

**80 Years
of Barker
Then. Now. Always.**

*Saturday, November 1, 2025
Imagination Stage | Bethesda, Maryland*

**THE
BARKER
ADOPTION
FOUNDATION** since 1945



With Gratitude

Throughout this program, you'll find quotes and tributes from Barker families and friends—heartfelt messages that honor loved ones, celebrate connection, and reflect the spirit of our community.

Thank you to everyone who shared their words and memories with us.

Together, these messages capture the love, legacy, and lasting bonds that define Barker—then, now, and always.

TRIBUTE



We joyfully celebrate the blessing and love of our daughter, Jessica; son, Dan; daughter-in-law, Laura; and the recent arrival of our granddaughter, Cameron.

Thank you to Barker for our family—then, now, and always.

—George & Donna Wolohojian



TRIBUTE



Congratulations to Barker on 80 years of wonderful work with families!

—Ellen, Robert, Gabe, and Raphael

TRIBUTE



In Honor of the Wolohojian Family.

—Sarah Fleischer

TRIBUTE



With gratitude to Sylvia Stevens, Allen Berenson, and Becca Berenson for their tribute honoring Barker's 80 years of Impact.

Welcome



Eighty years ago, a young couple believed that every child deserves the love and stability of family. That couple was Richard and Ruth Barker, and that belief became The Barker Adoption Foundation.

Since 1945, Barker has stood as a place of compassion, commitment, and community—for children needing permanency, for parents building families, and for all touched by adoption who deserve understanding, education, and lifelong support. Our work has never been just about placement; it has always been about people, healing, and hope.

As we celebrate this milestone, my heart is filled with gratitude—for the people who have trusted Barker to walk beside them, for the staff and board whose dedication defines our mission, and for the donors, volunteers, and partners whose generosity sustains it. **Together, we carry forward the promise that began eight decades ago.**

Our guiding theme throughout this year—*“Then. Now. Always.”*—reminds us that while times and circumstances change, our purpose remains steady. We honor our past by caring for today’s families and preparing the next generation to continue this work with empathy, inclusion, and integrity.

Tonight, as we look back with gratitude and forward with hope, I invite you to stand with us—to ensure Barker’s mission endures for another eighty years and beyond. Because family is forever work, and our shared commitment makes that possible.

Grateful,

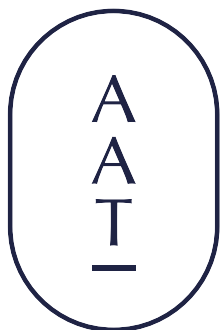
Sue Hollar
Barker ED & CEO

Melissa Gray-Hughes
Chair



Thank you to our
80 Years of Barker Anniversary

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AND



THE ALTMAN SHERMAN FAMILY

Evening Program Schedule



- 5:45 p.m.** Doors open / Reception begins
- 6:00 p.m.** Mingle & Munch
- 7:00 p.m.** Silent Auction closes. Program begins in The Reeve Studio Theatre
- 7:05 p.m.** Welcome from **Melissa Gray-Hughes**
- 7:15 p.m.** **Alison Larkin** presents with **Gary Schreiner**
- 7:45 p.m.** Raise-the-Paddle Fundraiser with **Sherry Truhlar**, Red Apple Auctions
- 8:00 p.m.** Program closing remarks by **Sue Hollar**, Dessert to follow
- 9:00 p.m.** Closing

TRIBUTE



**Fullness of our family journey together, as
parents, children, and grandparents.**

*—Love, The Diamond, Beuerle, and Stewart Families
Jean, Gary, Jennifer, Gerri, TJ, Easton, Holden, Rebecca,
Franklin, Grace, and Owen*



Congratulations to Barker!

The Kessler Family and
CohnReznick are pleased
to celebrate 80 years of
extraordinary work in
creating families.

–David & Kim Kessler



About Tonight's Performers



SPECIAL GUEST ALISON LARKIN & GARY SCHREINER

We are excited to welcome back **Alison Larkin**—a Barker adoptee, internationally acclaimed comedian, bestselling author, and award-winning audiobook narrator—as our featured performer for our 80th Anniversary Celebration.

Alison will speak and share excerpts from her hit solo show **Grief...A Comedy** with music by Emmy Award-winning composer **Gary Schreiner**, bringing both laughter and hope to our evening.

Alison's story and artistry embody the spirit of Barker: resilience, connection, and the power of community.

SHERRY TRUHLAR

*Fundraising Auctioneer & Benefit Auction Specialist,
Red Apple Auctions*

Sherry Truhlar is a friend of nonprofits, working as an auctioneer and fundraising host at dozens of events across the United States each year. She founded Red Apple Auctions after attending auctioneer school for fun so she could learn the chant for which auctioneers are known. As a prolific writer, speaker, and educator, she's been covered by many news outlets over the past 20 years, including *The Washington Post Magazine*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *The Nonprofit Times*. Tonight, she brings her signature style and enthusiasm to Barker's 80th Anniversary Celebration, guiding us through the Raise-the-Paddle moment in support of children and families.



What Barker Means – In Your Words

For eight decades, Barker has been a place of belonging – a home for children, families, and individuals whose lives are forever connected through adoption. As we celebrate this milestone year, we asked our community three simple questions: *What does Barker mean to you? Why must Barker exist 80 years from now? And, what do you want others to understand about Barker's value?*

Their answers were full of heart: **Family. Love. Connection. Hope.** Together, they form the foundation of who we are – and why Barker's work must continue. Each word represents a story, a journey, and a promise: to keep children at the center, to honor every voice in the adoption triad, and to build a future rooted in compassion and integrity.



♥ Barker made our dream of having a baby come true. Barker helped us to complete our hearts. ♥ Family, love, possibility. ♥ It means care, love, consistency, commitment to every single part of the adoption triad but most importantly always keeping the child at the center. ♥ Barker represents a unique approach to supporting adoption that acknowledges the grief, loss, joy, and complexity of the journey. ♥ Family. Love. Home. Advocacy. Activism. ♥ Love and support for children and families. ♥ Barker has given me a wonderful family for which I will always be grateful. ♥ Everlasting Joy and Connection. ♥ Barker means there is a community of caring individuals committed to

“A lifelong commitment to all individuals involved in the adoption community and the constant pursuit of evolution to help support/ strengthen the adoption community.”

support children and families. The Barker way ensures that families are prepared to parent. The Barker way ensures that the child is at the forefront of consideration. Barker means that there is a community dedicated to inclusive community of family. ♥ Barker counseling helped my children understand their adoption. It opened the door for better family communication about their adoption and impact. ♥ In a word “family”. ♥ Barker is an organization that values family, integrity, transparency and support, and that's what it means to us. As an adoptee, it provided me with an opportunity to be welcomed to a loving home and incredible family.

♥ A lifelong commitment to all individuals involved in the adoption community and the constant pursuit of evolution to help support/ strengthen the adoption community. ♥ It means 20 years and counting in creating a joyous and loving family. ♥ The creation of a loving family. ♥ An opportunity to experience and offer hope. ♥ Barker is the central connector for families, children,

resources, supports and a model for ethical practices among the constellation. ♥ Barker means to me a place of hope and community. ♥ I have been apart of the Barker team for just about seven years now. So to me, Barker means stability, connection, community, family and opportunity. I am truly humbled by the opportunities that I've had during my time here. Barker has offered me the opportunity to grow in so many ways both personally and professionally. The mentorship I receive from my colleagues is truly invaluable and I'm very grateful. I am always so inspired by the stories of permanency and the small contribution that I have in making that happen. ♥ In a word: Community. In a sentence: Barker was the first to accept my call, validate my experience, and open up a world of understanding,

“Barker is an extension of family. Staff treat others with care in some of the hardest times for a family; but simultaneously they are supporting families during the best times too.”

support, and encouragement to share my story as an adopted person. This jump started real healing and self discovery. ♥ Barker is a well run organization of dedicated professionals who go the extra mile to ensure that families, kiddos and other individuals in the adoption sphere are supported as they navigate their adoption journey

and that the highest standards of care and ethical processes are maintained at all times. ♥ A place for adoptees, birth parents, adoptive families, and all those connected by adoption to receive the important care and support they need. ♥ Barker's mission to ensure that every life they touch: children, families, and also the individuals they are in contact with feel cared for and supported throughout their adoption journey while maintaining the highest levels of accountability and ethics. The leadership is passionate about the mission and that transcends even the smallest details of the work. ♥



Barker means family. ♥

Why Barker Must Exist 80 Years From Now

Throughout our anniversary year, we asked our community: Why must Barker exist for 80 more years and beyond? The tributes and quotes shared here — from families, adoptees, staff, and supporters — capture that answer. They are love letters to Barker’s past, present, and future.

We overwhelmingly heard - *Because the need for family, love, and belonging never ends.*

“

“There will always be children who need families — and Barker’s support will always be crucial.”

“Children will always need families, and agencies like Barker who break down barriers ethically will always be essential.”

“The need to create happy, supportive, and strong family units will exist forever in our world.”

“There will always be a need for Barker’s shining light in the ethical practice of adoption.”

“Barker’s ethics are paramount — guiding birth parents, adoptive families, and adoptees with compassion and integrity.”

“Because families will still need support — maybe more than ever.”

“Because our families will still be here 80 years from now — and Barker should remain a lighthouse to guide their way.”

“To be the bridge between a child who needs a family and those who have love to give.”

“Because women and men will continue to need positive parenting options, adopted persons will need connection, and adoptive families will need community.”

“Because Barker is already a legacy of trust and integrity —continuing that legacy will bring profound meaning to generations to come.”

”

Thank You To Our Sponsors

Your generosity makes Barker's 80th Anniversary Celebration—and our ongoing mission—possible. “Our sponsors believe Barker must exist for 80 more years — because belonging should never expire.”

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the Barker Adoption Foundation.
Happy 80th Anniversary!**

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**Deep gratitude for
The Barker Adoption
Foundation for our
cherished family.**

*—The Irmingers (soon to
become Grandparents!)*

TRIBUTE



**Our everlasting
gratitude to Barker
for building our family
into what it is today!!
Congratulations on 80
Years!!**

*—With much love, Annie, John,
Grace & Sam Jenkins*

With Gratitude to Our Board of Trustees and Past Board Chairs*



We are deeply thankful to the leaders whose vision and commitment have guided Barker's mission and strengthened our community.

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James W. Riddell** – 1964–1966
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Bert T. Edwards – 1972–1975
Michael P. Bentzen – 1976–1978
William Pickens – 1978–1980
Lois H. Finley – 1980–1983

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Arnold H. Koonin** – 1985–1987
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Robert Long – 2007–2009
John Duff – 2009–2011
Kathryn Bucher – 2011–2013
Gary Rappaport – 2013–2015
John Freeman – 2015–2017
Howard Menditch – 2017–2019
Gary Diamond – 2019–2021
Adrian Washington – 2021–2023
Eugenia Collis – 2023–2025

*List reflects active and past data as of October 25, 2025. This information is current to the best of our knowledge. Please contact info@barkerfoundation.org with any updates, errors, or omissions.



Our People, Our Promise:

The world changes, but Barker's heart and mission remains the same.

Barker has always been defined by its people—the compassionate, committed, and creative individuals who have dedicated their time and talent to children, families, and our mission.

From our founders and longtime leaders to every staff member who has contributed along the way—you are the heartbeat of this organization.

We are who we are because of who you are. Thank you for being part of Barker's story.

Sami Albert
Caitlin Alfaro
Victoria Alves
Sandy Batton
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Jo-Ann Leitch
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To Our Partners, Vendors, Volunteers & Silent Auction Donors



Thank you to the incredible partners, vendors, volunteers, and donors who helped bring this celebration—and Barker’s ongoing work—to life. Your creativity, collaboration, and generosity make our mission possible.

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Contour Strategies
Twenty 1 Media Group

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Brad Kipe Creative, LLC
CPR MultiMedia Solutions
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Indigo Ink
Pink Pony Cookie Club
Red Apple Auctions
Relish Catering
Taglieri Photography

EVENT VOLUNTEERS



Amy Hood
Lorna Milkovich
Jessica Stone
Jennifer Vermillion

**Thank you to our friends who contributed time,
resources, and silent auction items that made
the evening possible.**





THE
BARKER
ADOPTION
FOUNDATION since 1945



Thank you for being part of the story—and
helping write the next 80 years.



Then. Now. Always.