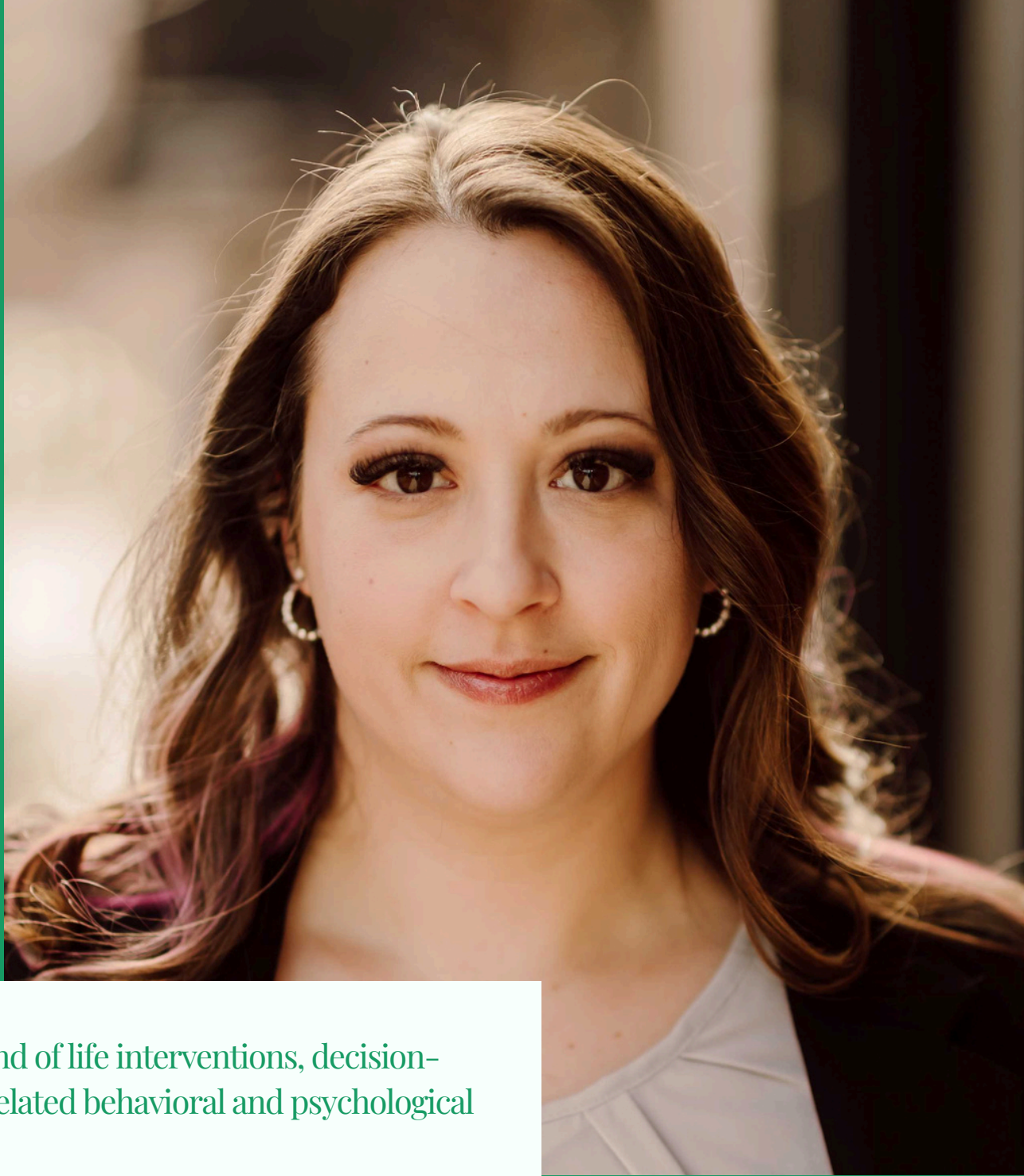
PAST-CHAIR



- Gero area of interest: Coping with chronic disease and disability, late-life depression, capacity evaluations.
- Goals for CoPGTP: Increase membership at all levels of training, performance-based assessment of geropsychology competencies.
- Initial Interest in Geropsychology: The diversity of experiences of older adults.
- Fun Fact: I have a one-year-old chihuahua mix.

Kristy Shoji

CHAIR-ELECT



- **Gero areas of interest:** cognition and aging, end of life interventions, decision-making capacity, management of dementia-related behavioral and psychological symptoms
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** My primary goal is to foster connections among geropsychologists and trainees to increase competence in the provision of mental health care for older adults. I hope to increase awareness of gaps in both training and service provision and formulate possible ways to address those gaps to ensure current and future geropsychologists are receiving the highest quality training possible. I am also interested in exploring ways to expand geropsychology knowledge and training to other specialty areas so that psychology as a field is better able to address the needs of a growing and diverse older adult population.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** My initial interest in geropsychology came from spending time with my great-grandmother and listening to her stories about growing up on a farm in rural North Carolina. As I progressed through my education and career, the opportunity to interact with individuals in the later stages of life was extremely rewarding and meaningful, and became the driving force behind my continued interest in the field.
- **Fun fact:** My partner is Hawaiian and all three of our girls have Hawaiian names: Evalani, Kainani, and Anuhea

Rachael Spalding

SECRETARY



- **Gero areas of interest:** Chronic pain conditions, women's and LGBTQ+ aging issues, caregiver support, surrogate decision making.
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** I am very excited to aid with advocacy efforts to support the growth of geropsychology as a specialty, including enhancing the accessibility of geropsychology for younger students and trainees.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** Like many folks who are drawn to geropsychology, my interest in this field began with a personal connection and grew from my early relationships with older adults. Growing up as an only child, I cherished my relationship with my grandmother, who was my babysitter, playmate, and friend all in one. She passed away when I was in middle school, but I still have her telephone number memorized. My first job in high school was as a dining room server in a long-term care facility, and I loved forming relationships with the residents and learning their stories. In college, I took an introductory psychology course with a professor who specialized in geropsychology and helped nurture my interest. From then on, as they say, the rest is history!
- **Fun Fact:** I am an endurance runner and enjoy racing the marathon and half-marathon. To balance out all the running, I try to do yoga consistently (although sometimes my practice looks less like stretching and more like napping on the floor).

Hannah Bashian

TREASURER



- **Gero areas of interest:** Impact of ageism on older adults health and well-being and Late life PTSD.
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** My main goal as treasurer is to think creatively about ways to increase membership to CoPGTP, increase CoPGTP's visibility and find new ways to use our funds to help advance the field of Geropsychology and increase involvement from students and trainees.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** I was lucky enough to have a great mentor while in undergrad who was a geropsychologist who taught multiple geropsychology courses. In her classes we were required to volunteer at a local nursing home and I realized how ignored and forgotten this population of people were in our society. During this time my grandmother was also diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease which made my academic interest very personal. After seeing what my grandmother went through and continuing to take Geropsychology courses I decided to pursue a career as a geropsychologist and have never looked back!
- **Fun Fact:** My brother is an actor and plays Santa Claus in the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular!

Kyle Page

MEDIA MANAGER



- **Gero areas of interest:** Capacity evaluations.
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** To be a leading resource for those wanting to learn more about working with older adults across the training/career spectrum.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** Initially, the only practicum site available for my master's degree was with older adults in rural Oklahoma, so I took it not knowing about the existence of geropsychology. I came to really appreciate what these older adults had to offer on life, setbacks, and perseverance, especially as a young adult. I was so intrigued that I decided to obtain a doctorate focused on aging and mental health.
- **Fun Fact:** I like to read geropsychology books in German and Swedish.

Michelle Kehn

NEWSLETTER EDITOR



- **Gero areas of interest:** End of life, psychotherapy, healthcare decision making.
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** Increase interaction with members and trainees through newsletter and vlog.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** Interest in psychology began with neuroscience and neuropsychology. Through that work and interest, I developed an interest in the aging brain.
- **Fun Fact:** All my dogs have had Spanish names. I currently have Chulo and Miel.

Nicole Torrence

DEI MEMBER AT LARGE



- **Gero areas of interest:** Functional cognitive assessment and rehabilitation.
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** Increase diversity in geropsychology training and promote culturally competent training. Advocate for supportive and inclusive environments within geropsychology training programs for trainees of all backgrounds. Serve as a resource by sharing best practices in Geropsychology diversity, equity, and inclusion training through workshops, conferences, and online platforms.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** As an undergrad, conducting neuropsychological testing for research with older adults in their homes played a significant role in my interest in geropsychology. This experience made me realize how much I enjoyed assessment and puzzles, particularly when working with older adults. Witnessing their unique challenges firsthand sparked my curiosity and motivated me to pursue geropsychology. Helping older adults maintain and improve their cognitive and functional abilities through psychological assessment and intervention became a deeply meaningful goal for me.
- **Fun Fact:** I love to eat, watch TV, and run, and I have a Shih Tzu with a mohawk.

Jessica V. Strong

GRADUATE PROGRAMS
MEMBER AT LARGE



- **Gero areas of interest:** Cognitive aging; program development and evaluation for late life mentalhealth
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** Increase Canadian member programs
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** My great aunt Lila
- **Fun Fact:** I live on a homestead in Canada and spend my free time playing the dirt with my chickens.

Nathalie Rieder

INTERNSHIPS
MEMBER AT LARGE



- **Gero areas of interest:** Neurocognitive disorders, caregiver well-being, grief and bereavement, and death and dying.
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** Formation of connection to other geropsychologists and training programs, in addition to access to continued education and training resources.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** At first I was interested in music therapy; however, after reading the greatworks of neurologist Oliver Sacks, I developed an interest in the aging brain. I also observed my parents transitioninto the roles of informal caregivers, which sparked my interest in caregiver well-being.
- **Fun Fact:** My first degree is in music (clarinet); although I am no professional, I still enjoy playing it when I can.

Amy Houston

POSTDOCTORAL
TRAINING MEMBER
AT LARGE



- **Gero areas of interest:** Dementia behavior management, caregivers, medical decision making capacity, long termcare, interdisciplinary treatment teams.
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** Continue to foster passion for working with older adults.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** I have always had a passion for working with older adults. I have my Bachelors and Masters in Gerontology. My interest in Geropsychology emerged when I was a research assistant at the VA in Tampa. I had the opportunity to work with many Veterans living with dementia and their caregivers. Working with this population drove me to pursue my Doctorate in Clinical Psychology with a specialization in Geropsychology.
- **Fun Fact:** I LOVE game shows, and for my 18th birthday I got to go to The Price is Right when Bob Barker was still the host!

Erin Kube

POST-LICENSURE
MEMBER AT LARGE



- **Gero areas of interest:** Geriatric primary care, caregiver stress, management of dementia-related behaviors, grief, end-of-life issues, and chronic disease management.
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** To enhance pathways to geropsychology support, education, and consultation for post-licensure psychologists.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** My relationship with my maternal grandmother. As the first grandchild (and only grandchild for 5 years), we developed a unique bond and one that culminated in me being able to care for her in her home at the end of her life. She lived to be 90 and modeled an admirable example of positive (female) aging.
- **Fun Fact:** Past accomplishments include safety patrol captain (5th grade), winning the DARE bear essay contest (6th grade), and performing in an improv comedy troupe (2015–2017).

Jameca Woody Cooper

CHAIR, CONA



- **Gero areas of interest:** Psychotherapy with older adults (racial/ethnic minorities).
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** Improved connection and collaboration.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** The opportunity to work with a demographic of individuals often ignored.
- **Fun Fact:** I was in the 1st Nutty Professor movie with Eddie Murphy.

Blake Peeples

STUDENT
REPRESENTATIVE



- **Gero areas of interest:** intergenerational learning, person-centered care, religiosity, grief, relationship dynamics in dementia context, LGBTQ+ and aging, and intervention-based/process-based therapy more clinically
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** Encourage and support early-career students in exploring geropsychology by increasing awareness of its importance and relevance, develop engaging training materials that highlight the impact of aging-related research and clinical work, fostering early interest in the field, inspire students to recognize the value of working with older adults and to consider geropsychology as a meaningful and rewarding career path.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** I first became interested in geropsychology my junior year of my undergraduate course when I took a course called Bringing Art to Life (BATL) at the University of Alabama. I ended up in this course by chance, needing to fulfill a degree credit, and it changed the trajectory of my entire life. In this course, I was paired in a group with other students where we participated in person-centered, non-pharmacological interventions like art and music therapy while building a relationship with someone who has dementia. I knew as soon as these sessions began, I wanted to build my entire career around this area. I then jumped right into this area of research and clinical work, and I am now a first-year clinical psychology student at the University of Louisville working under the supervision of Dr. Benjamin Mast.
- **Fun fact:** I love music and going to concerts! I also have a cat named Poppy, and I love to give her shout out at any chance I get!

Kate Smith

STUDENT
REPRESENTATIVE



- **Gero areas of interest:** how mindfulness can alleviate emotional distress and foster interpersonal harmony among older populations, person-centered long-term care practices, dementia assessment, and nonpharmacological interventions to address behavior changes
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** improve and extend Geropsychology-related training for students in graduate training programs (specialists and generalists). Develop new training materials in attempts to dismantle ageist beliefs by improving geropsychology-related education in general psychology PhD programs.
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** Like many of us, my initial interest in gero began within my own family. Further experiences volunteering and practica in long-term care settings have propelled my appreciation for elder care and wellbeing.
- **Fun fact:** I love to crochet! I am currently working on a sweater, and two hats.

Julia Phillips

STUDENT
REPRESENTATIVE



- **Gero areas of interest:** Late-life depression and anxiety, and cognitive aging
- **Goals for CoGPTP:** To collaborate with and learn from established geropsychologists and contribute to efforts in advancing training in the field
- **Initial interest in Geropsychology:** My experience working at the Memory Disorders Clinic at Columbia University sparked my interest in working with older adults. I loved connecting with patients and their loved ones and learning about their life stories. I realized the growing need for mental health care resources in late life and became inspired to increase awareness of and support for well-being in older adulthood.
- **Fun fact:** In my free time, I love to travel, snowboard, and hike.