

Sarah Frank, FL - 2021

The most impactful speaker for me was Norah O'Donnell. This surprised me, since journalism is not something I plan on going into. However, she gave advice that was simultaneously unique and applicable to anyone. She told us that who you work for/with is more important than what you do. She emphasized writing hand-written thank you notes, being the most well-read in the room, and being a good listener, never a gossip. Ms. O'Donnell reminded us that being respectful and friendly to everyone will only ever be a good thing. She encouraged us to keep working hard, citing that work ethic will get you recognized. Her emphasis on precision was captured in her saying that 90% of getting the right answer is asking the right question. Her advice, while she might have been applying it to journalism, was useful for every listener.

Most significantly, she shared a quote by Malala Yousafzai: "Why should I be afraid of someone who's afraid of me?"

This quote was the most impactful thing I heard throughout the entire event. It reminded me that people who fear powerful women are the kind of people I should never be afraid of. The sheer confidence in the quote rubbed off on me: it reminded me that I know what I am capable of and that other people should never be capable of stopping me from achieving those things.

Norah O'Donnell's articulate and motivating words reminded me that our uniqueness, our voice, and our knowledge are our greatest possessions. I will hold them in high esteem, knowing their worth and mine.

Overall, the U.S. Senate Youth Program, even virtually, was eye-opening. I learned as much from my peers as the speakers; I savored the small groups and enjoyed the large ones.

The U.S. Senate Program gave me an opportunity to embolden my opinions, speak my mind, connect with lifelong friends, and envision the future as something I have the power to shape.