

Sarah Jones Internship Program 2025

On February 20th 2014, the film industry was rocked upon the news of Sarah's death while working on a film set near Savannah, Georgia.

Her loss continues to be felt personally and professionally throughout the industry worldwide.





Supporting her endearing spirit

Sarah's parents, Richard and Elizabeth spearheaded several initiatives on behalf of their daughter:

'Sarah Jones Film Foundation' and the 'Safety for Sarah' efforts promote awareness around the idea of Never Forget, Never Again.

The 'Safety for Sarah Ends Credits' program encourages film projects to follow safety guidelines with the promise to allow all thoughts on set to have a voice without fear of repercussions and to post the 'Safety for Sarah' logo in the end credits.

The 'Sarah Jones Film Student Safety Grant' program provides recipients with a grant to pay for safety related expenses such as permits, off duty police for traffic, talkies, vests, etc. The idea behind this program is to change the industry's culture by starting with its youth.

The annual 'Sarah Jones Field Day' in Atlanta is yet another reminder to Never Forget, Never Again.

Outside of the 'SJ Foundation' is a scholarship endowment at Brookland Cayce High School that Sarah attended. It is among the largest endowments at that school.

What is the internship program?

Origins

In 2014, to honor her memory, Warner Bros, International Cinematographers Guild L600, the City of Atlanta and Sim Digital worked together to create an opportunity to discover more outgoing, passionate and dedicated people like Sarah who wanted to join the thriving camera community.

Philosophy

Getting a “foot in the door” of the television and filmmaking business is an often daunting and difficult first step. The Sarah Jones Internship offered just that: an open door. The project specifically targeted people with a passion for camera work who would otherwise not have direct access to the industry.

Purpose

The program included a 20 week paid internship in Atlanta, at a camera rental facility. The intern would experience a training regimen that, upon successful completion, would lead to a paid union camera department position on an established television production in Atlanta. Once the intern completed 30 days on set, they would earn their union card, paid for by Local 600.

Legacy

Since 2014, the Sarah Jones internship program launched the careers of more than 7 camera interns – all of whom have gone on to successful careers in the film and television industry.



Past Recipients of the Sarah Jones Opportunity

2014 – **Chelsea Craig**, *Trident Technical College*

2015 – **Becca Bennett**, *University of Georgia*

2016 – **Anna-Marie Aloia**, *Savannah College of Art and Design*

2017 – **Corey Boyd**, *Morehouse College*

2018 – **Emoni Aikens**, *Savannah College of Art and Design*

2019 – **Andres Lugo**

2020 – **Emily Gibson**

2024 – **Valeriia Luhovska**, *Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University*

A person is standing in a dark studio or rehearsal space, illuminated by a bright, cool-toned light source. The person is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, and is looking down at a device in their hands. The background shows various studio equipment, including tripods, ladders, and a large window or screen. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

Board's Role – Application & Selection:

Board to be set up to monitor the program and meet once a year to choose the candidate

Board would create a process with a local college to accept applications

Board would choose one or two successful candidates by early summer and make all necessary announcements

One person or two from Georgia would be chosen per year

Camera House's Role – Training the Candidate:

The Studio and Local 600 would approve the training program

The candidate(s) would train at the Atlanta camera house for 6 months as a paid intern.

Salary paid by the camera house

Candidate would be on the camera house payroll and be treated like a regular employee

Lighting/Grip & Stage Company Role – Training the Candidate:

The candidate would shadow key personnel in the managing and operation of both a lighting/grip facility, as well as a soundstage campus for one week.

Salary would be paid by the lighting/grip/stage company.

Local 600's Role – Granting Membership to the Candidate:

Local 600 would approve the training

Local 600 would sign off on membership for the candidate once they passed their training

Candidate would then be accepted into the union with initiation fees waived by Local 600.



Studio's Role – Providing on Set Training:

Candidate would be given a union, fully paid-for position on a locally produced Television production.

Candidate would work full time for three months

At the conclusion of production, the candidate will have successfully completed the entire program.

Choosing the Best Candidate

A snap shot of the original application form:

Applicants should possess the following attributes:

Energetic and eager to learn

A strong work ethic

Very communicative/affable

Willing to work long hours

Team player

Maintains a positive attitude at all times

Physically capable of lifting and carrying at least 50 lbs

Strong desire to work in the film and television industry within the Camera discipline

Prepared to enter the film and television "freelance" workforce on a fulltime basis (all formal studies completed)

Willingness and ability to live within a reasonable commuting distance of Atlanta, GA

To apply, please answer the following questions and submit them along with a resume and references to sarahjonesinternship@gmail.com

1) Why are you applying? Why camera? What draws you to the entertainment industry, and what about your life experience would indicate that cinematography is the right field for you?

2) What have you previously done to study or experience film production? Tell us how you express yourself creatively and any untraditional opportunities you've created for yourself to pursue your dreams. (If you are selected for round 2 of the application process, you will be asked to provide an example of a creative endeavor that indicates artistic potential - ie photographs, home-made films, etc)

3) Filmmaking is hard work. Long hours (sometimes over 12 work hours a day), heavy labor. You have to prove yourself and earn your stripes. Tell us about past work or life experiences that have prepared you for the part of the job that can be grueling, exhausting or frustrating.

4) Sarah Jones was funny, hard-working, and supportive of her friends and co-workers. Her personality allowed her to build relationships with peers in the business who provided her with many job opportunities. To find ongoing success past this opportunity you will need build the same kind of friendships and relationships. Tell us what about you embodies the spirit of Sarah and makes you confident you will be able to turn this opportunity into a long-term career?



Selection Committee creates the program parameters

Create a selection process based on the former program which was incredibly successful

Promote to various film schools for people to apply via direct contact and social media

Selection process is undertaken

Winner announced

The Program

- Quality time spent in a camera house
- Supplemental time in a lighting and grip facility
- 30 days on an approved union set
- Successful completion = union card
- Marketing – announcing the successful completion of the program

In Conclusion

The original Sarah Jones internship program was created by people who knew, worked with and loved Sarah Jones. Hundreds of applicants were drawn to the program every year. But as the production landscape changed the program was unable to continue – until now. Let's work together to re-establish this highly successful and important internship in the name of Sarah Jones.

Sarah Jones Opportunity 2025: Program Timeline

**November
30, 2024**

- Application software updates
- Deck updates with photos and testimonials

**January
2025**

- Educational Institution outreach
- Other outreach (IA, L600, L479, GPP, DGA, Film Office, Trilith, etc.)

**February
2025**

- Camera House outreach
- Studio outreach
- Lighting/Grip/Stage facility outreach
- Website launch

**March
2025**

- Application reviews begin

**April
2025**

- Interviews scheduled

**May
2025**

- Interviews begin
- Potential recipients visit sets

**June
2025**

- Selection process finalized
- 2-day PA class with Atlanta Film Society

**July
2025**

- Camera House intern begins
- Assignment to studio

**September
2025**

- Camera House intern ends
- Lighting/Grip/Stage facility intern begins

**October
2025**

- Lighting/Grip/Stage facility intern ends
- On-set training begins

**November
2025**

- On-set training ends

**December
2025**

- Press Announcements Made
- Determine board(s) for next Internship

Official Press Release



We are pleased to announce Netflix's partnership with The Sarah Jones Opportunity, an annual internship and job training program dedicated to the memory of the late camera assistant Sarah Jones. Supported by Netflix's Fund for Creative Equity, and in collaboration with the International Cinematographers Guild, The Sarah Jones Opportunity gives participants the opportunity to work directly on an Atlanta-based Netflix production.

The Sarah Jones Opportunity consists of a 12-week paid internship/camera training program at Commander Camera, Atlanta where participants learn all aspects of digital cinematography. Participants also have the opportunity to visit production sets to observe camera crews at work and to begin building their network of industry contacts. After successfully completing the Commander Camera internship, participants are provided an additional one-week paid internship at Cinelease Lighting & Grip and Cinelease Studios. The candidate then earns the opportunity to work for 30 days as an ICG crew member on an Atlanta-based Netflix production. The participant will work as part of a show's camera department, gaining practical experience and vital on-the-job training from established professionals. After full completion of the program, participants are then offered membership to ICG Local 600 and can begin their freelance careers.

A bright young member of the Georgia film community, Jones worked in the camera department on a number of local productions. Her loss continues to be felt personally and professionally throughout the industry. With the support of the Atlanta Mayor's Office of Entertainment, The Sarah Jones Opportunity specifically targets aspiring filmmakers like Sarah who have a passion for working in the camera field but may otherwise not have access to the entertainment industry. Since its inception in 2014, the program has put seven participants through the Sarah Jones Opportunity who are now members of the International Cinematographers Guild.

The Sarah Jones Opportunity recipient for 2024 was Valeriia Luhovska, who immigrated to the US from Ukraine. Valeriia, who showed incredible commitment and drive to succeed in the program, was chosen out of over 270 applicants. She demonstrated without doubt the traits and personality that would carry on the Sarah Jones legacy. After months of training and on-set work with an International Cinematography Guild L600 crew on the Netflix production, "Stranger Things", we can certainly say this was a successful endeavor for all parties involved! We are very proud of Valeriia who will no doubt have a successful career in the motion picture and television industry.

Past recipients of the Sarah Jones Opportunity

2024 - **Valeriia Luhovska** Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University
2020 - **Emily Gibson**
2019 - **Andres Lugo**
2018 - **Emoni Aikens** Savannah College of Art and Design
2017 - **Corey Boyd** Morehouse College
2016 - **Anna-Marie Aloia** Savannah College of Art and Design
2015 - **Becca Bennett** University of Georgia
2014 - **Chelsea Craig** Trident Technical College

Testimonials



"The Sarah Jones opportunity was an incredible experience that opened the door for me to learn, grow, and connect with amazing industry professionals. I am honored to carry the legacy of Sarah and be a voice for safety on film sets. This program changed my life and gave me the opportunity to pursue my dream."

~ Valeriia Luhovska



"One of the most important parts of the internship is the responsibility to safety that each of the interns has keenly felt. We are all apart of a legacy to help continue to keep sets safe and each and every one of us feels a profound honor to carry the legacy of Sarah Jones. I especially feel her spirit alive and will strive each day in every job to honor her and the legacy of safety."

~ Anna-Marie Aloia



"I felt it was important to carry Sarah's name with respect and remembering her everyday helped me to keep a positive attitude and work my hardest. I feel I need to remember that I do represent her in some way since earning this opportunity."

This opportunity is a golden ticket for anyone who is seriously interested in being taught how to be a successful camera assistant."

~ Chelsea Craig

Emily Gibson

How did your life or career change since becoming a recipient?

I was really struggling before becoming a recipient. I had managed to find a way into the film industry as a PA and then worked in craft services for a while. Camera department was always my goal, but I couldn't figure out how to break in. I didn't have the money, network, or skills to justify entering the union, but I had no idea how to get those! I would try talking to people on set, but I was also in the chaos of my own job. I was completely desperate! A couple months before I received the opportunity, I told my crafty boss that when our next 12 week movie wrapped I wouldn't continue on the next one, because I had to figure out how to work in camera. Two weeks after wrapping that movie, I found out I got it! Whew! Excluding Covid times and the strike, I really haven't stopped working since August 2019!

What did it mean to you to receive this opportunity?

I applied 3 times before receiving the opportunity. I was feeling completely defeated. So when I received it, it felt more than just a cool opportunity. It felt like an acknowledgment of all the work I had done up to that point. It felt like someone decided I was worthy of being taught and invested in. I can't put into words how much I needed that.

What types of projects have you been on and what are you looking forward to doing in the future?

I've worked on a lot of TV shows and movies. I continued with CW's Legacies (the production which the opportunity tied me to) for the rest of the season and the following season. I ended up moving to Loader after my second season with Legacies and did Staircase (HBO), Friend of the Family (Paramount), Pain Hustlers (Netflix), and Electric State (Netflix). I've been able to meet so many people, and I'm excited to grow more in the department. I love loading, and I love being able to meet and learn from so many awesome people.

What was something you learned that stood out and maybe you use to this day?

I could go on and on about all the technical and professional things I've learned, but I would say the biggest lesson I've taken from SJO is if you're good to people, they will be good to you. The opportunity exists because of who Sarah was and what she brought to a set with her skill set and personality.

Tell us a little about Sarah Jones and the importance of Safety on Set

I was not fortunate enough to meet Sarah, but I feel deeply tied to her. Not only has she had an active role in my career, but whenever people ask me about my journey into camera department, I am given the unique opportunity to talk about her legacy. My story is now woven into hers. I cannot talk about any of my success without remembering and honoring her and I find that incredibly special. It's been almost 5 years since I received this opportunity and at this point people younger than me are entering the industry and asking for my story. In telling them my story, I also get to tell them hers. The best moments have been when I've been sharing my story with someone and they excitedly tell me their own about knowing and working with Sarah. In that way, I get to learn a little more about her.

As a recipient I feel emboldened and empowered to speak up when I see something unsafe happening. Whether it is rigging a process trailer or preparing for a stunt, safety is always my first priority. I think when I was younger I would tell myself things like "oh I'm too far down the chain to say anything," but now I take it as my personal duty to make sure we are all being safe.

I truly cannot put into word the tremendous honor it has been to carry her name with me.



Becca Bennett

How did your life or career change since becoming a recipient?

My life changed completely because of this opportunity. While I had a passion for film and TV work, I really didn't know a lot of the basics. I also knew pretty much no one in the industry. This internship taught me everything I needed to know about equipment and structure of a narrative set. It introduced me to people who were incredibly patient in teaching me and would go on to hire me years in the future. It also gave me the confidence to feel like I could make this into a career.

What did it mean to you to receive this opportunity?

I remember receiving the phone call like it was yesterday. It truly is one of the most proud moments of my career. I am so thankful to everyone who was involved in creating this internship in memory of Sarah because I would not have the life I do now without it.

What types of projects have you been on and what are you looking forward to doing in the future?

After finishing my internship in 2017, I went on to work as a Utility and then Loader on multiple shows and projects. I am now working as a 2nd AC, which I love, but am also looking forward to working my way up in the future!

What was something you learned that stood out and maybe you use to this day?

While I use pretty much everything I was taught in my internship, I think what I learned that I try to remember every day is the importance of treating others with respect and kindness. Set can be an extremely challenging atmosphere. I feel like something that was emphasized to me throughout all of my interviews and internship was how well Sarah treated others and made them feel. I have tried to remember that attitude on especially hard days, and as a way to show respect to everyone who gave me this opportunity. Many people were so patient and giving of their time and knowledge when I started, and I try to embody that as well when I meet someone trying to learn.

Tell us a little about Sarah Jones and the importance of Safety on Set

Sarah has a presence on every set I've been on since I started in the industry. Whether it's Sarah's name on slates or t-shirts or bracelets, I really believe that the emphasis of safety, and the spreading of Sarah's story has prevented many accidents and injuries. I'm so proud to have started as a Sarah Jones Intern and always try to be aware of set safety.



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Andres Lugo

How did your life or career change since becoming a recipient?

First, I feel so honored to have received the Sarah Jones Internship. I was so fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time. I remember when I was living in Miami and having a job as a producer, videographer, and editor but it was in an office schedule, on a regular daily basis, and I was having a feeling of living numbness.

By those days, my EB-1A green card had been approved, after being awarded with a Daytime Emmy Award and a Lone Star Emmy Award due to my work done years back in the state of Dallas, Texas. There were many years of struggle, but I was being guided by the light of that personal intuition and I quit my job. I took my Toyota Camry 98 with 220,000 miles and I drove to Atlanta. The car was not in a good condition, but I prayed to God while driving, to allow me to arrive safe with my belongings (my home). I didn't have any place to stay neither a job but a self-conviction... everything started just right there.

In some way, I can say I have been touched by an inner source of strength every time I fall, to be able to open my soul's eyes and finding the path, that day it was Sarah Jones.

My life has been changing consequently after receiving the Sarah Jones Internship: To be allowed in getting the knowledge I needed, to be having the extensive training by inspiring mentors with years of experience in the film industry. To be learning every day the technical aspects of different cameras, cables, rigs, set ups at a camera rental house. To be able to understand the workflow in a professional set and how to approach to the different departments with respect, joy, humbleness, and authority.

It has been a big learning curve experience every set I have been a part of. Every day has been a different journey. Every crew member I have met has had different methods or systems to apply during their film career to approach any specific task considering several types of environments and that is what I can say how my film life-career has been shaping. The Sarah Jones Internship has not only opened my eyes to be able to keep constantly training my skills, my body, and my mind but to keep networking and to feeding my values even if there have been others who don't care about. To be human, to be receptive, to be loyal, to be curious, to be present.

What did it mean to you to receive this opportunity?

It has represented to me a lot. To always have the consciousness about safety on set. No matter how fast things need to be done. Safety is a priority. Even if I have always been cautious in performing any of my activities during a film set, I have experienced some injuries, and it is because we are always exposed and that's life, but we need to keep sharing the message to our teammates and to our future generations.

It has represented to me to be welcomed anywhere in the world to be accepted as part of the family, a small and huge community that works in favor of letting their dreams come to life through storytelling in many different aspects. Our life is in some way a path of storytelling, and we can become better in respecting others, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, economic status, and other diverse backgrounds. That's what makes our world a better place to live and to inhabit with others.

What types of projects have you been on and what are you looking forward to doing in the future?

I've been working on Narrative Feature films, Documentaries, TV Shows, Commercials, Short films. My dream is to become a cinematographer who supports newest talents the same way I have been supported.



Andres Lugo (continued)

What was something you learned that stood out and maybe you use to this day?

Supporting others, sharing learnings that I have got since the beginning of my internship.

Tell us a little about Sarah Jones and the importance of Safety on Set

I cannot even imagine how great Sarah Jones was, when reading about her before my application and during my internship I learned she was someone who amazed everyone on set every day, a crew member to never be forgotten. She left a legacy and that's so beautiful, someone who never will be replaced. I think no one in this life is here just for being. I truly believe that learning from her legacy will make us better as filmmakers but most important as human beings.

The message that invokes the expression Safety on set, must be a reminder to everyone that we need to be taking care of others constantly because taking care of one is taking care of ourselves as a community. We get what we give. The importance of Safety on Set is not only a top priority but a "way of living", not a "why us leaving".

Life becomes what you are afraid of and to confront it with tons of doubts, without them we would have arrogance and not being able to find self-awareness, the self-conviction.



Past recipients documentary

Sarah Jones: An Internship, A Legacy



The Original Sarah Jones Internship Program

- A Legacy of Success -
2014 - 2019

The History of the Sarah Jones Camera Internship Board of Directors

Julie Plec – Showrunner of *The Vampire Diaries*, *The Originals* and *Containment*. Founder of the Sarah Jones Opportunity.

James Martin – Chief Strategy Officer of Sim Digital and main supporter of the training at Sim Atlanta.

Colin Duran – Local 600. 1st AC and close friend of Sarah. Responsible for coordinating and often executing the on-set training portion of the program.

Paul Varrieur – Local 600 Cinematographer on *The Walking Dead*, *Cobra Kai*, *Greenleaf*, *Walton's Thanksgiving*, *Dolly Parton's Magic Mountain Christmas* and operator on numerous films including: *Flags of our Fathers*, *Swing Vote*, *Goosebumps*.

Tiphonie Watson – Special Projects Manager at the Atlanta Mayor's Office for film and television.

Lauren Petzke – Internship coordinator and coordinating producer on *Containment*, *The Vampire Diaries* and *The Originals*.

Amanda Etheridge – Local 600 Camera Assistant and dear friend of Sarah.

The Sarah Jones Camera Internship Program 2024

In the spring of 2023, members of the Georgia Film community got together to discuss reviving the Sarah Jones Internship which had paused its program due to changes with several of the original stakeholders.

This group initiated the process of reaching out to former board members, contributors and organizations to see if there was interest in creating a new internship program in Sarah's name. The response was overwhelming.

The group laid the groundwork to re-establish the program, adhering to the original parameters to ensure a successful relaunch.

2025 Sarah Jones Camera Internship Board of Directors

Meet the board

RICHARD JONES
ELIZABETH JONES
JAMES MARTIN
GANNON MURPHY
MELINDA HSU TAYLOR
JULIE PLEC
LAUREN PETZKE
PAUL VARRIEUR
AMANDA ETHERIDGE RAY
COLIN DURAN
MELISSA SIMPSON
PASCAL VERSCHOORIS
THERESA KHOURI
CARDELLIA HUNTER

Selection/School Outreach Committee

CHARLES JUDSON
MELISSA SIMPSON
PAUL VARRIEUR
COLIN DURAN
AMANDA ETHERIDGE RAY
LAUREN PETZKE
JAMES MARTIN
GANNON MURPHY
SUSAN MOSS
PASCAL VERSCHOORIS
THERESA KHOURI
BRENNEN DICKER

Camera House/ Grip-Electric Committee

JAMES MARTIN
PAUL VARRIEUR
GANNON MURPHY

Studio Committee

JULIE PLEC
MELINDA HSU TAYLOR
LAUREN PETZKE
PASCAL VERSCHOORIS