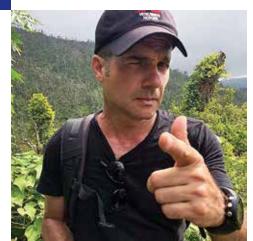


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We'd love to hear what you think about the stories in this Bulletin. We may edit your letters for length, clarity, and content, but please write.

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#### ON THE COVER

Go Rhinos! Meet Cyclura cornuta, a rhinoceros iguana photographed by Eladio Fernandez '85, who is the subject of a feature about his work in the Caribbean as a conservation photographer, filmmaker, and researcher. This display, with its mouth open, is called "gaping" and is executed by males as a threat posture to let the photographer know that he or she has come too close.

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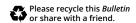
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## **MAIN HALL**

A WORD FROM HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78

"Committing to our residential spaces—our many dormitories, some over a century old, others quite new—is a really important part of the school's long-term planning."



### **Campus Preservation:**

STEWARDING THE HOME AWAY FROM HOME

In 1890, not long after Horace Taft decided to open a school for boys, he found a house in Pelham Manor he could rent from a family friend, and in September, our school was born. Taft wrote in his memoirs, "The furniture arrived at the same time that the boys and their parents did. Carpenters were at work upstairs, putting up the beds. It was a most comical beginning of a school." And so, even from that comedic start, ours was a boarding school.

With this as our history, it will not surprise anyone that committing to our residential spaces—our many dormitories, some over a century old, others quite new—is a really important part of the school's long-term planning. After all, we cannot separate what Taft is from the fact that many faculty and students live and learn together. Ours is not an original model, but it is a really good one, and an old one, shared by many great kindred schools which see powerful educational benefits in having students live at their schools.

In the past dozen years, we have been in a dorm renovation campaign, which had several goals: ensure that students had safe, beautiful, and functional spaces; offer faculty housing of high quality; honor the architectural excellence of the campus; keep ahead of deferred maintenance; and create spaces that affirmed community and furthered our mission of the education of the whole student. I feel we've been able to meet the goals and with a real commitment to containing costs, in no small part due to the leadership of the board of trustees, the vision of our architect, the expertise of general contractors, and the management by business and facilities offices. It's a good and important story.

In these years, we have fully renovated McIntosh House (19,000 square feet, with 35 rooms, and 3 apartments), Congdon House (17,000 square feet, 36 rooms, and 4 apartments), HDT (37,000 square feet, 69 rooms, and 10 apartments), and CPT (42,000 square feet, 74 rooms, and 9 apartments). Renovating these existing spaces proved far less costly than constructing new buildings—and we

preserved our history as well.



For each dorm, we had a consistent approach of completing the work in summers, thus ensuring we did not have to take the building off-line or disrupt school. Each dorm took three summers to complete. The first summer, as I often noted, was "the stuff you don't see," but which is vital: new fire safety, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems. The second summer was the work you did see, the complete transformation of all living spaces: new bathrooms, common rooms, bedrooms, and hallways. A student seeing the dorm after that summer would barely recognize it from a few months before. Consider, for instance, the mid

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Boys enjoying their renovated common area on a floor in HDT.

"All this has been done to ensure we are stewarding this beautiful, historic campus responsibly."

in 2016 returning to HDT, a building completed in 1913. It was *completely* changed: new bathrooms, common rooms, bedrooms, and hallways. The third summer in each dorm was for full renovation of faculty apartments. As we completed each project, we got better and better, gaining efficiencies and lowering costs, while still ending up with really beautiful and functional spaces. When the third summer of the CPT project ends in 2020, essentially every dorm room on campus will have been built after 1990 and the majority renovated in the past dozen years.

So what were we trying to accomplish? The broad goal, as I noted, was to ensure we had buildings of the highest quality and function and which enhanced the community and mission. But there were specific objectives as well. Take the faculty residences, for example. Taft faculty work very hard, and 24/7. The board of trustees and I are committed to high quality housing, so that after a long day (and even night), teachers have a real *home*. The renovations meant that old apartments, many built for single teachers decades ago, had the things we all would want: inviting living rooms, full kitchens, family-friendly design, washer/dryers, and so on. We also saw opportunity in common rooms. In an age where adolescents all too easily can engage with their screens, we wanted common places where diverse students would want to gather: boys and girls, day and boarder, upper and lower school. This meant inviting spaces with comfortable furniture, full kitchens, day-student lockers, bulletin boards, and lots of natural light. The opportunity to completely redo bathrooms meant we could design spaces that had lots of privacy, provided flexibility no matter who lived there, and used materials that were bright, easy to maintain, and attractive. And the student rooms themselves were utterly transformed, with new doors with adjacent message boards, oak trim throughout, carpeting or hardwood floors, and new furniture. Hallways were treated with uplighting, wainscoting, and carpeting. When you walk onto any of these hallways, you feel welcomed.

The benefits have been many and visible, and experienced by all. Common rooms that used to be cramped and uninviting places now open directly on to the halls, and students from all backgrounds gather, often with a teacher giving out extra help or cooking a snack. A faculty family that perhaps in the past had to move out of the dorm can remain even as the family grows—there's an extra bedroom, and they don't need to do the weekly laundry in the basement of the dorm. The disabled student now has a compliant elevator and accessible bathroom. The family on an admissions tour sees a dorm that truly feels like a home. And so the renovations have had a kind of positive ripple effect, with everyone on campus benefitting.

All this has been done to ensure we are stewarding this beautiful, historic campus responsibly, ensuring that no one inherits a backlog of deferred maintenance. We have a duty for those who come after us and are looking for the experience of a boarding school. This is our past and our future. After all, every night, a lot of day students finish extra help with a teacher in the dorm and then head home, and hundreds of boarders finish their work and get ready for bed in their *home*. It's only the scale that's changed since that day in 1890 when the carpenters finished making those beds and Mr. Taft bid 14 boys good night.

Willy MacMullen '78

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### Instagram

Traditions. #taftlife #mytaft #whytaft





This week 24 Taft students competed in the annual Technology Student Association (TSA) Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics, and Science (TEAMS), a national competition focused on engineering applications. This year's theme was "Engineering and the Brain." Each of Taft's three teams wrote an essay—researched and completed before the test—on Artificial Intelligence applications. Event-day challenges included a 90-minute multiple choice test based on eight scenarios related to the theme, followed by a "build it" challenge, during which participants worked to rescue a bear cub (stuffed bear) from a well (recycling basket). *Photo: Jim Mooney.* 



# Alumni **SPOTLIGHT**

### Lawrence B. Morris III '65

#### **2019 Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal Honoree**

LARRY MORRIS '65, who receives this year's Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal, is a modest but social man. From the earliest days of his career, he understood—instinctively it would seem—that conservation and resource management are really about relationships.

Morris describes himself as someone who never grew up or knew what to do with himself. But the fact remains that he has led the Ouebec-Labrador Foundation, or QLF, for nearly 40 years, and he leaves behind an incredible legacy in the people he has mentored there.

QLF works around the world investing in nature to help cities and rural communities, companies, and farmers—one person at a time—plan for a future where the needs of people and the environment can be balanced.

Three years into his president emeritus role, in which he is a sort of roving ambassador, Morris continues to serve QLF.

"It was hard at first," he says, "in a psychological sense, but I'm enjoying it." In his typically self-deprecating tone, Morris refers to his exalted sounding title of emeritus as "learning to keep my mouth shut."

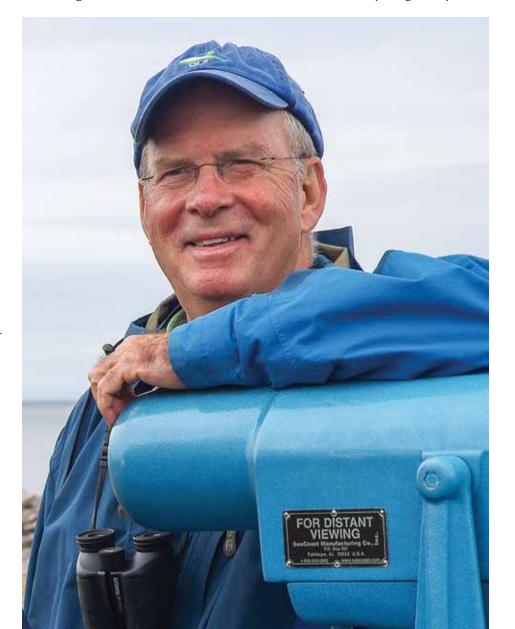
This new role has given him the "opportunity to take care of unfinished business" and given him time to write and reflect. He calls it a labor of love. "I'd do it for free if I could afford it—that's been true of my whole career," he adds.

QLF is an organization built on relationships, he says. "It's a hard sell unless you've had familiarity with it. Keep your friends and relations connected." He mentions numerous Tafties who've supported him in QLF's work along the way. Former

Headmaster John Esty, when he was at Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and Bob Poole '50 both directed him early in his career, and many 1965 classmates and alumni from other classes have supported him all along.

The organization works locally, but ties into big environmental initiatives and brings them into communities. "It sounds simple," he says, "but no one was doing it then—community-based conservation."

That connection between community and conservation was not obvious at first, he says. The QLF team began with a focus on service and community and gradually found



a niche among conservation organizations developing local support for conservation initiatives—something not many nonprofits were doing back in the early '80s.

"QLF's model of working across borders is one of our hallmarks," says Morris, "and has been responsible for our being invited to share our Atlantic region and our operational methodologies with other regions around the world."

His colleagues credit him for building a formal year-round internship program. That they hired young people, interns, was key, he explains, in that they avoided the Ph.D. hubris "that might come in and say 'we know best.' QLF's goal has always been to work with communities and really listen to them."

There are now 5,000 QLF alumni in the U.S., Canada, and around the world. The organization has worked in 24 countries. He pushed boundaries from U.S. and Canada to Central Europe, Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean. As an NGO, they are able to address transboundary environmental issues, like watersheds or wildlife migration corridors, in ways not possible by governments.

As for what specific initiatives Morris is most proud of, "The Middle East Program begun in the mid-'90s to promote communication among countries there based upon common concern for the environment which they all share, is one," Morris says. "It's built on the QLF model of working across borders and focusing on the individual and community." Another, he says, "was QLF's 'friendly takeover' in the 1990s of the former Sounds Conservancy (Essex, Connecticut), providing education and research opportunities in the marine environment of southern New



England and New York that rounded out QLF's home region geography to the sounds.

"Larry has lived out our motto in an incredible fashion," says Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78. "He has been a leader in the environmental and conservation fields, not just through QLF, but also other organizations and boards. He is at once a 'big picture' leader, with strategic vision, the ability to shape policy, and connect with leaders around the world; and yet he also knows what it is to roll up his sleeves and mentor young people, clean water, and preserve habitats. In an age when we are made intensely aware of the interconnectedness and fragility of our planet, we need leaders like him."

From the beginning of his time at QLF, Morris showed his passion and commitment to its cause. His bio from 1975, in fact, emphasizes his interest in the "socioeconomic implications of resource issues and resource management decisions on an international level, especially those relating to wildlife conservation."

Ten years later he became president of the organization. And his interests have stayed remarkably true to that early vision.

He may tell you he never grew up, but it seems he simply knew what really mattered before the rest of us did. And then he stayed the course.

—Julie Reiff

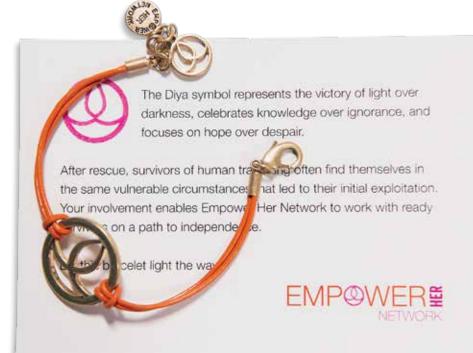


"Larry Morris is an outstanding choice for the 2019 Alumni Medal. His life has been dedicated to the protection of critical and irreplaceable natural resources and the education of people, young and old, about the importance of that mission. His leadership has also transformed the QLF into an organization of international prominence, with influence far beyond its home communities. It is an honor to bestow the award upon Larry this year."

—Holcombe T. Green III '87, trustee and outgoing chair of the Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal Committee

Alumni spotlight





WHEN ABBY FABIASCHI '98 decided to leave her high-stress corporate job, her boss said it would be the biggest mistake of her life. She took the risk anyway and hasn't looked back since.

Fabiaschi turned her sights toward writing a book, taking care of her two children, and becoming a human rights advocate. A few years later, she's now a published author and cofounder of Empower Her Network (EHN), a nonprofit that collaborates with survivors of human trafficking to help them on a path toward independence.

Operating in several large cities and regions throughout the U.S., EHN helps break down barriers for victims of human trafficking. "Domestic survivors of human trafficking go into immediate aftercare services," Fabiaschi explains. "When they've exhausted those services, there's a handoff to society, and that is often unsuccessful. So these women are at very high risk for re-trafficking and for homelessness due to a lack of viable alternatives. They often leave aftercare services in the same vulnerable circumstances that led to their initial exploitation."

That's where EHN comes in. The organization works closely with victims of human trafficking to ensure the handoff to society is successful. EHN advocates

begin by taking time to get to know each participant and her specific needs in order to create a 12- to 18-month individual "empowerment plan." The goal is that after completing the plan, participants will have reached fiscal independence and ultimately end the exploitation cycle. In short, their life will have been transformed.

The biggest barriers for these women include housing, education, and steady-wage employment. Fabiaschi shares examples of how EHN steps in to help overcome these barriers.

"Most women have no credit, or very poor credit if their trafficker used their credit. So in those examples, we have relationships with landlords who work with our survivors on a special case, taking their application even though they have this barrier," she says. "The women then pay full rent, and two years later, they do have credit and a landlord who can be their reference."

Fabiaschi also describes an example of how the organization assists with steadywage employment. "We have survivors who are ready and would love to go back to school, but they have to work two minimum wage jobs—because a minimum wage isn't a livable wage. Our partners pay a minimum of \$15 an hour. And we get these women into jobs where they can

Left: The organization's Empowerment Bracelet represents the victory of light over darkness, celebrates knowledge over ignorance, and focuses on hope over despair. 100 percent of net proceeds support Empower Her Network.

go from working 80-hour weeks to making just as much money in one 40-hour a week job...then we can talk about school."

Prevalent in all 50 states, human trafficking is a \$28 billion industry in the U.S. alone. At EHN, 40 percent of victims are American-born (often runaways or children placed into foster care), while 60 percent are immigrants who were lured to America with the false promise of a better life and a job.

Despite the unimaginable hardship these victims have been through, Fabiaschi emphasizes that these women are capable, hardworking, and ready to rewrite their narrative. EHN is currently helping 40 women and will be adding 70 more this year pending funding.

What is most amazing is that the women who complete the program want to give back and be part of the solution. "To get through what they've gone through and then be thinking about other people is pretty humbling," says Fabiaschi.

—Hillary Dooley

If you suspect human trafficking, contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at (888) 373-7888. Learn more at

www.empowerhernetwork.org

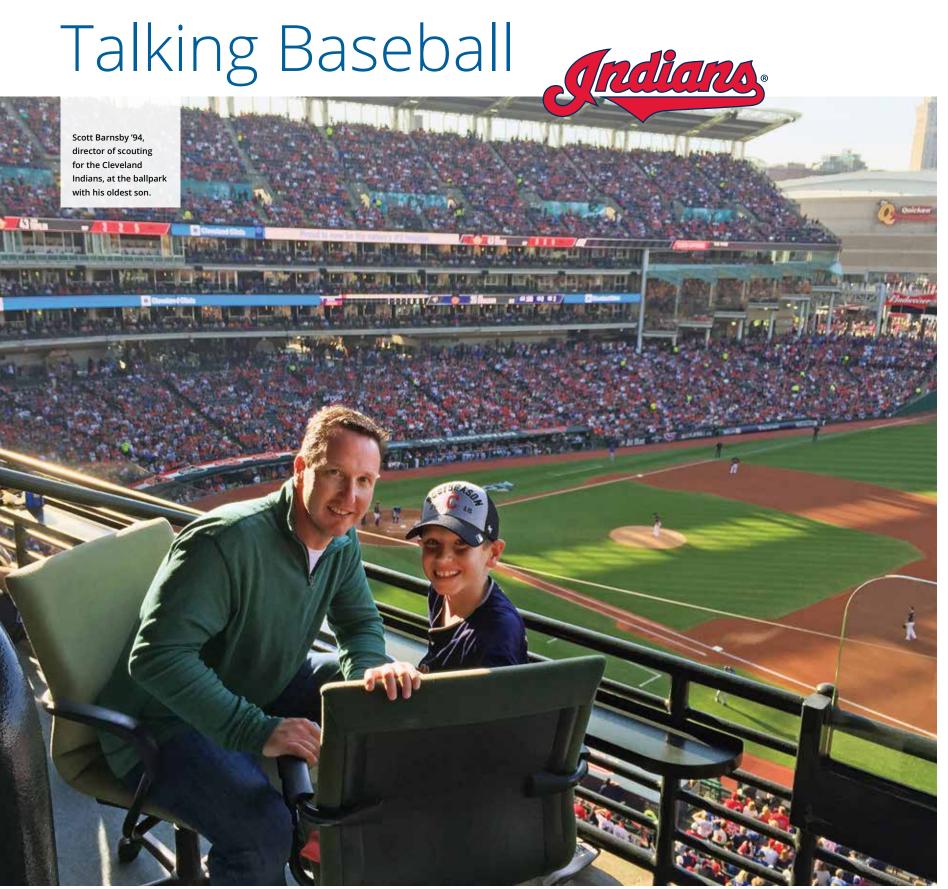


To watch Fabiaschi's Morning Meeting talk at Taft open photo app on phone and hover to play video or visit http:bit.ly/2C15jJd



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Alumni spotlight



SCOTT BARNSBY '94 spent more than 10 years crisscrossing the country as a scout for the Cleveland Indians before he finally got a full taste of why it was all worth it.

It was the ninth inning of Game 7 of the 2016 World Series against the Chicago Cubs, and Barnsby was behind the first-base dugout when Indians outfielder Rajai Davis—not a powerhitter by any stretch—clubbed a miraculous game-tying home run to keep Cleveland's title hopes alive.

"Looking around, the excitement, seeing everybody hug each other," Barnsby recalls. "I don't think I've ever felt anything like that in a ballpark before. The ballpark exploded."

The Indians wound up losing the game, and the series, in extra innings. But getting that close to securing a world title has kept Barnsby going ever since. And as the director of amateur scouting for the organization, he has a big hand in determining Cleveland's future success.

A former pitcher for Taft and the University of Massachusetts, Barnsby was drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1998 and played for two years in the minors before his playing career ended. It



So he moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to become an area scout for the Indians.

He was responsible for canvassing Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi for talented high-school and college players that Cleveland might be interested in selecting in the Major League Baseball amateur draft in June. There are 40 rounds to fill, and Barnsby had to be prepared to provide detailed information about any of the prospects from his region.

"The job of an area scout is simple: you

early 2000s, who used strictly objective indicators to find advantages over franchises with much larger budgets. Now, scouting departments across baseball are filled with statisticians with Ivy League degrees crunching a head-spinning amount of data about players and tendencies.

That doesn't mean that instincts and subjective analysis have been entirely excised from the scouting process. "They're still important pieces of the puzzle," Barnsby says. "But smaller pieces."

As scouting director, Barnsby's time is largely consumed with reading reports and talking with his staff about the directions the club could head in the draft. His time is primarily spent in front of a computer sorting through spreadsheets. And he misses spending more time at the ballpark. But he doesn't miss all the travel that he used to do in his various scouting roles.

"We joke about the Marriott points," he says. "Let's just say we're at the highest level of status. It was well over 100 nights a year on the road."

Regardless, he is still connected to the game he loves. "You're in your car, you're driving, you're thinking about baseball," Barnsby says. "You're talking about baseball. That's a lot of fun."

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#### "To really learn what makes a guy tick is one of the most important things an area scout can do, along with building a relationship with the player and the family."

was then that a former coach suggested he come to Cleveland as an intern to work with him in the Indians scouting department.

There, he helped assemble an advance report for pitchers to prep for upcoming opponents. But it was a time-consuming task in those days before everything was digital. "Somebody needed to clip all the video and chart all the pitches," Barnsby says.

When scouts would come in from around the country to discuss prospects, Barnsby found himself gravitating toward them. He loved hearing the stories about players and families, and he missed being at the ballpark. know the player inside and out," he says.

Most people assume that simply means
his abilities on the field, Barnsby says.
But it also requires a personal touch.

"To really learn what makes a guy tick is one of the most important things an area scout can do," Barnsby said, "along with building a relationship with the player and the family."

When he started, 80 percent of a scout's job was reliant upon what he calls "gut feel" about a prospect. But that was before advanced analytics swept across baseball, led by the "Moneyball" Oakland A's in the

—Zach Schonbrun '05

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# Visualizing Through One's Hands

"IT IS AN IMPRESSIVE LINE in elevator talk to say that I teach newly blind adults to use power tools," says Bill Reynolds '69. After a 35-year career as a painter and muralist in Washington, D.C., and Boston, Reynolds became a woodworking instructor at the Carroll Center for the Blind, a leading blindness rehabilitation center in Newton, Massachusetts, in 2010 and never looked back.

Enrolling as a premed student at Franklin & Marshall College after graduating from Taft, he quickly developed a love for the visual arts. "At that time, I wasn't

aware that art was a possible avenue, but I ended up taking a lot of philosophy classes—philosophy of aesthetics—and some art courses," he remembers. From there, Reynolds built an exciting career as a freelance artist, painting everything from courtroom illustrations for the Supreme Court to vast murals in government buildings and museums.

"At the same time, I also had an interest in the field of blindness and Braille," he continues. "It was the opposite of my intense focus on visual work, but really Braille is all about communication, and

that's what painting is about too." And when the Great Recession hit in 2008 and he struggled to acquire commissions to paint new works, the time was right for Reynolds to transform this lifelong fascination into a career opportunity.

"When the economy went down, mural projects went down too," he explains. "I was wondering what to do next and ultimately came across the Carroll Center." But when he inquired about a possible position at the center, he was surprised with his assignment. "I was more interested in Braille, but when they saw that I was an









artist, they automatically put me to work in the woodshop. All my life, I was so myopic about painting that I never thought I would be doing anything other than that," he says. "But creativity is creativity."

He learned to channel his talents toward new artistic pursuits, and nearly a decade later, he continues to guide visually impaired students as they construct anything from jewelry and music boxes to small pieces of furniture like bedside tables.

Working with only two or three students at a time, Reynolds slowly introduces them to the woodworking process. "Some of the clients are freaked out when they hear that woodworking is part of the program," he says, "but I just calm them down on the first day of class and say, 'No one has to use any power tools." They start with basic hand tools and cordless drills, only gradually working up to the more powerful equipment.

"Everyone must feel comfortable and safe," he stresses. "Often, people have no interest in using a power saw, so I ask that they just let me show them how one would use it non-visually. When they discover

Top left: As a longtime freelance artist, Reynolds painted this 20-foot by 5-foot mural, which depicts the Boston waterfront around 1916.

Bottom left: Revnolds working with a Braille reader at the Carroll Center

that it's just a few logical steps, they often challenge themselves and are thrilled." By the end of the course, the students are able to operate table saws, power miter saws, and drill presses—all under Reynolds careful supervision. "If someone is working on a power tool, I'm focused on them 100 percent, ready to throw my body into the middle of the saw if I have to."

Ultimately, it's the process, rather than the end product, that's most valuable. "It's a creative approach that encourages good organizational skills, a focus on hand-to-brain communication, paying attention to detail, and working on visualization," Reynolds says. "And these simple woodworking projects really incorporate everything else that they're learning at the institution. We use a Braille ruler and digital recording devices. And, much like they learn in safe-cooking preparation classes, they practice maintaining an organized workspace," he adds.

For Reynolds, there is an even greater significance to his work. "It's very empowering for my students," he's proud to say. "They've lost the ability to do so many things, but here they're making something that they designed themselves. For the first time in quite a while, they feel like they're in control—that's huge!"

—Christopher Browner '12



write something and a few short months later, it's onscreen. In that sense it's the opposite of theater, which can sometimes be an excruciatingly slow process."

While writing for Rubicon, Clark met her husband, Zack Whedon, a writer who was also working on the AMC series. The pair married in 2012 and now have two young sons.

"Finding a work-life balance is always a challenge," admits Clark, who's still a passionate playwright when she's not busy working on *Animal Kingdom* and caring for her children. Over the course of her career, Clark has written four plays that

Below: Clark at the opening night of her play Quack at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in LA.





have been produced, the latest being Quack, which recently went into its second production and has received rave reviews.

As for the future, Clark would love to create a television series that "comes from [her] brain." She and Zack are currently

collaborating on an AMC adaptation of Fates & Furies, Lauren Groff's bestselling novel. "We're in a very exciting time for TV," Clark says. "The possibilities are endless."

—Carola Lovering '07

#### WHEN WATCHING A PLAY OR FILM,

it's easy to forget that behind the acting and the set and the costumes is the one enabling the creation of it all—the writer. Or writers plural, as is often the case in television shows. And as both an accomplished playwright and a showrunner for TNT's popular drama Animal Kingdom, Eliza Clark '03 is one such voice behind the scenes.

Based in Los Angeles, Clark has been writing for Animal Kingdom since its debut season in 2016, and is currently the show's executive producer. She works alongside her brother, Spencer Treat Clark '05, an actor and recurring character in the series. The cast also includes actors Ellen Barkin and Denis Leary, to name a few.

"As the showrunner, I lead the writing staff and produce the series," Clark

explains of her role. "On any given day, I am in the writers' room, the editing suite, on set, or in production meetings."

Clark's interest in showbiz can be traced back to her days at Taft, where she was the first student with two Taft alumni parents, Rob Clark '72 and June Pratt Clark '72. (Her mother graduated in Taft's first coed class.) As a Rhino, Clark was heavily involved in theater and even wrote and directed her own play, Talk of Pleasant Things.

"The play was terrible," she laughs. "It was a very dramatic, dark sort of Eugene O'Neill rip-off."

Clark did a ton of performing at Taft—she was member of Hydrox and Collegium in addition to acting in numerous productions—and this would set the stage for her career.

"When I played Stella in A Streetcar Named Desire, that was very exciting. I remember feeling like this was a world I wanted to be a part of."

Clark went on to Yale for its esteemed theater program, and it was there that she began to focus on playwriting over acting. After graduating as a theater studies major in 2007, Clark moved to New York, where she started producing plays with friends. She soon got an agent, which led to her interest in TV and eventual move to LA to write for AMC's Rubicon.

"It's very rare to be able to make a living working in theater, and that's initially why I started writing for television," Clark explains. "TV pays the bills. But quickly, I fell in love with it. It's so rewarding to see how quickly things move in TV. I



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### Through the Grapevine PALMETTO PUBLISHING GROUP **David R. Hudson '66**

In his novel, author David Hudson introduces readers to retired schoolteacher Lynn Peterson, who works alongside her husband as caretaker of a ranch in the hills of Sonoma County, California.

One day Lynn's friend Karen, a nurse at the local clinic, shows up at the ranch and asks Lynn for a huge favor: to hide an undocumented vineyard worker, Teresa Alvarez, from her abusive supervisor, who brutally raped Teresa that same night. Lynn reluctantly agrees to shelter Teresa for the night as an act of loyalty and friendship. However, after hearing Teresa's story, Lynn becomes sympathetic to her plight and agrees to hide her for as long as it takes to ensure Teresa is no longer in peril. Lynn quickly finds herself embroiled in dangerous consequences.

Hudson delivers a novel rich in detail and riveting, and a moving story that stands as a testament to the human spirit. For more visit www.davidhudsonauthor.com.

# Meet the Squirbles: The Adventures of Percy & Pip Kate Harding Teves '97 and Christoph Teves '97

What are squirbles? A very special breed of rodent. Exceedingly rare (and very fond of gummy bears and seltzer). Percy is an A+ squirble. His mom and dad are A+ squirbles too. He is very proud of his A+ family—his mom, dad, cat, and fish are all stupendous. But then there is his brother Pip, who, according to Percy, is an A+ pest!

In this heartwarming picture book, Percy introduces us to his family and begins to see why Pip might not be so bad after all.

This first book by Kate and Chrisoph Teves is written for children from kindergarten to second grade.

Aloha Rodeo: Three Hawaiian Cowboys, the World's Greatest Rodeo, and a Hidden History of the American West WILLIAM MORROW

### By Julian Smith '90 and David Wolman

The lost story of the native Hawaiian cowboys who became rodeo champions, challenging the mythology of the American West.

In August 1908, three unknown riders arrived in Cheyenne, Wyoming, to compete in the world's greatest rodeo. Steer-roping virtuoso Ikua Purdy and cousins Jack Low and Archie Ka'au'a had traveled 4,200 miles from Hawaii to test themselves against the toughest riders in the West. Dismissed by white cowboys in the rodeo, the native Hawaiians would become American legends and return home as champions.

What few understood is that the Hawaiians were part of a deeply engrained cattle culture twice as old as that of the Great Plains. Hawaiians had been chasing cattle over the islands' rugged volcanic slopes and through tropical forests since the late 1700s.

The hopes of all Hawaii rode on the three riders' shoulders in August 1908 since the U.S. had forcibly annexed the islands just a decade earlier. The riders brought the pride of a people struggling to preserve their cultural identity and anxious about their future under the rule of overlords an ocean away.

Blending sport and history, while exploring questions of identity, imperialism, and race, *Aloha Rodeo* spotlights an overlooked chapter in the saga of the American West.

#### Katrina SAMUEL FRENCH

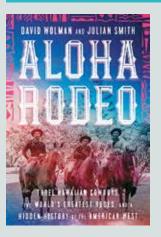
#### **Rob Florence '93**

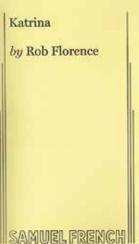
What happens when six Hurricane Katrina survivors retrace their footsteps at the Mother-in-Law Lounge? Experience heartbreak, humanity, and comedy through the journeys of these real-life New Orleanians in this life-changing, unparalleled misadventure in Florence's documentary play.

The New York Times writes of Katrina, "The evocative true stories assembled are full of fear, courage, and resilience. But they are also rich in the flavorful humor, inextinguishable identity, and civic love that characterize the inhabitants of America's most battered city."









### Strange Birds ANTRIM HOUSE

#### **Victor Altshul '52**

About Altshul's new book of poems, poet and editor Ginny Lowe Connors wrote, "Strange Birds is a marvelous book of poems. The author is not afraid to offer up his own vulnerabilities so that the reader may gain insight into the human condition. It is human nature to want to keep what is wonderful with us, as Altshul demonstrates with verve and humor in several of his poems. Yet we also keep with us our insecurities and feelings of guilt, convoluted memories of what went wrong, as he shows in other poems.

"As the pelican featured in one of the poems is able to scoop up fish and drain the water away from a catch before swallowing, Altshul captures moments in a life, drains away what's inconsequential, and uses what's left to give us a taste of humanity."

Altshul is a practicing psychiatrist in New Haven, Connecticut, and is on the faculty of the Yale University School of Medicine. The author of three earlier poetry collections, he lives in New Haven with his wife, Laura, also a published poet.

The Most Powerful Woman in the Room Is You: Command an Audience and Sell Your Way to Success TOUCHSTONE

#### Lydia Fenet '95

In *The Most Powerful Woman in the Room Is You*, Lydia Fenet takes you on her 20-year journey from intern to managing director and global head of strategic partnerships at Christie's Auction House. Fenet shares the revolutionary sales approach she has crafted over the years that has not only shaped her career, but helped her raise more than half a billion dollars for nonprofits around the world.

This is an approach that will empower readers to sell their way to success in business and in life. For example, readers will learn how to create a unique "strike method" or signature move to help feel confident entering any situation. Combining case studies and personal stories, Fenet also shares tips from some of the most powerful and successful women

in business, fashion, journalism, sports, and the arts.

This book will show you how to take a career to the next level, whether it's overcoming fear of asking for something or bridging a wage gap. Inspiring and encouraging, the author's hard-won advice will help anyone walk into a room with the confidence of a leader and motivate others to find their voice as well. Fenet's book is an empowering guide.

### The Cost Effective Life of Beno Bigelow **James Morrison '43**

In Morrison's latest novel, Beno Bigelow believed his nickname was a curse, but it became his passkey to boardrooms and corner suites along the Wall Street/D.C. axis. A cost-effective life? Reminds you of the painting of Tom Sawyer watching as the other kid paints the fence.

"I loved reading of Beno Bigelow's joyride—first as a WWII aviator and then as a power broker. It's 20th-century history told in fast-paced prose with great wit and an unsparing eye for detail."— Donald M. See, president & CEO, Pass It On, Inc.

### His Moon: A Shifter Romance TYPEWRITER PUB

#### Maggie McNeill '16

Maggie McNeill's new novel offers a different take on the werewolf genre.

For lead character Kaia, her life is a prison.

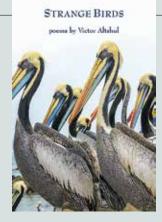
Ever since her mother's murder, her dad hardly ever lets her out of the house, even going so far as to homeschool her. And he keeps secrets from her—according to him, it's too dangerous for Kaia to leave the house, but strangely, it isn't for her brother, Cole.

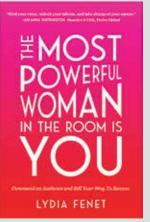
Why? Because, though Kaia doesn't know it, the woods are full of werewolves, and Kaia's scent is particularly mouthwatering. The second she steps too far into the woods, they can smell her, and only one Alpha can protect her from the wolves that want to taste her blood.

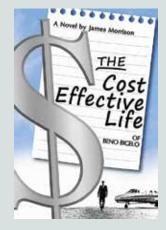
The secret world of the lycanthrope is Kaia's destiny, and who better to meet it with than her mate? Especially when his heart is just as dark as hers, if not more so.

If you would like your work added to the Hulbert Taft Library's Alumni Authors Collection and considered for this column, please email the editor (lindabeyus@taftschool.org) and mail a copy to:

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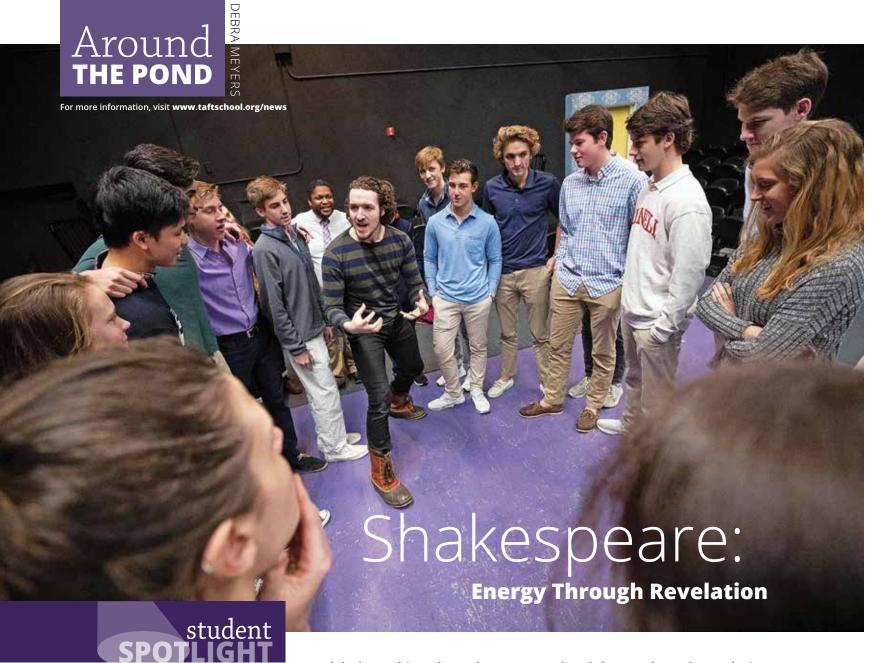
Jada Dawkins '22

reigned over Laube

Auditorium during

the 2019 lower

mid Macbeth recitation contest.



SIX PROFESSIONAL ACTORS from the Lenox, Massachusetts, based Shakespeare & Company visited Taft in January for a full day of hands-on workshops built on the "classical ideals and visceral experience of Shakespeare's work: collaboration, commitment to language, physical prowess, and the embodied voice." They were part of Taft's monthlong immersive Shakespearean study, and gave students the opportunity to lift the Bard's words from the page, breathing new life into the texts through voice and movement.

"The workshops were designed to

provide background for understanding the work as performance, not simply as literature," notes English Department Head Ken Hincker. "Shakespeare's work was created to be performed and to be seen. Performing it both deepens understanding and makes it more accessible."

Performance is a central component of Taft's monthlong dive into Shakespeare, a movement that gained momentum seven years ago, when the English department committed to a school-wide study and celebration of all things Shakespearean. In practice, says Hincker, that means that every student in every grade is not only

reading Shakespeare during the month of January, but that all students are invited to experience the Bard's work through a variety of performance mediums and venues. Including lower mid Macbeth recitations.

"Late in January, lower mids memorize short monologues or sonnets to perform for their individual classes," says Hincker. "Class winners then compete in an evening of Shakespearean performance before the full lower mid class and English faculty."

The event goes back 10 or 12 years, Hincker says, and used to be held in the Faculty Room in front of a roaring fire, with sweet treats for all, and





cheering fans filling the upper catwalk.

other and dug deeply into this beauti-

decisions—special effects, sound, cuts," explains Hincker. "For a time, some teachers offered extra credit for 'Pop-Up Shakespeare' performances—students would memorize a soliloguy or long-ish passage, then choose a random public place with many Tafties around, then perform the speech to surprised applause. Credit was also given for pop-ups captured on

For the past four years, semiprofessional

for their Shakespearean close-ups during

a weeklong campus residency. This year,

the Shakespeare & Company workshops

with a series of group exercises, through

filled that role. Each workshop began

which students explored the synergy

of word and movement—how volume,

intonation, and word choice complement

posture, reflect energy, affect intent, and

shape interpretation. Participants mar-

ried battle stances with battle cries, and

open arms and on bended knee. As each

session progressed, performance groups

grew smaller, culminating with small group

proclaimed love and compassion with

the raucousness, camaraderie, high-level performances, and sheer enjoyment of the night not only remain the same, but inspired mids to continue the tradition: beginning in 2012, the mid class launched a similar event, devoted exclusively to Shakespearean sonnets. This year, scenes from Othello upstaged the sonnet recitations.

ies in place of live performances, giving them more options for directorial

interpretations of scenes from *Macbeth*, The Taming of the Shrew, and Othello.

"Approaching the text in this way asks students to see it as more than just words on a page," says Hincker. "What do these words mean? Who are they directed to? What feelings are behind those words?"

Which was exactly what Ellie Ketchum '20 took away from the experience.

"Sometimes when you read, you hear the words in your mind in just one voice or just one tone," says Ellie. "Performing in this way not only brings in emotion, it brings perspective. Performing required me to think more deeply about the meaning of each line, and how best to convey that."

Shakespeare & Company's visit to Taft concluded with an evening performance of The Taming of the Shrew on stage in Bingham Auditorium, which, says Hincker, challenged students to examine their understanding of important social issues, while sparking "fruitful conversations about gender, marriage, and violence" in English classes.

"I hope that all of this allows students to discover something new," says Hincker, "that they see Shakespeare in a new light, and come away energized by that revelation."

"This was one of *the* highlights of my first year at Taft; it was fantastic to see how the kids supported each

ful language," recalls Hincker. "I was so surprised to see the camaraderie and the enjoyment of top-level Shakespearean performance...from freshmen, no less!" Though the event has moved to Laube, phone or video, then shown in class." actress and high school Shakespeare educator Blythe Coons readied Taft students

These foundational experiences allow upper schools to engage in deeper and more creative explorations of Shakespeare's work. Many upper mid and senior courses include projects that put students into "acting companies," where they cut a script, block, memorize, and perform.

"Recently, we've had kids make mov-

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# Tafties Win Girls in Math at Yale Competition



Left: Congratulations to Math Team Coach Joseph Zipoli '84, and the winners of the team round of the Girls in Math at Yale competition, from left, Linh Vu '21, Felicia Wang '21, Chloe Ye '20, and Angela Han '20.

"The individual round embodied the best of mathematical combat, old school style, with drama and controversy at every turn."

Controversy, Zipoli says, rooted in a three-way tie for first place at the end of the individual round. Chloe Ye '20 was one of three competitors with a perfect score at the end of competition. All were moved to the front of the auditorium to sit for a sudden-death tiebreaker.

"We all sat in anxious silence as the girls got to work—it was tense!" notes Zipoli. "Chloe and one of the other competitors raised their hands indicating they had reached solutions at virtually the same instant. Both had the correct answer, though the proctor who fielded the responses accepted the other competi-

#### EIGHT YOUNG WOMEN TRAVELED

to Yale University in January to compete in the second-ever Girls in Math at Yale competition. The group took home top honors at the event.

Conceptualized by the Math Majors of America Tournament for High Schools, Girls in Math at Yale was introduced in the fall of 2018, with the goal of cultivating "a love for math and the sciences in a younger generation and celebrating the diversity that is already present in these fields at the university level." The events include both individual and team components,

"The individual round embodied the best of mathematical combat, old school style, with drama and controversy at every turn."

with teams of four students from across the region competing for top honors. Taft fielded two teams at the January event.

"In two rounds of competition, the Taft mathletes dominated, winning first place in the team round and placing Linh Vu '21 and Chloe Ye '20 in the top five of the individual round," said Math Teacher Joseph Zipoli '84.

tor's answer first. After a brief conference among the organizers, Chloe was awarded second place. It was an incredible finish!"

Congratulations to Julia Kashimura '20, Coco Zhang '20, Anna Serbina '21, Linh Vu '21, Angela Han '20, Catherine Zhao '22, Chloe Ye '20, and Felicia Wang '21 on an exceptional showing.



Honors Model UN students compete in several highprofile conferences during the school year, including the January event at Yale, and a program at Cornell in April.



Essay contest winner and honorable mention delegate Dylan Kim '19.

#### STUDENTS IN HISTORY TEACHER

Model UN

Students Earn

Accolades at Yale

Megan Valenti's Honors Model United Nations class were among the nearly 2,000 delegates from 80 schools and 40 countries to compete in YMUN XLV, the 45th session of the Yale Model United Nations conference. The annual conference invites young scholars to think critically about contemporary global issues, and to develop solutions to world problems from a variety of informed cultural and geopolitical perspectives. Seniors Dylan Kim and Jamal Ahmad earned accolades for their work at the event, with Dylan winning the conference's first-ever essay contest and an honorable mention for his committee work, and Jamal earning outstanding delegate honors for his work representing Mali on a committee exploring economic issues.

"I was very proud to represent Taft well enough to earn an award," says Jamal, "and I really appreciated the opportunity to represent Mali at YMUN as I myself am from a sub-Saharan African nation—Nigeria. Issues I worked on, such as cryptocurrency regulation and beating the poverty trap, have given me a new sense of what it means to truly collaborate when faced with peers who view the situation through their own lens."

Model UN simulates the work done by the United Nations. Student participants become UN delegates who, on various issue-based committees, represent their assigned countries' policies and negotiate resolutions favorable to both their country and the world. Students must bring their best negotiation, diplomacy, public speaking, collaboration, and leadership skills to the table along with a solid understanding of current world affairs. At YMUN XLV, Dylan represented Jordan in the Historical General Assembly.

"My committee addressed the Nicaraguan Revolution," Dylan notes, "putting ourselves in 1981, and working to take steps to ensure that the Nicaraguan people's human rights would be protected. I sponsored a resolution

that addressed the situation."

The complex resolution contained, among many things, language condemning the Sandinistas' infringement of human rights, recognizing the "widespread disapproval of colonialism," examining and defining the role of both the Soviet bloc and the United States, setting deadlines for Sandinistas to halt human rights violations and restore "legitimate political stability," and creating an International Criminal Tribunal to examine possible war crimes. It passed the General Assembly by a vote of 61 for, 10 against, and 4 abstaining.

Dylan also submitted written work in advance as part of the event's first-ever essay contest. In his response to a prompt inviting consideration of international networks in an era of globalization, Dylan argued that the rise of nationalist policies across the globe is a result of the increased globalization of political systems, economic systems, and social perceptions. The essay earned top honors in the competition.

#### Around THE POND



### **Honoring Exceptional Faculty**

FOUR FACULTY MEMBERS WERE RECENTLY HONORED WITH ESTEEMED teaching chair appointments. Congratulations to (from left): Art Teacher Claudia Black, Mary and Robert Stott Chair; English Teacher and Lower Mid Class Dean Robert Campbell '76, Littlejohn Family Chair; Dean of Students, Admissions Officer and History Teacher Mark Traina, Donald Oscarson '47 Master Chair; Dean of Academic Affairs and Mathematics Teacher Jennifer Kenerson, Henry L. Hillman Chair. For a full description of all Taft chairs and faculty honors, visit bit.ly/TaftChairs.

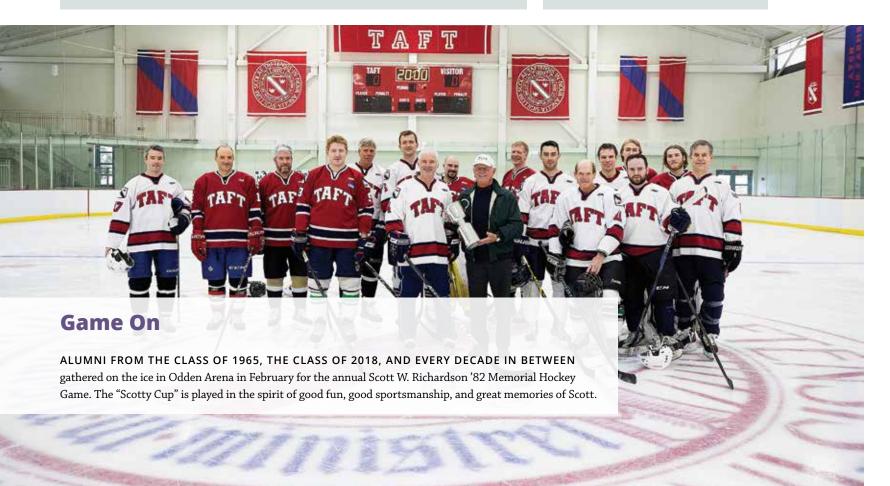


#### A Great and Powerful Welcome

**GUESTS AT THIS YEAR'S WINTER** 

formal, "A Night in Emerald City," may not have seen good witches, flying monkeys, tin men, or scarecrows, but they were welcomed to the City by a Great and Powerful wizard.

Bruce Fifer's familiar face and booming baritone emanated (somewhat eerily) from the building, issuing compliments and a warm welcome to all. Check Taft's Instagram (@taftschool) to see the full effect, and taftphotos.com for images from the night.





#### In the Gallery

THE ANNUAL STUDENT ART SHOW in Potter Gallery opened in February and featured work across mediums, including ceramics, photography, glasswork, painting, and drawing.



#### **Being Potter**

THERE ARE PRECIOUS FEW DAYS EACH

winter when the stars align to bring thick enough ice, warm enough temperatures, and hearty enough souls together to celebrate Potter's Pond in the tradition of its namesake. Mark Winslow Potter '48, the renowned artist who taught at Taft for more than 40 years, loved skating—and a little pond hockey—nearly as much as he loved teaching and creating art.



# Living Out Loud

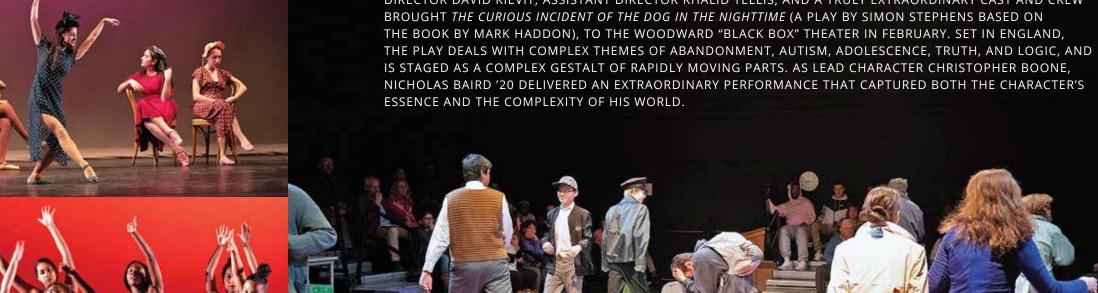
"If you ask me what I came to do in this world, I, an artist, will answer you: I am here to live out loud."

—Émile Zola

THE DANCE ENSEMBLE
WINTER CONCERT
IS ALWAYS ONE OF
THE HIGHLIGHTS OF
PARENTS' WEEKEND.
THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM
FEATURED A BROAD
RANGE OF DANCE
STYLES AND MUSIC
GENRES.











Learn more about the grant recipients and their work by watching the Morning Meeting awards video at bit.ly/RhinoGrants19.



# Student Philanthropists

#### **Support Community Nonprofits**

TAFT'S RED RHINO FUND AWARDED \$8,130 in grants this year to five local nonprofit organizations. It is the largest award total in the fund's history.

"In addition to using the endowment spending-plan funds or draw," says Grants Committee Co-Chair Henry Horne '20. "We also raised the Spring Fling ticket price last year, effectively increasing Fund income and allowing for a more generous grant budget."

The Red Rhino Fund is an endowed, charitable fund run by a nine-member student board with faculty advisors. The board typically sets a budget at the beginning of the academic year, which includes grants and marketing costs on one side, and income generated through events like Denim Day and Spring Fling on the other. The full board reviews and votes on the merits of each organization's application for support. And while fund bylaws preclude any one organization from earning grant dollars in consecutive years, the 2019 grantees did include eligible organizations recognized during prior grant cycles, including the Children's Community School (CCS), a nonprofit organization which provides an educational alternative for low-income families living in the Waterbury area. CCS offers a unique,

high-quality, private education experience, owing largely to its legion of volunteers.

"One of the things that made the great-

est impression on me was the contract that all guardians at the Children's Community School sign," says Grants Committee
Chair Maggie Robertshaw '20, who conducted a site visit at the school as part of the application review process. "The contract is a commitment to be involved in all aspects of school life. It fosters a sense of community that is so important to the school, but also aligns with all that the Red Rhino Fund represents, and with our understanding of the importance of involvement and building community."

CCS will use their grant dollars, Maggie says, to purchase Chromebooks, Chromebook chargers, and carts to house the technology.

"Access to Chromebooks can help limit the digital divide CCS students sometimes face," Maggie notes. "Standardized testing in the state of Connecticut is now done on computers. For students without access to technology, those test results may reflect a lack of digital literacy, rather than intellectual ability. Putting this kind of technology in their hands can help bridge that divide."

Henry visited the Mattatuck Museum during the review process. Located in the

heart of Waterbury, the museum's offerings include programs geared toward local children and families, from Community
Free Days and Black History Month celebration and kick-off events, to Story Time for Toddlers and programs for schools, scouts, and community groups. They welcome nearly 10,000 school children each year, including every third-, fourth- and fifthgrade Waterbury Public School student.

"Our grant will help fund a really interesting and new hands-on learning experience," Henry explains. "Children can look through suitcases filled with historical memorabilia and personal items to learn about different cultures and experiences—they can literally 'unpack history.' It is a great way to learn about immigration and the immigrant experience in the city across its history."

Grants were also awarded to Girls, Inc., Boys and Girls Club of Greater Waterbury, and the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra. In making their awards, the Red Rhino Fund board considers things like the breadth and impact of an organization's reach, their overall mission, and how they plan to spend the grant dollars.

Learn more about the Red Rhino Fund at bit.ly/RedRhino19.

## Welcome New Trustees!

THE TAFT SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES RECENTLY
SEATED THREE NEW MEMBERS: CURRENT PARENT
NANA CHIU, ALUMNA AND CURRENT PARENT KATAMA
GUERNSEY EASTMAN '95, AND ALUMNA AND CURRENT
PARENT JACQUELINE ROSA '82.







#### Nana Chiu P'18.'21

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Nana graduated from Philadelphia University with a B.S. in textile engineering in 1992, and received an EMBA degree from Guanghua School of Management, Peking University, in 2011. After graduating with her B.S., Nana began working in health food production and sales at her family's business. In 1997, she joined the ESCADA Group in Hong Kong, where she worked to develop the fashion market in China.

Nana is currently the CEO for Eagle Wealth Group Co., Ltd. The group's investments include real estate, battery cells, power banks, clean energy, and financial corporates in China. She served as a member of the CPPCC in the Shandong Province of China, as vice chairman of the China Federation of Industry and Commerce Women Entrepreneurs Chamber, and as vice chairman of Belt and Road General Chamber of Commerce, Hong Kong. Nana takes an active role in representing and promoting business between Hong Kong and China in all of these associations. She has also actively devoted herself to various charitable activities in Hong Kong and China.

Nana and her husband, David, have three children; Brian '18 is now a freshman at Wharton, Chris '21 is a sophomore at Taft, and Selina is an 8th-grader studying in Beijing.

### Katama Guernsey Eastman '95, P'22

Katama, the oldest of five children, grew up in Bedford, New York. Following in the footsteps of 11 previous Guernseys—including great-grandfather Otis '12,

grandfather Peter '40, and father Tony '66—Katama enrolled at Taft in the fall of 1991, where she played varsity field hockey, varsity lacrosse, was a dorm monitor her upper-mid and senior years, and graduated with cum laude honors.

Katama graduated from Williams College in 1999 and began a career in fashion as a retail buyer for Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City. In 2001, she and her husband, Jay, moved to London, where she was the buyer for Ralph Lauren's menswear division in Europe. After the birth of their daughter, Merrill, in the summer of 2003, the Eastmans returned to New York.

Merrill was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in the fall of 2004, plunging Katama into the world of research, advocacy, investing, and prevention. She joined the board of the New York/Long Island chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) in 2004 and is now chapter president. Katama chairs the Children's Congress, which lobbies senators and congressmen on the Hill for diabetes research funding. She and Jay also co-chair the advisory board of the Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, and were early investors and sponsors in the T1D Fund, a first-ever venture philanthropy fund dedicated to investing in diabetes related businesses.

Katama and her husband, along with two other families, recently bought, renovated, and reopened a historic inn and restaurant in Peru, Vermont, called Johnny Seesaw's. She is also a yoga instructor, and mother of four—Merrill '22, Jack, Oliver, and Otis. The entire Eastman family loves the outdoors,

and enjoys skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, camping, playing golf, and riding bikes.

#### Jacqueline Rosa '82, P'22

Jacqueline began her career as a marketing manager for Creative Games International (CGI). During her eight-year tenure at CGI, Jacqueline negotiated gaming contracts for international governments. During that time, she made her home in a number of foreign countries, including Mexico, Japan, Hungary, and Russia.

Jacqueline transitioned to Wall Street where she spent 12 years at Morgan Stanley, first as head of their Global Supplier
Diversity Program and later becoming cohead of their global diversity and inclusion initiatives. After Morgan Stanley, Jacqueline became managing director and global head of supplier diversity at JPMorgan Chase and was appointed the global head of branding and communications for strategic sourcing.

She was featured in *Hispanic Executive* magazine for her work in the supplier diversity industry and made their "Top 10 Lideres" list. Jacqueline has served on several boards including the U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce, the Women's Business Enterprise National Council, and the National Veteran-Owned Business Association.

Jacqueline most recently served as interim president of the National Hispanic Business Group, an organization dedicated to closing the racial wealth divide.

She has dedicated her career to living the Taft motto, *Non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret*. Jacqueline and husband, Victor Brown, live in Montclair, New Jersey, with their daughter, Susannah '22.



#### Shear **Benevolence**

#### TAFT STUDENTS SHAVED THEIR

heads and cut their hair in February to benefit two charities serving children with cancer. Sponsorship dollars for the bold shavers go directly to the St. Baldrick's Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to funding promising research into cures for childhood cancers. Those snipping ponytails sent them to Children With Hair Loss, a nonprofit organization offering no-cost, human hair replacements to children and young adults facing medically-related hair loss.



#### In the Swim

SCIENCE TEACHER CARLY BORKEN spent three months initiatives last winter working on Taft's new aquatic biomes center, which replaces the old fish tank in Wu lobby. The center incorporates three tanks representing three distinct aquatic biomes: tropical freshwater rivers, coral reefs, and tropical estuaries. As the center relies on sustainable aquarium protocols, all of the fish and corals are captive bred or aquacultured. More organ-

isms will be added as the tanks mature. Special thanks to Angus and Leslie Littlejohn

P'03,'05 and Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 who helped make this project possible.



#### Think Globally, **Act Locally**

#### TAFT'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Institute (GLI) is a cocurricular program that brings students from Taft and Waterbury public schools together for shared learning about world problems. The current cohort of GLI Scholars recently toured Waterbury's 17-acre Anamet property with Mayor Neil M. O'Leary. Once the largest producer of metal hose in the world and a huge employer in the city of Waterbury, Anamet closed in 2000, and its property has fallen into disrepair. The state of Connecticut gave the city \$2.1 million to aid with the redevelopment of the property, which involves soil remediation and demolition.



THE CURRENT COHORT OF TAFT'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (GLI) SCHOLARS RECENTLY TOURED WATERBURY'S 17-ACRE ANAMET PROPERTY WITH MAYOR NEIL M. O'LEARY.

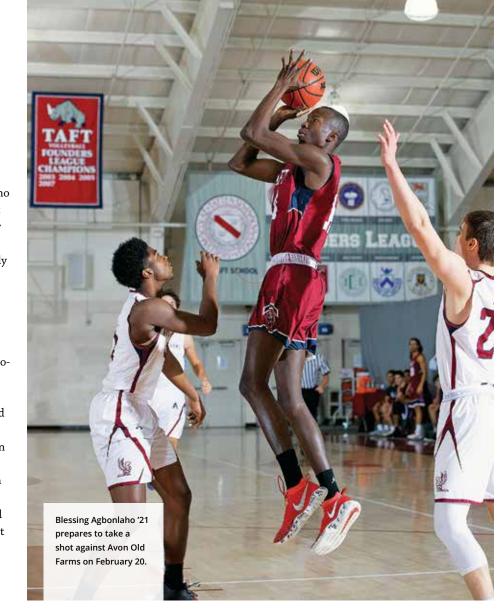


Once the largest producer of metal hose in the world and a huge employer in the city of Waterbury, Anamet closed in 2000, and its property has fallen into disrepair. The state of Connecticut gave the city \$2.1 million to aid with the redevelopment of the property, which involves soil remediation and demolition. (Also see Around the Pond page 28.)



#### Girls' Basketball 14-8

Since four of last year's starting five were seniors, this year's girls' varsity basketball team needed contributions from players who saw little action last year. And the team got just that: senior co-captain Maggie O'Leary stuck 25 3-pointers; Anna Csigirinszkij '19 contributed 4.5 points per game and reliably heady play off the bench; upper mid and rising co-captain Anna Koziol '20 averaged 6 points per contest; and lower mid Eliza Ford '22 netted nearly 5 points per game in limited action. Less surprising was the double-digit scoring of middler and rising cocaptain Natalie Hodak '21, who pumped in 10.7 a game from her point guard position. But even considering the team's unexpected 14–8 finish—including wins over Exeter, Hotchkiss, Deerfield, and Kent-and return appearance in the Class A New England Tournament as a #6 seed, senior co-captain Kayla Robinson's play highlighted the season. Robinson, who averaged 15 points and 11 rebounds and will play at Haverford next year, joined Katie McCabe '04 as the only other member of Taft basketball's 1,000 point club when she hit a corner jumper against Miss Porter's on February 19.



#### **KAYLA ROBINSON '19 Makes History with 1,000th Career Point**

THIS WINTER KAYLA ROBINSON '19 did something that only one other Rhino has done in the 129-year history of the Taft School—Kayla hit her 1,000th career point during Taft's February 19 win (53-35) over Miss Porter's School.

"I was so excited! We had been counting down since the beginning of the season when I was only at 724 points," says Kayla. "It was a lot of pressure being so close to 1,000 and so near the end of the season, but I'm so relieved that I made it, and happy it was a home game so that I could celebrate with the Taft community as well as my friends and family."

Since 1979—when Taft's girls' team

entered the competitive mix—only one other player, Katie McCabe '04, had reached the 1,000-point milestone.

"Kayla's historic accomplishment reflects her physical and mental toughness, and her work ethic, as much as it does her skill and athleticism," says Head Girls' Varsity Coach Jon Willson '82.

Kayla is headed to Haverford College next year, where she will compete with both the basketball and track and field teams. Her 1,000th point was just icing on the cake of a storied Taft career.

"I am so grateful to everyone who supported me throughout my time here," says Kayla.

#### Boys' Basketball 10-13

Taft finished the season winning three of their last four games and had many shining moments throughout the winter. One of those final victories came while the Big Red were drastically undermanned, dressing only seven players. The Rhinos played a disciplined and highly technical game to beat an extremely talented, playoff-bound Loomis Chaffee team (63-49). Other key wins came against Belmont Hill (67-66), Nobles (50-48), and Trinity-Pawling (41-27). For much of the year, Taft fought roster changes and lacked depth, but that did not prohibit the squad from competing with New England's best teams. Taft lost to rivals Hotchkiss (#3 seed in the New England playoffs) by just two points in an overtime thriller. A buzzer-beating win over Kingswood (54–53) prompted a flood of Taft students onto the

#### Winter sports

Cruikshank Gymnasium floor in January, as did a decisive home win over Deerfield following long weekend. Captains Tyler Arbuckle '19 and Connor Printz '19 were a dynamic duo all year long. The two were the only players to average double figures in scoring (18.1 and 13.2 ppg respectively) and were both top three in assists, rebounds, and steals. Arbuckle recorded two 40-point games, a feat that has only been accomplished a few times in Taft basketball history.

#### Boys' Hockey 10-10-2 LAWRENCEVILLE TOURNAMENT **CHAMPIONS**

This year's team had much to celebrate. Winning the D'Arco Cup versus Berkshire, taking home the Erdmann Trophy from winning the Lawrenceville Tournament, and not one but two overtime wins versus rival Hotchkiss were highlights of the season. Other big wins game against

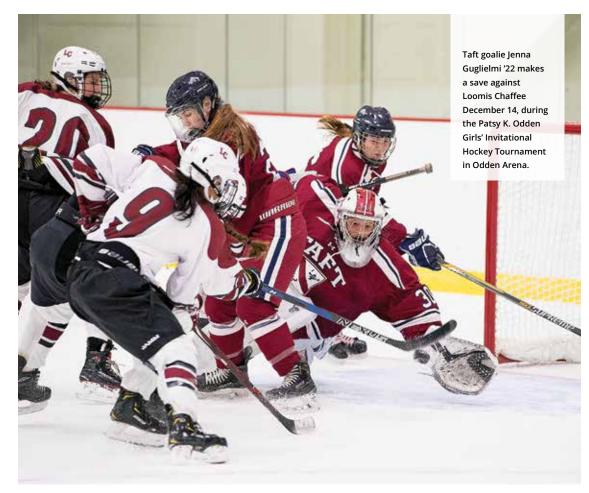
tournament-bound Northfield Mount Hermon (4–1), Loomis (4–1), and Choate (5–1). The Rhinos were led by two-year captain Billy Dobensky '19 and a committed senior class. Dennis Franklin '19 and Ryan Colwell '19 were honored as Founders All-League selections, and seniors Finn Walker '19 and Peter Kenerson '19 were awarded the Coach's Award, and Dobensky won the Angier Hockey Award. Thomas McAleer '19 and Andrew Ebersol '19 jumped into NEPSAC hockey as PGs and immediately impacted the team with strong goaltending and defensive prowess. Next year's team will be led by tri-captains Christian Jimenez '20, Zack Tonelli '20, and Tristan Fasig '20.

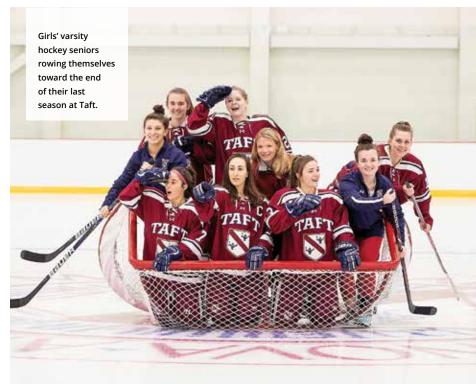
#### Girls' Hockey 11-11-1

After graduating eight seniors, the Taft Rhinos looked to continue their growth, building on the momentum they gained last season. While the team fell short of

repeating a berth in the New England playoffs, they earned some key wins against several talented teams, including league rivals Loomis (3-2), Choate (5-2), Berkshire (6-3), and Westminster (3-1). Senior Morgan Trimper '19 led in scoring with 15 goals and 11 assists, followed by Kristina Cornelio '20, with 10 goals and seven assists. Lower mid goalie Jenna Guglielmi '22 was solid in net and Claudia Vira '19, who returned as a postgraduate, once again anchored the defense, emerging as one of the top defensive players in the New England Prep School League and was named to the NEPSAC Honorable Mention Team, as voted on by league coaches. Captain Shannon Bucci '19 and Ally Trimper '19 were named Founders All-League players, and Patsy K. Odden Hockey Award winners were Morgan Trimper and Claudia Vira. The Rhinos bids farewell to nine seniors, but look to remain solid with a strong core of returning players, led by captains-elect Kristina Cornelio '20 and Olivia King '20.









#### WINTER **ATHLETIC AWARDS**

#### **Boys' Varsity Basketball**

James Paynter Logan Memorial Basketball Trophy Connor Printz '19

#### **Girls' Varsity Basketball**

1978 Girls' Varsity Basketball Cup Maggie O'Leary '19 Kayla Robinson '19

#### **Boys' Varsity Hockey**

Coach's Hockey Award Peter Kenerson '19 Finn Walker '19

**Angier Hockey Trophy** Billy Dobensky '19

#### **Girls' Varsity Hockey**

Patsy Odden Hockey Award Claudia Vira '19 Morgan Trimper '19

#### Skiing

Boys' Ski Racing Award Max Fossland '19

Girls' Ski Racing Award Abby Ford '19

#### **Boys' Varsity Squash**

Boys' Squash Award Peter Keigher '19 Raunak Advani '19

#### **Girls' Varsity Squash**

1986 Girls' Squash Award Aariya Patel '19 Eliza King Freedman '19

#### Wrestling

Harry F. Hitch Wrestling Award Kelvin Welbeck '20

John L. Wynne Wrestling Award Chase Harper '19

#### Winter sports

#### Boys' Squash 9-4

The Rhinos finished with a 9–4 regular season record, 16th in the Division I National Championship, and 7th in the New England Class A tournament. Taft was led by a strong senior class this season, #2 Sanjeev Jeyabalan '19, #3 Raunak Advani '19, #5 Peter Keigher '19, #6 Hunter Lord '19, #8 Rex Riefler '19, and #9 Gus

Harper '19. Highlights included wins against rival Hotchkiss (4–3), when Keigher came through in the deciding match, St. Pauls (4–3), and a tough 4–3 loss to a very strong Avon team. Advani placed 4th in the #3 flights at New Englands. The team next year will be led by captains #1 Marwan ElBorolossy '21 and #7 Peter Denious '20, as well as returners #4 Jesse Sarfo Brew '22, and #10 Teddy Schoenholtz '21.



#### Girls' Squash 9-5

Lead this year by co-captains and returners Aariya Patel '19 and Eliza King Freedman '19, the team was composed of four more returners, Nina Brockelman '19, Tiffany Tam '20, Carolina Salvatore '21, and Sadie Pollack '21, and three new players Lulu Bradley '21, Annabel Pick '22, and Julissa Mota '22. The Rhinos were excited to defeat Hotchkiss twice this season and also to take down Hopkins, Westminster, and Miss Porter's, all 7-0. Competing against top teams in the country in the Division II High School Nationals, Taft defeated a Greenwich Academy team in the first round before losing tight matches to Germantown Friends, St. Catherine's, and Andover to finish in 8th place. In Division A of the New Englands, the Rhinos did not have as much team success, finishing 14th, but had individual successes with Brockelman winning three of her five matches to place 9th in the 5th flight, and Tam, Salvatore, and Pollack each winning two matches during the weekend to place 11th, 13th, and 13th in the #6, #2, and #3 flights respectively. Taft looks toward many returning players next season and will be captained by Salvatore and Pollack.

### Wrestling 7-8

The 7-8 record was largely the product of a smaller roster than in recent years. While Taft was able to notch victories over Canterbury, Williston, and Salisbury, the Rhino wrestlers typically gave up several forfeits at the higher and lower weights, making victories against teams with full rosters difficult. Nevertheless, most Taft wrestlers finished the year with individual winning records, including Gavin Pintro '20 (15-7 at 126 lbs.), Austin Omala '21 (10-5, 5th place at Westerns at 138 lbs.), Kelvin Welbeck '20 (15-5, 6th place at Westerns at 152 lbs.), Jacob Rooks '21 (7-3, 4th place at Westerns at 160 lbs.), Sean Cummings '20 (10-5 at 170 lbs.), and Elijah Cohen '21 (10-6, 4th place at Westerns at 195 lbs.).



All of these wrestlers will be returning next year, which should allow for the team to build towards a strong 2019–20 season.

#### **Alpine Skiing**

The varsity alpine ski teams both had a solid season this winter. The young team, led by captains Abby Ford '19 and Max Fossland '19—both significant four year contributors to the team—had great success at the New Englands, particularly for the girls who placed second in the Class B New England Championships. Taft hosted the New Englands Prep School Championships at Ski Sundown on a beautiful February day, and both teams made the best of the home hill advantage. The girls skied well, with Logan Clew-Bachrach '20 and Abby Ford earning All New England honors in giant slalom, and Ford in slalom. The boys finished in fourth place, led by Fossland, who earned All New England honors in both slalom and giant slalom. The team had equally good success in the Brigham Ski League, with the boys placing 3rd and the girls 8th of 15 teams. The team will miss seniors Ford, Fossland, Collin Amelsberg, Piper Forstl, and Jake Marx and are excited for their returning group who look to continue the strong performances of the team over the last several years.







(previous page) "Some trees are natural monuments. This button mangrove in Jamaica has been around for more than a century, and it has even inspired local poets," Fernandez says.

One of the first images of Anolis *eladioi* ever taken in Sierra de Bahoruco National Park, in the Dominican Republic, and named for photographer Eladio Fernandez.

Fernandez taking a break during a demanding hike to one of Haiti's last fragments of primary forest.

### Meet Anolis eladioi.

This unassuming green-brown lizard with a whiplike tail and a speckled throat pouch was named for its discoverer, nature photographer Eladio Fernandez '85, who has become one of the world's experts on the flora and fauna of the Caribbean. He and his camera travel throughout the region, documenting endangered species that are at risk of disappearing.

Fernandez is now working on a documentary series, Island Naturalist, which he is filming in his homeland of the Dominican Republic, and also in Haiti and other Caribbean countries.

When asked what drew him to nature photography and conservation, he says, "Initially it was the thrill of hunting with a camera. I wanted to see how many birds, reptiles, orchids, etc. I could amass.

"Later I saw the need for imagery that could give faces to many animals and plants that were unknown by the public and deserved protection," he says. "Surprisingly the Caribbean is only thought of as beautiful beaches, sun, and turquoise-colored waters, when in fact it holds a huge diversity of plants, animals, and habitats."

Fernandez made it his mission to concentrate on portraying the natural heritage of the Greater Antilles instead of dispersing himself in distant parts of the world that probably have already received enough exposure from other colleagues, he says.

In 2007, he published his first photography book, Hispaniola: A Photographic Journey Through Island Biodiversity (Harvard University Press) with a prologue by Pulitzer Prize winner E.O. Wilson.

Fernandez fell into the current video project by accident. "A friend (turned producer), Jake Kheel, asked me to help him out with a photo shoot for a magazine. We went to one of my favorite locations in the Dominican Republic, Sierra de Bahoruco."

"While we were there, I kept getting distracted with a plant, a lizard, or whatever else was around. Jake was impressed with the amount of information I was providing for each particular thing along the trail that day—things he would have ignored otherwise,"

The eight-episode series will cover a range of subjects and environmental situations in the Caribbean region. The idea is to provoke the viewer, and there will be a call to action for those who want to become part of the solution at the end of each episode, he says.

"Subjects range from how Bahamas generates \$80 million a year from shark tourism, and fishermen in the Dominican Republic continue to hunt them for food, to rescuing a critically endangered magnolia species from one of Haiti's last fragments of primary forest so we can help a terminally-ill conservationist fulfill his dream," he adds.











(previous page) Selfie shot of Fernandez with a whale shark in Isla Mujeres, Mexico. Every summer hundreds of whale sharks aggregate near the coast of Isla Mujeres to feed on bonito eggs.

Culture is also endangered in the Caribbean Islands, so Fernandez has been trying to document and film "cimarron carnival" traditions such as this one from the town of Cabral in hopes of creating a new interest in preserving them.

Having fun and creating lasting friendships with the local communities is an important part of the conservation effort. Cresida is an affectionate powerful leader among the farmers who live around the Grand Bois nature reserve.

Painted men from one of the best carnivals on the island of Hispaniola, Haiti's Kanaval Jacmel.

An image of two broad-billed todies (Todus subulatus) from Fernandez's first book, Hispaniola: A Photographic Journey Through Island Biodiversity.



### The reaction

Fernandez and the film crew get when researching subjects has been varied. "Dominicans love having their photograph taken so it has not been a problem there—even by those who are committing environmental infractions," he says.

"Haiti is another story, as a lot of people there don't like to be photographed or filmed. This requires us to spend some time obtaining people's trust first."

Though he has only taken one photography course (while a student at Taft), his love of nature goes back to childhood. "Since I was a kid, I've always liked animals, horseback riding, and the outdoors in general," Fernandez says. "It wasn't until I finished college and went back to the Dominican Republic that I started going hiking and birdwatching.

"A group of friends would often trek to Pico Duarte, the highest point in the Caribbean, and I started to join their hiking trips. Birds are one of the most charismatic groups of animals in the DR, so I bought a field guide and started to observe them every time we went on these trips," he says. "When I tried describing some of the birds I saw, I became aware that no one knew them, and in fact, my friends wouldn't even believe my descriptions.

"That triggered my next move, which was to buy a camera and a 300mm f4 lens. It was enough of a telephoto lens that made it possible for me to have my first photography exhibit called Aves (Birds) in a local gallery," he says. "At the time there were no specialized bird photographers in the Dominican Republic. Today we have a couple of bird photography clubs that are giving me a run for my money."





### Over time,

Fernandez became interested in other fields of nature photography: landscapes, flora, man's relationship with the environment, and more. Each discipline within nature photography requires learning a separate set of skills using the camera.

"My favorite images are very different from the ones the public prefers," he says. "People love landscapes or images that portray someone that is part of a story. Some people have their preferred groups of plants and animals and love images for those reasons.

"My favorite images are those that have a story of hardship behind them, or perhaps a sense of accomplishment because it is the first image taken of a particular flower since its discovery," he notes. "It might not be something special in terms of light or composition, but the stories of what I went through to make them is what gives them value for me and make them my favorites."

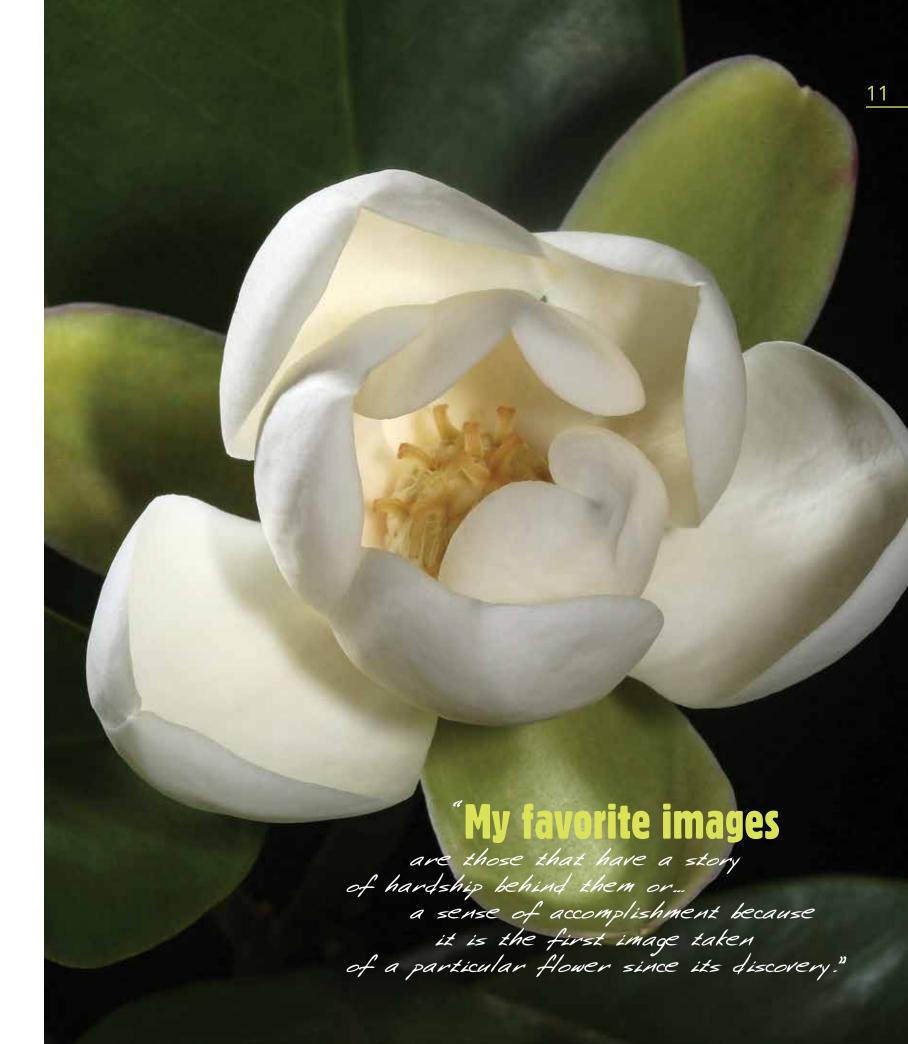
While he's known as a conservation photographer, he also is doing scientific work. For example, he is a coauthor with colleagues from Harvard of an article about several new species found on Hispaniola with the help of his photography.

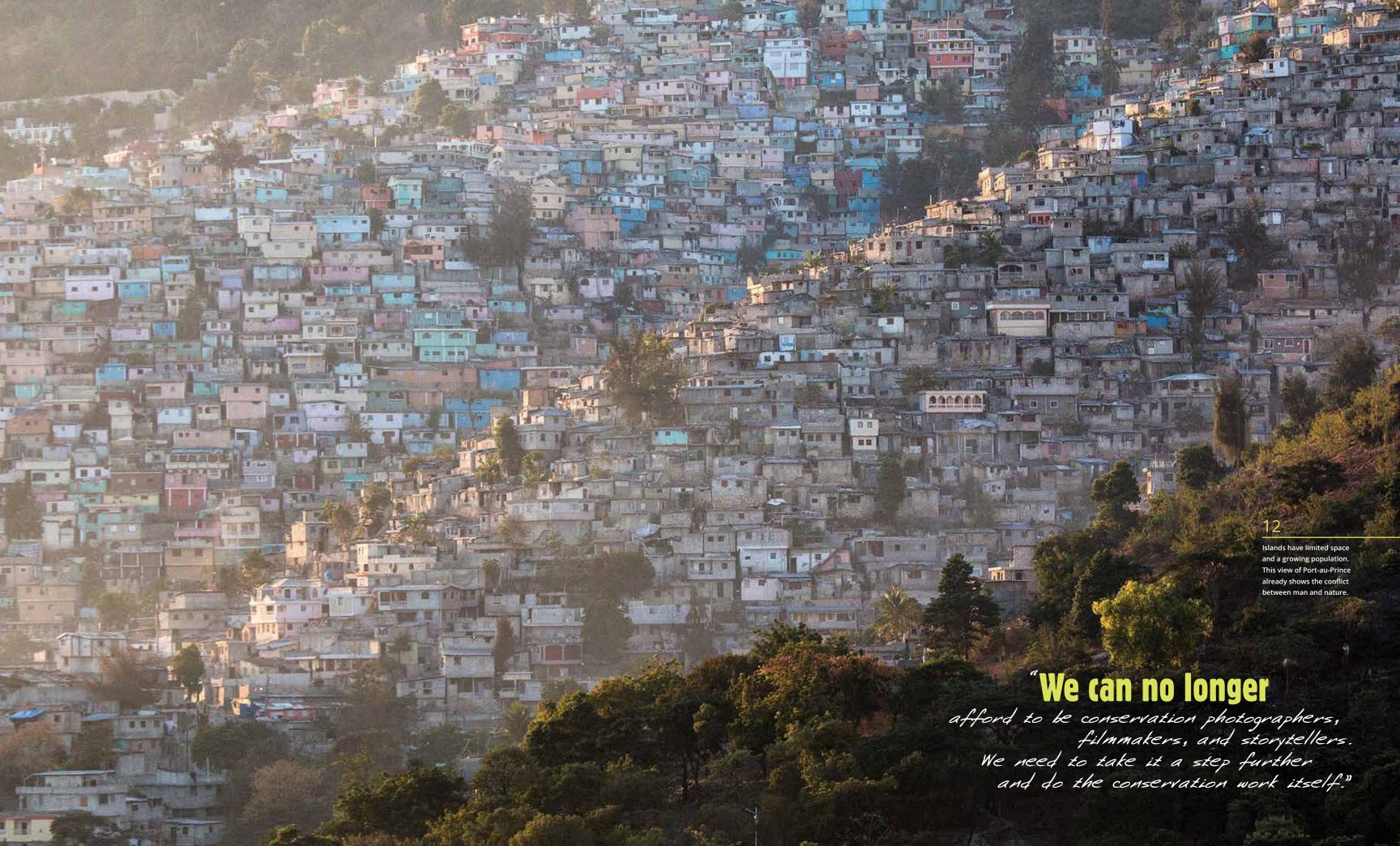
Fernandez is encouraged about the growing awareness of the need to protect native species in the Caribbean. "Twenty or 15 years ago people in the Dominican Republic were not as aware of conservation issues," he says. "That is not the case today.

"Living on islands with limited space and resources leaves us with no choice but to be highly concerned with managing and conserving spaces and resources that will ensure the future of our nations.

Sebastian Cabrera, director of photography and cameraman for the documentary series Island Naturalist, filming Fernandez while documenting a charcoal kiln in Grand Bois, Haiti. Grand Bois is the first private nature reserve in Haiti, and it holds one of the last fragments of primary forest left. Charcoal production is one of the threats to this 2-square kilometers of pristine habitat.

Fernandez has been working for more than 2 decades with Fundacion Progressio to help preserve the endangered Magnolia pallescens in the Dominican Republic.







Aristolochia passiflorifolia is one of the pipe vine species from Cuba that is part of the study that Fernandez is currently conducting in the Greater Antilles.

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Mother and calf humpback whales in the Silver Bank of the Dominican Republic.



### "Every island

in the Caribbean has its own conservation story. Conservation laws in Cuba get enforced, thanks to an authoritarian regime. Haiti has a huge deforestation problem and is undergoing mass extinctions of flora and fauna. Dominican Republic has preserved a third of its territory as protected areas (at least on paper), thanks to the political decisions of a past president who considered preserving nature a national priority. But the current governments have horrible environmental policies," says Fernandez.

"Puerto Rico has a small territory, but the U.S. enforces laws that protect important areas and forests. Jamaica is currently under economic hardship, and its politicians are trying to kick-start the economy again by expanding mining and leasing protected areas for ports. The story goes on and on."

He's discouraged when he sees governments not valuing the importance of protecting the environment, however.

"Nature provides our most basic needs: food, water, and housing," he says. "Wherever you are sitting, look at what surrounds you—everything comes from a

natural resource. Instead of keeping nature at the center of all political policies, it has been relegated to the side.

"Instead, governments dedicate huge amounts of their budgets to education, health care—all important things when it comes to human beings, but they seem secondary when you don't have access to drinking water," he says. "Water may not be of any concern in developed countries, but it is a huge issue in developing countries."

Fernandez's commitment to and passion for his Caribbean region is deep. And it's lived out in his work and his words.

"We can no longer afford to be conservation photographers, filmmakers, and storytellers. We need to take it a step further and do the conservation work itself," he says.

"We now have to be part of the story. The planet can no longer afford people on it who are not paying rent. Everyone needs to get involved by volunteering and giving back to a cause. The Taft motto is more relevant today than ever."

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

The documentary series, Island Naturalist, will be released and shown in fall 2019 in the Dominican Republic, followed by an eight-episode series to be available on one of the streaming platforms.



it's not easy being

FIVE ALUMS WITH VISION LEAD THE WAY

by Neil Vigdor '95



Far left: Alastair Smith '05, at left, and PowerGen Kenya employee Jay Ituli working on the installation of distribution lines and lighting poles in 2015.

Left: The power system for Kickstart Kids International, an organization supporting orphans and vulnerable children, installed by PowerGen in 2013.

# empowering a continent

# **ALASTAIR SMITH '05** BUILDS COMMUNITY MICROGRIDS

lastair Smith '05 went way off the grid after graduating from Harvard—to Africa—far from family, friends, and creature comforts.

But \$10-a-night hostels to begin with and spotty electricity in his apartment in Lagos, Nigeria, were a small price to pay to bring electricity to the developing world.

Since 2010, Smith has been building renewable energy power systems, including community microgrids, initially harnessing the power of wind and then the sun to help bring modern amenities to Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. He is cofounder and the head of the Nigeria office of PowerGen Renewable Energy, which is revolutionizing an untapped market on a continent where 500 million people don't have electricity.

A boarding school in Tanzania is among

the many beneficiaries of the company's work. "They've never had light before in the evenings at their school," Smith says. "It really does change their life and their world. It really is a great sight to behold."

The engineering major did a thesis on building a wind turbine during his senior year at Harvard and then joined a friend in Africa later that year. They worked with schools and health clinics to build renewable energy power systems.

"After about two months, I realized I could build a small wind turbine locally for about 50 percent of the cost of one imported," Smith says.

A massive drop in solar energy prices shook up the market in 2011, however.

"It essentially made small wind uneconomic," he says. "We started to see the changing of the tide. It's better to have a



First dark moment on the day after commissioning of one of PowerGen's first microgrids in the village of Ololailumtia in Kenya's Maasai Mara in 2014.



Smith with a power system—
including lead-acid batteries, an
inverter, solar charge-controller, and
more—housed in a 20-foot container
with a solar PV array on top, during
commissioning of a project for Philips
that included installing 10-meter
poles and LED lights for a soccer field
in Western Kenya outside of Kisumu.

diversified generation source, especially when dealing with renewable energy, as you're depending on the environment."

The burgeoning company started selling power on a kilowatt basis and building solar microgrids. Financing for the business, which now has 140 employees, came from U.S. seed investors and family friends, and project finance came from crowdsourcing campaigns and humanitarian aid organizations.

"You're basically dealing with two different worlds," Smith says. "It's been a great experience in seeing a completely different culture and perspective on values, especially in Africa. There's an interesting juxtaposition of wealth and poverty, especially in Nairobi, Kenya."

It wasn't easy transitioning to life in Africa. "I think I always remember the first few months that I moved to Nairobi. We didn't know anybody," Smith says. "We just lived in a hostel for \$10 a day. It was a really good way to get us to know the city. We didn't have computers."

Direct flights from the U.S. to Africa are few and far between. "That's been one of the acclimations to living over

here—you're just not close to a number of people you care about," he says. "I never expected to be here this long. Initially, it was more of fascination. Whenever my friends would say, 'When are you coming home?' I would say, 'six months."

Smith's work is not without risk. He helped build a solar-powered water pumping system in Dadaab, which is home to 235,000 refugees on the border of

Kenya and Somalia. The UN base is the third-largest refugee camp in the world. Humanitarian groups typically discourage visits by civilians because of the threat of terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab.

"It's one of those things that oftentimes I think about what needs to get done and the work that needs to happen, and I don't reflect on things as much as I probably should," Smith says.



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They've never had light before in the evenings at their school. It really does change their life and their world. It really is a great sight to behold.

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Ann Magnin '76 next to a customer's shopping cart loaded with plastic bags, which inspired her group, Skip the Plastic Norwalk, to work toward a ban, which goes into effect in July.

# minding the store

### **ANN MAGNIN '76** IS LEADING THE CRUSADE AGAINST SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS

ven the Land of Steady Habits, as Connecticut is often referred to, is capable of change.

Just ask Ann Magnin '76, who helped convince the Common Council in her city, Norwalk, to adopt a ban on single-use plastic bags. Businesses that violate the ordinance, which passed in January, face a \$100 fine for a first offense and a \$250 fine for each repeat offense.

The public relations specialist and cofounder of the group Skip the Plastic Norwalk isn't stopping there, however. Not with a number of other municipalities looking to follow suit and the state

under new Governor Ned Lamont moving to disincentivize the use of plastic bags.

"Some people say, 'Well there are retailers where you can return your plastic bag.' That's not really the solution," Magnin says. "It's refusing plastic in the first place and cutting it off at the source. Recycling is not the answer."

Magnin is trying to educate both consumers and policymakers about the environmental threats posed by plastic bags and straws, which have been blamed for a pair of giant debris fields in the Pacific Ocean. Closer to home, they are polluting Long Island Sound.



While a number of retailers tout the recyclability of their plastic, Magnin says that most communities are not equipped to handle those materials. At one point, Trader Joe's in neighboring Darien, for example, claimed its cornbased plastic bags were biodegradable in 90 days, which Magnin disputes.

"They're essentially the same as plastic," Magnin says. "I think the more we're able to raise awareness, the better. People simply don't know. They're just not aware."

What started as a Facebook conversation

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The solution...is refusing plastic in the first place and cutting it off at the source. Recycling is not the answer.



RICH CAREY/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**PLEASE** An important first step in reducing If you forget to bring reusable Norwalk's plastic footprint, shopping bags, merchants will have paper ones available for purchase plastic checkout bags DONATE for 10e each. will no longer be available in Norwalk YOUR stores as of July 8, 2019. REUSABLE **SHOPPING** BAGS Please no plastic disposable bags for Norwalk food pantries THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION skiptheplasticnorwalk.org

about the amount of trash produced in New York City, where Magnin runs an eponymous PR firm, blossomed into a grassroots campaign to ban single-use plastic bags in her own community.

"I help a lot with the messaging," Magnin says. "Everyone's working hard to reduce plastic pollution. It's a landfill issue and an incinerator issue."

Just because the group opposes plastic bags, doesn't mean that its advocating for consumers to use paper bags, Magnin says. In Norwalk, the city's ban allows retailers to charge 10 cents for more costly alternatives such as paper bags.

"We're advocating for reusable,"
Magnin says. "Paper has its own issues."
At the Capitol in Hartford, lawmak-

At the Capitol in Hartford, lawmakers are weighing a 10-cent per plastic bag surcharge proposed by the governor.

Magnin says Norwalk's ban would still stand if the surcharge is approved by the legislature unless the state passes something that explicitly overrides local law.

Norwalk's plastic bag ordinance stopped short of banning plastic straws, but that doesn't mean straws are getting a pass from conservationists like Magnin and environmentally conscious businesses.

"We did kick off Skip the Straw," she says. "There were a number of local restaurants that were only providing straws upon request or have already made the switch to paper."

Magnin traces her environmental activism to her upbringing in San Francisco.

"I grew up with the idea of drought and water conservation," she says. "Conserving resources and protecting our planet is really important to me." A poster that Skip the Plastic Norwalk uses on its donation boxes at locations around the city where people can drop off reusable bags for those in need. GRAPHICS, TFI ENVISION, INC.

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Right: These small oysters, raised indoors during earlier stages, will be market size by this summer, Pryor says.

Opposite page: Tap Pryor '49, owner of Maine Shellfish Developers, with Production Manager Liam Fisher, at their indoor tank (raceway), where seedling oysters are grown.



# beyond the sea

# **TAP PRYOR '49** PIONEERS LAND-BASED OYSTER FARMING

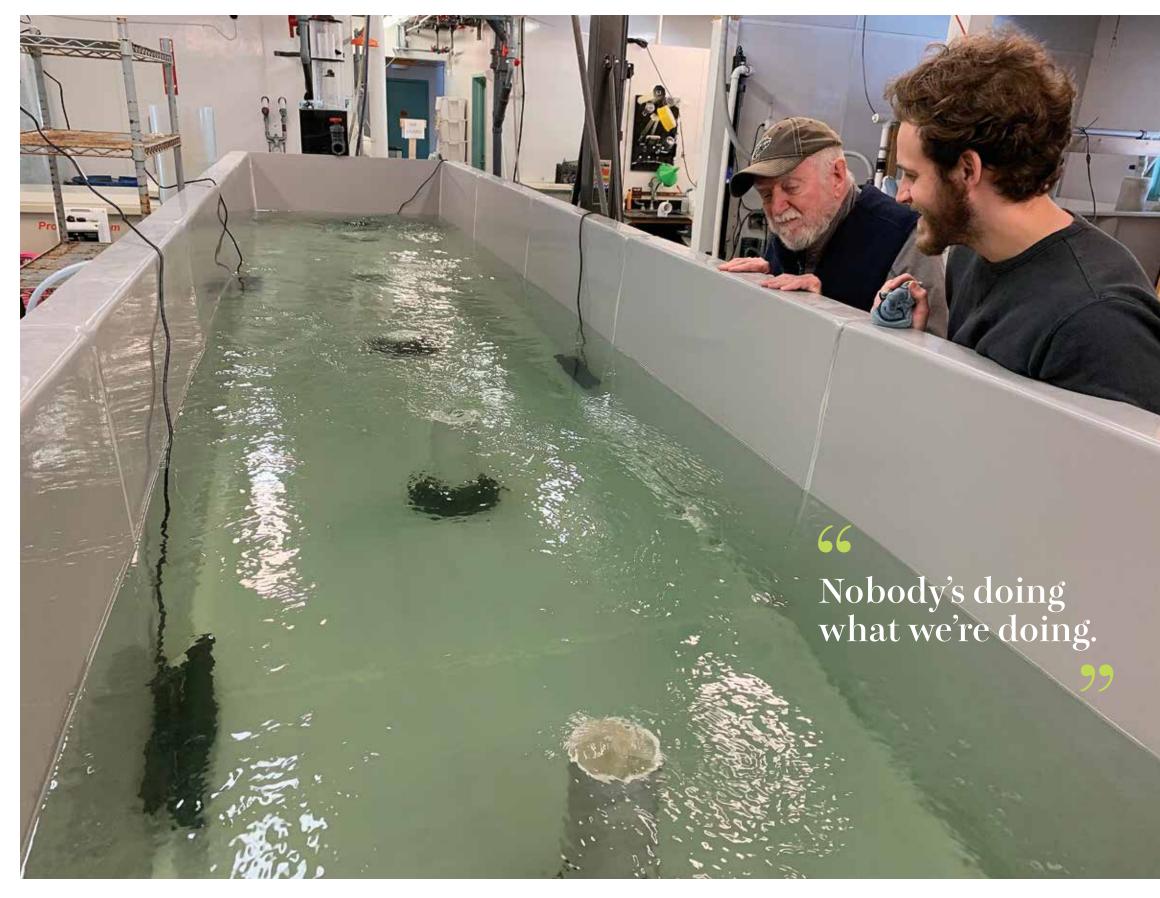
ap Pryor has salt water in his veins. It comes from 50 years of harvesting oysters, the briny delicacy treasured all over the globe, from the exotic South Pacific to the rocky shoreline of Maine.

But you won't find the 87-year-old marine biologist, aquaculturist, and entrepreneur in waders or in the muck.

What started off as an experiment in 1971 has turned into a cottage industry for Pryor: on-land and indoors oyster farming. "You're in shirtsleeves year-round," Pryor says. "Here in Maine, why can't we grow them year-round?"

Pryor is cofounder of Maine Shellfish Developers in the fishing resort town of Waldoboro, where the small business has taken over a large warehouse for its aquaculture venture. Inside, Pryor uses a proprietary feed formula for farming large numbers of oysters in a 60-foot-by-60-foot room protected from environmental changes and other threats.

The process takes about nine







Pryor enjoying oysters his firm has raised.

### [With on-land aquaculture] you're in shirtsleeves year-round. Here in Maine, why can't we grow oysters year-round?

months, compared to two to three years for near-shore oyster farming. Pryor adds well water, imported salt, calcium, and manganese to the feed.

"When we harvest them, they are fat because they have been growing 24/7 for all those months," Pryor says. "It's largely the result of warm water and continuous production for the whole time. They spend a lot of energy making shells."

The cocktail-size oysters, known as Eastern or Atlantic oysters, then get sent to local near-shore estuaries for two weeks finishing.

"The oyster picks up the local flavor profile and salinity profile right away," he says. "The flavor is inconsequential when it leaves our warehouse."

In contrast to Pryor's operation, the typical offshore harvesting season only goes from July through October in Maine. Oysters raised offshore face a myriad of threats, from viruses to red tide, an algae bloom that can deplete oxygen in the water and release toxins.

Then, there's the red tape associated with environmental permitting. One of Pryor's offshore counterparts has spent \$100,000 on permitting and gone through three public hearings and still had not received approval yet, he says. Pryor got his permit to farm oysters indoors in less than a month and at no cost.

"Coastal landowners are very vigorous opponents of aquaculture in Maine," Pryor says.

After being stationed in Hawaii as a Marine aviator, Pryor went on to study marine biology at the University of Hawaii. He spent 30 years in Hawaii and 20 years in the Cook Islands in the South Pacific. Now, he's been in Maine for nine years. "I left the



pearl farming behind," Pryor says wryly.

Oysters are big business in their own right. Close to two million oysters are harvested from a single room in a year, according to Pryor, who has been recognized by groups such as the United Nations for his innovation. In 1982, at the German European Food Fair, he won the outstanding food product award.

"Nobody's doing what we're doing," he says.

For Pryor, oysters are not simply an acquired taste. "You're missing a gourmet experience," he says.



Above: Maine Shellfish Developers solar-powered oyster-growing facility in Waldoboro, Maine.

Left: Pryor pioneered land-based oyster farming in Hawaii circa 1980.

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Architect James Rice '87 of Firstfloor Energy Positive, during filming of a video, explains the school's lighting and solar power to students and their teacher in their energy-positive building, which generates more electricity than it consumes.

# new school of thought

JAMES RICE '87 DESIGNS THE LEARNING CENTERS OF TOMORROW

n life, like in architecture, you need a solid foundation.

For James Rice '87, it started when he was 16, designing and building a "netzero" cabin in the Green Mountains of Putney, Vermont, for a summer project.

He oriented the small house toward the south to get maximum sun exposure and fitted it with solar panels, a woodstove, and ample insulation to keep out the cold.

The structure is still in use on the campus of the Putney School to teach students about sustainability and living off the grid, lessons that Rice has carried with him for the past 25 years designing

and building K-12 schools, higher education facilities, and custom homes.

"The best part of being net zero or being off the grid is your awareness of the environment," Rice says. "You're not going to leave your lights on, especially if it's a cloudy day. You become one with nature in a net-zero building."

Today Rice is Energy Positive program manager for Firstfloor, a Raleigh, North Carolina, based architectural and construction administration firm that is revolutionizing the way buildings are designed, created, maintained, and even paid for. He works out of the







company's office in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where he's lived for 15 years.

"Because the 21st-century student is so different from the 20th-century student, the architecture has to adapt," he says. "The number one thing in our buildings is the people. Our architecture reflects the program and the teachers' methods."

At Sandy Grove Middle School in Lumber Bridge, North Carolina, Rice and his colleagues came up with a design for a 75,930-square-foot building that creates 60 percent more energy than it consumes. The cutting-edge design uses solar panels, a well-insulated building envelope, and energy efficient windows. It's earned Rice and his colleagues numerous awards.

"It's crazy how much money municipalities spend on energy," Rice says. "We're able to deliver buildings that are much better than your regular buildings and are also much less expensive to James Rice '87, of Firstfloor Energy Positive, on a rooftop with solar arrays, shows a group from Eastern Carolina University a Firstfloor energy-positive school in Myrtle Beach.

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The best part of being net zero is your awareness of the environment....You're not going to leave your lights on, especially [on] a cloudy day.

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operate. There's a lot of modeling that goes on during the design phase."

Firstfloor and its sister company, SfL+a Architects, are also redefining how school projects get built—they come up with financing and will operate the facility for a set term, such as 30 years. Sandy Grove Middle School, serving 650 students, is the nation's first energy positive, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certified, leased public school

"All the district has to do is agree to the monthly lease payment. After seven years Sandy Grove decided they want to own building," Rice says, adding that the school district was expected to close on the building sale in the spring.

The revolutionary financing program has paved the way for high quality schools to be constructed in some of the nation's poorest areas.

"We do a lot of amazing things," Rice says.

"A lot of it we didn't plan on happening."

Since he was 5 years old, Rice wanted to be an architect. Taft, he says, reinforced that for the Naugatuck, Connecticut, native, who was recruited by Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island, to go to their architecture program when they learned of his net-zero Vermont cabin project.

"I've always been project oriented and I'm a collaborator, too," he says.

Photos courtesy of Firstfloor Energy Positive

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# You become one with nature in a net-zero building.

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Sandy Grove Middle School, owned and operated by Firstfloor, produces approximately 60 percent more energy than it consumes; some of its solar arrays are shown at right.



Kate Bailey '97 of Eco-Cycle and a coworker with bales of recycled materials ready to ship to market.

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It's great to see more and more local communities take action.

"

# dirty work

**KATE BAILEY '97** IS THE "ZERO WASTE" GURU

t's not easy going green.

So when communities and citizen groups need direction on recycling, reducing carbon pollution, creating green jobs, and environmental best practices, more and more of them, from Boston to Brazil, are turning to Kate Bailey.

Bailey is the policy and research director at Eco-Cycle Solutions, a Boulder, Colorado, based nonprofit that has gone from a group of volunteers collecting aluminum cans and newspapers for recycling in 1976 to an international authority on resource conservation.

"Part of my job is sharing our success stories, our hands-on experience around the country and around the world," Bailey says.

The University of Colorado graduate gives tips to communities with colder climates to keep compost materials from freezing at the bottom of trucks, for example. Some need help identifying areas for improvement, from developing zero waste plans to cutting back on single-use plastic bags. Others need training webinars.

"We will often have a group of citizens reach out to us," Bailey says.







Bailey meeting with sustainability leaders from Russia visiting as part of an international exchange program to share ideas on how to start recycling programs.

"It's great to see more and more local communities take action."

Bailey's work coincides with a national conversation about the Green New Deal, the much-buzzed about and contentious legislation seeking to address climate change and income inequality. It also comes as a number of states and cities have banned single-use plastic bags, with California becoming the first in 2014. A 2016 referendum upheld the ban.

"It's like the momentum in the last year has really picked up," Bailey says. "It's fun to see that from all corners of the country."

But Bailey says that plastic bags "are just a small fraction of the problem."

"You may have schools that have no recycling at all," she says. "We've got some work that we need to do. It doesn't happen overnight, but it's one of those more easy-to-do solutions."

Last year, Bailey helped Boston adopt a zero waste plan. She was also a presenter at a Zero Waste Cities Conference in Brazil and traveled to the Netherlands to learn about the circular economy initiatives. Her work has also taken her to more than a dozen states in the U.S.

The onus is often on individual communities and groups to raise awareness and come up with an action plan.

"My work typically is with local cities," she says. "It's hard having such a lack of leadership at the national level." Bailey says that many cities and towns are not equipped to handle the everchanging packaging of products.

"Manufacturers are constantly putting new products on the market," she says. In Europe, there is better communication between packaging designers and the recycling community, according to Bailey, who says, "We have a little bit of a free-for-all over here."

Getting consumers and businesses to change their habits can be tough, but Bailey sees progress. Take plastic straws. "People are looking at straws as unnecessary," she says. Other habits aren't as easy to break, such as providing 15 soy

"We're big fans of, ask first," Bailey says.

sauce packets with takeout orders.

Neil Vigdor '95 covers politics for the Hartford Courant.

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between packaging

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designers and the

better communication

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# Looking

# There is nothing like spending a sunny spring or summer afternoon watching a ball game. For more to 120 years, the young men of Taft's baseball teams, and the women of Taft's softball teams, since 1972, have slugged it out on the fields here in Watertown.

There is nothing like spending a sunny spring or summer afternoon watching a ball game. For more than

—Beth Nolan Lovallo '93, archivist The Leslie D. Manning Archives



# Togethen we make it happen.













At Taft, there is little we cannot achieve when we come together as a community. Please support the Annual Fund before June 30.

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# Student Art Exhibit

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