



American Name Society

Bulletin

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The ANS has a New President!

Formerly ANS’s Information Officer and Vice President, Brandon Simonson will now serve as President of the ANS. Members voted to elect Simonson President during the General Business Meeting at the 2025 ANS Annual Meeting in February. We welcome him to this new position and are grateful for his leadership.

The ANS also has three new Members-at-Large. A big welcome goes out to Dr. Terhi Ainiala (University of Helsinki), Dr. Rebekah Ingram (Carleton University), and Dr. David Wade (Wade Research Foundation)!

Save the Date: 2026 ANS Annual Meeting

The 2026 Annual Meeting of the American Name Society will take place on February 21, 2026.

More information about the Annual Meeting, including a call for papers, will be posted to our website soon. Please mark your calendars and check here for updates:
<https://www.americannamesociety.org/conferences>.

2024 Names of the Year

“Ozempic” was chosen as the winner of the Name of the Year for 2024 by the American Name Society at our annual Name of the Year discussion and vote on January 9, 2025. This pharmaceutical brand name was selected for its significant linguistic features and spin-offs like “Ozempic face,” “Ozempic Olympics,” “oat-zempic,” and “faux-zempic.” Reflecting an important US trend, “Ozempic” has also become nearly synonymous with weight-loss drugs like “Wegovy” and “Mounjaro.”

“Ozempic” was also chosen as the winner of the Brand Name of the Year over “ChatGPT,” “Bluesky,” and “DOGE” (Department of Government Efficiency).

“Kamala” was chosen as Personal Name of the Year. The US Presidential hopeful of the Democratic Party, Vice President Harris’s campaign leaned heavily into the use of her first name as a rallying cry, in slogans like “Yes We Kam.” “Kamala” was one of the joint winners of the 2020 Name of the Year. In 2024, it gained renewed linguistic significance because of the public discourse around its pronunciation. Other candidates in this category included “Gisèle Pelicot” and “Kennedy.”

“Ohio” was voted Place Name of the Year. In the summer of 2024, this US state name became a social media meme meaning something weird or “cringe.” Although the meme started on Tumblr in 2016, it went viral in 2024 among Generation Z and Generation Alpha. Other candidates in this category included “Mar-a-Lago” and “Denali.”

“Wrapped” was voted E-Name of the Year. Introduced by the music streaming company Spotify, this trademarked name refers to a marketing service that allows users to compare their listening activity over the past year. The name has been adopted by other companies, such as Duolingo and Reddit. Other candidates in this category were “Bluesky,” “ChatGPT,” and “Discord.”

In the Miscellaneous category, the winner was “Brat.” The title of Charli XCX’s popular album, the name later appeared in “Brat Summer,” a season of female strength and empowerment. “Brat” was also embraced by Vice President Kamala Harris’s presidential campaign. Other nominations in this category were “Moo Deng,” “UAP,” and “Project 2025.”

The complete official report on the 2025 NoY meeting can be found in *NAMES* 73, no. 1: 81-88 (<https://doi.org/10.5195/names.2025.2754>).

And the Winner is... 2024 NAMES Best Article of the Year Award

Each calendar year, the members of the *NAMES* Editorial Board review the articles that appeared in the previous volume to determine the winners of the Best Article of the Year.

All article publications are judged across the following three criteria: (1) creativity and originality, (2) potential scholarly contribution to onomastics, and (3) writing style and organization.

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A full report about the 2024 deliberations can be found here: <https://ans-names.pitt.edu/ans/article/view/2755>.

The article that was roundly selected as the top publication for 2024 was contributed by a scientific team of three researchers: Siyue Li (Zhejiang University, China), Chunyu Kit (City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong), and Le Cheng (Zhejiang University, China). Their article is entitled “Unveiling the Landscape of Onomastics from 1972 to 2022: A Bibliometric Analysis” and appears in Volume 72, Issue 3 of *NAMES*.



As the title implies, the investigation provides an intriguing diachronic look at the publication trends in onomastic research over the past six decades. This innovative and insightful

piece can be read for free here: <https://ans-names.pitt.edu/ans/article/view/2576>.

Interested readers are also invited to visit the *NAMES* website where all publications featured in *NAMES* are available to the general public.



Congratulations to Siyue, Chunyu, and Le and to our other winners: in second place, Maya Sfeir for “A Corpus Linguistic Approach for Onomastics in Drama: Proper Names and Naming in Edward Childs Carpenter’s *The Cinderella Man*” and in third place, Krzysztof Górny and Ada Górna for “Gender and the Urban Linguistic Landscape: Polish Street Naming Practices.”

NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics Reviewers Needed!

We are currently seeking new applicants to join the *NAMES* Editorial Board.

Although onomastic specialists in all areas of onomastic research are welcome to apply, we have a particular need for scholars with expertise in the following areas:

- toponymy
- literary onomastics
- anthroponymy
- corpus/computer linguistics

Interested applicants should be native or near native speakers of English, have published in onomastics, and be a member in good standing of the ANS or an allied onomastic scholarly society (e.g. The Canadian Society for the Study of Names, the International Council of Onomastic Sciences, The Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland, etc.). Familiarity with a modern language other than English is also a bonus.

As a general rule, editorial board members will not be expected to review more than two manuscripts per month. In addition, all members of the Editorial Board participate in the selection of the Best Article of the Year.

If you are interested in joining our team, please complete the application from available here: <https://nick662.typeform.com/to/P6dzaz>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Professor I. M. Nick at nameseditor@gmail.com.

CFP: Special Issue of *NAMES* on Forensic Onomastics

The American Name Society (ANS) is now issuing its first call for abstracts for an upcoming Special issue of the Society's journal, *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics*.

One of the most fascinating areas of interdisciplinary research involving onomastics, criminology, and the law is forensic onomastics. The current call for paper proposals for original pieces of research for an upcoming Special Issue of *NAMES* devoted to this branch of onomastic investigation. Possible topics of interest include but are not limited to the following:

- the names and naming of crimes, criminals, and/or victims
- crimes involving the illegal use of names (e.g. identity theft/fraud; trademark infringement, verbal threats involving malicious name-calling; the use of modern investigative technology to uncover the names of unknown crime victims and crime perpetrators in cold cases)
- the names of laws and policies at any level of governance
- laws and policies governing the use or alteration of names
- strategies for the translation of names in forensic contexts
- clandestine names used by criminals and/or illegal organizations, both online and offline
- the ways in which the media uses names to discuss crimes, crime victims, and criminal offenders
- official strategies or policies used by law enforcement to analyze, process, or store public onomastic data
- legal cases fought over names (e.g., the right to use a product name; lawsuits over potentially pejorative names)

- naming policies and practices of governmental organizations devoted to names and naming

Proposals for research examining any name type, during any period of time, are welcome. Although all proposals must be written in English, the papers proposed may involve any language(s), spoken, written, or signed. Both diachronic and synchronic approaches are invited. Investigations may also employ qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Data relevant to either criminal or civil law may be examined. However, the analysis proposed must be clearly focused on the onomastic data. Proposals will be judged upon their thematic fit as well as their potential to make a substantive fact-based contribution to both forensic linguistics and onomastics.

Proposal Submission Process

- Abstract proposals (max. 800 words, not including references) should be sent as an email attachment (PDF format) to Professor I. M. Nick (nameseditor@gmail.com).
- Proposals must include a preliminary reference list that follows the formatting regulations of the *NAMES* Style Sheet.
- Proposals must include "FORENSICS" in the subject line of the email.
- All proposals must include an abstract, a tentative title, the full name(s) of the author(s), the author(s) affiliation(s), and email address(s) in the accompanying email and NOT within the body of the abstract.
- **DEADLINE: Proposals must be received by August 31, 2025.**

All proposals will be submitted to a double-blind review process. Authors will be notified about acceptance on or by September 15, 2025. Final chapters (max 7,000 words, excluding abstracts, graphics, and references) will be due November 15, 2025. For further information about this call, please feel free to contact Professor I. M. Nick at nameseditor@gmail.com.

ANS Member Research Spotlight

“The Surprising Resurgence of Research Using Signature Size”

by Richie Zweigenhaft

In the late 1960s, and into the 1970s, as an undergraduate, a graduate student, and an assistant professor, I performed a series of studies on signature size. The first series of studies led me to conclude that signature size was “a key to status awareness,” and subsequent studies showed that it was related not only to status, but to self-esteem.

I then moved on to other topics and wrote articles and books that focused on diversity in what C. Wright Mills called “the power elite” (the corporate, political, and military elites). In this work, among other topics, I studied the ethnicity, and the career trajectories of the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. It never crossed my mind to look at the signatures of these CEOs.

However, it did cross the minds of some researchers, 40 years later. In May 2013, I received a call from the editor of the *Harvard Business Review* because they had interviewed Nick Seybert, an Associate Professor of Accounting at the University of Maryland, for an article they were soon to run titled “Size Does Matter (in Signatures).” He and a colleague had used signature size to study narcissism in CEOs.

Others soon began to use signature size to assess narcissism in CEOs. By 2020, there was enough interest in CEO narcissism for the *Journal of Management* to run an article titled “Making CEO Narcissism Research Great: A Review and Meta-Analysis of CEO Narcissism.” It included signature size as one of five ways to measure narcissism in CEOs.

Now, five years later, researchers have used signature size to explore narcissism in CEOs not only in the USA but in many other countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Uruguay, Iran, South Africa and China.

This surprising resurgence of research using signature size to assess narcissism leads me to three conclusions. First, signature size as a way to assess aspects of personality, and perceptions about the person doing the signing, has turned out to be much more robust than I imagined as an observant undergraduate working in my college library back in 1967. Second, signature size is not only an indicator of status and self-esteem, as I once concluded, but, as recent studies suggest, of narcissistic tendencies. And, third, you never know where your research will be taken by others.

(There’s more to this story. Send me an email at rzweigen@guilford.edu and I’ll be glad to send you a longer version of this brief article, complete with references).

Richie Zweigenhaft

Charles A. Dana Professor of Psychology, Emeritus
Guilford College

Greensboro, NC 27410

<https://whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/diversity>

In Memoriam: Honoring the Legacy of ANS Members

Should you learn of the passing of one of our members, please let us know so that we can honor their lives and scholarly contributions with a formal tribute. To request a formal ANS death notice, simply send the name of the deceased member and any additional details you may have to nameseditor@gmail.com.

ANS Executive Council 2024 End-of-Year Reports

President's Report

Ms. Laurel Sutton

This was my last year as President of the ANS. I welcome Brandon Simonson as our new President!

- My main responsibilities were:
- Organizing the 2025 conference with Brandon Simonson, our new President
- Fielding inquiries on naming from journalists, directing them to experts like Cleve Evans and Jennifer Moss, as well as providing interviews
- Dealing with the hacking of our Stripe account and our database of users at the website, with assistance from Brandon Simonson
- Working with Sharon Obasi, our Membership Officer, in the management of our membership payments and tracking
- Assisting Tristan Alphey, our Information Officer, with website upkeep and mailings
- Reviewing submissions to *NAMES*, as assigned by Iman
- Reviewing candidates and voting for Best Article of the Year for *NAMES*
- Conducting the Name of the Year discussion and writing the press release
- Editing and uploading presentations from the 2024 ANS Conference to our YouTube channel

Outside of the ANS, I continued my work with the LSA SIG Linguistics Beyond Academia; we provide resources, networking, and support for linguists entering the non-academic job market. Our latest offering is a podcast, called Linguistics Careercast, which I host. In it, I interview linguists who have made the transition to industry about their career journeys.

Vice President's Report

Dr. Brandon Simonson

I spent the first half of the year as Information Officer, until Tristan took over. I worked on the "Names in the News" column, Cleve's column that is posted to the site. I also organized a conference panel with Laurel at LSA on names and world building. At that meeting, I shared the NotY at the WotY discussion. I also reviewed articles for the *NAMES* journal. Through the year, I conversed with many members. Overall, it's been a great year.

Secretary's Report

Dr. Star Vanguri

My first tasks as Secretary for 2024 were collecting and tallying votes for proposed bylaw changes, taking the minutes for our EC meeting at last year's conference, and posting several press releases for our NotY. I completed a manuscript review for *NAMES* and was an abstract reviewer for a Special Issue. Throughout the year, I gathered content from our members for our newsletter and compiled the 2024 issues. As always, please let me know if you have feedback or suggestions for the newsletter.

Name of the Year Coordinator's Report

Ms. Laurel Sutton

The NotY discussion was January 9, and "Ozempic" was chosen. This was for many reasons, including it becoming genericized and productive. You can see the press release on the ANS website.

Allied Conference Coordinator's Report

Dr. Anne Anderson

As Allied Conference Coordinator for ANS, most of my work during 2024 involved preparing for the Modern Language Association's 2025 and 2026 conferences, as follows:

MLA 2025: The Modern Language Association (MLA) opens its site for members and allied organizations to post calls for proposals more than a year in advance. Accordingly, I developed the CFP in November 2023 for the 2025 conference, sent it to relevant ANS board members, and posted it in the MLA portal in mid-December 2023. In addition to being posted in the MLA portal, the call was posted on the ANS website, on the *NAMES* journal website, and to several Facebook groups and/or pages. The calls generated eight responses—double the number of the previous year—which were double-blind reviewed by two ANS members. Four submitters were invited to participate; three of the four accepted the invitation and chose to present in person. In early April, I submitted the panel information to MLA, and the panel was confirmed for Saturday, January 11, 2025, at the MLA Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. The panel met in the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Complex, Steering Room, at 1:45 p.m. on Saturday, January 11, with a couple of attendees in the audience. As it happened, this year's papers focused on onomastics in British Literature with each presenter sharing about one or more works from a different time period. The papers were nuanced and the ensuing discussion was thoughtful.

MLA 2026: In early January 2025, I sent the proposed CFP for MLA 2026 to Laurel Sutton, Star Vanguri, Christine De Vinne, Sue Behrens, and Iman Nick for input and for inclusion in the Newsletter, on the ANS website, and on the *NAMES* website.

Once I received confirmation the CFP had been received and posted on the ANS website, I submitted the CFP to the MLA portal.

Susan Behrens has posted the CFP to the ANS Literature SIG Facebook page, and I have begun posting the CFP to the other social media pages listed above and to some newer groups, as well. I will repost closer to the end of February, and just before the deadline date. Additionally, I will search out other MLA groups on H-Commons—rhetoric groups, for example—and to see if they will post the call.

I will work with the new liaison to receive submissions, forward them to reviewers, and develop/submit the panel to MLA in a timely manner. Once the panel is formed and closer to the time of the 2026 conference, I suggest the liaison advertise the panel directly to other allied organizations in MLA.

Other ANS involvement: Additionally, I have posted relevant articles to the ANS SIG Facebook pages as I find them and have cross-posted ANS items to other groups and on LinkedIn.

Treasurer's Report

Dr. Saundra Wright

My main duties as Treasurer have been to oversee our budget, issue payments, send reimbursements, submit tax forms, answer questions about budget-related expenses, and advise on society expenditures. I also process mail-in renewals and mail-in conference fees, as well as those fees submitted by bank transfers and other means.

Our budget, unfortunately, has continued to dwindle, though not as rapidly as in previous years.

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Our balance in our CHASE account stands at approximately \$28,300, and we have \$1,886 in our PayPal account. Our largest expense continues to be our journal (editing costs, the open access fee, etc.). We also have regular bills for web hosting fees, InCorp, Stripe service (scam blocking), and Zoom upgrades (when needed), as well as occasional expenses for awards and acknowledgements. Our incoming funds, meanwhile, have come exclusively from membership fees and conference memberships.

I recommend that we pay close attention to budget items in the next few years and continue to explore options for bringing in additional income.

Membership Officer's Report

Dr. Sharon Obasi

As Membership Officer, I focus on building and strengthening our community by encouraging membership renewals and recruiting new members, especially students and emerging scholars. Expanding our membership continues to be a top priority, and I am excited to see our community grow with fresh voices and new ideas.

Reaching Out & Growing Connections

Over the past year, I have broadened outreach efforts by:

- Connecting with onomastic enthusiasts e.g., the People's Name Research Network and conference; the International Network for Personal Names Research.
- Using platforms like LinkedIn to share onomastic insights, highlight current research, and spark conversations that reach beyond our usual circles.

These strategies help raise the visibility of ANS while making space for more dynamic discussions within the field.

Contributing to Scholarship

I continue to serve on the editorial board of *NAMES*, reviewing several submissions each year and supporting the journal's commitment to high-quality scholarship. In my own scholarship, I am currently refining a chapter that explores onomastic themes in youth literature, particularly stories centered on immigration — a topic that continues to reveal powerful connections between names, identity, and belonging.

Bringing Names to Life on Social Media

As coordinator of the Facebook Special Interest Group on Place Names, I have encouraged the conversation on toponyms by posting:

- Research updates
- Policy developments
- Fun facts about place names from around the world

The group has 112 members and I am grateful to everyone who engages with the information provided.

Looking Ahead

At the end of the day, it's about connection — whether it's helping members rediscover their love for onomastics, welcoming new scholars into the fold, or simply celebrating the stories names carry. I am honored to be a part of the growing ANS's community, elevating our collective work, and deepening the conversations that make this field so vibrant.

Editor-in-Chief of *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* Report

Professor I.M. Nick

This year, for the American Name Society, I edited the four regular issues of *NAMES* which equaled approximately 300 pages of text. Each issue had an average of 74 pages.

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In addition, I authored the Best Article of the Year and Name of the Year Reports for both 2023 and 2024. For the Best Article of the Year, I organized the election, notified the winners, designed, and sent the plaques for all of the winners. I also wrote short articles for each of these events for the *NAMES* website.

Along with maintaining the *NAMES* website, I have conducted a preliminary review of all manuscript submissions to the journal. Since *NAMES* moved to Upitt, I have processed 2,643 submissions. The website currently has 445 users and 274 authors registered. These numbers continue to grow which is positive. On the negative side, I have registered a complaint with Upitt regarding content materials being lifted from the *NAMES* website without ANS permission or source attribution. I also processed, in close consultation with the ANS Presidency, one charge of editorial bias which was lodged by an author in response to a manuscript being rejected for failing to meet the formatting regulations and being outside of the scope of the journal's aims and scope. The Presidency, upon reviewing all of the relevant materials, determined that no editorial misconduct had taken place; and the author was barred from re-submission due to repeated threats against the editor. As a member of the Council of Editors for Learned Journals, I worked fellow editors who have reported an increasing number of attacks by disgruntled authors. To help draw attention to this problem, an international presentation about this trend was created. Plans for a future conference panel on this issue are in the making.

For the Name of the Year events, I helped the ANS President and Vice President solicit nominations from the public and I then created the PPT that was used during the annual NoY vote. I also actively participated in the NoY deliberations and proof read the press release on the results.

For each issue of the ANS Bulletin, I also offered proof reading services. For the ANS Presidency, I have also served as a consultant on constitutional issues and questions that arose.

Throughout the year, I also answered multiple queries from the public on onomastics and answered potential and current *NAMES* authors; coordinated with Taylor and Francis and Upitt regarding submissions made to the journal during Professor Frank Nuessel's tenure as the *NAMES* Editor-in-Chief. When reviewers on the *NAMES* Editorial Board have had to step down, I have replaced them with new members and I have coordinated with international onomastic organizations and editors about potential cooperations.

I also assisted as a liaison with the Modern Language Association for the ANS's annual panel. For the traditional special issue of *NAMES*, I organized a call for papers and peer review process to solicit works on names, naming, bias, and prejudice. Finally, after three years of research, I developed a *NAMES* policy for the use of AI in journal submissions.

Book Review Editor of *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* Report

Dr. Christine De Vinne

With a note of gratitude for the editorial leadership provided by Dr. I. M. Nick, the complete list of book reviews published by *NAMES* in 2024 is below. Note that the first issue of 2025 is also included in order to provide the most up-to-date information:

- *Place Names: Approaches and Perspectives in Toponymy and Toponomastics*, Francesco Perono Cacciafoco and Francesco Cavallaro (Cambridge UP 2023). Daniel Duncan, 72-1.

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- *The Names of the Wyandot*, John Steckley (Rock's Mills Press 2022). Rebekah Ingram, 72-1.
- *Names and Naming in Beowulf: Studies in Heroic Narrative Tradition*, Philip A. Shaw (Bloomsbury Academic 2020). Tristan Alphey, 72-2.
- *The Name Plate: Jewelry, Culture and Identity*, Marcel Rosa-Salas and Attyah Flower (Clarkson Potter 2023). Mary Ann Walter, 72-2.
- *Personal Names and Naming Practices from an Anthropological-Linguistic Perspective*, Ed. Sambulo Ndlovu (De Gruyter Mouton 2023). Fariz Alnizar, 72-3.
- *Names of New York: Discovering the City's Past, Present, and Future Through Its Place-Names*, Joshua Jelly-Schapiro (Penguin Random House 2021). Christine De Vinne, 72-3.
- *Names, Naming, and the Law: Onomastics, Identity, Power, and Policy*, Ed. I. M. Nick (Routledge 2024). Susan Behrens, 72-4.
- *The Word Horde: Daily Life in Old English*, Hana Videen (Princeton UP 2022). Charlotte Schwennsen, 72-4.
- *A Teacher's Guide to Learning Student Names: Why You Should, Why It's Hard, How You Can*, Michelle D. Miller (U of Oklahoma P 2024). George Matejka, 73-1
- *The Boggart: Folklore, History, Place-names and Dialect*, Simon Young (U of Exeter P 2022). Alexander Volk, 73-1.

The 2024 reviews include contributions by returning reviewers Tristan Alphey, Susan Behrens, and Daniel Duncan. In addition, this year the journal welcomed several new reviewers: Rebekah Ingram, suggested by author John Steckley for her expertise in Wyandot-related languages; Mary Ann Walter, who reviewed a visually striking book on names in jewelry; Fariz Alnizar, who suggested and then reviewed a new multicultural collection; and Charlotte Schwennsen, who also serves as the meticulous copyeditor and formatter for our work.

The range of topics covered by the eight titles reviewed is indicative of some of the most recent work in onomastics, especially its interdisciplinarity. While the works reviewed by Daniel Duncan and Christine De Vinne focus directly toponymy and the work reviewed by Rebekah Ingram addresses personal names, the preponderance of titles in the set would represent a combination of approaches. Two offer thematically selected anthologies, Dr. I. M. Nick's *Names, Naming, and the Law: Onomastics, Identity, Power, and Policy* and Sambulo Ndlovu's *Personal Names and Naming Practices from an Anthropological-Linguistic Perspective*, reviewed by Fariz Alnizar. *The Word Horde* collects names from multiple fields, while *The Nameplate* takes up names as objects of physical art. Shaw's study of names in *Beowulf* combines personal names with toponymy by identifying geographical areas as sources for character names in the text.

If this year's reviews are any indication, it appears that contemporary onomastics studies reach across disciplines to provide new insights into the cultural phenomenon of naming. As always, new reviewers and new titles for review are most welcome. Please contact cdevinne@ursuline.edu with your suggestions.

In addition to curating the book review section of the journal, as member of the journal's editorial board I reviewed a number of manuscripts, some of them multiple times, and provided my input into the Article of the Year selection process. I published an article (based on the paper presented at the 2021 ANS virtual conference) in *Onoma* with Grant Smith as guest editor, one book review in *NAMES*, and one peer-reviewed paper at a literature conference.

2025 ANS Executive Council



DR. BRANDON SIMONSON

President
Boston University (USA)
simonson@bu.edu



DR. STAR MEDZERIAN VANGURI

Secretary
Nova Southeastern University (USA)
sm1850@nova.edu



DR. ANNE ANDERSON

Allied Conference Coordinator,
Independent Researcher/Scholar (USA)
awanderson.editing@gmail.com



DR. SAUNDRA WRIGHT

Treasurer
California State University, Chico (USA)
skwright@csuchico.edu



DR. SHARON N. OBASI

Membership Officer, Place Names SIG Coordinator
University of Nebraska at Kearney (USA)
obasis2@unk.edu

2025 ANS Executive Council, cont.



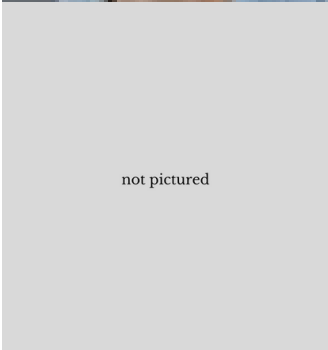
PROFESSOR I.M. NICK

Editor-in-Chief of *Names: A Journal of Onomastics*
Germanic Society for Forensic Linguistics (Germany)
mavi.yaz@web.de



DR. CHRISTINE DE VINNE

Book Review Editor of *Names: A Journal of Onomastics*
Ursuline College (USA)
cdevinne@ursuline.edu



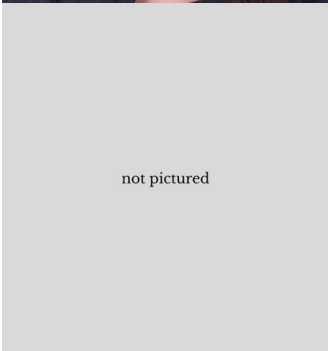
DR. T.K. ALPHEY

Information Officer
University of Oxford (UK)
tristan.alphey@gmail.com



MS. LAUREL SUTTON

Coordinator of the Name of the Year Election, Immediate
Past President
Catchword Branding (USA)
laurelasutton@gmail.com



DR. DAVID WADE

Member-at-Large, 2025-2027
Wade Research Foundation (USA)
wade-research@hotmail.com

2025 ANS Executive Council, cont.

not pictured

DR. REBEKAH INGRAM

Member-at-Large, 2025-2027
Carleton University (Canada)
RebekahIngram@cunet.carleton.ca



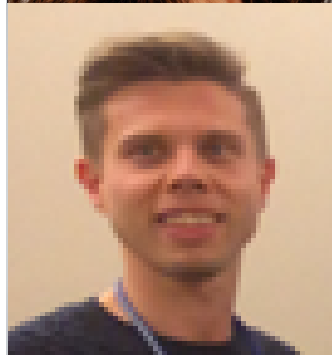
DR. TERHI AINALA

Member-at-Large, 2025-2027
University of Helsinki (Finland)
terhi.ainiala@helsinki.fi



DR. MARYANN PARADA

Personal Names SIG
California State University, Bakersfield (USA)
maryannparada@gmail.com



DR. MIRKO CASAGRANDA

Trade Names SIG
University of Calabria (Italy)
mirko.casagranda@unical.it



DR. SUSAN BEHRENS

Literary Names SIG
Marymount Manhattan College (USA)
sbehrens@mmm.edu