

Our state's future depends on this kind of leadership

DIVISION is easy. Leadership is hard. But it's exactly what New Hampshire needs most.

New Hampshire needs leaders who listen, who learn, and who act with the common good in mind. Leaders who bring people together, even when it's uncomfortable. Leaders who are willing to step into complexity, not away from it.



Will Stewart



NEW HAMPSHIRE VOICES

That is what Leadership New Hampshire (LNH) has worked to cultivate since 1992. And this year, we are proud to welcome the 44 associates who make up the Class of 2026.

They were selected through the most competitive process in our program's history. They come from every region of the Granite State and represent a wide range of industries, backgrounds, lived experiences, and political perspectives. LNH associates and alumni include individuals from both major parties, reflecting a commitment to cross-partisan dialogue and a shared desire to understand New Hampshire more deeply and lead it more wisely.

For going on 34 years, LNH has helped build a statewide network of informed and engaged leaders. Our more than 1,100 alumni are shaping policy, leading organizations, teaching the next generation, and working to strengthen communities across

New Hampshire. You'll find them on school boards and nonprofit boards, in local government and private enterprise, advancing solutions to the challenges we face.

At a time when trust in institutions is fading and polarization threatens progress, programs like LNH offer something different. They offer a chance to step away from silos and toward shared purpose. A chance to ask hard questions, listen to diverse perspectives, and find common ground.

LNH is not a typical leadership course. It is a yearlong experience rooted in relationships and learning. Associates travel the state together, meeting with leaders, practitioners, and residents. They explore the issues that shape New Hampshire. They gain insight into the systems and stories behind them.

Through this journey, something powerful emerges: trust. Trust that allows for honest conversations. Trust that leads to new ideas and unexpected collaborations. Trust that outlasts the program year and strengthens the civic fabric of our state.

This LNH Class of 2026 joins that story. They bring talent, vision, and a willingness to grow. In a time that too often rewards outrage over outcomes, they are choosing to engage with humility, respect, and purpose. They are choosing curiosity over certainty, dialogue over division, and connection over complacency.

Civic engagement is not reserved for election day. It is found in the everyday decisions people make to serve their communities, as volunteers, advocates, mentors, or simply informed citizens. It is found in the effort to understand how sys-

tems work and to imagine how they might work better.

That is what Leadership New Hampshire fosters. Not just knowledge, but perspective. Not just networking, but community. Not just awareness, but action.

Starting in September, the Class of 2026 will spend nine months learning, listening, and building lasting relationships with one another and with the state we call home. And they will not do it alone. They are joining a network of LNH alumni who continue to serve New Hampshire in visible and invisible ways. Their impact is felt in every county, every sector, and every type of community, rural or urban, prosperous or struggling.

As we welcome this new class, we celebrate not only their potential, but the power of leadership itself. The kind that takes risks, invites conversation, and stays focused on what matters most: strengthening the places we live, work, and raise our families. Information on the Class of 2026 is available at leadershipnh.org.

The challenges ahead are real. But so is the opportunity. When we invest in leadership that is curious, collaborative, and rooted in service, we build a stronger, more connected, and more resilient New Hampshire.

That work continues with the Class of 2026. And it continues with all of us.

Will Stewart is executive director of Leadership New Hampshire. He lives in Manchester.

Lafayette, we'll be there!

"LAFAYETTE, we are here." So said American army Colonel Charles Stanton in Paris on July 4, 1917, standing at the tomb of Gilbert du Motier — better known as the Marquis de Lafayette.

The Americans were in Paris as part of an advance World War I vanguard of Yankee doughboys. More than a million U.S. soldiers and Marines would soon be in France to turn the tide and bring victory to an allied coalition that was utterly spent and exhausted.

"We'll be over. We're coming over. And we won't be back 'til it's over, over there!"

The French people thrilled to the influx of all the motivated young Americans who gave them hope and eventually victory.

Stanton and company were at Lafayette's grave that day to acknowledge a debt to a Frenchman who conversely had given an exhausted American effort hope and eventually victory during our Revolution almost 250 years ago.

A wealthy young nobleman, Lafayette was a romantic idealist captivated by the new American nation. His father had been killed in battle by the British and Lafayette requisitioned a ship to make his way to America.

In his current best-selling Revolutionary War tome, "The Fate of the Day," Rick Atkinson describes the subsequent voyage thusly:

"Night fell. The darkened boat beat on. His destiny lay west, over the horizon, where eventually his name would adorn some six hundred towns, counties, schools, mountains and other American landmarks. He had chosen to risk everything — for glory, for adventure, for an idea. Why not?"

Lafayette made it to America and at the age of 20 became a major general in our Continental Army. Wounded at Brandywine, he quickly recovered and remained a favorite of George Washington until the triumphant end of the war, after the epic Yorktown victory in 1781.

After returning to France, Lafayette was buffeted by the horrors of the

French Revolution after 1789. Imprisoned, he would have been executed but for the intercession of his American supporters. He eventually returned to favor.

In 1824, he accepted an invitation from President James Monroe to return to America for a triumphant tour of every state to help celebrate the coming 50th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence. By that time, every other American Revolution flag officer was dead, the last survivor being New Hampshire's John Stark, who died in 1822 at the age of 94.

In June of 1825, Lafayette's tour brought him to Concord, New Hampshire. Accompanied by his son, Georges Washington, he was welcomed by passionate Granite State throngs similar to those that lined roads all over the country cheering his carriage's journey from state to state.

Lafayette gave a wondrous speech at New Hampshire's then-new Representatives Hall — the very space in which our Legislature still meets today. He went on to finish his tour and return to France, where he died in 1834.

On Sunday, June 22nd, the American Friends of Lafayette will be joined at our State House by renowned Lafayette reenactor Ben Goldman, who will arrive in a horse-drawn carriage, just as the Marquis did two centuries ago. He'll be welcomed by our governor and legislative leaders before giving a reprise of Lafayette's 1825 speech at the very spot in Representatives Hall where the original remarks occurred. This time the speech will be delivered in front of a huge painting of George Washington, whom Lafayette adored.

While I was not there in 1825, I will be in my Seat #23 in Representatives Hall Section 2 on Sunday to be part of a remarkable event that will connect us to our republic's origins in a most profound way. And I already know what I'll be thinking, as I sit and listen. "Lafayette, I am here."

Rep. Mike Moffett, R-Loudon, is a former professor and retired Marine Corps infantry officer. He chairs the House Committee on State-Federal Relations and Veterans Affairs and represents Merrimack District 4.



Rep. Mike Moffett

Letter

Snake oil RFK Jr. is selling isn't just useless, it is dangerous medicine

To the Editor: Thank you for your editorial "Most dangerous: Is there an RFK vaccine?" last Sunday. Your comments are spot on.

Kennedy is a lawyer with a history of drug abuse; he has no training in medicine and he has no experience in treating patients with infectious or other diseases. He has no business being in his present position as head of the Department of Health and Human Services. It is ridiculous and dangerous to every American family

that he fired the entire Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

To anyone who currently supports him, I ask: Would you take your car to be fixed by a lawyer with a history of heroin abuse, someone with no training in auto mechanics and no experience in fixing cars?

It is a shame that some people believe hoaxes and charlatans. Sadly, it isn't the gullible adults who suffer the most for this failing ... it's their children and other families' children.

PAUL ROBINSON
Windham



Morgan & Ruais: A team to move Manchester forward again

OVER THE COURSE of serving the residents of Manchester's Ward 1, I've had the privilege of working closely with residents, community leaders, and city officials across all 12 wards. This experience has given me a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities that shape our entire city, not just one neighborhood. That's why I am excited to announce my candidacy for alderman at-large.

I want to represent every corner of Manchester and bring a united, citywide voice to the Board of Aldermen. Our city deserves leadership that understands the big picture, listens to varying perspectives, and works tirelessly to build a stronger, safer, and more prosperous Manchester for all residents.

In this race, I am also proud to endorse Mayor Jay Ruais for reelection. Over the past term, Mayor Ruais has demonstrated the kind of principled, results-driven leadership our city needs. His commitment to public safety, fiscal responsibility and community unity aligns with my own priorities for Manchester's future.

Mayor Ruais is not a career politician, his background as an Army National Guard officer and nonprofit leader gives him a real-world perspective grounded in service and accountability. Under his leadership, Manchester has seen budgets that responsibly work to reduce the tax burden



Chris Morgan

while protecting critical services, including our schools. That balance between fiscal discipline and investing in our community is essential.

Public safety is another cornerstone of Mayor Ruais's agenda. He has been a strong advocate for reforming bail laws that too often let repeat offenders return to our streets unchecked. He backs our police and first responders with meaningful policies and funding decisions, aiming to keep residents, families, and businesses safe.

What impresses me most is Mayor Ruais's ability to bring people together. His vision for Manchester is one of inclusivity and respect, bridging divides and ensuring every resident feels valued and heard. His outreach to diverse communities, like delivering part of his inaugural address in Spanish, is a clear sign that he leads for all of Manchester.

I am inspired by his straightforward, transparent approach. In a political climate filled with spin and division, Mayor Ruais stands out for his integrity and focus on delivering real results. This city deserves leadership like his and together we hope

to continue to deliver it.

As I seek to serve Manchester as alderman at-large, I am committed to working alongside Mayor Ruais and other leaders who put the city's needs first. Quite simply, if you care about Manchester, we want to work with you. Together, we can tackle the challenges ahead and build a Manchester where every resident thrives.

I look forward to representing all 12 wards, bringing a collaborative, citywide perspective to the Board of Aldermen, and continuing the progress that Mayor Ruais has set in motion.

That's why I am proud to support Jay Ruais for mayor — and why I ask for your support in my run for alderman at-large.

Alderman Chris Morgan represents Manchester Ward 1.

New Hampshire Voices

New Hampshire Voices is a regular feature, replacing our editorial page with Granite State viewpoints and letters.

Letters should be sent to Letters@UnionLeader.com. Opinion pieces may be sent to Opinion@UnionLeader.com. Letters must be within the body of the email. Attachments won't be opened. Due to volume, submissions cannot be acknowledged.

"There Is Nothing So Powerful As Truth" — Daniel Webster

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"Where the Spirit of the Lord Is, There Is Liberty" — II Corinthians 3:17

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MALLARD FILLMORE

By Bruce Tinsley

