

A group of approximately 12 diverse students are posing for a photo in front of a large, historic brick building with Gothic-style windows. A green statue of a man is visible in the background. The students are dressed in casual winter clothing, including jackets, sweaters, and plaid shirts. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

Taft

BULLETIN

THE WORLD
Here.

WINTER 2019

Matt O'Toole '20 helps paint a fence on Community Service Day at Hillside Equestrian. ROBERT FALCETTI



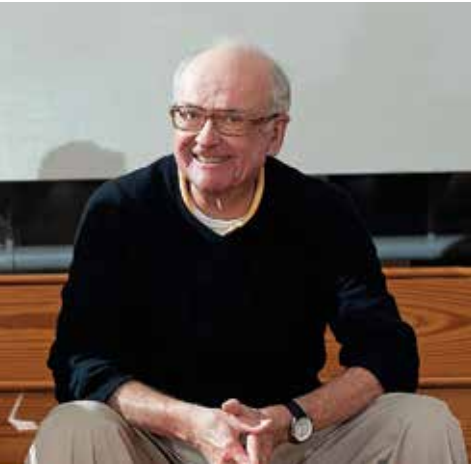
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EDITOR
Linda Hedman Beyus

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Kaitlin Thomas Orfitelli

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Debra Meyers

PHOTOGRAPHY
Robert Falcetti

CLASS NOTES EDITOR
Hillary Dooley

DESIGN
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taftbulletin@taftschool.org

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ON THE COVERS

front:
Taft's Davis International Scholars, featured in an article about this transformative program on page 48.
ROBERT FALCETTI

back:
Taft varsity skier Max Fossland '19 takes a run on the slalom course at Connecticut's Ski Sundown in January.
ROBERT FALCETTI

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On MAIN HALL

A WORD FROM
HEADMASTER WILLY
MACMULLEN '78



Deeply Trained

At a place like Taft, where so many people labor unselfishly to make the place what it is, it's easy to take for granted the magic that happens every day. Amazing happens everywhere. Here's an example: the athletic training office.

Our three athletic trainers—head trainer Sergio Guerrero, Rachel Cohen, and Maggie Wilson—each day and with scores of students do extraordinarily challenging, deeply meaningful, and mission-critical work. What goes on in that room is inspiring. When I want to see Taft

teaching at a really high level, I like to watch our trainers at work—and that's what I find myself doing often, when I poke my head in the room on a busy afternoon, a few minutes before practices start.

I'm guessing that most of us have a pretty good idea of what our athletic trainers do: injury prevention and treatment. It sounds simple. But when you think hard about what happens every day in that room and on the sidelines, you find yourself staggered by the complexity and importance of the work. Here's what I mean.

First, Taft's athletic trainers are *educators*. They are not complementary, or additional, or extra, or adjunct. They are faculty members entrusted to educate the whole student, and that happens in one of the most interesting classrooms on the campus. The syllabus, if you will, changes all the time, but it includes nutrition, stretching, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. And there's no class on campus harder to manage. After all, on a given day you have boys and girls, lower mid to PG, even the occasional aching coach. If you watch the trainers moving in a beautiful but crazy dance in that crowded room—students on the treatment benches or sitting at the whirlpool or bunched near the ice machine or waiting to be taped, with lots of good-natured complaining, serious questioning, plenty of laughing, occasional crying—you would be amazed at the individual instruction happening, and blown away by how rapidly their pedagogical approach changes from student to student.

Second, they *must perpetually develop professionally* because the field changes so rapidly and the stakes are so high. Longtime and legendary retired head trainer Maryann Laska—she served for over three decades—embodied this: her desk was covered with professional journals, with highlighted passages and pages marked with sticky notes, and her computer was generally opened to a latest treatment advance.

Today our trainers have continued and extended this practice, and advances in technology—video streaming, 3-D anatomy navigation, innovative websites, threaded blogs—have made the possibilities even richer. They are scholars like any good teacher, perpetually curious, researching, and improving. They have to be. If you get a little lazy as an English teacher and come into class not having read deeply into the sociocultural context behind Ralph Ellison's 1952 novel *Invisible Man*, you can still have a good class. But if you haven't read the latest diagnostic approaches necessary to distinguish tibial stress syndrome, chronic exertional compartment syndrome, stress fracture and shin splints (and they are different!), or if you are not aware of the latest research on hydration schedules or concussion return-to-play protocols, students can suffer. And, while rehabilitation was a small fraction of the work a couple of decades ago, our trainers now are deeply trained in how to use best practices and cutting-edge techniques to bring students back to activity. To be in this field, you must continually grow, be a lifelong learner.

Third, athletic trainers work with as *diverse a group* as anyone on campus: athletes, parents, coaches, doctors, athletic directors, counselors, and on and on. Basically every one of them feels—understandably—that their perspective matters the most and hopes their need can be met yesterday. And these needs are often felt intensely: “I *really* want to play!” or “We need the MRI results *now!*” or “*If* we win, we might make the playoffs!” Think of the pressures. Again, consider the fact that a trainer



Taft's athletic trainers, from left, Rachel Cohen, head trainer Sergio Guerrero, and Maggie Wilson.

“Athletic trainers work with students who are often at their *most painful, vulnerable, and fragile moments*, and so they must bring the deepest, most empathic and most subtle abilities.”

on a given day might work with boys and girls, lower mids and postgraduates, Division I level recruits and intramural athletes. So trainers must have really effective communication and listening skills, extremely high emotional intelligence, a ton of confidence, not to mention a good bit of patience and a lot of humor.

Fourth—and this is most important to understand—athletic trainers work with students who are often at their *most painful, vulnerable, and fragile moments*, and so they must bring the deepest, most empathic, and most subtle abilities. Sometimes the pain is real, physical, and severe. You know what this looks like when you see a trainer kneeling by an athlete who has been seriously hurt. Every coach has held the hand of a player writhing on the field and looked into his or her eyes saying, “You are going to be OK” and privately thinking, “Thank God the trainer is here.”

To watch the calm professionalism, prompt diagnosis, and profound compassion is humbling. To hear the reassurance, care, and love for a student in pain and fear is inspiring. Of course, sometimes the pain is not physical at all; it's emotional and psychological. For all of us, identity is bound tightly to body, and for the adolescent, especially one for whom sports participation is inseparable from feelings of self-worth, injury and then inability to play is *really* hard. It's not just the loss of exercise or membership on a team. It's felt as a loss of self, and grief is not too strong a word. “Who am I now?” wonders every athlete who has been told they are done for the day, or week, or season, or who is looking at six months of rehab after ACL surgery. It's an existential crisis. It is in this moment—a moment of exquisite vulnerability but also rich educational power and potential personal growth—that the trainer inserts him or herself and becomes far more than an ankle-taper. They become advisor, counselor, partner. Maybe the most important person on campus.

There are a lot of people who labor in the service of the school, some very visibly and some less so, and we do well to pause and reflect on *all* of them. Over my years while coaching three different sports, I was privileged to have as colleagues some really remarkable athletic trainers, and I still feel that today, every time I look into the training room, or watch one of our three extraordinary trainers, beckoned frantically by the referee, hurry out onto the field to kneel next to a Taftie and tell them, “I'm here. You are going to be alright.”

Willy MacMullen

Willy MacMullen '78

SOCIAL SCENE

Follow @thetaftschool on Facebook and @taftschool on Instagram for daily glimpses of Taft life.



Spirit Day theme: Throwback. Waaaaaay back! #whytaft #mytaft #tafthotchkiss #spiritweek



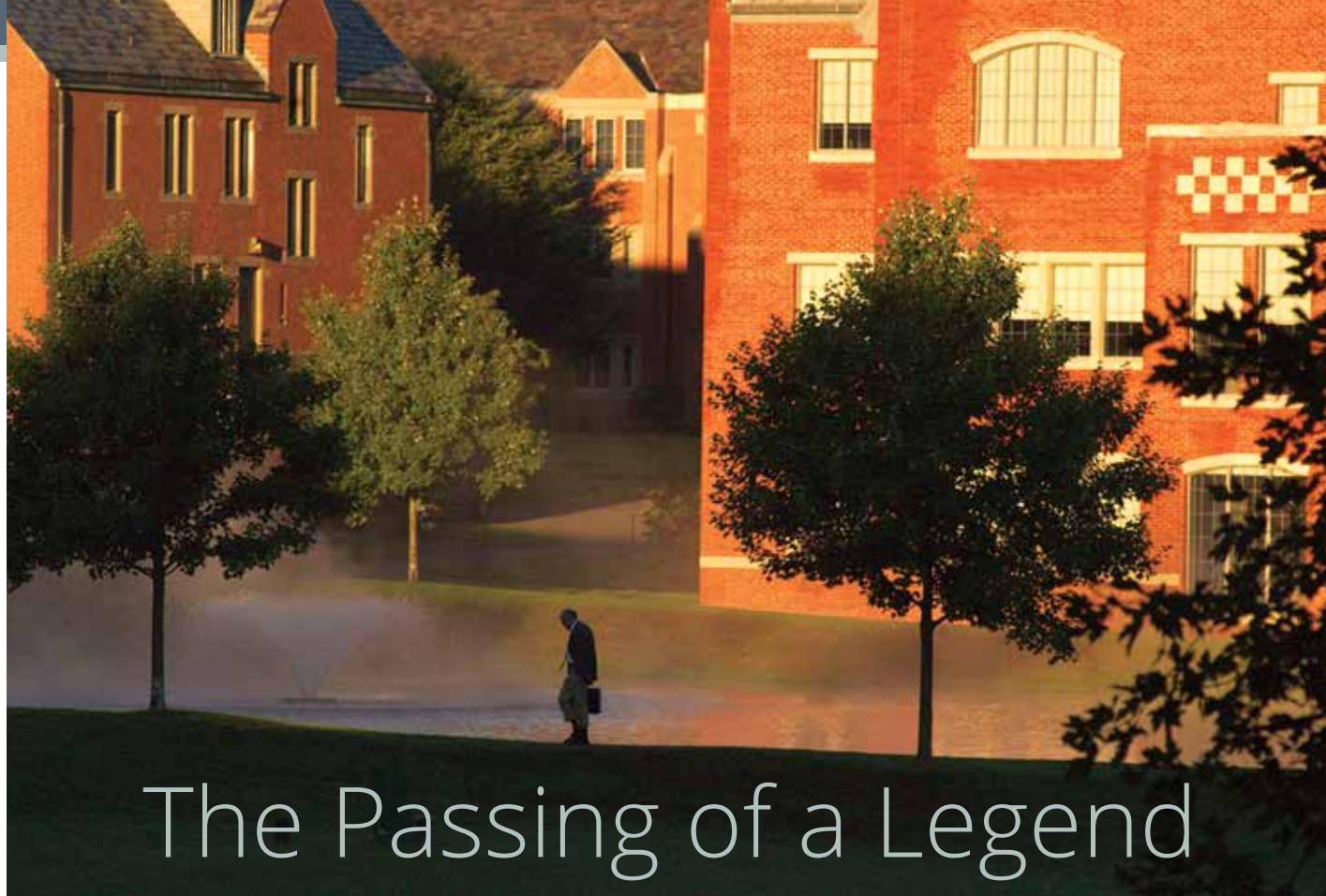
Convenience coifs: Haircuts in Headmaster's Circle by @mobilecuts #yesterday #latergram #taftlife #mytaft

Taft
Trivia

Where are these historic light fixtures, designed by architect James Gamble Rogers, located at Taft?



To learn the answer, see page 74 in this issue.



The Passing of a Legend

Dick Cobb Remembered

By William R. MacMullen '78, Headmaster

DICK COBB DIED ON JANUARY 26, in his sleep, in his apartment just a few miles from Taft's campus. He was 74. With Cobb's death, Taft has lost one of the finest teachers it has ever known. A lot of people on this campus loved him. It's a sad time for this community, including the hundreds of alumni who are grieving over this news. He was the best of Taft.

Dick taught at Taft for over 40 years, from 1969 to 2013. He was a dear friend—someone I learned much from, someone with whom I laughed a lot, someone I will never forget.

Lance Odden, one of Dick's closest friends, wrote me, "Dick Cobb was a paragon of what it was to be a great school master—a brilliant teacher who made Latin riveting, an inspirational coach whose record of 24 consecutive victories against Hotchkiss will last forever, and one of the most caring advisors in school history. He loved Taft even as he exemplified the school motto every day of his life."

When I arrived in 1976, Dick was already one of the most respected teachers on campus. By the end of his career, he simply *was* the face of Taft teaching.

Dick Cobb will be remembered as a legendary classroom presence. When you talk of command over the material, of the ability to engage

and inspire, of creating a rigorous and challenging classroom, of making the material come alive, of assessing learning every day—you think of Cobb. A lot of teachers came to Taft and heard, "You need to sit in on one of his classes." I have heard scores of alumni talk about having him for Latin: how you could not hide, how he called on you repeatedly, how you were terrified of being unprepared, how you worked harder for him than for any teacher, how he would not give up on you, how you laughed a lot, how you came to love learning.

He was a great coach. He coached JV boys' soccer for a decade and golf for a few years, but it was with girls' basketball from 1973 to 2001 that he will be remembered: a record of 297–144, five Founders League titles, seven Referee Association sportsmanship awards, and always a classy, tough, demanding, caring, brilliant coach—and one who just had so darn much fun.

He was the best corridor head I have ever known, most of his years in CPT, and for many years the director of residential life. He embodied how we educate at all hours of the day and in all corners of campus. He was tough and had high standards, and students were a little afraid of him, in part because he seemed to have superhuman abilities in finding mischief or rule breaking.

But he was also really funny and caring, and he never forgot what it was to be a teenager. He might come down hard on a knucklehead whose late-night corridor sports woke him up—and then ask him to come by the apartment for a snack the next night. He loved catching students doing something good. He could be tough, but there was always a smile in his eye and his actions said, "I care about you, I'm going to demand a lot of you, and I'm not going away."

He was an incredible advisor. There are a lot of men and women—I meet them all the time in my travels—who offer versions of "If it were not for Cobb, I would not be where I am, who I am." He was wise, caring, and honest with *every* advisee; but he was perhaps at his best with the ones who were maybe pushing back on the institution, or who were struggling to find their way. He knew that the teenager who seemed to be stiff-arming you might actually be trying to grasp your hand. So he proved what adolescent psychologists tell us: that the best incentive for positive teenage behavior is the desire not to disappoint someone they respect. That's why until his death, Cobb was receiving holiday cards, wedding invitations, and baby announcements from Tafties across five decades.

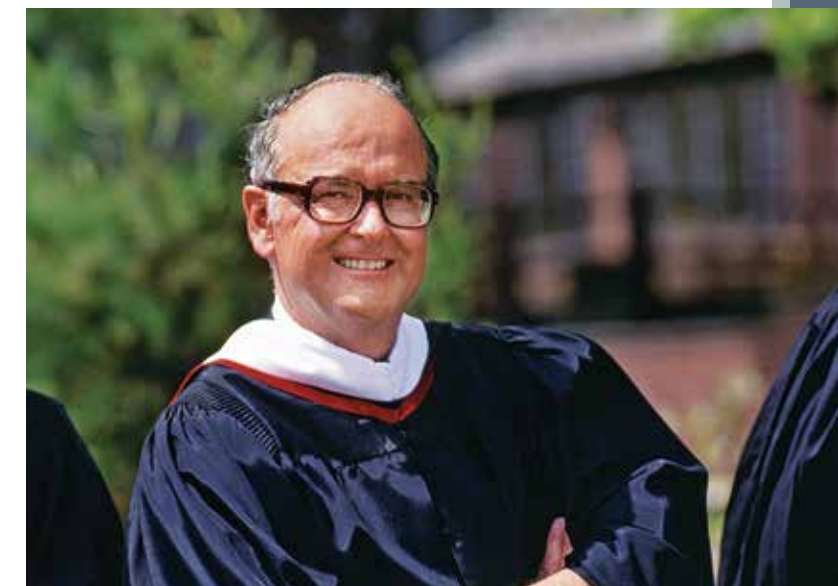
He *was* institutional memory and wisdom, and a lot of people—including Lance Odden and me—consulted with him before making really hard decisions. No one questioned his fairness, and everyone asked for his insight. He ran the Disciplinary Committee for years, and even controversial decisions of that group were accepted, in part

because faculty and students knew he had been in the room. When he spoke, you listened. If we had a faculty yearbook, he would win the "Talks Least, Says Most" award every year. I remember being a young teacher and hearing him speak in faculty meetings; and for a rookie looking for mentors, it seemed as if his words had been translated from Latin, etched in stone, and lugged down from some mountaintop.

He was a great mentor, to teachers of all ages, in all departments. In fact, his nickname was "The Wily Mentor." He never gave edicts, just suggestions, helpful questions, an open ear—nuggets of wisdom you carried in your pocket the rest of your days. I often saw him in the dining hall having lunch with some teacher who no doubt was looking for guidance. For years I would tell new teachers, "If you wonder how to speak in a class committee meeting, just listen to Cobb."

I saw Dick at the gym last week, and we chatted while watching the girls' basketball game. Dick was where he always sat; and over the two hours, I could see the steady stream of people coming to say hello—colleagues, alumni parents, folks working in the gym, some faculty kids—he always smiling and reaching out his hand in greeting. He was where he always wanted to be. Though he had a house in Maine, and he never lost his Maine roots, Taft was home, and *he was Taft*, as good as Taft ever gets, Taft's motto writ large and with humility and compassion.

We are planning on a celebration of his life at Taft on Alumni Day, Saturday, May 11 at 1:30 PM. ■

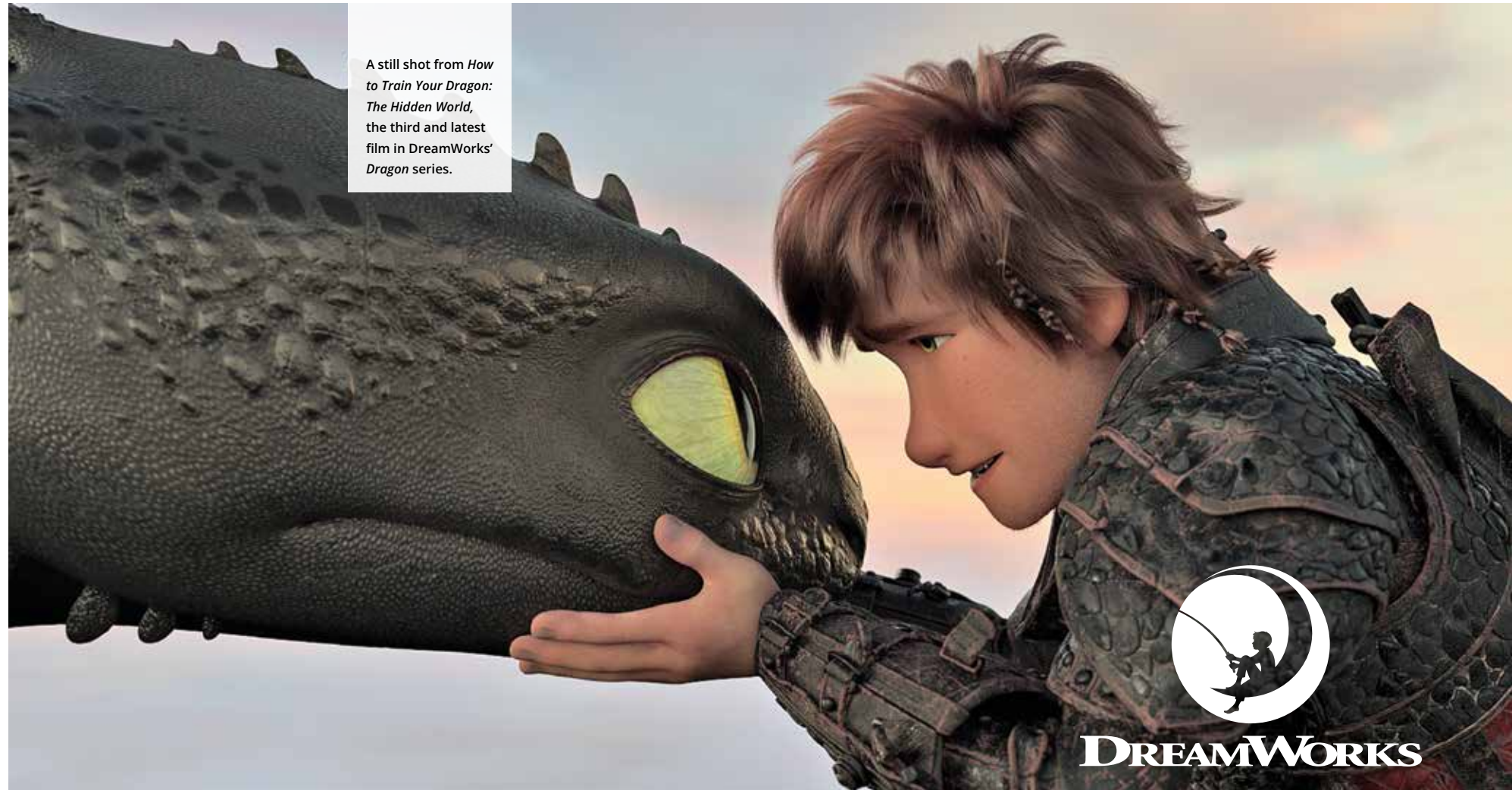


"Taft was home, and *he was Taft*,
as good as Taft ever gets,
Taft's motto writ large and with
humility and compassion."

Alumni SPOTLIGHT



Liz Camp '96, production supervisor at DreamWorks Animation, at their campus in Glendale, California. ERIC CHARBONNEAU



A still shot from *How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World*, the third and latest film in DreamWorks' *Dragon* series.



How to Train Dragons... and a Production Supervisor

LIZ CAMP '96 GOT HOOKED ON VIDEO production as a student at Taft, where she production managed a series of videos for Connecticut Public Television, doing everything from managing the shooting schedule to recording the sound. She carried that love back to her hometown of Los Angeles, where her ability to multitask and her attention to detail led her to eventually become the visual development production supervisor on the popular *How to Train Your Dragon* series of films.

But what does a visual development production supervisor actually do? Well, only everything that has to do with how a film looks, from backgrounds to main characters, and in the case of the *Dragon* films, even to the look of the toys produced for their many fans.

"I've always been very detail-oriented," says Camp. "I can retain a lot of information and the complex web of things that need to be taken care of. I have a mental database of all the artwork,"

created for the *Dragons* trilogy.

Camp worked on several live-action films, including *Charlie Wilson's War* and *War of the Worlds*, but says animated films offer a better work-life balance. An animated film can take three to five years to create, she says. She now works for film powerhouse DreamWorks Animation and says she loves working with "incredibly creative people."

"It's amazing to inspire the imagination of children," Camp says.

Still, there's a lot of juggling that goes into the creation of a film like *How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World*, the third in the *Dragon* series, set to open this February. As visual development production supervisor, Camp works hand in hand with the production designer, crafting the look of all the characters and the digital environments of the film—in essence, everything that gives a film its look.

"It's oftentimes a juggling act once a film is in production. Early on we are just concerned with the design work, but once animation and lighting get going, we're making sure everyone in those departments has what they need to do their jobs," she says. It can be a challenge "juggling all of that support, and also keeping morale up

in my department, and also supporting all the partners outside of the studio—making sure everyone's needs are met."

But in the end it's worth it. Especially when she hears how the film has impacted the audience. With the *Dragon* series, for example, the studio has received thank-you letters from parents and children for showing characters with prosthetic limbs. The film's protagonist, Hiccup, lost the lower half of this left leg in a battle with the Red Death, and his dragon, Toothless, has a prosthetic tail fin that Hiccup made for him. "Parents are thanking us for showing a hero who is like their children," Camp says.

"As we go from one movie to the next, the technology for creating animation is

always evolving," she says, and everything from the dragons' skins to the texture of the cloth and leather needs to continue to look as it has in the world created for the films. In addition, as the series has progressed, each character ages as well, setting up new artistic challenges.

With production of the third *Dragon* film completed, Camp has been hard at work on an art book that showcases the artwork used to create the film; the book will be released by DreamWorks to coincide with the film's February release.

"I work with amazing people—incredibly creative and funny artists," she says. "They're all wonderful people." ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

Sonic Playground

BLENDING THE TECHNICAL WITH the creative—that’s what Nick Gotten ’93 loves about his job as a re-recording mixer and sound engineer.

A longtime musician (he plays guitar) from a family of musicians, Gotten worked on Music Row in Nashville before getting the opportunity to work in the world of re-recording mixing, a job he calls a “natural fit.” A re-recording mixer takes recorded dialogue, sound effects, and music to create the final version of a soundtrack for a feature film or television program.

Since his days on Music Row, he’s

moved to Los Angeles and won an Emmy for his work on mixing the sound for the Disney juggernaut show, *Sofia the First*. He also did the sound mixing for the surreal cartoon *Adventure Time*, plus a number of other children’s animated series and some live-action work as well.

“It’s fairly technical,” he says of his job. “You have to keep on top of changing technology.

“And then there’s the creative side. There are so many different ways to approach any scene or situation. You want to bring life, you want to tell

stories through audio. We joke that it’s our own sonic playground,” he says.

The process is anything but simple. Gotten says he usually has about a three-week turnaround time from getting the locked picture to turning out the mastered audio for a finished cartoon. In the case of *Adventure Time*, each 11-minute show requires a wide variety of hard sound effects like howling wind and epic explosions, but just as important are the human elements like footsteps, silverware clanking, fabric rustling, and more. Gotten and his team have access to a giant room

that more resembles a junkyard than a professional studio. It’s filled with gates (for creaking sounds), a small pool for underwater sounds, and much more.

“There’s every different type of cup and cereal box and metal—various surfaces like concrete, grass, and sand,” he says. “Our Foley team has collected massive amount of different sounding objects...various things like a chair you can squeeze to make a really good squeak. If we don’t have it, we go get it. We just try to address what’s on-screen.”

He got into children’s animation after a former client chose him to do the sounds for a Disney series and Gotten discovered he really liked it.

“You’re not fighting production dialogue from the field,” Gotten says, “where you spend too much of your time trying to fix extraneous noises such as planes flying overhead. It can be a mess. With animation dialogue having been recorded clean in a studio, you can focus more on blending dialogue, music, and sound effects, giving greater support to the storytelling.”

His first love, creating music, hasn’t left him, Gotten says. He is involved in the songwriting community even as he mixes sound for four animated series (*Fancy Nancy*, *We Bare Bears*, *Powerpuff Girls*, and *Shimmer and Shine*). He’s modest about his Emmy Award, “something to have on your obituary,” he jokes.

“I’m very happy to stay in the animation world, but also broadening my horizons with more songwriting placements, mixing features, and sound design for video games,” he says. He’s had a glimpse into the video game world since his wife, Judy, has some experience in that area.

“It’s always been sort of natural for me [to work with] music and sound,” he says. “It’s the perfect blend of technical and creative.” ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow ’84



Nick Gotten '93 on the mix stage where he works as a re-recording mixer for film and TV series.



Gotten won an Emmy in 2017 for “outstanding sound mixing” for Disney’s *Sofia the First*, a preschool animated program.



Pediatric nurse Torie Snyder Pearce '04, second from left, with husband Kevin Pearce at the 2011 opening of one of their pediatric care centers, Urgent Care for Kids, in Austin, Texas.

Called to Nursing



SINCE HER DAYS AS A RHINO, Torie Snyder Pearce '04 has been inspired by Taft's motto, Not to be served but to serve. In fact, a strong resonance with *Non ut sibi* is ultimately part of what inspired her to become a pediatric nurse and to cofound Urgent Care for Kids, an urgent care company specializing in pediatrics with multiple locations across Texas.

Pearce and her husband, Kevin, started Urgent Care for Kids seven years ago. Kevin had been working for a medical development company and identified

pediatric specific urgent care centers as a largely underserved space. He and his business partner spent five years doing due diligence and becoming experts in this niche area before completing the business plan and launching Urgent Care for Kids with Torie in 2011.

Urgent Care for Kids' clinics are open afternoons, nights, and weekends—times when it's typically difficult to get into a pediatrician's office or when offices tend to be closed. The company prides itself on being able to offer affordable care, and

all clinics staff board-certified doctors. Unlike many pediatric offices, Urgent Care for Kids clinics are able to provide X-ray exams, sutures, lab tests and cultures, splinting, and non-emergent exams.

Originally from San Diego, Pearce didn't always envision herself as a nurse. When she graduated from Southern Methodist University in 2008, she planned to pursue a career in finance, but quickly realized the industry wasn't for her. Seeking a more fulfilling trajectory, she applied to nursing school on a whim.

"I didn't know for sure that I wanted to be a nurse—what I did know was that I'd always loved helping people," Pearce explains. "My aunt is a nurse, and it just seemed like a line of work that I was called to. But quitting my job and enrolling in nursing school was definitely a leap of faith."

Shortly after starting at Dallas Nursing

Institute, Pearce met her husband when their career paths aligned. She graduated as a registered nurse in 2011, and has never second-guessed her chosen profession.

"Being a nurse is not for the faint of heart," Pearce says of her career. "It takes a strong medical background, a strong stomach, and a lot of compassion, but it's so incredibly meaningful to me. By far, the most rewarding part of my job is providing comfort and a sense of calm to my patients. No kid likes going to the doctor, so when I can bring a smile to a patient and distract them, if only for a minute, that's the biggest reward."

Now with 10 locations and approximately 200 employees across Dallas, Houston, and Austin, Urgent Care for Kids plans to double in size over the next few years. The company also offers VirtualPediatrics, a specialized online telemedicine

service that is available throughout Texas. Through this advanced virtual platform, patients can receive access to top pediatric providers from their own homes.

Pearce's empathetic spirit is certainly an inherent trait, but she credits Taft for broadening her scope in a way that shaped her professional abilities.

"Taft exposed me to so many people all from different walks of life," she says. "The ability to attend school with people from all over the country has really widened my perspective and enabled me to connect with patients on a much deeper level."

Pearce and her husband, who have been married since 2011, are now based in Austin, where they're busy raising two young children and spearheading their company that touches so many lives every day. ■

—Carola Lovering '07

"No kid likes going to the doctor, so when I can bring a smile to a patient and distract them, if only for a minute, that's the biggest reward."

Right: Pearce participating in a nurse and staff appreciation moment for their business when each person shared something about why they loved their job.



Overcoming Epilepsy's Challenges

FORMER OLYMPIC HOCKEY PLAYER

Chanda Gunn '99 has faced some major hurdles both on and off the ice. The star goalie won the 2003–04 Hockey East Player of the Year Award as a Northeastern University Husky, then led Team USA to a World Championship in 2005 and an Olympic Bronze Medal in Turin in 2006. And she achieved all this while battling epilepsy.

Diagnosed at the age of 9, Gunn has struggled with epilepsy most of her life, but

Former Olympic hockey team member Chanda Gunn '99, third from right, who works for Epilepsy Foundation New England, at a Slap Out Epilepsy hockey clinic in Boston where players with epilepsy practiced with professionals. RICH GAGNON



she's never let it prevent her from pursuing her dreams. Instead she used her struggle to her advantage, turning a substantial obstacle into a passionate and fulfilling career.

A longtime spokesperson for the Epilepsy Foundation of America, Gunn now works for the Epilepsy Foundation New England. Founded in 1983, EFNE is a nonprofit working to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives. The organization serves approximately 100,000 people in New England who are affected by the disease.

Gunn's official titles are New Hampshire field services manager and youth programming specialist, but she's most proud of her work spearheading the Young Leaders Network, a program she designed for epileptic youths seeking to help others with epilepsy in their communities. Gunn started

“At the end of the day, the most rewarding part of bringing home my medal has been the ability to share it with others, and the platform the Olympics gave me to be an advocate for epilepsy.”

the Young Leaders Network in January 2017 with only five participants. Today, more than 300 youths across six U.S. cities are involved. Its 12 core programs aid a range of abilities and ages, and offer services from career support to summer camps.

Gunn's passion lies not only in helping those suffering from epilepsy, but in raising awareness of the disease, which affects 3.4 million people in the U.S. Her own struggle with epilepsy has not been easy, but with medication and a low-carb ketogenic diet her seizures are mostly under control. An inspiration to many, Gunn is living proof that having epilepsy doesn't (and shouldn't) define you. Her goal is to instill this sense of hope in others, encouraging the epileptic community not to let the condition prevent them from chasing their dreams.



Gunn at the Slap Out Epilepsy ice hockey clinic with a supporter.

Of her Olympic experience Gunn says, “At the end of the day, the most rewarding part of bringing home my medal has been the ability to share it with others, and the platform the Olympics gave me to be an advocate for epilepsy.”

Now famous for her support of the cause, Gunn travels around the country to speak at various epilepsy foundations such as NYU's FACES (Finding a Cure for Epilepsy and Seizures), and hosts events and fundraisers to raise awareness and education. One notable recent event was Slap Out Epilepsy, a hockey clinic Gunn organized where youths got an exciting opportunity to skate alongside NHL stars including New York Ranger Chris Kreider, whose cousin suffers from epilepsy.

Gunn credits Taft for giving her a more well-rounded perspective that motivated

her to succeed both on and off the ice.

“I came to Taft as a PG hockey recruit,” she says. “Before, hockey had always dominated my entire being, but at Taft there was an emphasis on the importance of well-roundedness, and that had a real impact on me. I'd always been pigeonholed as a hockey player—and I did love hockey—but I realized I was also someone who liked to work really hard in other areas. Taft taught me that I didn't have to identify with just one thing.”

Gunn has fond memories of her time on the ice, but with two children and a full-time job, she rarely has time to skate these days. But Gunn says she doesn't miss hockey all that much—her family and epilepsy advocacy work keep her heart very full.

“Epilepsy is still a disease that's very much in the shadows,” explains Gunn's wife, Susan Linn, CEO and president of the Epilepsy Foundation New England. “But we're working to change that. I'm so proud of all Chanda has done with the Young Leaders Network. It's growing so quickly, and we're on track to share this model throughout the country in the near future.” ■

—Carola Lovering '07



Stateline writer
Sophie Quinton '06
at the Pew Charitable
Trust's office in
Washington, D.C.

Local Beat, National Audience

IN HER WORK AS A STAFF WRITER

for Stateline.org, a news service affiliated with the Pew Charitable Trusts, Sophie Quinton '06 truly takes the adage “all politics is local” to heart.

“Stateline was started to address the shrinking of local news coverage and reporting on statehouse policy,” she explains. “There was a need for deep, fact-based reporting on trends at the state and local level.” So, instead of tracking the news out of Washington, Quinton uncovers stories in a number of smaller communities throughout the United States.

Passionate about writing from childhood, Quinton didn't always know that her hobby would become a career. “I've always loved reading and analyzing texts and putting sentences together, but journalism wasn't really on my radar when I was younger,” she says. It wasn't until she was preparing to graduate from Yale, where she

earned a degree in English, that she began to consider a job at a news publication.

One position immediately grabbed her attention: a fellowship with Washington, D.C.'s *National Journal*. “I remember thinking, ‘I have to get this,’” she says. Looking back on her first job out of college, Quinton says she discovered the thrill of journalism and tried her hand at a number of different beats. “I pick up things quite quickly and am fairly versatile,” she says, “so I gained a reputation as someone who could get moved around and dropped into a new beat and still do a good job.”

While at *National Journal*, Quinton worked on both the “Next Economy” series, which followed economic trends at the local and even nongovernmental levels, and the “Next America” series, which focused on the effects of demographic change on the country. These projects especially prepared Quinton for her current role at Stateline.

“I was writing feature stories that had a greater focus on state and local issues than the typical Washington reporter,” she explains, “and I made a niche for myself. Now I'm doing that on a much larger scale.”

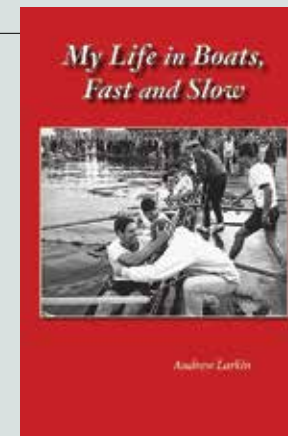
Quinton joined Stateline in 2015, and while, broadly speaking, she is an economics reporter, she admits, “the economy” can mean pretty much anything, so I end up writing about a wide range of topics. I work on an ongoing series about wildfires and what they mean for budgets. I've written about marijuana legalization and what that means for state regulators, and I've done a number of stories about higher education and workforce issues.”

It's a beat that allows her to “really get to see how different issues are playing out across the country” and takes her around the nation following leads. “It's been so interesting to go places that I would never have gone to otherwise,” she says. “I did a

story about a community college program that brought me to Jackson, Mississippi, and I looked at job training and migration in Eastern Kentucky.” Last summer, Quinton permanently relocated to Colorado to undertake a new position as a regional reporter covering issues facing communities in the Rocky Mountains and on the West Coast.

In addition to her regular presence on Stateline.org, Quinton's work has been republished in the *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Huffington Post*, and *USA Today*, among many other news outlets. For her, the opportunity to help a broad audience understand the issues facing regional communities is especially meaningful: “It's been very rewarding to go to places the national media doesn't often see and to learn how things are playing out and tell the story of what life is really like there.” ■

—Christopher Browner '12



My Life in Boats, Fast and Slow
OFF THE COMMON BOOK
Andrew Larkin '64

“*My Life in Boats, Fast and Slow* is an appealing memoir, an indispensable rowing history, and a paean to river boating. As memoir, it flows from the boyhood of a doctor's son through the cultural turmoil of the late 1960s into the calmer waters of late middle age, evoking memories of times and places which will be familiar to many of its readers.

“As history, it provides an unseen perspective of life at the top of the sport's pyramid—Andrew Larkin was a multiple sprints champion and an Olympian—from the early years of Harry Parker's reign at the helm of Harvard rowing. And as good writing, it resonates in Larkin's descriptions of his solo sculling journeys on New England waters.

“This first-person narrative offers a unique view of how some of the issues that roiled the 1968 Olympics—and remain unresolved a half-century later—were used to malign one of our country's greatest collegiate teams.”—Thomas Weil, Curator of the National Rowing Museum

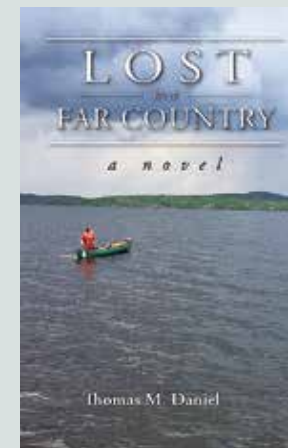


No Such Thing As Normal
FRIESEN PRESS
Nicole Robertson '99

Author Nicole Robertson might appear to have everything: a loving family, a solid education, scholarships to prestigious schools, and a bright future ahead. And despite the difficulties presented to her as a young woman of West Indian descent living in America, she works hard and succeeds, time after time—for a while.

Because all is not quite right...and while she fights to keep up with the expectations her family and community hold her to—even in the wake of grief and difficulty—her textbook life begins to crumble around her.

Join the young Nicole on her journey as she tries frantically to be everything to every person in her life—and learn with her, through her many trials, that doing so means compromising yourself, almost always to destructive ends.



Lost in a Far Country
FRIESEN PRESS
Thomas M. Daniel '47

Robertson is a first-generation Canadian of Jamaican descent. Born in Montreal, she spent 17 years living south of the 49th parallel with her family until, in 2006, she returned to her native Montreal, where she has lived ever since.

Lost in a Far Country
FITHIAN PRESS
Thomas M. Daniel '47

Jack is a 17-year-old honor student whose counselor has advised him to apply to Ivy League colleges. But Jack's father nixes the idea, having decided higher education is a waste of money, and his father does not waste money. Jack's mother is no help, because she's a drunk. Disgusted with his dysfunctional family, Jack steals one of his dad's junker cars, withdraws all the money in his savings account, and runs away from home. He drives into Canada, where he destroys his passport and gives up any thought of turning back. After he buys a canoe and sets out on the lakes, he discovers that paddling a canoe into the wind is no picnic, and camping is not as carefree as he had expected.

An emeritus professor of medicine at Case Western Reserve University, Daniel has turned to writing. His previous works include several nonfiction books and a novel. *Lost in a Far Country* is inspired by O'Neill's drama *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Running Home: A Novel
Frederick Murolo '74

In Frederick Murolo's novel, Harmon Willow thinks he's a runner. But he's not much of one. Maybe if he can develop a rhythm, can run with consistency, his life will fall into place. The key might be in running every day: in going from obligation, to habit, to love. He sets out on December 30th on a lifetime mission. But can it work? Will he find happiness beyond the daily run?

Murolo is a runner and trial lawyer who has run hundreds of races, including over 60 ultramarathons. He runs every day. He lives in Connecticut with his wife and two youngest children. ■



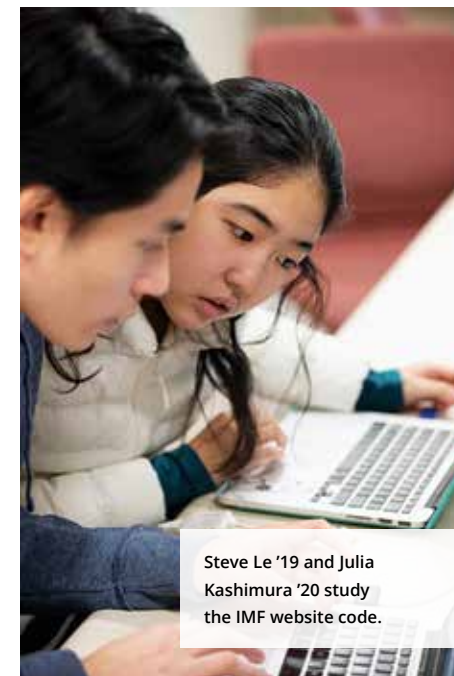
If you would like your work added to the Hulbert Taft Library's Alumni Authors Collection and considered for this column, please email the editor (lindabeyus@taftschool.org) and mail a copy to:
Taft Bulletin | The Taft School | 110 Woodbury Road | Watertown, CT 06795-2100

Mission Possible:

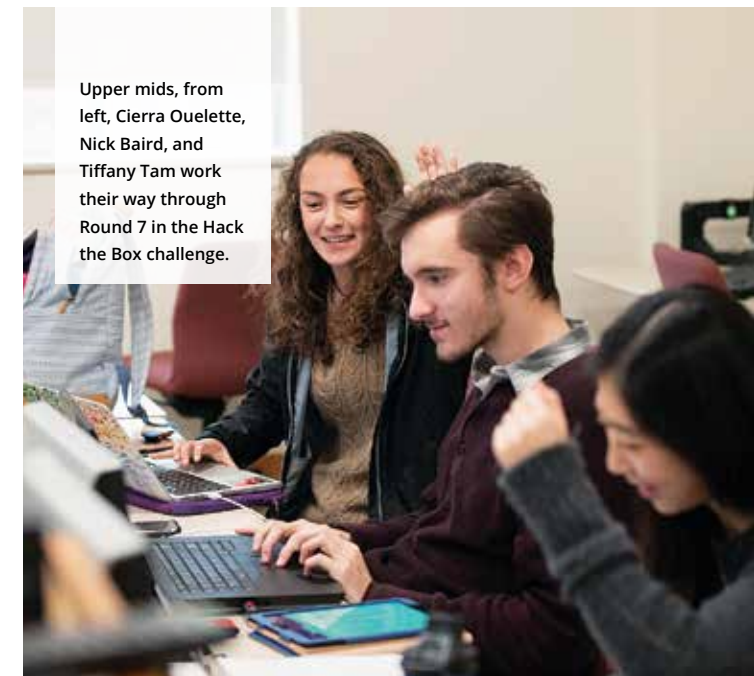
Capturing the Digital Flag



Post-AP Computer Science teacher Michael Scaramuzzino consults with Julia Kashimura '20 and Steve Le '19 on the hidden flags in the IMF website source code.



Steve Le '19 and Julia Kashimura '20 study the IMF website code.



Upper mids, from left, Cierra Ouelette, Nick Baird, and Tiffany Tam work their way through Round 7 in the Hack the Box challenge.

ON ANY GIVEN TUESDAY, six Taft students can be found tucked into a closed-network classroom in a remote corner on the third floor of Wu. They are hunched over their laptops, working in pairs, generating a low but steady murmur of voices that is occasionally punctuated by a few deliberate clacks of a keyboard, followed by revelatory shouts—a mixture of relief and celebration. Drill down to their screens, and there it is: The Impossible Mission Force web page. Espionage? While there is no sign of Ethan Hunt or any other IMF operative, Post-AP Computer Science teacher Michael Scaramuzzino *might* be overheard suggesting that students “do an SQL injection in the password field of

the website.” Is he advising them to hack websites? SQL injection is, after all, one of the most common web hacking techniques. It can completely destroy a database.

“The students are actually playing a game I call ‘Hack the Box,’” says Scaramuzzino. “It plays out like a series of capture the flag games where pieces of data are hidden throughout the server. Students must apply various security techniques to locate vulnerabilities—flags—on different computers and networks, and ‘capture’ them.”

A flag is a value that signals a function or process in the code. In Hack the Box, the students are looking for flags that seem to reflect irregular alterations to normal functioning—pieces of data

that represent system vulnerabilities. According to Scaramuzzino, the server in the closed-network classroom hosts multiple vulnerable computers with proprietary IP addresses. Those addresses allow students to safely connect with “hacked” systems as they search for vulnerabilities, some of which Scaramuzzino planted himself, others that have been created online and uploaded specifically for this type of training.

“The goal is to teach students which attack vectors hackers utilize and how to defend against each type of attack,” Scaramuzzino explains. “Learning how to find and correct vulnerabilities offers a look inside what a career in cybersecurity might look like.”

In its *2018 Cybersecurity Market Report*,

analyst firm Cybersecurity Ventures (cybersecurityventures.com) predicts that global spending on cybersecurity products and services will exceed \$1 trillion during the five-year period ending in 2021. It also notes that a projected shortage of trained cybersecurity professionals could lead to 3.5 million unfilled jobs by the end of the same period. That void creates not only a tremendous demand for skilled professionals, but a competitive compensation market: According to the Bureau of Labor

advanced working knowledge of code, meticulous attention to detail, and a good deal of patience.

“The flags are not at all obvious,” notes Julia Kashimura '20. “We have to look very deeply into the website’s source code to find them behind the scenes. Each flag we find contains a hint to the next flag. It may be a series of letters that appear random, but when run through a decoder site, it reveals hints and important information for moving forward through

leaderboard. With Rounds 6 and 7 in play, upper mids Cierra Ouelette and Nick Baird held a slim lead over the competition.

“I think we’ve been successful by taking a kind of divide-and-conquer approach,” says Nick. “We bounce ideas off each other, then try out the best ones—I try one thing, Cierra tries another. We keep going back and forth until we successfully figure out what the flag is telling us about how to get to the next step.”

Success, Cierra notes, isn’t always

statistics, the median income for information security analysts last year was \$95,510.

Cybersecurity work relies on several different computer languages, including Python, C, and C++. Scaramuzzino covered each of these languages with his Post-AP students in preparation for the game, then set up the closed-network workspace. “Most of the sessions are very interactive,” says Scaramuzzino. “I set up the server, and the students go in and sort of explore with the goal of learning by doing.”

The exploration requires a fairly

the process to get to the next flag.”

The Hack the Box game is set up in rounds. Each round is a start-to-finish vulnerability assessment of one computer or network of computers hosted on the classroom server—including Round 7’s IMF system hack. Students may take a week or two to complete an individual round, which involves finding, decoding, and resolving as many as 10 or 11 flags. The flags increase in complexity as the round progresses. Students earn one point for every flag, and scores are tracked on the classroom

easy or assured: “When we found flag six, we ran a piece of code that printed out a couple of lines of text. Right now we’re trying to duplicate that line of code and it just isn’t giving us anything.”

For Ranon Larpcharern '20, the biggest challenge lies in the very first step: “Once you get going, you know what you’re trying to do and know what methods you should use to move forward. But when you are just starting, there are almost too many possibilities to consider. We sometimes have to rely on informed trial and error.” ■

Post-AP Computer Science students spend one semester exploring computer security, computer graphics, and artificial intelligence, and considering how the three disciplines will intersect to drive digital innovation in the future. Participants in the course are required to sign a strict (and strictly enforced) end-user agreement governing the current and future use of the tools and skills learned in the classroom.

Celebrating Excellence

“We have really high standards, and they are what make us feel that we belong to a special place.”
—Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78



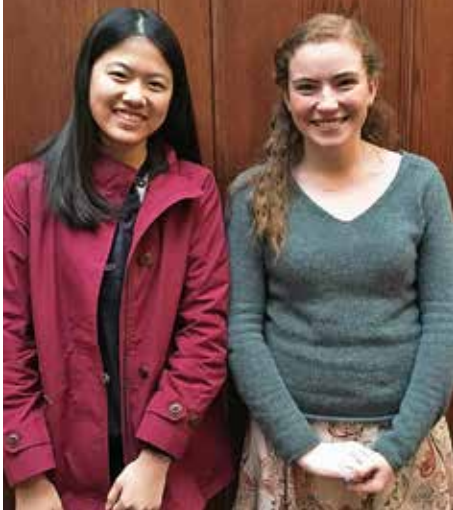
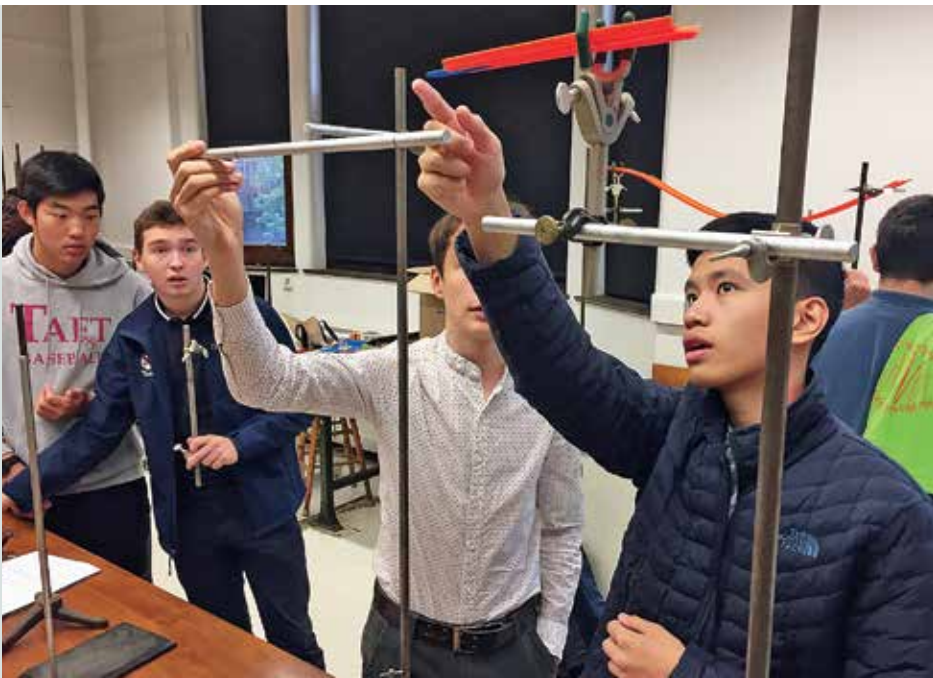
Cum Laude Society

FIFTEEN SENIORS WERE INDUCTED into the Cum Laude Society in October, representing 8.8 percent of their class. During the induction ceremony, Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 noted, “It is as if these students looked at the bar of expectations and saw it not as something to get over, but as something to leap from.” 2018 inductees are Eva Baurmeister, Malcolm Bellairs, Chih-Yao (Jerry) Chan, Julia Dawson, Anne Gilland, Marshall Henshaw, Dylan Kim, Yiqiao (Rachel) Lau, Yijie (Bill) Lu, Quincy Morgan, Mihir Nayar, Joseph Reiser, Marcus Valenta, Nicholas Winicki, and Olivia Wivestad.

See the video of the full induction and awards ceremony at www.taftschoo.org/news.

Yale Physics Olympics

TAFT STUDENTS COMPETED in the 21st annual Yale Physics Olympics in October, and came home with hardware. The event featured 50 teams from 42 schools across Connecticut. Peter Yu '20, Steve Le '19, Will Wang '19, and Bill Lu '19 made up team Nonlocal Interactions, while Ernest Protas '20, Andrii Torchilo '21, Stefan Kim '20, and Ben Le '21 competed as team Human Error. Nonlocal Interactions tied for first place in the Fermi Quiz, while Human Error placed second in two events and third in another, boosting them to a second-place finish overall.



Debate

COCO ZHANG '21 AND MORGAN MALCOLM '20 may have arrived at the 17th annual Hotchkiss School Parliamentary Debate Tournament a little green, but went home decidedly bronze. In the parliamentary debate round, Coco and Morgan won third-place novice pair honors. Morgan also took home the bronze in the Novice Impromptu Speaker category. The debate, which brought together more than 120 students from 21 schools, marked Coco's second debate outing and Morgan's competitive debut.



Harvard-MIT Mathematics Tournament

SIX TAFT STUDENTS TRAVELED TO CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts, in November for the 22nd Harvard-MIT Mathematics Tournament. Competing as Team Galois, Ben Le '21, Bill Lu '19, Linh Vu '21, Chloe Ye '20, First Yingyord '19, and Peter Yu '20 finished in the top 12 percent overall among the nearly 200 teams and 1,000 high school students competing in the event. Chloe was among the top 50 competitors in the Theme Round, while Team Galois placed 16th in the Team Round; they also earned a spot in the top 30 of the highly competitive Guts Round.

Barclay Johnson '53, P'83

THE TAFT COMMUNITY PAUSED on Parents' Weekend to celebrate the life of Barclay Johnson '53, P'83, who brought a deep and refined dedication to excellence to his role as teacher, coach, and mentor at Taft for nearly 40 years.



Living Our Motto



Community Service Day

ON OCTOBER 25, TAFTIES spread out across New Haven and Litchfield counties to support the important work being done by organizations whose impact is truly changing lives across their communities. From schools and environmental groups to local and national nonprofits, our Community Service Day partners effect meaningful change at every level, and Taft is proud to support them through hands-on service.

Food Bank

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS are go time for teams of every sort—athletes, performers, and dedicated volunteers alike. Jalen Little '19 worked with a team of volunteers to help distribute food for the local food bank during the fall term.



Breast Cancer Walk

TAFTIES RAISED FUNDS AND AWARENESS while volunteering their time at the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer event, held in Litchfield's White's Woods every October.



Student Diversity Leadership Conference

SIX TAFT STUDENTS TRAVELED TO NASHVILLE, Tennessee, to participate in the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Student Diversity Leadership Conference. This year's event marked the 25th anniversary of the conference, a multiracial, multicultural gathering of 1,600 upper school student leaders across the globe. The conference helps participants develop cross-cultural communication skills, design effective strategies for social justice practice through dialogue and the arts, and learn the foundations of allyship and networking principles.

In photo, from left, Francesca Nyakora '19, Keren Egu '21, Sarah Tata '19, Justin McLeod '21, Geovanna Pineda '20, Megan Sng '19, and Dean of Multicultural Education Andrew Prince.

United Way

WHILE MOST TAFTIES TRAVELED FAR FROM CAMPUS by the start of Thanksgiving week, a dedicated group of faculty, alumni, and even a few students continue the *Non ut sibi* tradition each year by sharing their time and talents at the United Way of Greater Waterbury food pantry during the busy days before the holiday.



FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE October, Taft joined colleges and universities across the state of Connecticut in engaging in a full

week of environmental education and sustainability initiatives. Taft's Campus Sustainability Week began with students signing a pledge to live more sustainably, and continued with things like "No Waste Game Day," roadside trash collection, a sustainable sit-down dinner, scrape-your-plate education, a formal debate about the use of plastic bags, and a runway Trashion Show featuring wearable fashion crafted completely out of recycled materials. Dream Corps and Green For All CEO Vien Truong also delivered a Morning Meeting talk.

Giving Tree

TAFT'S TOUR GUIDES continued the *Non ut sibi* tradition of decorating a Giving Tree in the Harley Roberts Room, filled in part with hats, gloves, socks, scarves, and other cold weather essentials for those in need.



"Serve others unselfishly, reflecting and acting upon the school's motto in both formal and informal contexts: *Non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret.*"

—The Taft School Portrait of a Graduate

Faculty Spotlight

PEG Winter Workshops

Science teacher Dan Calore led colleagues through an overview of his research and findings on project-based learning.



TAFT FACULTY STEPPED AWAY FROM their traditional teaching roles for an hour in early December to engage in a bit of “homegrown professional development,” says Dean of Faculty Edie Traina, “developed for the community, by the community.”

The Winter Workshop program was conceptualized by Taft’s Professional Education and Growth (PEG) Committee seven years ago, and invites faculty members to develop and lead educational seminars or to attend sessions delivered by their peers. This year, 13 workshops were offered across a variety of disciplines, and included contemporary topics like social media and student learning, gender inclusivity, and culturally responsive lesson design; practical skill training on things like recommendation writing and using Google Suite apps; and prep school essentials, from teaching leadership to understanding team dynamics.

For science teacher Dan Calore, the PEG Winter Workshops were an opportunity to

share some of the research, findings, and classroom strategies that not only shape his teaching, but also drive his personal passion for teaching and learning. With support from the PEG Grant program, Calore earned a Master of Science in science education last summer, and was awarded the outstanding research prize for his work on project-based learning in the science classroom. He used Taft’s Performance Engineering class as the model for his research; Calore also collected data from students enrolled in Taft’s Forensics and Scientific Ethics course. All three classes, he says, are largely project-based.

“Sixty-two percent of the students I interviewed indicated that they did not truly enjoy science before taking these courses,” notes Calore. “After taking science classes that approach learning in a bit of a different way, they actually liked science again. That seems to say that we’re really on to something with project-based learning.”



Faculty members learned about the practical application of Google Suite productivity apps from IT Director Tom Chestna.



Spanish teacher Jon Bender considers social media and student learning in a workshop co-facilitated by Associate Dean of Students Lindsay Leal.

And after years of multifaceted study, researchers in the Physics Department at the University of Washington agree: Inquiry- and project-based learning not only improves students’ understanding of content and concepts, it improves long-term retention, as well.

“What we actually *do* is what really sticks,” says Calore.

Calore’s own research shows that students respond to the key components of project-based learning. “They like that it is hands-on, they like that it is based in real-world applications, and they like that they are having fun while they’re learning,” says Calore. “In more traditional

settings, students often feel like they are sitting back absorbing material. Project-based learning allows for more active learning—it is largely student-driven, and allows for frequent and open collaboration and discussion. Those are the things our students like, and that get them going.”

Project-based learning allows students to work on a project over an extended period of time—sometimes for as little as a week, other times through a thematic unit, occasionally even for a full semester—that engages them in solving a real-world problem or complex inquiry. Project-based learning always culminates with students presenting their findings in some public format.

“There still may be some lecture component,” notes Calore. “Teachers still provide scaffolding. They may talk about concepts, talk about expected results, and talk about the materials. Students then have to dive in and figure out steps and procedure. It allows them to be creative and to take ownership of the process. It also allows them to make mistakes and to learn from those mistakes without penalty.”

And while some classes lend themselves better to project-based learning than others, Calore believes the benefits far outweigh the additional planning that introducing and incorporating projects

might require. He encouraged PEG workshop attendees to start small, developing simple projects around simple curricular elements. Science teacher and workshop attendee Alison Frye intends to do just that.

“I am always trying to incorporate more hands-on activities into the curriculum, and attended this workshop hoping to come away with some ideas on how I could make my classes more interactive and student-centered,” says Frye. “I appreciated Dan’s advice on getting started—that you don’t need to completely redesign your classes all at once, that you can start with one concept and grow from there. Next week I’ll be taking an existing lab activity and flipping it so it presents as more of an exploratory activity. I hope this allows the students to ‘discover’ the concept along the way rather than me simply telling them the concept. Although this takes more class time to achieve, the hope is that they have a deeper understanding of the concept when they’re done.”

While science courses seem to inherently and effectively support project-based learning, Calore hopes his colleagues will adapt the approach across disciplines. English Fellow Sierra Berkel sees value in trying; she hopes to bring the concept into her lower mid English classroom during the spring semester.

“I am really interested in how alternative modes of learning can impact student engagement in the classroom,” says Berkel. “When done right, project-based learning can create flow experiences for students, handing them agency and the ability to focus on what’s going on in the moment. As Calore noted, this would require a collaborative working relationship between colleagues, scaffolding, and a significant amount of time; however, the impact would be monumental.” ■

The Professional Education and Growth Committee is one of Taft’s 17 standing committees, comprised of both faculty and staff, which meet regularly to enhance and expand all aspects of our school community. Other committees include Academic Technology, Global Leadership and Service, Gender, and Spiritual Life. The charge of the PEG Committee is “to assist in the development of the faculty through programing for professional growth and providing oversight for the Professional Education Grant (PEG) program.” The PEG charge is realized through programming such as the Winter Workshops, sponsoring outside speakers like Dr. Michael Thompson and the Stanley King Institute, as well as reviewing the 80-plus summer grant applications that are submitted each spring.

ARTS

"Art is everywhere: thriving, vibrant, creative, inspiring, unsettling...we are reminded consistently that art and education cannot be separated."

—Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78



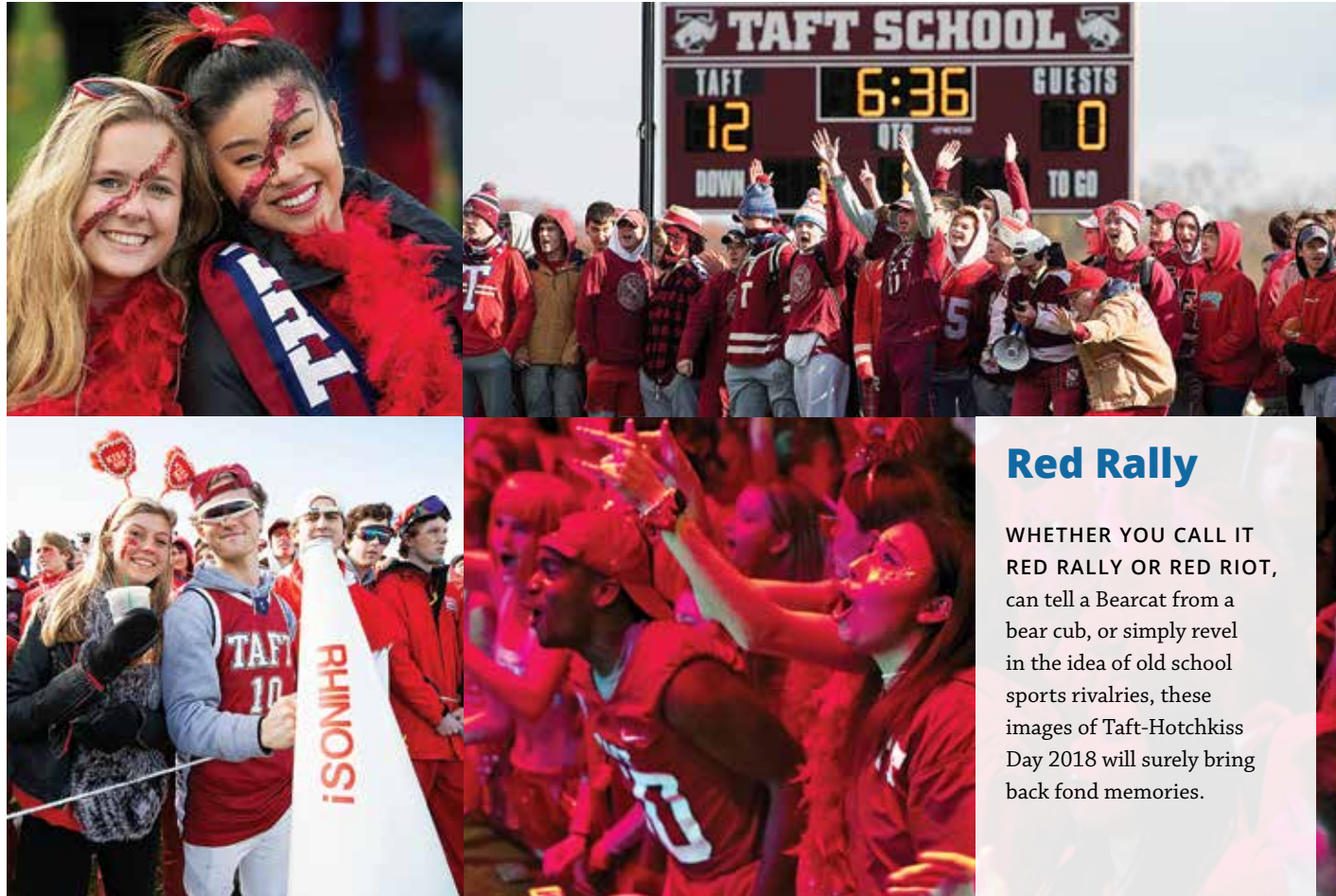
THE FALL DANCE SHOWCASE FEATURED TAFT PERFORMERS STUDYING DANCE AT EVERY LEVEL. THE PROGRAM INCLUDED ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHY BY STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND OTHER GUESTS AND EXPLORED THEMES AS DIVERSE AS THE DESIRE FOR ATTENTION, THE CONFLICTING ASSOCIATIONS OF THE COLOR RED, FINDING ONE'S VOICE, AND THE VERSATILITY OF WATER. DANCE TEACHER SARAH SURBER ALSO CHOREOGRAPHED A SEASONAL PIECE, FEATURING MUSIC FROM TCHAIKOVSKY'S *THE NUTCRACKER*.



DIRECTOR HELENA FIFER BROUGHT *CHICAGO: THE HIGH SCHOOL EDITION* (BOOK BY FRED EBB AND BOB FOSSE) TO LIFE ON THE BINGHAM AUDITORIUM STAGE FOR FIVE PERFORMANCES IN OCTOBER. BUT SHE DIDN'T DO IT ALONE: THE 30 EXCEPTIONALLY WELL-CAST, TALENTED PERFORMERS SINGING AND DANCING ON STAGE WERE SUPPORTED BY A CREW OF 24 BEHIND THE SCENES. DANCE TEACHER SARAH SURBER SPENT THE SUMMER STUDYING FOSSE'S TECHNIQUE, DAVID KIEVIT'S INCREDIBLE SET DESIGN ELEVATED THE PRODUCTION, AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR T.J. THOMPSON WAS, ALL AT ONCE, ACCOMPANIST, CONDUCTOR, AND MEMBER OF THE CAST.



Taft Traditions



Red Rally

WHETHER YOU CALL IT RED RALLY OR RED RIOT, can tell a Bearcat from a bear cub, or simply revel in the idea of old school sports rivalries, these images of Taft-Hotchkiss Day 2018 will surely bring back fond memories.

Headmaster Holiday

STUDENTS AND FACULTY alike wait with bated breath not only to find out when the next Headmaster Holiday will be, but who will announce it, in the Peter Berg '80, P'19 production era. No fumble on this year's announcement...

Watch the video here
<http://bit.ly/TaftHead>



"And here, with that first night, we came to the sight that we might use always as a symbol of all we can be as a school.... That night they all sat down together. It was our first sit-down dinner: Taft, his two teachers, a handful of students. All we can do is honor that night this year, and every year."

—Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78, writing about Taft's oldest and deepest tradition, sit-down dinner

Sit-down Dinner

THE TRADITION OF SIT-DOWN DINNER essentially began on the very first night in 1890 that Horace Dutton Taft opened the doors to his school in Pelham Manor, New York. Today, sit-down endures, often with a contemporary twist, such as sustainable sit-down featuring locally sourced foods during Campus Sustainability Week.

Halloween

THE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT OWNED HALLOWEEN this year, personifying the discipline at the elemental level. Look closely to find the Iron Chef, heavy metal, bromates, potassium, designer jeans, Schrödinger's cat, and more.



Morning Meeting Speakers

“Consider a range of perspectives in order to develop a moral worldview that helps create a compassionate, inclusive, and socially just community.”

—The Taft School Portrait of a Graduate



▲ Rebecca Savage

FOUNDER, THE 525 FOUNDATION, honoring the lives of her sons who lost their lives to alcohol and oxycodone overdoses on the same night, by working to prevent another such tragedy through outreach, education, and support.

“I think it is so important that we all realize that every decision we make has a consequence, positive or negative. Let’s focus on making positive choices and encouraging others to do the same.”

▼ Alison Wright

SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHER and author dedicated to photographing endangered cultures and people, while covering issues concerning the human condition.

*“What is this thread that binds all of us?
We all want the same things.
We all want to love and be loved.
We want safety and health for ourselves,
our friends, our family, our children.
We want our kids to be educated.”*



◀ Vien Truong

CEO OF DREAM CORPS AND LEADER OF ITS GREEN FOR ALL INITIATIVE, a national project putting communities of color at the forefront of the climate movement and equality at the center of environmental solutions.

“Solutions have to start with the people who are impacted the most. The people who are at ground zero understand best what kinds of solutions work and don’t work.”

▶ Hakeem Rahim

MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATOR, consultant, and powerful advocate dedicated to destigmatizing mental health issues.

“People frequently ask me, ‘How did you accept your mental illness?’ This essential question strikes at the heart of healing because in order to heal, you must first recognize healing is necessary.”



▶ Bob Mattingly

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COUNCIL ON SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL EDUCATION

“The human person is not designed to function alone. It needs to be connected with others in a state of humility and a desire for peace. The human person needs to be plugged into something beyond itself.”





◀ Jason Gay

SPORTS COLUMNIST FOR
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"Be in the moment. Be present. That's what the athletes that I talk to really love about sports. Yeah, money's good. Fame is great. Trophies are cool. But they love it because they are in the moment. They remember it because they are present. They are fully themselves—fully alive—when they are in the moment."



◀ Lisa Luckett

A 9/11 WIDOW AND AUTHOR
of *The Light in 9/11: Shocked By Kindness, Healed by Love*

"Social change takes time. If you want the world to look different in 20 years, you have to start now, by choosing to look at things differently and seeing all the possibilities before you." ■

▶ Abby Fabiaschi '98 and Kristy Norbert

CO-FOUNDERS OF EMPOWER HER NETWORK, a nonprofit organization collaborating with ready survivors of human trafficking who find themselves in the same vulnerable circumstance.

"I do believe that privilege comes with responsibility. Get involved. Choose something that matters to you—just choose something. What becomes a beginning for you may also be a beginning for others."
—Abby Fabiaschi '98



The Embodiment of Service

CFO Gil Thornfeldt Retires

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER GIL THORNFELDT RETIRED IN DECEMBER AFTER 13 YEARS IN WHAT HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78 CALLS "A ROLE OF ASTONISHING COMPLEXITY AND CHALLENGE."

"The range of issues that would come across his desk on any given day is mindboggling," says MacMullen. "The skillset that is required—so diverse and so sophisticated—is incredible. And yet it is a position in which you often hear cymbals of criticism and flutes of praise."

Thornfeldt earned an undergraduate degree from Fairfield University and an MBA in finance from Sacred Heart University. He spent the next 20 years in various finance and operations posts in the for-profit sector. Before arriving at Taft in 2005, he spent 11 years serving as the director of financial services at Wesleyan University.

Recognizing the changing role of business managers in private schools, and as acknowledgment of the measurable and extraordinary change Thornfeldt effected at Taft, the Board of Trustees named him Taft's first chief financial officer in 2012.

"He changed our school in really profound ways and really positive ways," notes MacMullen. "Gil made Taft a better school, better for every one of us, better for every student. We're a different school because of everything he did, and we're a better school because of everything he did. And he did it with zero attention to self, with no interest in accolades, and without an ounce of ego. He embodied the best of what service to something larger than the self means."

And, MacMullen says, he did it "with the craziest sense of humor I've ever seen." Thornfeldt's work extended well beyond the Taft community. He has been deeply involved with professional organizations,



where he has been celebrated for mentoring countless young men and women. He was president of the Business Officers Association of Housatonic School, and a recognized leader of the Association of Business Officers of Preparatory Schools. In 2017, he was awarded the National Business Officers Association Will J. Hancock Unsung Hero Award. Thornfeldt has also worked tirelessly to strengthen relationships with the local community to the point, MacMullen

says, where town leaders proudly "consider us collaborators and partners." "Gil's work at Taft has been extraordinary, and it has been a real privilege—and a lot of fun—to work with him," says MacMullen. "Gil's work ethic is one of the most extraordinary I've ever seen. I've often felt humbled and dwarfed by his capabilities. What I will remember most, and treasure always, is his heart. He loved Taft and its mission, he cared deeply about people, and in the end, he wanted to do one thing: serve." ■

Fall SPORTS wrap-up

BY STEVE PALMER
Photography by Robert Falcetti



Diante Vines '20 works for extra yardage against Exeter on September 15.



Olivia Wivestad '19 makes a play during a match against Loomis Chaffee on October 10.

Football 8-1

ERICKSON LEAGUE CO-CHAMPIONS
NEW ENGLAND BOWL CHAMPIONS

The 2018 Taft football season was one of the finest in recent memory. The team finished the regular season with a record of 7-1 and a three-way tie for co-champions of the Erickson League. The one blemish to the record was a tough loss to a talented Brunswick School team where Taft had the ball on the 1-yard line and time ran out after a controversial call. The team rebounded the following week on Parents' Weekend with a stirring come-from-behind win to snap Avon Old Farms' 14-game regular season win streak. This game showed the grit and resilience that was a hallmark of the entire season, including a hard-fought win over Hotchkiss. That victory assured a postseason bowl game for Taft, and the NEPSAC Bowl committee selected the Rhinos to play in the

Todd Marble Bowl against St. Sebastian's School—the ISL champions. Taft played an outstanding game to win 35-34 to hoist the NEPSAC Championship trophy on St. Sebastian's home field and take sole possession of the Erickson League Championship. Co-captain Nolan Grooms '19 led the offense and put together one of the best seasons that a Taft quarterback has ever had. Nolan finished with 123 completions on 180 attempts (68%) for 1,655 yards, 18 TD, and only 4 INT. He also added 83 carries for 522 yards and 9 TD on the ground. For his efforts, Nolan was selected as the Erickson League Offensive Player of the Year as well as All New England and All Erickson League. Postgraduate Teely Rhyne '19 carried the offensive load at running back, rushing for over 1,000 yards and 12 TD. Diante Vines '20 was one of the most feared wide receivers in the league—he added 51 catches and 12 TD. Taft's massive offensive line (averaging 300 pounds)

of Ryan Last '19, David Brown '19, Anim Dankwah '19, Seamus O'Hora '19, and Erik Johannesson-Perez '20 controlled the line of scrimmage and allowed skill players such as Mashod Harrison '20, Michael Yamin '20, Ayinde Johnson '20, and Skyler Bell '21 to make big plays all season. Co-captain Liam Akpata '19 led the defense and roamed the secondary as our leading tackler. Mac Culbertson '19, Seamus O'Hora '19, and Jacob Rooks '21 all shone as key players and put defensive coordinator Tim Cary's plan into action. This team was a special one.

Volleyball 17-2

RANKED #2 IN NEW ENGLAND
NEW ENGLAND QUARTERFINALISTS

The varsity volleyball season started with two fantastic wins over Exeter and Andover on the opening road trip to Andover. The team's theme, "Whatever



Congratulations

TO GIRLS' VARSITY VOLLEYBALL COACH GINGER O'SHEA, WHO LOGGED HER 500th CAREER WIN ON SENIOR DAY when Taft—in a gym decorated with balloons and streamers—played Choate and won 3–0!

In 2010, O'Shea was the recipient of the Victory Club Award for achieving 400 career wins. Her team is the only one in the New England Prep School League to be presented the All-Academic Award by the American Volleyball Coaches Association.

It Takes," was in evidence every day in practice and in games. The Rhinos lived up to the theme by earning the #2 seed in the New England Tournament after a dominating season. Though the Rhinos would defeat many strong squads, including Choate (3–0, 3–1), Nobles (3–0), and Loomis (3–2), the two 3–0 wins over rival Hotchkiss in the regular season and on Taft-Hotchkiss Day proved to be very special. The team qualified for the New England tournament (their 15th trip to the Class A Tournament in the past 18 years), and coach Ginger O'Shea earned her 500th career victory on Taft's home court against Choate (see above). In their quarterfinal New England Tournament matchup, Taft lost to Exeter (2–3) on a neutral court in an exciting 5th set. The team's players were recognized for their fine academic work by receiving an award from the American Volleyball Coaches Association. Co-captains Kayla Robinson

'19 and Addie Delafield '20 were the backbone to this team's success, and both were selected as All-League players. Robinson was the recipient of the Volleyball Award, and New England All-Stars were Robinson, Anna Csigrinszkij '19, and Osi Bialunska '19. Olivia Wivestad '19 and Delafield were recognized as Founders League All-Stars.

Boys' Soccer 14-3-2

NEW ENGLAND CLASS A SEMIFINALIST
WNEPSSA CLASS A RUNNERS-UP

Taft boys' soccer continued their incredible run, posting an impressive record of 14–3–2, 6–1 in the Founders League. For the fourth year in a row, Taft earned a spot in the Class A New England Tournament, and for the third consecutive year, the team reached the semifinals, falling to the eventual champion in each of those contests. Taft also finished as the WNEPSSA Class A



Marvin Sibanda '19 moves the ball up field against Choate.

regular season runners-up. The program maintained national notoriety, being ranked as one of the top five prep school soccer teams in the country. After beginning the season with a draw at Brunswick, the team rattled off six straight wins, highlighted by wins over top programs like Avon Old Farms (4–3), Deerfield (3–1), and Andover (8–0). After dropping a tight game to Berkshire, Taft produced six straight shut-out victories, including a convincing 4–0 win at Kent. The Rhinos closed out the regular season with a fantastic 3–0 victory at home on Taft-Hotchkiss Day. In the New England quarterfinal, Taft defeated Choate (5–1) before falling to eventual New England champion Berkshire in the semifinals. Taft's offense was certainly entertaining this season, scoring 86 goals in 19 matches, led by the dynamic duo of Sammed Bawa '20 (26 goals, 12 assists) and Marvin Sibanda '19 (15 goals, 11 assists). Aaron Skeene '19 (9 goals, 7 assists) and Jordan Miller '20 (3 goals, 8 assists) added to this explosive attack. Kharym Florvil '19, James Donaldson '20, and Rex Riefler '19 were key members of the midfield, and a



Patience Kum '21 stays ahead of a Berkshire player.

talented group of defenders—Micah Umeh '19, Zayn Daniels '19, Taj Salawu '19, and Ethan Hindle '20 —were excellent all season. Their efforts, combined with those of goalkeeper Shayan Karimi '19, allowed opponents to tally only 15 goals against Taft throughout the entire season, less than one goal per game on average. There are plenty of young players eager to build upon this success next year, and the graduating seniors, especially senior co-captains Umeh and Sibanda, leave an incredible legacy. The future of Taft soccer remains bright!

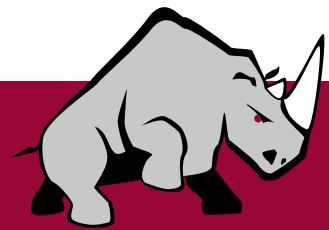
Girls' Soccer 7-5-3

The 2018 girls' varsity soccer season was characterized by learning, demonstrating that communication, support, and togetherness are not things that just happen. As a result, these Taft players grew from early season struggles into a team with some of

the best results in the past five seasons. Highlights included the home victory over Deerfield (2–0) under the lights on the Katie Jackson Morrison '92 Field, and well-played ties against top league teams Hotchkiss, Choate, and #1-ranked Porter's, as the Rhinos played their best soccer at the end of the season. The Taft defense gave up five fewer goals than last year, with goalkeeper Claudia Torres '19 as the anchor in net. Patience Kum '21 (17 goals) and captain Emilee Adami '19 led the offense with Kayla Thomas '20, a dominant force all over the field. Kum, Adami, and Thomas were elected to the Connecticut All-State Prep Team—the first time in over a decade that Taft has had three players honored. The program is indebted to a senior class that has marked a phenomenal run of four years of high-caliber soccer, posting a 43–15–7 record in their time. With a combination of strong returning players, this group is committed to getting back to the playoffs in 2019.

Field Hockey 11-3-4

The varsity field hockey team, led by co-captains Eva Baurmeister '19 and Corinna Dorr '19, began their 2018 campaign with a trip across the pond, attending four World Cup games in London, competing in three international matches, and taking in practice directed by current and former national team players. Returning to Watertown with a strong sense of unity, the Rhinos began their official season with a road win



**FALL
ATHLETIC AWARDS**

Boys' Varsity Soccer

Livingston Carroll Soccer Award
Marvin Sibanda '19
Micah Umeh '19

Girls' Varsity Soccer

1976 Girls' Soccer Award
Emilee Adami '19

Girls' Varsity Field Hockey

Field Hockey Award
Corinna Dorr '19
Eva Baurmeister '19

Football

Black Award
Nolan Grooms '19

Harry K. Cross Football Award
Liam Akpata '19

Girls' Cross Country

Girls' Cross Country Award
Michelle Lian '20
Katherine Bootsma '20

Boys' Cross Country

John B. Small Award
Oliver Spencer '19

Volleyball

Volleyball Award
Kayla Robinson '19



Eva Baurmeister '19
fires the ball upfield
against Sacred Heart.

against Milton Academy (2-0). The wins would continue with key victories over Loomis (4-0), Choate (9-0), Ethel Walker (2-1), and Kent (5-1). Home games were highlighted by a 2-2 tie against an undefeated Deerfield team on Parents' Weekend and a battle against the visiting Bearcats on Taft-Hotchkiss Day. Hotchkiss and Taft went head-to-head for the Founders League title, a game that ended scoreless (0-0), and gave Taft a 2nd-place finish in the Founders League (a tie against Westminster put them one behind Hotchkiss) and an 8th seed in the NEPSAC Class A tournament. Taft traveled to Andover, the #1 seed, for the quarterfinal matchup. Trailing by one at the half, the home team made a strong push in the second and Andover walked away with a 4-0 victory. Taft's leading scorer, Abigail Hano '20, was named a WNEPSFHA All Star and NEPSAC All-League. Corinna

Dorr was also named a WNEPSFHA All Star. Baurmeister was named NEPSAC All League, and Emma Hentemann '21 and Jenna Guglielmi '22 were awarded NEPSAC Honorable Mentions. Founders All League winners were Olivia King '20 and Liv Santini '19. Captains-elect are Hano and King.

Girls' Cross Country 3-5

The season's three wins against Miss Porter's, Kent, and rival Hotchkiss were definitely an improvement for the girls' cross country team, but the overall record does not do justice to this team's dedication to improvement throughout the season. The Rhino runners lost a few close matchups during the regular season, including a real battle with league champion Choate (32-23), where Stella Oldakowski '22 nearly

won her first home race, and the top five ran very well. In the highlight of the season, Taft came together to earn 3rd-place when they hosted the Founders League Championships. At that same Founders League race, Lucy Gretskey '19 earned All-Founders honors for her 8th-place finish, and Annabel Pick '22 placed 3rd among members of the Class of 2022! The team was excited to have earned two more wins than in 2017 and to have improved their standing in the Founders League from 5th in 2017 to 3rd in 2018. The team will miss their departing seniors, but with just three of them graduating, next year's team has high aspirations for both the regular season and the championship races. The 2019 team will be captained by Katie Bootsma '20, Michelle Lian '20, and Maggie Robertshaw '20.

Boys' Cross Country 3-4

The 2018 season was marked by growth and improvement, as a majority of the team was new to running at the varsity level and will return next year. Wins this season included strong team performances against Trinity-Pawling (17-41), Williston Northampton (19-37) on Parents' Day, in which the home course record was set, and a hard-fought win on the road against Kent (25-30), where the depth of the program was highlighted when Taft was missing their second, third, and fourth runners. Taft finished 5th again at the Founders League Championships, and in perhaps their best race of the season, the Rhinos placed 8th at the NEPSA Division I Championships at Avon, bettering their 2017 finish by two spots and capping the season

by beating Choate in this race by 20 points. (Choate edged the Rhinos in two previous races this season.) Individual accomplishments for the season included six harriers breaking into the top 30 performances by Taft runners on the home course: Mason Conto '21, Sanjeev Jeyabalan '19, Robbie Accomando '22, Joey Nihill '21, Ian Staines '20 (16:45/7th all-time), and Ollie Spencer '19 (16:26), who bested the previous home course record set last year by two seconds. Spencer and Staines were recognized as Founders League All-Stars (finishing 7th and 8th) and New England All-Stars (finishing 8th and 13th). All-Founders League recipients were Staines and Stefan Kim '20, while Spencer was the recipient of the John B. Small Award. Next year's team will be captained by Kim and Staines. ■



Stella Oldakowski '22 runs against Choate.



Joey Nihill '21, left, and Ian Staines '20 in action against Choate and Trinity-Pawling.

GOING FOR THE GUSTO

HOW A CAREER SHIFT VAULTED

LEXI BROWNELL REESE '92 TO THE C-SUITE

BY NEIL VIGDOR '95

THERE'S SOMETHING SEISMIC HAPPENING TO SILICON VALLEY AND ITS REPUTED "BRO CULTURE."



LEXI BROWNELL REESE '92 is one of the reasons why. The Harvard MBA and former Google vice president is part of an ever-expanding circle of top tech executive women, not just in the Bay Area, but in the country, that is shaking the ground. This group of C-suite trailblazers is changing the corporate values system and opening up windows of opportunity, from the boardroom to the diverse mix of customers their businesses serve.

Reese is the chief operating officer of Gusto, an all-in-one human resources platform that helps small and medium businesses pay and take care of their teams. Gusto was recently valued at about \$2 billion (having raised \$316 million of private capital).

Reese also just joined the board of directors for Gap Inc. According to Board Monitor, women only hold 22.2 percent of the total board seats on Fortune 500 companies.



Asked about her thoughts on the shake-up of the bro culture in Silicon Valley, Reese says, "I think it is real. A notable proof point is that talent from underrepresented backgrounds is choosing to join companies where there is an undeniable focus on diversity and belonging."

Reese shared that one of the key drivers that led her to join Gusto's leadership team and Gap Inc.'s board of directors is that both companies are deeply committed to diversity and belonging—in how they recruit and scale, as well as how they design products.

"Gusto's mission is to create a world where work empowers a better life. This mission applies not only to the small businesses we serve, but also the people who work here. Our customers come from all walks of life, and so must we. We want our team to reflect our

incredibly diverse customers to build the best product and service for them. We hire people from a wide variety of backgrounds, both because it's the right thing to do and because it makes our company stronger."

Gusto has made admirable strides in gender diversity. More than half (56 percent) of the company's employees are women, according to Reese, who adds that 26 percent of its engineers are women. Among the company's employees, or Gusties, as they're nicknamed, is Lauren Humphrey '02, who helped launch Gusto's health insurance offering.

"We still have work to do relative to our aspirations on ensuring our workforce composition reflects our customer set, but equally important is ensuring that when people arrive at Gusto as an employee, they feel equally heard and included. That is the core of belonging. That is the core work of great innovation," says Reese.



The title of chief operating officer comes with great expectations for the highly-scheduled mother of two, who empowers Gusto's sales, marketing, customer experience, and insights and operations teams. Reese explains that she is primarily responsible for three things: "Cost-effective growth, scaling



previous page:
Gusto's San Francisco office is in a historic Pier 70 warehouse formerly used for shipbuilding. COLIN PRICE PHOTOGRAPHY

right:
Lexi Brownell Reese '92, COO of Gusto. COLIN PRICE PHOTOGRAPHY

"DO GOOD IN THIS LIFE.
THINK ABOUT THIS MINUTE.
THESE PEOPLE.
WHAT GOOD CAN YOU DO?"

Reese says the traits she looks for in new hires are similar to those embraced by Taft. **“You work hard, and you don’t do it for public acclaim,”** she says. **“You develop your talents by being passionate, curious, and persistent.”**



while maintaining extraordinary customer service, and navigating this growth while maintaining our core values.”

Since Reese joined Gusto, the company has grown significantly across every dimension—customers, employees, and, of course, revenue. It now serves over 60,000 small and medium businesses in the United States. And the company has close to 800 employees in offices in San Francisco and Denver.

Its cloud-based computing platform was built with mobile users in mind, with “three out of four customers running payroll in 10 minutes or less,” Reese says.

Gusto’s clients run the gamut, from the popular San Francisco ice cream purveyor Humphry Slocombe to Houston-based start-up Homebase, which creates time-tracking software. Most would rather spend their limited time and energy growing their business and recruiting investors than dealing with the tangle of red tape associated with processing payroll, tax compliance, and providing cost-effective health care to their employees.

“About half of small businesses don’t offer health care to employees,” Reese says, “so we want to change that.”

The private company has attracted marquee investors such as CapitalG (formerly known as Google Capital), as well as the founders of Instagram, PayPal, Yelp, Dropbox, Stripe, Nest, and Eventbrite. “It was a space that was ripe for disruption,” Reese says.

Reese didn’t vault to the C-suite of Gusto by staying in her comfort zone, however.

In 2015, she left a plum executive post at Google as vice president of global programmatic platforms for Gusto. She had worked for the tech giant for eight years, helping Google open its Cambridge, Massachusetts, office and pioneering the marketing of Google’s AdWords platform to small and medium-sized businesses at a time when traditional television and print advertising was still a main avenue for companies to reach consumers.

“Eleven years later, the rest is history,” she says. “I loved Google. I love the mission of Google. But I wanted to get back to something that was smaller and was still in the building stage.” By the time Reese left Google, the company had 50,000 employees.

“Gusto represents the Venn diagram about what I’m passionate about, what I think I’m good at, and what I think is good for the world,” Reese says.

Reese was looking for a company with an inspirational mission, a \$100 billion growth opportunity, and high-integrity founders. “My code for that was no a-holes,” she says.

It wasn’t the first career reboot for Reese, who has been profiled by *Fortune* magazine and Huffington Post since joining Gusto.

The first chapter of Reese’s career started as a documentary filmmaker after graduating from the



right:
Reese in the
company's San
Francisco office.
COLIN PRICE
PHOTOGRAPHY



**“DON’T SOLVE FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.
SOLVE FOR MEANING.”**

University of Virginia. One of the projects she worked on chronicled the plight of adolescent prostitutes in Nicaragua. “I was not as good of a filmmaker as I was an advocate for the girls we were filming,” she adds.

Reese then went to work as a paralegal in the sex crimes unit of the Manhattan district attorney’s office, followed by two years of advocacy work on

Capitol Hill for microfinance funding to help low-income individuals and business owners get access to loans. “We all were trying to say to Congress and the World Bank, ‘This is why microfinance is important,’” Reese recalls.

But Reese still hadn’t found her niche. Not until Michael Chu, the former head of the microfinance

nonprofit Acción and a Harvard Business School professor, told her she lacked “hard skills.” That’s when the signal went off for her to enroll in Harvard’s MBA program.

“I didn’t know how to take that. It felt a bit like a ‘complisult’ (half compliment, half insult),” she remembers. “He said, ‘No matter which path you choose, you need to figure out some of the language of how this all happens.’” It was an epiphany for Reese professionally as well as personally.

“What I loved about Harvard Business School is they have a social enterprise program,” Reese says. The practice of companies measuring their social impact along with financial performance, known as the double bottom line, was just starting to come into the mainstream. “That’s now happily a lot more widely known and supported,” she says.

It was at Harvard that Reese met her husband, Corby, in the hockey locker room, where she played on the club hockey team of the business school, the Blades. The couple has two daughters, Scout, 9, and Sejal, 6.



Facebook. “We’re here to be of service and to have an impact,” Reese says, adding that the mantra was instilled in her at an early age while at Taft.

Reese has a checklist that she says applies to companies such as Gusto that are trying to disrupt an industry: “How do we grow at an accelerated pace cost-effectively? How do we do it while maintaining extraordinary service? How do we do both of those things while maintaining a culture that’s values-driven and values-based?”

A critical component of leadership for Reese is disciplined planning, as well as stating goals and non-goals.

Reese says the traits she looks for in new hires are similar to those embraced by Taft. “You work hard, and you don’t do it for public acclaim,” she says. “You develop your talents by being passionate, curious, and persistent.”

Reese advises young professionals to be true to themselves. “You can take advice from other people, but you know your passions, skills, and interests,” she says. “You’re trying to line those things up.”

Job titles and company names aren’t the true measure of success, either. “I see lots of ‘tumbleweeds’ [people who don’t have a clear direction] or people who go for ‘shiny apples,’” Reese says. “So they never really get deep experiences. Or you get the planners who are so busy planning their life that they miss what’s happening in front of them.”

After all the twists and turns of her career, Reese says she’s learned that it’s important to focus on the present.

“Do good in this life. Think about this minute. These people. What good can you do? Remember, time and life are not linear. It’s never that simple and it never works out that way. Don’t solve for accomplishments. Solve for meaning.” ■

—Neil Vigdor ’95 covers politics for *The Hartford Courant*.

JENNA CARANDO



“Gusto’s mission is to create a world where work empowers a better life. This mission applies not only to the small businesses we serve, **but also the people who work here.**”



COLIN PRICE PHOTOGRAPHY

“WE’RE HERE TO BE OF SERVICE
AND TO HAVE AN **IMPACT.**”



Taft's

GLOBAL REACH

THE DAVIS
SCHOLARSHIP AT
10
YEARS

BY MICHAEL HOFFMAN '97



LINH TANG '14 COLUMBIA '18—VIETNAM

WHEN ONE OF MY MENTORS RECENTLY ASKED ME, “WITHOUT LIMITS OF TIME, ENERGY, AND RESOURCES, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?” I CAME TO THE STARTLING YET HUMBLING REALIZATION THAT 10 YEARS AGO, AS A 12-YEAR-OLD GIRL BORN AND RAISED IN THE WORKING CLASS OF POSTWAR VIETNAM, MY ANSWER WOULD HAVE BEEN TO GO TO COLLEGE, MAKE A GOOD LIVING, AND HELP MY FAMILY. NOW, MY ANSWER IS TO BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER, TO INFLUENCE GLOBAL DEBATES SURROUNDING WOMEN’S ISSUES, TO SHAPE THE VALUES OF A LARGE COMMUNITY, AND TO HELP GIRLS AND FAMILIES WHO CANNOT YET AFFORD TO DREAM AS BIG AS I AM DREAMING NOW.

“My [goal] is to become an international technology human rights defender, to influence global debates surrounding women’s issues...and to help girls and families who cannot yet afford to dream as big as I am dreaming now.”

—LINH TANG '14

founded in
2007



THE SATURDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING, HEADMASTER EMERITUS LANCE ODDEN, COORDINATOR OF THE DAVIS INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM, STANDS IN THE CHORAL ROOM AND ADDRESSES A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE AS HE HAS DONE COUNTLESS TIMES BEFORE. ON THIS EVENING, THOUGH, ODDEN COULD BE MISTAKEN FOR A UN SECRETARY GENERAL AS THE AUDIENCE IS ABOUT 50 STUDENTS HAILING FROM 26 NATIONS ON FIVE CONTINENTS. THESE STUDENTS FROM TAFT AND FIVE OTHER BOARDING SCHOOLS ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP, A BOLD AND INNOVATIVE PHILANTHROPIC ENDEAVOR THAT HAS TRANSFORMED INTERNATIONALISM ON BOARDING SCHOOL CAMPUSES LIKE TAFT’S. THE DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP MAY SOMEDAY BE WIDELY CREDITED FOR CHANGING THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER.

below:

Davis Scholars from six member schools with Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden, coordinator of the Davis International Scholars Program, gather to mark the 10th anniversary of this successful program.

Founded in 2007, the Davis International Scholars Program provides tuition funds to international students of talent and integrity with demonstrated need to encourage greater global and socioeconomic diversity on American boarding school campuses. Davis Scholars are highly motivated future leaders who will make

the most of their educational experiences. They are extraordinarily idealistic young people who are eager to prepare themselves for a life of service to society.

Odden opens his address to the group describing Shelby Davis, the scholarship’s founder. “He is a unique person,” Odden notes. “His life has been one of





building a great investment firm and then of serving society in the broadest capacity, in particular, through education.”

The Davis Scholarship has impressively committed more than \$30 million in tuition aid to 219 students from 58 countries in its 10-year existence. Each member school (Andover, Emma Willard, Lawrenceville, Milton, Taft, and Westminster) awards up to five new scholarships annually and may have a maximum of 15 scholars enrolled at once. The Davis Foundation contributes

\$20,000 per scholar annually for each of three years of boarding school study and continues this support for all four years of undergraduate study. Each Davis Scholar will receive up to \$140,000 of tuition support directly from the Davis Foundation. Taft typically makes up the remainder of a student’s tuition through a financial aid award. As Odden reminds the group, “There is no equivalent program in American education.”

The Davis family’s commitment to internationalism has allowed Taft to enroll and graduate students from places the school could not reach otherwise. The scholarship has, so far, brought 49 students to Taft from 25 nations around the world, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.



top left:
Scholars at the NYC event
enjoy a lunch break.

above:
From left, Linh Vu '21, Vietnam;
an Emma Willard student;
Melisa Kayali '21, Turkey;
and Cho Dechen '19, Nepal.

more than
\$30,000,000
in tuition aid to 6 member schools

and to
219
students

from
58
countries

The Davis Scholars anniversary event was held at Hotel 50 Bowery in New York, hosted by owners Alex '66 and Irene Chu (former trustee and current trustee, respectively) and daughter Lauren '99.



NICK MORGOSHIA '17

BATES '21—GEORGIA

I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LEARN FROM THE WORLD AT LARGE: BY ARGUING PARTISAN POLITICS ON THE PAGES OF STUDENT NEWSPAPERS LIKE TAFT’S *PAPYRUS* AND *GLOBAL JOURNAL*; BY SERVING ON NONPROFIT BOARDS LIKE THE RED RHINO FUND TO HELP THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN ME; AND BY WORKING WITH STREET KIDS IN FORGOTTEN NEIGHBORHOODS OF INDIA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC THROUGH PAGE AND POOLE GRANTS THAT I RECEIVED AT TAFT. COMING FROM A POOR COUNTRY IN EASTERN EUROPE, THE DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP HAS SHOWN ME THAT EDUCATION IS THE MOST POTENT ANTIDOTE TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF BIRTH.

“The Davis Scholarship has shown me that education is the most potent antidote to the circumstances of birth.”

—NICK MORGOSHIA '17



RAYA PETROVA '17 UNION COLLEGE '21—BULGARIA

MY GREATEST INFLUENCE AT TAFT CAME THROUGH THE AMAZING, RICHLY DIVERSE, AND INTELLECTUALLY CHARGED GROUP OF PEOPLE I CHOSE AS MY CLOSEST FRIENDS. I AM CONFIDENT THROUGH OUR INTERACTIONS AND ROLES ON CAMPUS WE SHOWED HOW OUR DIFFERENCES CAN, INDEED, BE WHAT HOLD US TOGETHER AND HELP US GROW. IN MY FRESHMAN YEAR OF COLLEGE, I TOOK UP A SERIES OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: STUDENT FORUM BOARD, FINANCIAL COMMITTEE, RUGBY TEAM, AND THE ALL-GIRLS A CAPPELLA. IN ALL THAT I DO ON CAMPUS NOW, I PUT THE TAFT SCHOOL'S CORE VALUES AND MY CULTURAL ROOTS AS MY CENTRAL MOTIVES. THE DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP HAS IRREVERSIBLY CHANGED MY LIFE BY GIVING ME A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY—THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A GLOBAL CITIZEN OF THE WORLD. TODAY I CAN LISTEN, UNDERSTAND, CONNECT, AND WORK WITH PEOPLE BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE.

“The Davis Scholarship has irreversibly changed my life by giving me a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity—the opportunity to become a global citizen of the world.”

—RAYA PETROVA '17



The first few classes of Davis Scholars have now completed their undergraduate degrees and are finishing graduate school or are at the start of their professional careers. Taft's first Davis Scholar graduate, Jenny Jin '09 from China, graduated from Princeton and is now completing her Ph.D. in computer science at Stanford researching artificial intelligence. Similarly, Marieta Kenkovova '10, from Slovakia, went on to study economics at Wellesley, and she will finish an MBA from the Wharton School of Business at UPenn this spring. Dima Yankova '12 from Bulgaria has engineering degrees from Union College and Cambridge University, and is now working in Spain on the ideas and strategy team for la Marina de Valencia. Rozalie Czesana '14, from the

top left:
Lauren Chu '99
and trustee
Ernest Kwarteng '98
participated in the
Davis event.

right:
Scholars attending
the NYC event dining
at 50 Bowery.

Czech Republic, graduated from Princeton in 2018 and now works as a management consultant for McKinsey in New York.

“You might wonder why the Davis family is so committed to international education,” Odden continues. “In fact, Shelby Davis's mother had a lifelong interest in internationalism. After graduating from Wellesley College and earning a Ph.D. in international relations, she worked for the Council on Foreign Relations. She lived to be 106, and



\$20,000
*per scholar annually
for high school and college*

The Davis Scholars group has already made their impact on the Taft community through their intellect, leadership, and diverse range of talents. Their powerful and positive effect on the world at large is only now beginning to reveal itself.

up to
\$140,000
 of tuition support

Each scholar brings a guaranteed \$80,000 of tuition with them to college that also helps them differentiate themselves in the college process, where aid for international students is often very scarce.

up until the end of her life was an advocate for cross-cultural understanding.” It was, in fact, in Mr. Taft’s Dining Room of ISP wing that Lance Odden and Phil Geier, former president of United World College USA, hammered out the details of the program in 2007 at the direction of Shelby Davis. The goal was to enroll promising scholars and leaders from countries not well represented in U.S. boarding schools. Member schools were chosen based upon the Davis family’s prep school enrollment—Shelby



Davis attended Lawrenceville, and his son Lanse '97 attended Taft, for example.

The Davis Scholarship is unique because it is additive to Taft’s financial aid budget. Taft can enroll a group of students who will have an instant and powerful impact on many areas of school life without having to absorb the full cost of their enrollment. Further, that each scholar brings a guaranteed \$80,000 of tuition with them to college helps them differentiate themselves in the college process, where aid for international students is often very scarce. Davis graduates from Taft have gone on to colleges and universities like Columbia, MIT, Amherst, and Middlebury, but also to less common Taft destinations like Pomona and the University of Florida.

above:
 Taft’s Director of Financial Aid Michael Hoffman '97 speaks to the Davis Scholars.

left:
 From left, Davis Scholars Bojana Drca '20, from Serbia (in blue), and Cho Dechen '19, from Nepal, and Lance Odden talk with Fahima Ali, a guest speaker from Emma Willard School at the anniversary gathering.



ZYGIMANTAS JIEVALTAS '17

TUFTS '21—LITHUANIA

IN THE FUTURE I WANT TO LEAD A LIFE IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCE OR DIPLOMACY, A LIFE THAT WOULD ENABLE ME TO CONSTANTLY BE CONNECTED TO THE WORLD. AS A DAVIS SCHOLAR, I AM A BENEFICIARY OF CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION AND GENEROSITY, HENCE I WILL NEVER CEASE TO ADVOCATE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTICULTURALISM, TOLERANCE, AND INCLUSIVITY IN OUR INCREASINGLY GLOBALIZED WORLD. IN ESSENCE, MY OBJECTIVE SINCE BECOMING A DAVIS SCHOLAR HAS BEEN TO BUILD CROSS-CULTURAL BRIDGES AND TO FOSTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT BETWEEN PEOPLE WHO MIGHT SEEM FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT.

“My objective since becoming a Davis Scholar has been to build cross-cultural bridges and to foster mutual understanding and respect between people who might seem fundamentally different.”

—ZYGIMANTAS JIEVALTAS '17



NAIMA CAYDIID '15 WESTMINSTER COLLEGE '19—SOMALILAND

GROWING UP IN SOMALILAND, MY FUTURE WAS ALREADY DETERMINED FOR ME. I WAS TOLD MANY, MANY TIMES THE ROLE OF A WOMAN IN OUR SOCIETY IS TO BECOME A MOTHER AND A WIFE. I WOULD COME TO CONCLUDE THAT SOMALILAND IS THE LAND OF NO OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN LIKE ME WHO HAVE AMBITIOUS DREAMS. SOMALILAND IS A MALE-DOMINATED SOCIETY, AND I FELT ALMOST INVISIBLE. THE DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP GRANTED ME A LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND THE TAFT SCHOOL AND WESTMINSTER COLLEGE. BOTH SCHOOLS ENCOURAGE ME TO STEP OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE AND TAKE LEADERSHIP ROLES. AS A DAVIS SCHOLAR I HAVE LEARNED THAT MEETING PEOPLE AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM ARE IMPORTANT. PERHAPS THE BEST THING I'VE LEARNED FROM THESE LEADERSHIP ROLES IS THAT WORKING ON A TEAM BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN ME. I AM MAJORING IN BIOCHEMISTRY WITH A MINOR IN PUBLIC HEALTH. I PLAN TO GIVE BACK TO MY COMMUNITY BY BUILDING A WOMEN'S HOSPITAL WITH MY SISTERS WHO ARE IN MEDICAL SCHOOL.

"I plan to give back to my community by building a women's hospital with my sisters who are in medical school."

— NAIMA CAYDIID '15

THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE DAVIS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Taft has enrolled
49
Davis Scholars from—

AFGHANISTAN 2
ALBANIA
BULGARIA 3
CHINA 2
CZECH REPUBLIC 2
FINLAND
GEORGIA
HUNGARY 2
INDIA 2
JAMAICA
LITHUANIA 3
MOLDOVA 2
NEPAL
PHILIPPINES
POLAND 2
SERBIA
SLOVAKIA 2
SOMALILAND
SOUTH AFRICA
SWEDEN
TURKEY 2
UKRAINE 4
USA 6*
VIETNAM 4
ZIMBABWE

[* Domestic scholars were enrolled
in first years of the program]



49
students
to Taft

from
25
nations

As Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 describes it, "The Davis Scholars Program affirms, accelerates, and deepens Taft's commitment to help create a diverse campus. Since the program began, the Taft campus has never been the same. The Davis Scholars program has had a transformative effect." The Davis Scholars group past and present includes school monitors, dorm monitors, honor roll stalwarts, and graduation award winners. "While 10 years is a significant milestone for the program," MacMullen says, "the impact these graduates will have in their adult lives is just beginning to unfold. I can guarantee that in the future there will be Davis Scholars sitting around a table solving the world's problems."

Lance Odden concludes his remarks to the current scholars group with some words of wisdom from Shelby Davis himself: "I want you to hear what his personal mantra is. It is characteristic of him.... 'Learn, earn, and return.' Think about that. He believes that if you do this you will leave the world a better place." The Davis Scholars group has already made their impact on the Taft community through their intellect, leadership, and diverse range of talents. Their powerful and positive effect on the world at large is only now beginning to reveal itself. ■

Michael Hoffman '97 has been Taft's
director of financial aid since 2012.

above:
Ernest Protas '20, Ukraine

right:
Osi Bialunska '19, Poland,
and Melisa Kayali '21, Turkey



Looking
BACK

Give me a T!

What has been in style at Taft for more than 100 years?

Sweaters, hats, and more all sporting the big T! Students from the '30s, '60s, and today have all worn the big T. Styles may come and go, but these sweaters (and hats) will always be in style!

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



THE 1935 CHEER LEADERS
SERLEY SHERWOOD BURKE

Ensuring a rock-solid financial future for Taft.

I established my planned gift, a bequest, many years ago. Planned gifts have had an immediate impact at Taft from tuition assistance to building a new Dining Hall. All gifts in any amount are welcome and appreciated. Taft's endowment is primarily the result of planned gifts, such as bequests and charitable remainder trusts. It is my desire to grow the endowment, ensuring a rock-solid financial future for Taft, and that is where I directed my gift.

Please consider a planned gift for the school and join me as a member of the Horace Dutton Taft Legacy Society.

—Grant A. Porter '69, P'00
Board Chair



For more information,

please contact Paul Parvis, Director of Planned Giving, at 860-945-7751
or paulparvis@taftschoool.org | taftschoool.giftplans.org

TAFT

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