

An Interview with WGM Thalia Cervantes

By IM Justin Wang & WIM Ellen Wang



How did you start chess, and what part of it was the most attractive to you initially?



I started playing chess when I was seven. I was in second grade, still in Havana, Cuba, and we were taught chess in our P.E. class. I knew the basic rules but played my first ever chess game against my friend and I won somehow. When I went home that day and told my mother, she enrolled me into a chess institute in Havana for kids to start playing chess. That's kind of how it all started! I was going there after school, and I played a lot of games with chess hustlers and people from my same apartment building. I think the part that attracted me the most was winning; I was just very competitive even as a kid. Any type of competition I was up for. Obviously if I wanted to win I needed to learn more, and then I just fell in love with the game as a whole.

You mentioned that you learned in a PE class in Cuba. Is that very common, for chess to be taught during school or was that just specific to your one school?

Usually, it started at schools. I mean probably even before you reach the time to start school, you see chess all around you because in Cuba, chess is a big part of the community. We have the third world champion, Jose Raul Capablanca, and then we have other really great players like Leinier Dominguez, so chess is everywhere; you can see people playing chess at parks, in the corner of the street or just in some cafe. In general, it's kind of all around you. They host a lot of tournaments, and my school had a chess club after school in the afternoon, but I didn't join that until much later. Thankfully, my school also offered that, and I would say that throughout Havana there were a few chess instructors that would just do these types of programs for free just so that kids would be more interested in chess. In my area there was one of those instructors.

Are you able to talk about the difference in chess culture between Cuba and the US?

Obviously, Cuba is extremely small compared to the US. It's just a tiny little island and the US has so much. Growing up in Cuba, obviously, there are fewer resources and a lot less opportunities and tournaments and just knowledge of how to work on chess. So, when I was growing up I was probably the best female player or one of the top female players for my age like 7, 8, 9, and 10 years old. Maybe in a couple of years I would have started playing in the Cuban Women's National Championship. But then when I came to the United States in 2014 when I was 11, and I noticed that there was just such a high level of competition here and everybody was trying to do the most. I felt like okay, in Cuba, I can do 10 tactics and that's pretty good for the day, but then when I come here to the US, people are used to doing 50-100 tactics a day and things like that. And you know there's just a lot more kids starting with a rating at a younger age. I wasn't used to seeing it because I think I got my FIDE rating when I was 10 or 11, and nowadays you see kids at 7 getting a FIDE rating. There's just a lot more competition here in the US, a lot more work ethic I would say and certainly more resources to keep on progressing.



How did you address the new culture; was that something that was hard for you and did that take a long time or did you just kind of get in the swing of things very quickly?

I wasn't ready for it, but I'm very good at adjusting once I get to a situation. For example, I learned English within the first three or four months of being here in St. Louis. The reason I came is that I was invited to the Susan Polgar Foundation Girls Invitational, so I kind of quickly had to adjust and start playing that tournament and get back on the cycle. At first, it was quite difficult. I wasn't ready and I was overwhelmed by not just the chess portion but also, you know, the living style in general. But quickly, soon after, I started adjusting and I started seeing other players and how they were working on chess and what it was that I needed to do to keep on improving. At first it was just a huge culture shock, but thankfully, I think, you know, since I moved at 11, I was still very young, adjusting wasn't as bad as it could have been.

So now after playing competitive chess for many years, what is your favorite thing about it? In your opinion, what aspects of chess are the most enjoyable?

That's a good question. I just love competitive chess in general. It's so fun to go to the tournament, especially if you have friends who are also playing in those tournaments. The fact that I live in St. Louis and a lot of the bigger, more official tournaments happen here is always fun because I get to play in my city, where it's very comfortable and I'm very familiar with the St. Louis Chess Club. I would say that some of my favorite parts right now are most likely middlegames, and I feel like everybody prefers middlegames, the process of studying structures and positions. I find that very interesting, but also another magic of tournaments, I would say, especially when you do one round per day which is amazing, is the fact that you can prepare well for your opponents, and you can go through their games and analyze what their mistakes are and what their strengths are and try to base your game off of that. I find it very interesting, and you can find also a lot of things about yourself through that, because sometimes if you're doing preparation for the tournament, you also look at your own games just to see what the opponents would be expecting from you, so I find that part fascinating in general. I'm not too crazy about opening preparations, but I do enjoy the process of possibly surprising the opponent with a one-day type of preparation, so I find enjoyable as well.

What is your biggest strength as a chess player?

That's another good question. For a long time, I've been curious about what my playing style is and what my strengths are. I definitely know what my weaknesses are, but I've always been curious about strengths. What I feel most comfortable with right now is kind of a universal style, like just playing whatever the position requires and seeing what happens. It's not super aggressive, and I wouldn't say it's technical either so it's somewhere in between. I really like positions where I have space and I can seize the initiative. Those are probably my favorite moments, or when my opponent has one clear weakness and I can go after them by piling up all my pieces, and maybe creating a second weakness. Moments like that are kind of my favorite. I've also been told that I am good at queen endgames. I think at one point in one of the US Junior Girls I had two back-to-back queen endgames and I won both of them. For one summer I had maybe five queen endgames. It's very interesting and they are different from usual endgames just because you must be a little bit more aware. So, for someone like me who sometimes over-calculates instead of just playing natural moves that ends up being a bit helpful actually. Like those aspects.

I guess it is relatively rare but it occurs many times in your games, so it's good that you're playing well in those types of endgames.

Thank you. Yes, I had this queen endgame against Jennifer Yu in 2018 in the Junior Girls. I was trying my best to defend because she had 3 pawns and I had 1. I had like a perpetual check, but then she decided to go with her king a little too close to my territory. I almost missed it, but I had like a four-move mating sequence and we're on time trouble; it was almost move 100. So I went from trying to draw to actually winning. It was funny. I teach that to students sometimes, be careful in queen endgames; it's a lot trickier than you think.



So kind of also again tying into the last question, you've played in the US Girls Championship and also the US Women's championship several times where the field is very strong. Do you have any specific preparation methods and how do you approach playing the game against really strong opponents?

Right. I think I've played the Junior Girls five times and I've played the US Women's one year when it was online and last year in 2021. The field is always strong regardless of the tournament. And there is also once again a big level of excitement because it is here in St. Louis. They are very big events for women; it's probably the top two events in the country. In the US Junior Girls, it's kind of very uplifting as well and you must do a lot of preparation but obviously, the US Women's championship is stronger. It feels like a very big challenge. I would say that when I'm playing the Juniors, I have some expectations to win it, but when I'm playing the US Women's, I want to try my best and just see how I play against the field. I think just because of the fact that I have played the US Juniors a lot more times than the Women's. I'm not as experienced against the top female players in the country who are not juniors, so it's kind of a new experience even though I have seen them a bunch of times and looked at a lot of their games. It feels like a whole new challenge and it's a good moment to test out your strength and see how you fare against such strong opponents. If you're the type of player that is up for a challenge regardless of the result, I think it's a wonderful opportunity and obviously, I can't play the juniors anymore which is a shame but hopefully, I can play the US Women's for years to come.

Do you have any routines that help you into the correct mindset during the game?

Especially, like I was saying, in one round per day tournaments you can work on your routine a lot better. In general, I try to do my preparation for as long as I can, but I don't want to still be thinking and preparing when it's getting too close to the round. So, I like to stop maybe one or two hours before [the round] just so my eyes can rest a little bit too. In the meantime, I like to listen to a lot of music, so I try to just play songs that gets me in the mood to go to the game and do my best. Overall, it's just relaxing for myself. I don't really like seeing other people, especially during tournaments; it's very rare for me to even respond to text messages. I like to be isolated and quiet and just let things flow. I don't like to think about the games too hard either and put extra pressure on my shoulders. Whatever happens, happens. Going to the game with an empty, I don't want to say empty brain because obviously, we have to put in a lot of work and effort but still, kind of like a no worries type of mindset.

How would you suggest studying and practicing openings, middlegames & endgames?

Yes, so openings, I feel like they're very interesting. Personally, the way that I did it for a lot of years was if you're going to start from scratch, have a book for reference. It doesn't have to be the most recent book, but I just want to have a book on the variation that I want to play so they can explain the ideas a lot better. You know, if it's a good book, it's going to tell you "Hey, the plans are these. These ones are our key squares" things like that. These are the top players in this line and such and then you go into the database for more. And hopefully, you have the most recent versions of the database and then you can start looking at games and seeing what improvements have happened over time. For example, if a player played a game in June, let's say, and then that same player played a new line in July, it probably means that they upgraded and analyzed this new variation and found an improvement. I like to kind of look at the upgrade of lines and the new ideas that have happened over time. The fact that a lot more online games have been put into the database in the last two years also helps to see the change and improvements. But obviously, I think the best way to especially study openings are to play out those lines that you were working on, just to see how you feel in them, and you get some experience and it's a lot easier to handle when you play tournament games. You feel a lot less insecure about the lines, like what the opening moves are, "what if they play that?", because hopefully in the training games here you covered those bases.

For the middlegame, I really like just chess books. I mean there are a few that I've liked that I've read, like Chess Structures by Mauricio Flores Rios. I think it's a good book.

Also, *Small Steps to Giant Improvement* by Sam Shankland, that book is really, really nice. If I find a player that has a similar style as me, I like to read books that have to do with them as well. For example, I think my style fits Spassky a lot, which is I guess kind of an underrated choice for a player, but I really like Spassky, so I enjoy going through a lot of his games. In *My Great Predecessors*, I read his chapter and learned from his ideas. It's a very fun process too because the player resembles your playing in games.

I would say, everybody reads just the Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual or *100 Endgames You Must Know*; that's probably the best way to study theoretical endgames. But there was a moment in time where I was very stuck trying to understand practical endgames and I feel like the biggest thing is to practice them. Kind of lose whatever nervousness you have, or feel more comfortable in time trouble, and also keep the positions active because sometimes you think, you know, it's just going to be a draw anyways and you start playing a little passive. You might miss a couple of opportunities, or you might make moves that make it easier for the opponent and then you have to start being precise with the moves that you play and that's not fun because mistakes can happen. I think it just requires a lot of practice as well. Yeah, those are how it would start the opening, middlegame, and then endgame.

What role did your coaches and family play in your chess career?



My family was always very supportive of me playing chess. That was a huge blessing, and my mom was always involved in trying to find a coach for me or find a chess school for me, figuring out tournaments, and taking me to international events as well. Thankfully, as I was growing up and I was getting into chess, in the same apartment building that I lived in, also lived a national arbiter, funny enough. So, he helped me out; you know, getting connections to other big chess figures in Cuba and figuring out which tournaments to play. A lot of times I was the representative for Havana in nationals or scholastic events, so I had a lot of coaches throughout my career, and I still do. What I like to think is that it doesn't matter the number of coaches that you have; you always want to try and pick from them what they're best at. Their most valuable asset is what you want to learn as much as you can from them and then take all of the good things from all the coaches you have had. That's what I tried to do growing up. I feel like, at some points, I don't know if this happened to other people, but you know, you get a few coaches at the same time and they don't agree on the same ideas; then you have to make the decision for yourself and that also is a bit confusing and awkward, but it helps you; it helps you grow and have your own opinion in things. So that definitely played a role in my career as I was growing up. I see coaches obviously as an authority figure, but I don't believe that you should just blindly do as they say; you can assess yourself as well and see what your strengths and your weaknesses are and what you need to work on.

From being a scholastic player to almost a professional chess player, what are the biggest changes that you have made to become kind of a more mature chess player?

When I was starting out in chess, I was repulsed by strategical chess or technical chess; I just wanted to do tactics and play as aggressively as I could and find the most attacking openings that I could, and that was my chess style. With time and help from coaches, I realized that I needed to work more on my understanding of chess and the technical aspect of it. I feel like that's a big part of growth and you know, accepting that you need to work on your weaknesses as well, not just do what you like. I would say that it also has to do with a lot of psychology and mindset. I feel when you are a younger chess player, maybe you go to chess tournaments and you just either hang out with friends and maybe you are less serious about your games. I feel that the more you go and the more opportunities you're getting to play serious tournaments, you realize, "this is a big deal, I need to put my mind into this". I feel many chess players are familiar with this, but from your losses always comes a certain level of maturity and it just keeps on increasing and growing. I think you can learn a lot from your own mistakes either in or outside the chessboard. You should have the open mindset to work on chess topics that are not the most interesting to you just because you really need them to improve.

Since a lot of our magazine readers are from elementary to high school students, it may be interesting to share with us what your chess study routine was before college. How often did you compete in tournaments?

That's very interesting. I got into college in August of 2021. Before that, I would study around eight hours a day almost every day and I had plenty of time to work on chess because I was doing online school. So that gave me the freedom to do things in my own place and then also study chess. I think my problem was that I wasn't playing enough tournaments. I was playing a tournament maybe once every month or every two months and I could have played a lot more frequently, taking into account that I had the time to do so. I could have also tried and played more international tournaments or renowned tournaments like World Youth and World Junior Championships. That is one slight regret that I have, but overall, you know, I got my first ever chess scholarship when I was 12. So in the back of my mind, you know, I always knew I could go to college. I knew that I needed to do online school to finish it quickly and figure out what I wanted to do with this scholarship. I always felt it was a big question, whether to go for chess or for university. I'm sure I'm not the only chess player who thought about that, but thankfully nowadays there are a lot more chess programs in colleges so that leaves me some time to still work on my chess and hang out with the people in my chess team and go to tournaments as well.

Can you talk about chess as a game, like the aspects of technical versus psychological, tactical versus positional, and how much do you think each of them contributes to the ending result of the game?

Right. Chess has a lot to do with psychology just as any other sport I believe, and you have to be in the right mindset; you have to have a certain level of confidence. You have to have a certain level of ego, even if that doesn't sound nice (at least not to me). Psychology really has to do a lot with it. And it's about trying to overcome your opponents, so I believe in the psychology of chess. If you do only tactics, you can still win games and find a couple of strategic ideas. But if you're only doing strategy, it can lead to worse results. I would say then don't go 100% for one of each, but do 50/50, kind of evenly study both. And I feel like that's kind of the biggest advice for chess players who are just getting started. For younger generations, they are just so good at tactics and calculation, and you can certainly feel it! That kind of proves my point a little bit. I've also met some people who say they would prefer working on openings a lot more than other parts of the games, but that can be a more professional approach. That isn't really my case, but I guess it makes sense at some level that there should be a balance with everything, so working a little bit of everything is probably the best idea.

Which tournament do you enjoy the most?



Well, I played the US Women's Championship in 2021 for what felt like the first time because the previous edition was online, and it lasted only three days. It didn't feel very real, but I really enjoyed the US Women's Championship. There is a level of prestige about it that I haven't felt before, especially because it's an invitational tournament and not an open tournament. People take it with a lot more respect and they're looking forward to it. I get to see players that I haven't seen in a long time, friends that I haven't seen in a long time, but also players that, as I said, I haven't faced before. It's this curiosity of how I can fare against them, and I really like that. After the US Women's Championship last year, I also had the opportunity to play in the online World Chess Olympiad. Thankfully, our team got the silver medal and we put up a good fight. I've never played such tournament before. Even though it was online, it felt like we connected because we also had a coach, we had John Donaldson, and we had meetings together where all of the players were there, so it did feel nice. You know, it's also representing the US. So that was a huge experience for me and it made me want to participate in more tournaments like that. I would say that those two have probably been my best experiences. And I feel like when there is a certain level of a challenge, you also rise to that challenge, and it brings out the best of you. At least that's the way I see it, so tournaments like such are certainly the most fun to play.

Do you have a favorite chess player, one that you look up to the most, or like you mentioned that you think your playing style is like Spassky, but are there any other players that you want to learn more from?

Throughout my life, my chess idol has been Bobby Fischer, just like a lot of other people. He's the lock screen on my phone and he has been for many years. But yeah, so I really like his playstyle, especially in my younger years when I was a lot more aggressive. It was so fascinating to me, and it still is right now. It can be mesmerizing, even if it doesn't completely match your style. It was just so revolutionary, and kind of changed the perspective of chess a lot. Boris Spassky would be my number two favorite. It's funny because they played against each other then. They are my two favorites, but in terms of play style, I really like Spassky as well and I feel like he's very underrated in the world of chess. Spassky's play style is very interesting. It was one of the biggest, I guess, innovators or contributors to universal chess. He had this cool style where he would play for initiative and sometimes even sacrifice in the process. It's not clear right away if he's getting it back, but he's just going for it, so I find that so amazing as well. I also like chess players that are good people and have a very uplifting attitude. Spassky was one of those players, and he was always very, very chill. He enjoyed being a World Champion, but it wasn't his biggest desire because he knew it was such a competitive and such a, how should I say, egotistic sport where you have a lot of people wishing to be you and jealous to be you. He has lived a long life. He looks like a happy person as well. I was actually in Moscow in 2019 and he was supposed to do a conference there, but I wasn't in time. I mean, I was leaving back to the US on the same dates, more or less when he was having a conference, so I didn't get to go. But yeah, I would say that those two are certainly up there. And of course, there are other great players like Kasparov and Capablanca and even Magnus. People have different opinions, but I would say that those two are my favorite.



Do you have a specific goal that you are aiming for in your career?

That's a good question. I mean, in general, I just try to do as best as I can. Based on previous experience, I can set goals for myself and achieve them, but that doesn't mean that I'm happy, right? Because I feel like there is always a next step that you can reach and I'm not good enough just yet. I hope that at some point during my chess career, I just reach a point where I say I'm proud of myself and I'm content with what I have done. I think I've achieved a lot up until now, but certainly I could do a lot more. And I don't know if it's exactly connected to titles. I don't think it would be, but obviously, I would love to become an International Master hopefully soon and try to be a Grandmaster after that. But outside of my competitive chess career, I would like to spend my time as well just bringing chess to people. I really like teaching, especially to kids. I've taught a couple of summer camps in recent years both in St. Louis and Memphis. I want to bring more chess and more opportunities if I can to Latin America. Cuba, in particular. After I decide I'm good enough with chess for myself, I'll dedicate a lot of my time to bringing chess to others. I think I'll always be involved in chess, even if I get a college degree or I don't play competitively. I feel like that's the life of the chess player as well, like sometimes you may leave professional chess, but you are still connected to it somehow. You have friends in the chess world, and you still play games online and a couple of tournaments. It's the kind of sport that people can always come back to and I feel like my life will always be involved with it.

From your own experience, do you think that there's any difference between female players and male chess players? And if so, what do you think could be the reason behind that difference?

I'm not sure. I don't think it has to do a lot with strength. I think it just has to do with how many girls versus guys get into chess. Obviously, with Queen's Gambit, a lot more girls are interested in chess. And even from just me checking out the St. Louis Chess Club or teaching summer camps, I can see that a lot more girls are involved. That is very exciting to see. In general, I think it just has to do more with which path you want to take in life. I feel like at some point, girls might go for college and higher education, maybe a more professional field. In my opinion, the difference rises from differences in interest rather than strength.



Can you share with us your school experience? What is it like attending a chess university? What is your training routine?

I started with Saint Louis University in the fall of 2021, and so far I love it. It's been a great experience. I live in St. Louis anyway, so it's not far from home and I'm still connected to my family and the chess club. This is a whole new chapter of my life. It's interesting as well because like I said, I moved from Cuba when I was 11 and my whole world changed pretty much, then a year after, I started doing school online. So, for maybe like 6 years, 7 years I was doing school online and not interacting much.

Now I'm going to an actual university, meeting people, and making new friends. It's completely new to me and a little unexpected, but I'm very happy with my situation. We got first place in 2022 in January's Collegiate Chess Championship. The girls won first place for the female team. SLU B was the name of the team and SLU A won first place overall, so that was absolutely amazing. In the Final Four Championship, or Presidents Cup, which is the top four teams that qualify from the Pan-Ams, we also won that for the first time, so that was great as well. I'm very happy with the team. I'm very happy with the coach, Alejandro Ramirez, and Varuzhan Akobian. I try to work with them as much as I can and ask a lot of questions. I feel like they obviously care for me and care for my improvement beyond me playing for the university. Adjusting is a bit difficult, especially academically, but you learn a lot as you go. That's also just how life goes.

So what is your training routine in college? Is there a designated part of the day when you go and train with the team? Or is it more like you study on your own and then play in the tournaments with the team?

It's essentially whatever you want to do. Honestly, I do have to spend a couple of extra hours studying for my classes because I don't think I'm that gifted academically. So I have to make up for it by some extra hours after school, after the classes, trying to really grasp the topics and understand what is going on and be ready for upcoming exams and quizzes, and that takes the majority of my time. But I've always wanted and tried to do scheduling in a way that get to have at least a portion of my time for chess during the day. If I don't have that much time, I try to either play some games online or maybe solve some puzzles and look at some tournaments that are happening now and see if any of the openings that I play were played by the top players. Just try to find some new ideas. The good thing is that you can text another member of the team and be like, "hey, do you want to play some training games? Do you want to solve tactics together?" and they're usually up for it, so you can work on your own or with a group. And I find that amazing because there are people who prefer either way, so you have the option to do both.

We do get together at least once a week and we play blitz, talk about chess and maybe work on some specific topic. More recently actually we have been doing a couple of norm tournaments. So that's a whole new opportunity for us, especially for the players who are norm seekers, like me, it's absolutely amazing. And the fact that you get this group of people who want to improve just like you, with coaches that are actually supportive. Really, it makes the whole experience a lot more comfortable.

So did you participate in any other extracurricular activities?

I try not to because that's not going to leave me time for chess. I mean, I've been tempted to join a few clubs, you know, if you want to live the college experience, I guess. It's probably a good idea to join a few clubs and whatever you like. I have gone to a couple of events and have checked out the international student meetings as well, even though I'm not considered "international". But it's very interesting and you can make a lot of connections. College is a great time for networking and just meeting more people in general. So that is very exciting and, if I ever have any free time, I'm usually trying to spend it on chess somehow, so that is mostly what I'm doing.



What do you think are the differences between studying chess and studying other things like academics or maybe other sports or other, like music, something like that?

It's very interesting because obviously chess teaches you chess, but also it helps you develop the necessary work ethic. I feel like because of chess, and let's say, because I've read so many books, it's a lot easier for me to stay focused, studying and reading books and trying to find the information that I want for certain classes. Especially with math courses, the whole pattern recognition and memorization process makes things flow a little bit easier. And maybe even the bullet sessions at 3 a.m. make it easier to study until 3 a.m.

What are the important skills you developed for chess that have helped you in your life?

More than anything using logic and calculating one step ahead. I do that with life a lot and just try to keep my head cool in any circumstance and try to figure out what's the best way to proceed. When I have several pathways to consider, or I have a big decision to make, I have the process of elimination from chess, I guess. If I go through this path, this can happen. If I go through that path, that thing can happen. For making decisions, the way of thinking chess has helped me a lot in my life in general. Also just trying to keep a cool head and keep my nerves under control. For memory, I think it has also helped quite a bit.

You mentioned that you're doing your Grandmaster in Residence. How has that experience been so far with the Saint Louis Chess Club?

It's amazing. Once again, I've been involved with the Saint Louis Chess Club for 8 years now, more or less, and I have been a member since the beginning, and I started officially working for the Saint Louis Chess Club about three and a half years ago as an instructor. And it's very exciting because even one of the classes that I teach is called Ladies Knight, focused on promoting chess for women. It's just for ladies to have a good time and learn chess as well. It's been a lot of fun. I'm really interested in teaching chess and promoting it as much as I can. The good thing about this residency is that you teach all sorts of classes. So not only you teach kids classes, but also just classes in general with different topics for the people who want to watch and learn. I also get to do streams and interact with the community online. I do a lot of simuls or just accepting challenges and playing online games with people. It's very exciting because it has many different formats, but it's not too difficult either. And if I can help at least one person, I'm content with that. I hope to be invited to do more residencies in the future.

As a female chess player in a male-dominated sport, do you have any advice for young girls who are just picking up the game?

Probably the biggest advice is, if you really love it, then keep going, put in the work and it's going to start paying off in the future. One thing that my mother did for me when I was growing up was that, as she realized that I was seriously going to pursue chess, she made me play chess hustlers. Usually, while we were playing, they would tease me or just throw a few insults. I was very hot headed as a kid, and this was a good experience for me to overcome the emotion I felt and stay focused on winning the game. Over time that helped me putting aside any negativity and just play chess. You know, the moment you start winning games, your confidence starts growing. So, it's kind of a step-by-step process. Don't give up just yet, and if you really love it, then go for it.



Thalia Cervantes Landeiro is a Cuban-American Woman Grandmaster and FIDE Master with 1 International Master Norm. Her recent achievements include participating in the 2021 US Women's Championship, Silver medal as part of the US team in the 2021 Online Olympiad, 12th place at the 2022 Absolute Continental Championship, and 2nd place at the 2022 US Junior Girl's Championship. Thalia is also a member of the Saint Louis University Chess team, which achieved first place in the 2022 Pan-American Collegiate Championship and President's Cup, as well as a member of the Saint Louis Chess Club, where she has been an instructor for 3 years.

