

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Coeducation

Taft

BULLETIN

'72



SUMMER 2022

INSIDE

42

Alumni Weekend 2022

Photography by Robert Falcetti,
Anne Kowalski, Seamus Conway,
and James Shannon



50

1 Campus, 52 Countries

By Debra Meyers



56

132nd Commencement

Photography by Robert Falcetti,
Anne Kowalski, Seamus Conway,
and James Shannon



OTHER DEPARTMENTS

- 3 On Main Hall
- 5 Community Corner
- 6 Alumni Spotlight
- 16 Around the Pond
- 32 Sports
- 40 Annual Fund Report
- 64 Class Notes
- 70 In Print
- 102 Milestones
- 112 Looking Back



Taft's spring production
of *Little Shop of Horrors*
was imaginative, colorful,
and wowed the audiences
in Bingham Auditorium.
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

COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE/CLASS NOTES
Seamus F. Conway

DESIGN
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SEND ALUMNI NEWS TO
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or write Taft Bulletin
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CORRECTION
In the Community Corner column (Spring issue, page 7), the wording from a *Papyrus* article about UCT incorrectly stated, “with the admission of the first Black students at Taft in 1969.” The first Black students were admitted in 1954.

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ON THE COVER

This year’s Alumni Weekend was also a celebration of the 50th anniversary of coeducation at Taft. For the first time, alumnae joined the honored Old Guard—those graduating 50 or more years ago—and proudly carried the banner in the parade as members of the 50th Reunion Class of ’72. ROBERT FALCETTI



The Fall 2021 *Taft Bulletin* received a 2022 Council in Support of Advancement & Education (CASE) Circle of Excellence Award, Bronze, for the magazines of independent and international schools category.

The judges commented: “Impressive use of photography, especially in the feature section. The robust class notes section reflects how successful Taft has been building relationships with its alumni.”



TAFT ONLINE

- Find a friend or past *Bulletin*: taftalumni.com
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On MAIN HALL

A WORD FROM HEAD
OF SCHOOL WILLY
MACMULLEN ‘78



An excerpt from Taft’s 2022 Commencement remarks

At our Convocation at the start of this year, as we recognized the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, I connected those events and the challenges of the last two years. Both changed the globe, left a legacy whose effects we still feel, and revealed the very best of this school. History rhymes even when it doesn’t repeat.

And then two weeks ago, during Alumni Weekend, I found myself talking and emailing with graduates from the Class of 2002, back for their 20th reunion: seniors, whose first day of classes was interrupted by the attacks. They shared stories.

Seniors, you’ll be telling stories two decades from now, too. So here’s the scene I’m thinking about: It’s 2042, and a lot of you are back on campus to celebrate your 20th reunion.

Campus looks both the same and different. The Main Hall floor is still polished. You go to see your dorm, and the common room looks like it did the day you left: maybe a pizza box on the table, some books on the floor. When you poke your head inside Bingham, you can find your old seat, remember the number, who sat on either side of you. On the walk up the hill to watch games, you hear the distant cheer of a crowd. Maybe your daughter asks, “Is this where you played lacrosse?”

And then under the tent, you find classmates: hugs, high-fives, handshakes.

And I’m there as well, because I told you at your Commencement I would be. And you will talk: of jobs and moves and marriage and births and deaths. Someone says, “It’s crazy to think back on what we went through when we were here.” And that starts it: stories about how school closed and you took classes online from your bedroom; and then that year of hybrid classes with many unable to be on campus, and those that were, wearing masks, submitting saliva tests, physically distanced. And senior year: the first tentative and anxious days, then the relief, joy, fun of the last months.

Maybe I say, “You knew such complex, unstable, and challenging years. You witnessed a divisive presidential election, a contested result, and an assault on the Capitol. You watched a nation’s reckoning around race and a summer of protests, and you were part of really hard and needed conversations on campus. And most of all, you lived through a pandemic that shook the world and changed *everything* we did at Taft.”

I am probably going to ask you, “Want to tell me a story from your Taft days?”

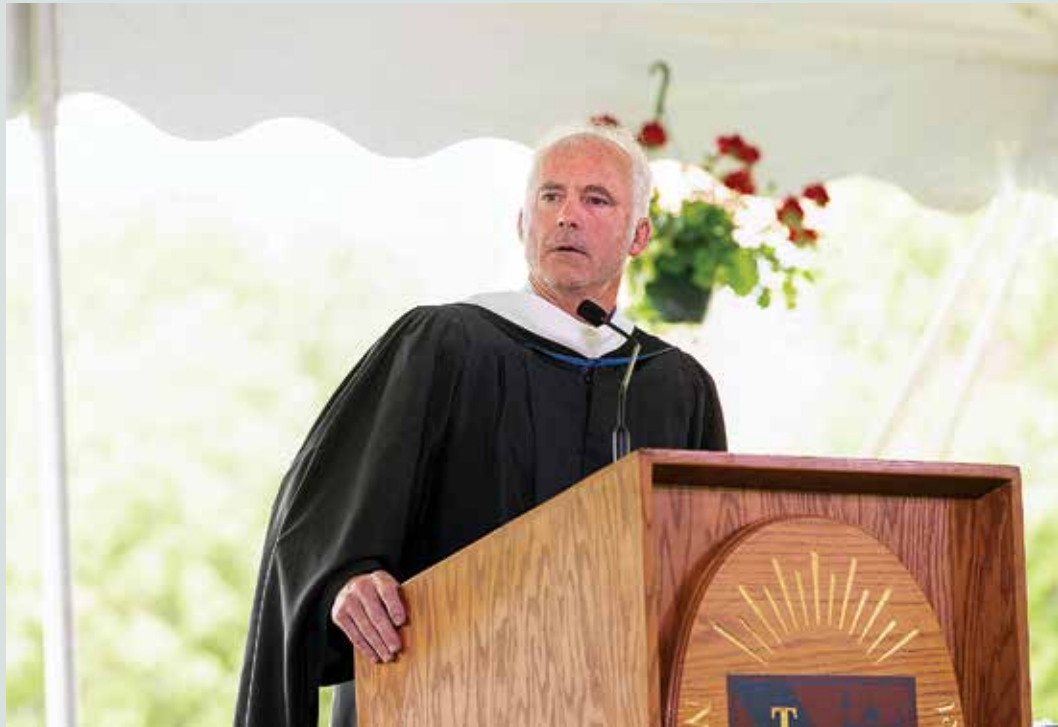
Maybe you’ll tell a story about how much you learned about *connection*. That’s what I took away, you say. COVID had to be all about separating, distancing, isolating. It asked us to be everything a teenager is not. It confined many to home, saw us lonely on Zoom screens, forced us to eat 6 feet apart, prohibited us from visiting rooms, kept parents from campus. So the connections I *did* have—friends, teachers—were like water for the desert wanderer.

So, yeah, I learned how much I need connection to be whole and human.

Maybe you’ll tell a story about how Taft left you with a lot of *resilience and grit*. Taft seemed a catalogue of setbacks and disappointments, both the ones a good school always has and then a whole lot more layered on top. Especially that dark upper mid winter of loss. Learning was harder in a hybrid classroom; staying motivated when school was less fun was difficult; getting visits, games, and concerts taken away was so disappointing.

“You had to be elastic, strong, persevering, dogged, optimistic.”

“Maybe you’ll say, ‘I learned a lot about *sacrificing* for something bigger than me.’”



Yes, you had to be elastic, strong, persevering, dogged, optimistic. I never thought I would say this, but in a strange way, I’m glad. It kind of prepared me for life.

Maybe you’ll add, “But I also learned how much being *mentally healthy* matters to me. That I wasn’t always alright and didn’t have to pretend I was. I’ve worked to take care of myself. I guess I’m like most people: I’m both fractured and whole, wounded and healed, and I know that and I can share that with those I trust.”

Maybe you’ll say, “I learned a lot about *sacrificing* for something bigger than me. For two years really, the school asked us to put community before self. We had to give up a lot for the good of others, and that was hard: wearing masks we hated, even in the dorms; understanding the loss of Assemblies, athletic seasons, musicals; accepting distancing policies in the dorms and dining halls; developing empathy for people more vulnerable than me.


“That’s not easy for teenagers. I had never been asked to give like we were at Taft. I think differently about responsibility now. Sacrificing. You know: serving others. *Non ut Sibi.*”

And maybe you’ll say, “I could tell a lot of stories about feeling *gratitude*. I think it was on the week before graduation that it really hit me. Last class with a favorite teacher. Final meeting with my advisor. Sunrise on the hill with 50 friends, a view of campus draped in mist. Those years that rushed by. So much taken away, even more given back. I look back and feel thankful. To my parents, who sacrificed so much. To the faculty, who cared so deeply. To my friends I hold so close. So, yeah, I feel grateful.”

“Is that what you were asking?” you ask.

I’ll look at you, in that crowded tent. There’s conversation in the background, but it’s quiet. “Yes. That’s what I was asking.”

That’s the scene I am seeing.


William R. MacMullen ’78

COMMUNITY CORNER

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Taft

The first sentence of our DEI statement begins, “Taft is an intentionally diverse community.” As we continue to help all community members have a shared sense of belonging, we are going to intentionally celebrate a variety of identities on our campus. While we recognize that these celebrations are commonly celebrated in different months in the “traditional” calendar, here at Taft we are working to be intentional with how we celebrate the richness of cultures and identities.

SEPTEMBER
Latinx Month

JANUARY
Intersectionality Month

OCTOBER
Asian American/
Pacific Islander Month

FEBRUARY
Black History Month

NOVEMBER
Indigenous People/
Native American Heritage
History Month

MARCH
National Women’s
History Month

APRIL
LGBTQIA+ Month

MAY
Jewish Heritage Month

Crafting the Message

FROM PROBABLY TOO-YOUNG AN AGE,

Liz Shepherd Bourgeois '05 was a political news junkie, which partly explains why she spent so much of her time in college handing out lawn signs to lobstermen.

She drove around so much as an intern working for former Democratic Rep. Tom Allen in Maine that her Subaru Outback smelled like wooden stakes for years. Allen lost his Senate bid by 23 points, but the stink lingered. That's politics.

Bourgeois was recalling the fumbles and fragrances of her earliest campaign memories this summer, roughly a year after she and her family packed up their home in San Francisco and returned to Washington to begin working for the Biden administration at one of the most crucial junctures in recent history.

As a senior advisor in the Office of Public Affairs at the U.S. Treasury Department, Bourgeois was initially brought on to help explain the various recovery programs established under the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan passed in March 2021.

One year into the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. economy was still mending, unemployment was still high, and many schools and childcare facilities remained closed. The relief bill included stimulus checks for individuals, small-business grants, rental assistance, and an expanded child tax credit. The vast majority of it was to be handled and distributed via the Treasury Department.

It was a very un-Treasury-like task.

"Our relationship with taxpayers is usually through the IRS," Bourgeois says. "Through the pandemic we've overseen housing relief, child tax credits, programs directly impacting the lives of millions of families. It just seemed like an interesting moment."

Liz Shepherd Bourgeois '05, senior spokesperson for the secretary of the Treasury, with her grandfather, Dave Fenton '48, at the Treasury Department in June.



Above: Bourgeois with President Obama in 2013 and her husband, Michael, on Michael's last day of work at the White House, when she was then working for the Democratic National Committee chair. THE WHITE HOUSE

Below: Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, with Bourgeois at right, during a visit to the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota in June.



It also required a crash course in advanced economics for Bourgeois, who had spent the previous eight years in Silicon Valley working in social media—first for Instagram starting in 2013 and then at its parent company, Facebook, where she handled communications for Sheryl Sandberg, the company's former chief operating officer, and built the company's crisis communications team.

When she arrived at Instagram, it had only a few dozen employees. Today, the picture-sharing app has roughly 1.4 billion active users; Facebook has 2.9 billion.

Bourgeois could draw parallels between her work in tech and communications for a government body—"no matter what's going on in the world, it's unfolding on social media," she says—but she also grew to miss public service.

She began her career in Washington, working on Capitol Hill for her hometown representative, Nancy Pelosi, now the Speaker of the House. But she fell in love with communications after going to work for the Democratic National Committee.

"I was the traveling body person for the chairwoman, Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, and we went to 37 states" campaigning for the reelection of President Barack Obama, Bourgeois says. "She did tons of TV, and we were always reacting to some crazy thing

that had happened in the news that day and you just had to come up with how to respond on the spot. It's gut instinct, it's not technical. It's 'what do you think people need to know or hear in this moment.'"

A year after joining Treasury, Bourgeois' role has expanded to communicating about the state of the economy more broadly and the department's work with other countries. "A lot of that is about the strength of the recovery we've seen, but also the steps we're taking to get inflation under control and to keep up the pressure on Russia through our sanctions." Early this summer she was preparing to travel with Secretary Janet Yellen to the G20 summit in Indonesia.

She notes that she has now worked almost exclusively for women leaders [Pelosi, Wasserman-Schultz, Sandberg, and Yellen], "which hasn't always been on purpose but is something I'm proud of," Bourgeois says. "I believe representation matters, and seeing more women in leadership roles whether in government or in business is crucial."

Bourgeois always considered her obsession with politics to be a hobby until she took Rachael Ryan's AP Government class at Taft.

"It was coming of age in a highly politicized moment of Bush versus Kerry and the war in Iraq," she says. "Ms. Ryan helped me realize that my passion could be channeled into a career."

She considered law school, a stepping-stone to drafting policy, but decided she much preferred writing the messaging side of politics.

"Comms is so much about synthesizing something complicated that doesn't feel relevant to a regular person," she says, "and trying to simplify it in a way that's going to resonate with people. That appealed to me."

In today's polarized environment, crafting a message that doesn't get lost in the partisan turbulence might seem like a Sisyphean task.

"It is tough, the division, but also the media environment," Bourgeois says. "The media cycles are short, people's attention spans are short—it's really hard to tell a nuanced story. Trying to get creative about how to get our message out and elevate voices of people who are being helped and seeing improvements in their lives so that doesn't get lost, is something I think a lot about," she says.

Fans of *The West Wing* television program might recognize some of Bourgeois' traits in the character C.J. Craig, the quick-witted White House press secretary. But Bourgeois laughs off that comparison.

"I'd probably fit in a little better on *Veep*," she says. ■

—Zach Schonbrun '05



Fighting Liver Disease

Advocacy for Liver Health

“There’s a Toni Morrison quote: ‘If you can’t find the book that you want to read, it’s because you were meant to write it.’ The Global Liver Institute is the book I was meant to write.”

DONNA HENRY CRYER’S life mission began in an unusual way: She developed an autoimmune disease as a young teen, and its effects eventually led to a liver transplant between her first and second year of law school at Georgetown University, following her Taft and Harvard careers, both marked by bouts of illness.

Now, as a three-decade transplant survivor, Cryer (Taft Class of ’88 and a former Taft trustee) leads the Global Liver Institute, a multinational, patient-driven advocacy organization dedicated to fighting liver disease and finding treatments to help those with liver illnesses and other rare diseases live as fully as possible.

Having a serious illness as a teenager limited Cryer’s ability to participate in athletics, so she turned to the stage at Taft. There, she gained speaking skills that now serve her as she speaks and raises funds to fight liver diseases worldwide. She is a frequent commentator on liver health and patient advocacy in print, online, and on television.

“It really did shape my identity,” Cryer says. “But it never took me off track. I really had no plans for a nonprofit career or to build my own nonprofit organization.” But her experiences left her wanting change.

“There was no effective liver advocacy, only misconceptions, misunderstandings, misdiagnoses,” she continues. “I was mindful that other patients...might not necessarily experience the same outcomes [I did]. There’s a Toni Morrison quote: ‘If you can’t find the book that you want to read, it’s because you were meant to write it.’ The Global Liver Institute is the book I was meant to write.”

Founded in 2014, GLI has raised more than \$10 million for liver health initiatives and convenes more than 200 organizations within the liver cancers, nonalcoholic

steatohepatitis (NASH), pediatric and rare liver diseases, and general liver health communities across GLI’s councils and its Liver Action Network. Cryer says GLI helps connect agencies to bring accountability to innovation, regulation, and adoption of best practices to optimize outcomes.

The challenge, Cryer says, is the lack of awareness about liver diseases and a stigma related to liver illnesses, with many assuming liver damage is due to alcohol or drug use. More than half a billion people suffer with liver ailments due to lack of education and access to medical treatment.

“And what little people do know is wrong,” she says. “The greatest challenge is that the stigma is so high that people don’t come forward, so people don’t know there are so many other people in their circle who have liver disease.”

One out of four people has some form of liver disease, Cryer says.

“We’re seeing cases of children with acute hepatitis right now, a mystery, but there are thousands and thousands of children who were born with liver diseases, like biliary atresia, who develop autoimmune diseases like I did as a young person, and rising cases of obesity [leading to] cases of pediatric fatty liver disease.

“Everyone has a liver, and everyone is at risk of liver disease,” she says. Unlike conditions such as heart disease, many people have no awareness of liver illnesses, which can lead to poor outcomes.

“Because so many people are undiagnosed or are diagnosed so late, there aren’t many survivors,” Cryer says.

Undeterred, Cryer has rallied patients, physicians, and researchers to focus attention on liver diseases, bringing the patient’s experiences to the forefront. She credits Taft with giving her the skills to sit in multinational boardrooms and advocate for liver research funds.

“I felt like I belonged in any boardroom I entered, and that sense allowed



Cryer cohosting a culinary event with celebrity chef Daniel Thomas to raise awareness about nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) and liver health as part of the 2021 International NASH Day campaign.

me to have the ambition to build a global organization. Why would I not be able to transform the entire field of hepatology?”

Cryer’s expertise and effectiveness in advancing the voice of patients in defining and designing equitable health care has been recognized by the United States Congress and the White House. In 2021, she received both the Global Genes RARE Champions of Hope Founder’s Award and the American Association for the Study of the Liver Distinguished Advocacy Service Award. She has been named one of the Top Blacks in Healthcare by the Milken Institute at the George Washington University School of Public Health and BlackDoctors.org, one of the Top 10 Patients Who Make An Impact by Health 2.0, and one of PharmaVoice’s 100 Most Inspiring People.

“Having been the first in many situations—the first patient, the first Black person and Black woman in those seats as well—there’s a lot of responsibility to make sure I’m not last,” Cryer says. ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow ’84

Opposite page: Donna Cryer ’88, a 26-year liver transplant survivor, fights liver disease misconceptions as president, CEO, and founder of the Global Liver Institute. JPIX STUDIO



Three Boomerang cofounders—Ben Freedman '08, Brendan Maaghul '08, and Mark Lentini '08—with fellow Taft alums at Maaghul's wedding: from left, Freedman, Charlie Fraker '08, Jake Heine '08, Kevin Quirk '08, Cara Maaghul '10, Maaghul, Sammer Richi '08, and Lentini.

Return on Investment

“RIGHT NOW, YOU CAN BUY an entire barn on Amazon and they’ll deliver it to you, all the wood, everything, and yet you can’t even get a small package picked up from your house,” says Mark Lentini '08, who, along with former Taft classmates Ben Freedman and Brendan Maaghul, cofounded the start-up Boomerang to simplify the returns process when shopping online. “The sell side of e-commerce has been optimized to the millionth degree, but the customer experience on the return is just nonexistent.” To fix this growing problem, Lentini, Freedman, and Maaghul—the self-proclaimed Boom Team—partner with online retailers and package carriers to enable customers to

return unwanted items directly from home. The idea first occurred to Lentini when he lived in an apartment complex in Atlanta. “I noticed how nice it was to walk down to the front desk and hand off all of my return packages and just leave, whereas before I had to drive to UPS or the post office,” he explains. “Business pickups happen constantly, and yet these companies weren’t putting much emphasis on returns.” And as online sales skyrocketed during the pandemic, the need was only increasing. As Lentini and Freedman—who had previously worked in corporate strategy for UPS and Walmart—began to devise their new venture, they realized they needed someone with a background in

finance. That’s when they reached out to Maaghul, who had been advising start-ups and who happened to be part of a tight-knit videogame-playing crew along with Lentini. “Mark’s appendix also exploded while he and Ben were skiing in Tahoe. That really helped put things in motion,” Maaghul recalls. “I went out there do a wellness check—and to get in some skiing—and while Ben and I were chilling in the hot tub, he [asked me] to come join Boomerang.” Their initial model centered on the customer, whom they envisioned using an app to schedule an independent driver to pick up their packages—think Uber meets the post office. But they soon discovered the

limitations of the direct-to-consumer approach. “We realized pretty quickly we would have to change the psychology of our customers, to make them think differently when they wanted to return a package, and that was going to be pretty tough” Lentini points out. So they pivoted, instead taking their service straight to retailers. Now, each individual business can offer a home-pickup option on their website, powered by Boomerang, which automates the back end, connects the company with the ideal carrier to execute the pickup, and determines the best facility to process the return. Not only is the experience far more convenient for the customer, it also makes restocking simpler for the retailer—and keeps unnecessary waste from piling up in landfills. In discussing Boomerang’s growth, all three are quick to share credit with



Above: Mark Lentini '08, Boomerang cofounder/CMO
Left: Ben Freedman '08, Boomerang cofounder/co-CEO
Lower left: Brendan Maaghul '08, Boomerang cofounder/co-CEO

the many Taft connections that they’ve made that have either offered professional advice, invested in the company, or connected them with potential customers. They also see their individual strengths as complementing each other. “Ben is the only one of us who has experience with complex supply chains, from manufacturing to warehousing, and Brendan, in addition to his experience in finance and the fact that he’s an excellent writer, gives us a little spark that focuses Ben and me when we go off into the clouds,” says Lentini. Maaghul concurs, adding, “Mark has always been the most thoughtful of the three of us. In a world where things are expected to happen really quickly, it’s been great to have him so committed to what we’re building and how we want to grow. Otherwise, Ben and I would just be running at 16,000 miles an hour without lifting the blinders.”

While none of them could have imagined when they met at the beginning of their sophomore year that they would one day be business partners, Freedman sees this longstanding friendship as the key to their success: “Managing your emotions is the most difficult part of building a start-up. Some days are amazing, and some days suck, quite frankly, so having a support system of people who are grounded, whom you can trust, is to me the most important part. That’s what’s been so special about building this with two people I’ve known for 15 years: it really feels like a partnership.” ■

—Christopher Browner '12

Learn more at boomreturns.com.



Protecting the Irreplaceable



EVER SINCE SHE WAS A CHILD, Kate Parks Schaefer '05 has been a tireless advocate for protecting the natural environment. As a 12-year-old, she participated in annual sea turtle counts on the coast of South Carolina, her adopted home.

"That was my initial hook and entrée into environmental work. I did that every summer, and I still volunteer with the turtle patrol. That led to a real interest in coastal land protection. [Turtles] are threatened because of habitat loss. What's the leading driver of coastal loss? It's us.

"I grew up overseas and went to boarding school at Taft, and my family would vacation in South Carolina," she says. "When it was time for college, I said, 'I want to go to the Atlantic Coast Conference,' so Clemson University it was. She never left.

"Clemson was a great choice for me," she says. "It was a happy campus, a large sports school, and a larger school [than Taft]. I wanted that environmental focus, and Clemson is a land-grant school." She was one of just 100 students chosen each year to participate in an internship program with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Hollings Scholar program was named for former South Carolina Senator Fritz Hollings, an early voice for environmental protection in the state.

After Clemson, Schaefer joined the Coastal Conservation League, and recently joined the Open Land Trust, the first land trust in the state, founded in 1970 after organizers saw pollution threatening waterways, open spaces, and rural communities in South Carolina's Lowcountry. As the OLT's director of land protection, Schaefer works with the "three-legged stool" of environmental protection: zoning, infrastructure, and land protection. She works with local landowners and

government officials to protect vulnerable areas along the coast and in the region.

Her role has taken on new urgency as the world's climate continues to warm.

"Land conservation is a solution today and tomorrow for the climate change conversation. Working farms and forests, if protected, will serve as carbon storage. Small working farms, without crazy emissions from industrial agriculture and transportation, help us reduce our carbon footprint. Land conservation protects the most vulnerable places. The

challenge is how do you do both at scale with limited resources. Grants to apply for land conservation are limited. We have to stretch those funds as far as we can," she says.

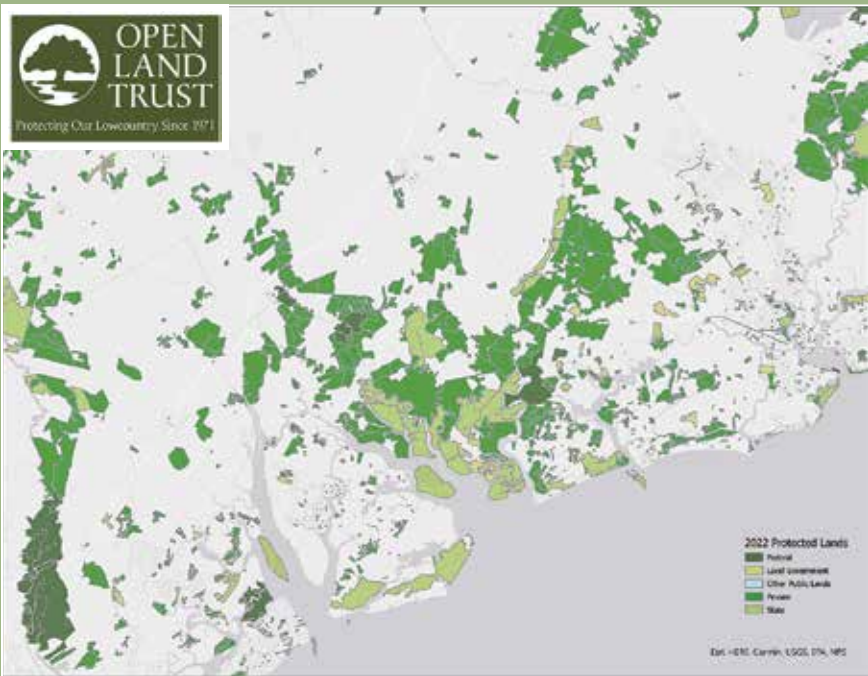
Schaefer says that the desirable real estate on the coast of South Carolina is emblematic of the challenges facing those seeking to protect natural areas and reduce global climate change.

"This is where the climate change and urban growth conversations merge," she says. "Flood-prone lands are now being



Opposite page: Schaefer holding a female horseshoe crab in front of protected coastal property in Beaufort County, South Carolina.

Right: Schaefer on a boat tour to view protected property in the Ashepoo, Combahee, and South Edisto river basin. NURNBERG PHOTOGRAPHY



Top: 1970 map showing protected coastal land in South Carolina.

Bottom: 2022 map showing the progress made over 50 years to protect coastal land in South Carolina due to advocacy and land conservation.

sought after for development—the ‘good’ real estate is gone. When marginal lands are developed, the next cry is to build a sea wall or engage in expensive disaster recovery. Protecting undeveloped landscapes is a proactive way to protect the floodplain and the communities that surround it,” she says.

“I was thinking how much the environmental landscape has changed in 30 years. That is in large part due to Dana Beach and the Coastal Conservation League. Beach [parent of Taft graduate Nellie Beach ’08] founded the Coastal Conservation League in 1989 and served as the executive director for 28 years. I was able to intern for the League during college, and then Dana hired me two weeks after graduation. I worked in



Above: Kate Parks Schaefer '05
NURNBERG PHOTOGRAPHY

Above background: Schaefer (middle) kayaking the Coosawhatchie River in Jasper County, South Carolina, on property protected by the Open Space Institute, another land conservation organization.

“Protecting undeveloped landscapes is a proactive way to protect the floodplain and the communities that surround it.”

various capacities for the League for nine years, and it was incredibly formative to my conservation worldview, just like the League was formative to environmental policy that has shaped South Carolina.”

What’s next for Schaefer? The ambitious goal of working with other land trusts in the state to create a coastal greenbelt to add to the 315,000 protected acres of valuable waterways in the ACE Basin. Located between Charleston and Beaufort, the Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto rivers combine to form the ACE Basin, a significant portion of which drains into the Saint Helena Sound in Beaufort County. Land conservation will protect additional acreage, drinking water, and

endangered species, as well as store carbon.

“Environmental work in South Carolina is solutions-oriented: we are a small but passionate community that works together to find solutions,” Schaefer says. “This requires community organizing and meeting people that approach conservation from all sides and may not even call themselves conservationists initially. The people I have met doing this work have enriched my life, and we have been united because we care about a place. If our future is to be a healthy, prosperous one, we need to have healthy, thriving, rural areas, and one way to do that is land conservation.” ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

The Life of the Mind: Excellence in Academics

Water for Nicaragua:

At the Intersection of Global Service and Applied Academics

Students in Dan Calore's 3-D Design and Prototype Engineering class are helping the residents of a village in Nicaragua develop a community-based solution to a common problem in the region: access to safe, clean drinking water.

The problem is both global and significant. The latest information published by the World Health Organization and UNICEF shows that more than 785 million people lack access to basic water services, and more than 884 million people across the globe do not have safe water to drink. Among them: the 538 residents of Ciudadela, Nicaragua.

Ciudadela is a rural village in north-central Nicaragua. The community's 158 homes are clustered around 13 streets. One primary school and two churches contribute to Ciudadela's average daily water consumption of 68,000 liters. That water currently comes from a single pipe in a neighboring community. During a Zoom call in January, Ciudadela residents told Taft students that many of them work 12-hour days in the region's coffee fields. At the end of the work day, when the single pipe opens for water collection, they line up to collect water for their families. Most days, someone from each of the 158 homes is in line at the same time. There isn't always enough water to go around.



Students presented their proposal to Ciudadela and other project leaders during a Zoom meeting in April.

Last spring, Calore's students collected demographic, geographic, and economic information about Ciudadela and its residents, as well as details about the current water system in the village and the challenges it presents. Studying that data and its implications for the community led them to propose the construction of a 24-cubic meter water storage tank that would allow for uninterrupted access to drinking water while reducing the risk of water-borne diseases. Working in groups and with a range of mapping and design programs and engineering software, students designed the tank and mapped its installation and functional system. They also developed a \$4,000 execution budget that accounts for every projected expense, down to the last roll of Teflon tape. Proceeds from T-shirts sold on

campus will help fund the construction of the water delivery system. The impact the project will have on the village—and on Taft students—is almost immeasurable.

"I have never felt more impactful on and involved in the problems of a foreign community," says Emile Zogbi '23. "Talking directly to those who will benefit from our work was a truly a special experience, and one that I am grateful for."



Hear from Calore's students, read more about the class and project, and see photos by scanning this QR code with your smartphone.



Applied Biology and Experimental Design

Honors Inquiry in Applied Biology is a project-based science seminar designed to bridge the gap between theoretical and applied biology and the techniques researchers use to explore the world from a scientific perspective. The core of the coursework: hands-on, student-driven research that, Science Teacher Michael McAloon explains, requires students "to think about things independently and to use critical thinking to develop hypotheses in a natural, inquisitive way."

The seminar begins with applied learning activities around topics in ecology, conservation, animal behavior, anatomy, and molecular microbiology. From investigations of the dynamics of ecosystems and current conservation issues, to the isolation of DNA for PCR analysis and the investigation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), students not only apply high-level critical thinking to their work, but explore topics of real-world consequence and application.

"Using everything we've talked about and read and learned, and with a strong eye toward experimental design, students

come up with their own projects," says McAloon. "Their ideas start out very raw; it is exciting to see how they develop."

Last spring's seminar students explored a range of topics, from probiotics and GMOs to herbal medicines and the transformation of E.coli using hydrocarbon-metabolizing DNA. Students also built on work McAloon did during an academic trip to the Amazon rainforest.

"A group of students has been extracting DNA from Amazonian pollen collected during my trip," McAloon explains, "then sequencing it to determine plant species, and cross-checking it with geography. The group is field-testing an iPhone-controlled, battery-powered PCR machine—a 'lab-in-a-box'—to test the proof of concept that this can be used in a remote jungle. I hope to use the same technology when I return to Peru."

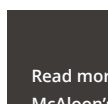
And while the research each student conducted met or supported their individual hypothesis, McAloon is quick to point out that for his students, the work is as much about the process as the results.

"These students may not all be going

off to become scientists, but we all have to think like scientists in life—if you're going into politics, business, or almost any other field, you have to be able to think critically and examine things from a whole range of different angles. That kind of critical thinking and applied inquiry can be learned. That's what I hope students take away from this experience."



Read more and watch video chats with each student by scanning the QR code on your smartphone.



Read more about McAloon's work in the Amazon by scanning this QR code on your smartphone.



Celebrating Excellence



1 Mathematics

Taft's Math Team, captained by Brian Chi '23, was among the top finishers in the highly regarded New England Mathematics League (NEML) competition. With just over 200 schools participating in the six-month-long test of high-level applied mathematics knowledge and principles, Tafties earned the highest score in the region, tied for the second spot in Connecticut, and finished in the top 5 percent of competitors overall, besting peer schools Hotchkiss and Deerfield along the way.

"Our own Michael Ren '24 led the team with an individual score that placed him second in the state and 19th in New England," says Mathematics Teacher and Math Team Coach Kevin Coleman.

In addition to his NEML achievements, Michael also turned in a stellar performance in the American Mathematics Competition (AMC), a series of increasingly selective and competitive exams that

draws more than 300,000 competitors from 6,000-plus schools each year. The top 2.5 percent of all AMC competitors earn invitations to sit for the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME); this year, Michael was among the invitees.

Science

Taft students also competed in the Connecticut State Science Olympiad, a tournament-style event where competitors work in pairs to tackle 23 events across a range of disciplines, from forensics and cell biology to ornithology and experimental design. Seniors Eli Juvan and Kevin Lian earned a first-place finish in the "Wright Stuff" event, where competitors construct and test free flight rubber-powered monoplanes to achieve maximum time aloft. Upper mids Brendan Stains and Alex DiCorpo placed second in the "Trajectory" event, in which competitors construct a device that uses only the gravitational energy of a falling mass to launch a projectile.



2 History

Congratulations to seniors Anishka Perera and Drew Niewinski, who earned top honors in both the regional and state-level National History Day competitions for their documentary film, *Ping Pong Diplomacy: The Unknown History of the Game That Changed the World*. The first-place nod came in the Senior Group Documentary category; Anishka and Drew will represent Connecticut at the national event.

Spanish Language

The Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica is a national honor society for high-achieving students studying Spanish and/or Portuguese. It is sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. Congratulations to Taft's 2022 inductees:

Taylor Adducci '22, Susannah Brown '22, Macy Cherneff '22, Ethan Costanzo '22, Gavin Feller '22, Callia Ferraris '22, Sadie Frame '22, Emily Andrea González '23, Jenna Gugliemi '22, Will Henderson '22, Kate Hrazdira '22, Olivia Karpas '22, Kevin Lian '22, Caroline Messer '22, Elise Moreira '22, Kate Sacerdote '22, Matt Sheinberg '22, Kartal Tepebasi '22, Gwen Thompson '22, Xiting (Amy) Wang '23, and Anna Wice '22.

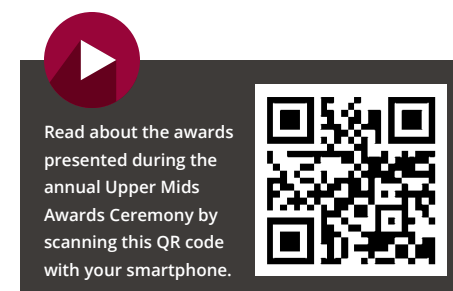


3 Latin

The National Latin Exam (NLE) is a test given annually to Latin students across the globe. The NLE is not meant to be a competition but rather an opportunity for students to receive reinforcement and recognition for their accomplishments in the classroom. Depending upon their score, students may earn certificates or medals, and may even qualify for scholarships.

Congratulations to the Taft students were honored for their achievements on the NLE this year:

Gold Medal: Michael Ren '24, Matthew Romero '25, Trevor Stellmach '24; Silver Medal: Christopher Jozscayk '25, Steve Mayer '22, Tanya Muangman '25, Matt Ramirez '23; Bronze Medal: Theo Charrington '25, Grace Deng '23, Babi Marques Jones '22, Brooke Smith '23, Mercury Titterton '22; Honorable Mention: Lilly Bunnell '23, Maria Hogenkamp '23, Conrad Lynch '24, Kyla O'Byrne '24, Catherine Peng '22, and Alicia Sze '23.



Taking the Lead: Taft Model UN Conference

As a community of students hailing from 52 nations, Taft is a study in international relations, diplomacy, cultural exploration, and global celebration. Rina Kurihara '24 and Theresa Alves '24 see that diversity as a critical component of the kind of deep learning and understanding many students gain through the Model United Nations experience. So when the pandemic brought curricular changes that paused Taft's MUN course, Rina and Theresa looked for other ways to bring the experience to Taft students.

"There were many voices in our community expressing interest in participating in MUN," says Rina. "During the summer following my freshman year, I reached out to Taft alumni who had participated in MUN, and to members of our faculty. I landed on the idea of bringing MUN back to Taft as a club—as a way to keep us engaged with the MUN culture."

When Rina announced that she'd be establishing a MUN club in the fall of 2021, more than 60 students signed on; Theresa was among the first, and most enthusiastic. The two became co-heads of the Taft Model United Nations Club, and began hosting biweekly meetings where members learned about MUN policies, procedures, skills, and conference protocols. They applied those skills at Yale University's annual MUN conference in January, where Theresa earned Outstanding Delegate recognition.

"Our experience at Yale MUN and several other conferences were positive and encouraging," notes Theresa. "So much so that we wanted to take on the challenge of hosting our own in-house conference—Taft MUN 2022."

The program, geared toward MUN "beginners," spanned two days in April,

and reflected the significant and cooperative efforts of the full Taft community. Taft MUN also partnered with Taft Girl Up, a group dedicated to empowering women and girls on campus, in selecting conference content, which explains Rina, "included sensitive topics such as female genital mutilation, sex trafficking, and funding for the protection of women and girls in areas at war across the world."

"With so much support from countless faculty members and students at Taft, our 23 delegates successfully passed a United Nations Security Council draft resolution addressing International Intervention to Ensure Women's Human Rights," notes Theresa.

"We can proudly say that we achieved our goal for this conference," adds Rina. "We engaged Taft students in the MUN process and educated them on worldwide issues, while promoting peace and the work of the UN through cooperation and diplomacy." ■

Photos courtesy Kevyn Gunawwan '22, Rina Kurihara '24 and Theresa Alves '24



On Stage

Around **THE POND**

Spring Dance Showcase

THE SPRING DANCE SHOWCASE FEATURED THE EXTRAORDINARY TALENTS OF TAFT'S DANCERS, CHOREOGRAPHERS, AND DESIGNERS. LAST SPRING, 41 TAFTIES TOOK THE STAGE FOR THE YEAR-END SHOW, WHICH WAS A SWAN SONG FOR SENIOR PERFORMERS NICOLE BALBUENA, CHRISSY BERTRAND, DIANA BRAGHIS, BEN WHITE, GRACE KENNEY, CATHERINE ZHAO, BABI MARQUES JONES, DONOVAN DRUMMER, FEJ ESIEVO, AMELIA OWEN, NICK BRILLANT, NIXON JENNINGS, AND LIGHTING DESIGNER MERCURY TITTERTON. BRAVO!

Little Shop of Horrors

THE SINGING! THE DANCING! THE COSTUMES! THE SETS! THE STAGING! THE MAKEUP! THE LIGHTING! THE MUSIC! THE CHOREOGRAPHY! EVERY ELEMENT OF TAFT'S PRODUCTION OF *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* WAS ON POINT IN A TRULY SPECTACULAR SPRING SHOW. TAFT GAVE THE ICONIC SHOW THE FRESH TREATMENT, THRILLING THE AUDIENCES IN BINGHAM AUDITORIUM.



Taft Theater Honored for *The Addams Family*

THAT THERE WERE SO MANY extraordinary elements of Taft’s fall musical was not lost on the Seven Angels Theatre Halo Awards committee, which recognized Tafties with 11 nominations and a big win for Claire Roberts ’23 during the 2021–22 awards season.

The musical delivered an original story featuring the classic Addams Family characters created by cartoonist Charles Addams in 1938. Taft Theater Teacher Helena Fifer met Addams at a party 40 years ago in New York’s Greenwich Village, where he sketched the original Addams Family house on a cocktail napkin. Not only does Fifer still have the napkin, but the sketch served as inspiration for the set built for the Taft production by Performing Arts Technical Director David Kievit and his creative team.

Congratulations to Claire Roberts ’23, who earned a win for her role as Wednesday Addams in the Best Performance by a Supporting Actress in a Musical category. In addition to Claire’s nomination and win, *The Addams Family* cast and crew were nominated in the Best Musical, Best Dancing, and Best Running Crew categories. Elle Smiley ’25 was nominated for Best Hair and/or Makeup Design and or Execution. The following were also nominated in acting categories:

Best Performance by a Couple or Dynamic Duo in a Musical:
Leo Kaplan ’22 and Mina Xiao ’23 as Gomez and Morticia Addams

Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical:
Kyla O’Byrne ’24 as Pugsley Addams

Best Performance by a Featured Actor in a Musical:
Coleman Grustas ’22 as Lucas Beineke

Best Performance by a Supporting Actor in a Musical:
Benjamin White ’22 as Uncle Fester

Best Comic Female Performance in a Musical:
Audrey D’Autorio ’22 as Alice Beineke

Best Specialty Ensemble:
Diana Braghis ’22, Grace Deng ’23, Grace Kenney ’22, Jasmine Pun ’25, Carm Sievers ’25, Elle Smiley ’25, Marina Tanaka ’23, Chance Terry ’22, and Catherine Zhao ’22 as The Ancestors ■

For 19 years the Seven Angels Theatre High School Halo Awards have recognized talent from more than 80 Connecticut high school theater programs.



50
YEARS
COEDUCATION
Taft



Melissa McCarthy Meager ’74 joined the girls’ varsity lacrosse team at practice during Alumni Weekend.

50 Years in the Making

Wandelt-McCarthy Girls’ Lacrosse Fund

ALUMNI WEEKEND 2022 MARKED the 50th anniversary of coeducation at Taft. It was only fitting, then, that the celebration should include an event 50 years in the making: the creation of the Wandelt-McCarthy Girls’ Lacrosse Fund, endowed by Melissa McCarthy Meager ’74 and honoring the late Ferdie Wandelt ’66. The fund was introduced during a field-side ceremony attended by McCarthy Meager, current lacrosse players, students, faculty, alumni, and the Wandelt family.

“This is a really special day and a really special moment for us,” noted Head of School Willy MacMullen ’78. “Melissa is the reason you all are here. When she started at Taft, we had just admitted girls. Of course we had no sports for girls—we were starting from scratch. Melissa had the passion and the courage and the strength to say we need to have [a girls’ lacrosse program]. She went to Ferdie Wandelt—the legendary director of admissions—and asked him if he would be willing to be the

girls’ lacrosse coach. And that’s how it started. Fifty years ago, Melissa said, ‘We need this, we deserve this, we want this, and this will make Taft a better school.’”

The fund will be administered by Head Coach Jenna McNicholas and Director of Athletics and Afternoon Program Andy Dunn, who will work together to prioritize the team’s needs, and to identify opportunities that will, Dunn notes, allow a new generation of young women to “pursue excellence through the sport of lacrosse.” ■

Expanding Taft's Leadership Blueprint

New Annual Fund and Parents' Fund Co-Chairs Lead Volunteer Efforts



TAFT IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT CHARLES E. WATSON '88, P'21,'24 AND JANE BOYLE HENTEMANN AND CHRISTOPHER C. HENTEMANN P'19,'21,'24 HAVE ASSUMED KEY LEADERSHIP ROLES IN OUR VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY. EFFECTIVE JULY 1, WATSON BECAME CO-CHAIR OF THE ANNUAL FUND, WHILE THE HENTEMANN'S BECAME PARENTS' FUND CO-CHAIRS.

Watson and Annual Fund Co-Chair Tamara Sinclair '05 will work closely with the Alumni & Development Office and class agents to build strong relationships with fellow alumni and constituents, increase community engagement, and grow philanthropic revenue. Watson succeeds the long-serving Dylan Simonds '89, who Director of Annual Giving and Constituent Relations Allison Lyman

notes, "brought years of innovation and energy to his work with the Annual Fund."

Watson has served Taft as a class agent since his graduation in 1988. As a Taft student, he was a dorm monitor, played hockey and varsity lacrosse, and was named captain of the famed 1988 lacrosse team. As a senior, Watson was named to the All-New England Lacrosse Team and received the Taft Lacrosse Cup and Heminway Merriman Award. He continued his education (and his lacrosse career) at Middlebury College and later earned an MBA with academic honors from Columbia Business School. Watson joined Russell Reynolds Associates in 2004 and was named partner in 2013. There he conducts senior-level executive recruitment and assessments for private equity funds and banking clients.

Watson and his wife, Anne Sylvester, live in New Canaan, Connecticut, with their three sons, Charlie Mac '21, Gunnar '24, and Briggs (age 14). He has been a coach and board member with New Canaan Lacrosse for many years, and served on the board of the Freedom Golf Association, which later merged into the United States Adaptive Golf Alliance, a 501(c)3 charitable organization focused on serving the special needs community through their inclusion in the game of golf.

While Watson and Sinclair will focus their efforts on the alumni community,

Jane and Chris Hentemann



Jane and Chris Hentemann will connect with current Taft parents. They succeed Neile and Chad Messer '90, P'20,'22.

"Neile and Chad understood how meaningful Parents' Fund giving is for Taft, and how important it is to keep parents connected to our school community," says Director of Parent Giving Joyce Romano '92, P'14. "They were extremely dedicated and have made such an impact. Jane and Chris, who have been members of the

Parents' Committee for the past five years, will surely bring equally capable, equally strong leadership to the Parents' Fund."

Jane and Chris Hentemann are both 1990 graduates of Boston College. In 2008, after a 25-year career on Wall Street, Chris organized and launched 400 Capital Management LLC. He is the firm's chief investment officer and leads its operating and investment committees. Chris serves on the board of directors for

the Boston College Wall Street Council, Domus Kids, and the Henrik Lundqvist Foundation. Jane served or serves on the boards of local nonprofit organizations and volunteers at programs in Greenwich, Connecticut, including Greenwich Alliance for Education, Community Centers Inc., and Impact Fairfield County.

The Hentemanns live in Greenwich and are parents of three Tafties: Henry '19, Emma '21, and Patrick '24.

Welcome to the Board of Trustees

TAFT IS PLEASED TO WELCOME FOUR NEW MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES: ALUMNI TRUSTEE DR. JOHN K. RIGGINS JR. '08, AND CORPORATE TRUSTEES ROGER LEE '90 P'23, NAVID MAHMOODZADEGAN P'23, AND ROBIN (XIAOGE) WANG P'23.

Alumni Trustee Dr. John K. Riggins Jr. '08

The alumni community elected John K. Riggins Jr. to serve Taft as the newest alumni trustee for a term of four years. A native of Brooklyn, New York, he was introduced to Taft through the Prep 9 academic enrichment program. During his time at Taft, Riggins was a tri-varsity athlete on the football, wrestling, and track teams, and was a saxophonist with the Jazz Band. As a member of United Cultures at Taft (UCT), Riggins worked to create events celebrating the diverse cultures represented in the school community. He spent his upper mid year in Spain through the School Year Abroad program, and won the Prize for Excellence in Spanish at his graduation.

After graduating from Amherst College, Riggins worked for City Year New York as an Americorps member, mentoring and tutoring students at a Brooklyn high school. He went on to enroll at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where he served as the president of the Student National Medical Association and worked with school leadership to create policies that encouraged cultural sensitivity and diversity on campus. Riggins was a recipient of the Dean's Recognition Award for academic excellence at his medical school graduation. He went on to complete an

emergency medicine residency program at SUNY Downstate Medical Center and Kings County Hospital in Crown Heights, the neighborhood where he grew up.

Following his residency, Riggins became the inaugural fellow for the Dr. Lorna M. Breen Fellowship in Healthcare Administration at New York Presbyterian-Columbia University Medical Center. He is currently pursuing his Master of Healthcare Administration through the Executive Program at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, and lives in New York City with his wife, Regine.

Corporate Trustee Roger Lee '90, P'23

Roger Lee has spent the past two decades as a general partner at Battery Ventures, a global venture capital firm managing over \$15 billion in assets. As one of the world's top venture capitalists, Lee has been named to the Forbes Midas List many times. He invests in talented founders building innovative consumer technology companies in sectors including, but not limited to, e-commerce, online gaming, digital health, financial technology/blockchain, and online education.

Lee graduated from Yale University and is the president of the Yale University Council. Before joining Battery, he spent



Riggins



Lee

10 years as an entrepreneur and operator. He was the cofounder and president of NetMarket, an e-commerce company that executed the first retail transaction on the internet in 1994, and that was later acquired by Cendant Corp. Lee also cofounded Corio, a leading managed-service provider that went public before being acquired by IBM, and SMART, a nonprofit that provides disadvantaged students access to educational opportunities, personal experiences, and social support services to foster academic excellence and access to a college education.

Lee is a very proud graduate of the Taft Class of 1990 where he played soccer, hockey, and tennis and made many lifelong friends. Lee served as an alumni trustee from 2003 to 2007 and is deeply honored to rejoin the board.

Corporate Trustee
Navid Mahmoodzadegan, 'P23

Navid Mahmoodzadegan is a cofounder and co-president of Moelis & Company, and sits on the firm's executive committee.

Mahmoodzadegan began his professional career as an attorney with Irell & Manella before moving into the investment banking field in 1995. He was an investment banker with Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette until 2001 when he joined UBS, where he was global head of media investment banking and a member of the UBS Investment Banking Department Americas Executive Committee until 2007. Mahmoodzadegan

previously served as board chair for the Carlthorp School Board of Trustees and served on the National Board of Directors of JumpStart. He holds an A.B. with Highest Distinction from the University of Michigan (Phi Beta Kappa) and a J.D. from Harvard Law School, magna cum laude.

His daughter, Sienna, is a member of the Class of 2023 at Taft.

Corporate Trustee
Robin (Xiaoge) Wang, P'23

A graduate of the China Conservatory of Music with a master's degree in music from the University of Maryland, Robin Xiaoge Wang is an acclaimed mezzo-soprano whose voice critics have described as "pure crystal." In 1999, she made her performance debut at Rachmaninoff Hall in Moscow. The next year Wang toured her homeland of China, performing at the Shanghai Grand Theater and Hangzhou Music Hall. She returned to China in 2007 as a visiting professor at Anhui Academy of Art and Musical Director of the Eastern Symphony Orchestra. Wang's repertoire spans modern, classical, Eastern, and Western compositions. She has performed at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, and throughout America, Europe, Russia, and the Far East.

In addition to her many musical accomplishments, Wang is an avid angel investor who has helped a number of American technology companies enter the Chinese market. Her daughter, Alisha, is a member of the Class of 2023 at Taft. ■



Mahmoodzadegan



Wang

In 1912, Horace Dutton Taft incorporated the Taft School, giving one-sixth ownership to faculty member and friend Harley Fish Roberts. Fifteen years later Taft and Roberts turned the school over to a board of trustees, making it a nonprofit institution. Today, the school's affairs are still governed and guided by a board of trustees.

Global Leadership Institute Scholars

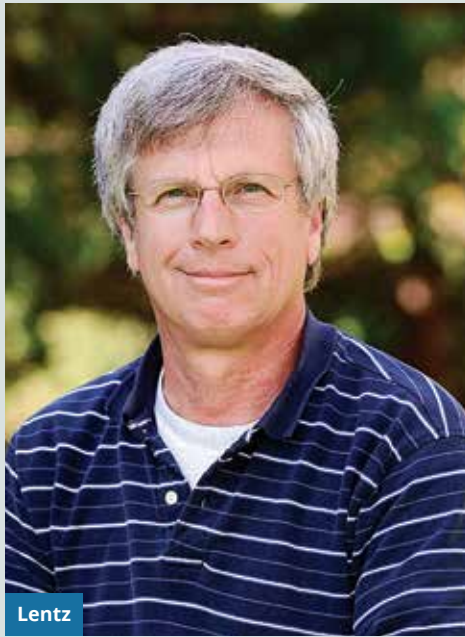
For the first time since 2019, Global Leadership Institute Scholars were able to visit the United Nations as part of their leadership training. GLI cohorts VII and VIII traveled to New York City together this past spring.



Padgett



McNeill



Lentz

Retirements

Don Padgett,
Mathematics Teacher

In 2016, Mathematics Teacher Don Padgett retired after 14 years at Taft. Retirement didn't take, and in 2017, he returned to Taft's classrooms. He'll try again this year. During his Taft tenure, Padgett was a math teacher, Admissions Committee member, curriculum designer, and coach.

"Don has been a fixture in the math department since 2002," notes Mathematics Department Head Al Reiff '80. "He has handled our high-level courses while also finding time to bring his expertise to our distance runners on both the cross-country and track teams. In the classroom and in athletics, Taft students have benefitted greatly from Don's insights."

From 2007 to 2009, Padgett held the Littlejohn Family Chair for commitment to the whole student. A brilliant classroom teacher with a tough, no-nonsense approach, Padgett was the course head for Accelerated Precalculus and developed most of the material used in the classroom. Over the years, he taught

everything from Algebra and Accelerated Precalculus to AP Calculus AB/C with only one focus: student success.

"He just won't let students fail," Head of School Willy MacMullen '78 has said of Padgett. "He sets a really high bar and then says, 'You can reach it. It won't be easy, and I'll help you.'"

Andrew McNeill,
Senior Associate Director of College Counseling

"It is truly the end of an era," says Director of College Counseling Alison Almasian '87. "Andy McNeill is one of the greats."

McNeill began working in college admissions at his alma mater, Lawrence University, in 1982. He later moved to independent schools, with stops at The Gunnery and Choate before arriving at Taft in 1999.

A member of the National Association of College Admission Counselors and the College Board, McNeill has presented on various admissions topics and has served as a consultant for other schools and for the Soros Foundation's Open Society.

"Andy's ability to both share his considerable wisdom and to make students feel seen and supported is his hallmark," Almasian notes. "And he is one of the best colleagues I've ever had. He will be dearly missed, but I can't wait to hear about his adventures in his next chapter."

Vernon Lentz,
Grounds Manager

Since 2000, Vern Lentz has had one of the most highly visible, high-stakes jobs on campus: keeping one of the most beautiful campuses anywhere in peak form.

"I've heard from many people—alumni, parents, townspeople—over the years about what beautiful grounds the school has," says Director of Facilities James Shepard. "That all reflects on Vern and his crew for keeping the grounds in pristine condition. He deserves the credit and our thanks for making the grounds look as beautiful as they do."

Thank you, Vern, for creating and maintaining such a beautiful space for all of us to live, work, and learn. ■



Non ut Sibi:

Spring Service in Bloom

1 MellowFest!

Every Mind Matters was founded by Valeria D'Virgilio '22 as a place for Taft students to connect, share burdens, find support, and prioritize themselves and their mental health. In May, Every Mind Matters sponsored MellowFest, a fun (and mellow!) event that brought Taft students together for a meaningful cause: teen suicide prevention. Attendees tie-dyed shirts, made friendship bracelets, participated in a raffle, and enjoyed açai bowls. MellowFest proceeds benefited the Jed Foundation,

a nonprofit working to protect teens' and young adults' emotional health by offering skills, resources, and support.

2 Earth Day

Taft marked Earth Day 2022 with a number of events and activities spread over the few days surrounding the traditional April celebration. Members of the senior class planted a commemorative tree near Main Circle, the Mid Class Committee hosted an Earth Day/Earth Colors dress down, the

film *Ponyo* played in Bingham, and there was an outdoor brunch in the Centen courtyard, a reseeding initiative in the pollinator garden, and a community cleanup event.

3 Dancing for a Cause

Taft's Red Rhino Fund hosted its Spring Fling at the Watertown Country Club to raise funds for its philanthropic programs. The fund awards grants to local nonprofits serving local youth each year. In 2022, it awarded a total of \$10,000

to the Police Activity League (PAL) of Waterbury, Arts for Learning Connecticut, Waterbury Youth Services, and the United Way of Greater Waterbury.

4 Building Their Legacy

The Class of '25 spent their last full day on campus engaged in a range of community service initiatives, including working with the library staff to clean and disinfect high-touch spaces and computers; weed through, update, and wipe down the periodical collection; sort picture books; dust shelves in the reference section; and evaluate the main book collection for faded spines and overworn covers.

5 Interact!

Taft Interact Club (TIC), a youth branch of Rotary International, conducted a spring book drive to benefit Waterbury Reads/Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury. The group collected an incredible 465 books. Group members traveled to Waterbury to deliver the books. They also shared voter registration information with each donation in an effort to improve voter registration rates in the community.

TIC's goal is to inspire young leaders to become better and more responsible global citizens through service. Through its work with the Watertown Food Bank,

Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury, and voter registration advocacy, TIC is connecting Taft with the greater community while living the Taft School motto, *Non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret*; Not to be served but to serve.

6 Senior Week

Senior Week was filled with fun and meaningful activities, from a trip to a local amusement park and an evening of food trucks and games, to events like Senior Community Service Day, the culmination of years of building connections with our partners in the greater community while fully embracing the school motto. ■





College Bound

THE CLASS OF 2022 BEGINS THE NEXT STEP IN THEIR EDUCATION JOURNEY AT EXCEPTIONAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD. ONCE AGAIN, MORE RHINOS (8) HAVE ENROLLED AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY THIS YEAR THAN ANY OTHER SCHOOL, WITH SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY (6) A CLOSE SECOND.

The number of students from this year's graduating class attending a given university is reflected in parentheses following the school name. Those with no parenthetical reference will welcome one Taft student this fall.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| American University | Fordham University (3) | Santa Clara University (2) | University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (3) |
| Amherst College (2) | George Washington University | Scripps College | University of Notre Dame (4) |
| Arizona State University | Georgetown University (8) | Southern Methodist University (6) | University of Ottawa |
| Assumption University | Hamilton College (3) | The London School of Economics and Political Science | University of Pennsylvania (3) |
| Barnard College | Harvard University | Trinity College (4) | University of Richmond (3) |
| Boston College | Haverford College | Trinity College Dublin | University of San Diego |
| Boston University | Hobart William Smith Colleges | Tufts University (2) | University of South Carolina |
| Brown University (3) | Husson University | Tulane University | University of Southern California |
| City University of New York | Indiana University Bloomington | United States Military Academy | University of St Andrews (2) |
| Claremont McKenna College | Iona College | University of British Columbia | University of Texas at Austin (2) |
| Colby College | Johns Hopkins University | University of California-Berkeley | University of Virginia |
| Colgate University (2) | Keene State College | University of California-Los Angeles | University of Wisconsin-Madison (3) |
| College of Charleston | Lafayette College | University of Chicago | Vassar College (2) |
| College of the Holy Cross (2) | Lehigh University | University of Colorado Boulder (5) | Villanova University |
| Colorado College | Middlebury College (4) | University of Connecticut (2) | Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University |
| Columbia University in the City of New York | New York University (3) | University of Florida | Wake Forest University (3) |
| Connecticut College | Northeastern University (2) | University of Georgia | Washington and Lee University (3) |
| Cornell University (3) | Oberlin College | University of Hawaii at Manoa | Wesleyan University (2) |
| Dartmouth College (3) | Pennsylvania State University-Penn State Main Campus (2) | University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign | West Virginia Wesleyan College |
| Dickinson College | Pomona College | University of London | Yale University (5) ■ |
| Drew University | Princeton University (3) | University of Miami (4) | |
| Duke University | Purdue University (2) | University of Michigan (3) | |
| ESSEC Business School | Salve Regina University | | |

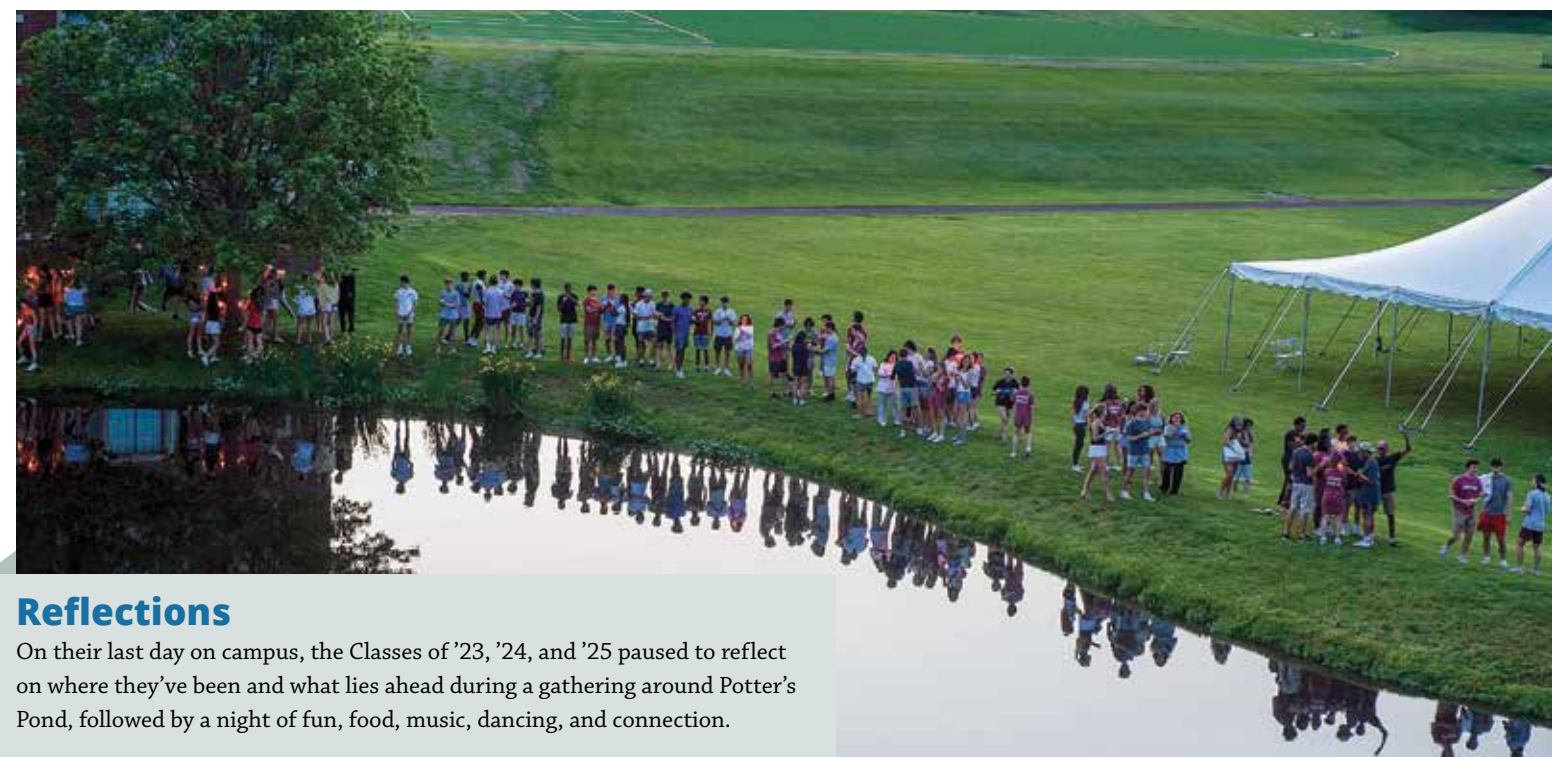
Morning Meeting

2022 Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal Honoree Karen L. Stevenson '75 delivered an inspiring Morning Meeting talk in Bingham Auditorium, where she encouraged students to find their own paths and passions.



WorldFest '22

Taft's annual WorldFest celebration is an opportunity for community members—who currently represent 52 nations worldwide—to share their cultural heritage through the customs, art, music, food, and traditions of their families. Students don native dress, prepare regional foods, and celebrate their heritage in song and dance during the festival. Read more about Taft's culturally diverse community in this issue on page 50.



Reflections

On their last day on campus, the Classes of '23, '24, and '25 paused to reflect on where they've been and what lies ahead during a gathering around Potter's Pond, followed by a night of fun, food, music, dancing, and connection.

Spring SPORTS wrap-up

BY STEVE PALMER
Photography by Robert Falcetti



Thomas Ricciardelli '22 makes a save against Kent on May 4.

Boys' Lacrosse 16-3

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS,
GEICO HIGH SCHOOL LACROSSE
NATIONAL TOURNAMENT RUNNERS-UP

Boys' lacrosse finished the 2022 season with a 16-3 overall record, undefeated in the Founders League for the second time since 2003, Founders League Tournament Champions, runners-up at the GEICO High School Lacrosse National Tournament, and ranked No. 7 nationally in Inside Lacrosse/ESPN's Top 25 High School Lacrosse Power Rankings. Keys wins came over Army Prep, Navy Prep, Westminster, Hotchkiss, Choate, St. Sebastian's, Avon Old Farms, Salisbury, and IMG Academy. At season's end, Elliot Cohen '22, Sam Erickson '22, and Luke Smith '22 were named to the All-Founders League team, and Ethan Costanzo '22, Isaac Korus '22, Matt Sheinberg '22, Ben Spinelli '22, and Trey Taylor '22 were named All-New England West Division I. Goalie and senior captain Thomas Ricciardelli '22 was honored as Western New England Goalie of the Year and a U.S. Lacrosse All-American. Finally, 12 seniors will matriculate to play college lacrosse next year: Elliot Cohen (Washington and Lee), Ethan Costanzo (UPenn), Sam Duffy '22 (Oberlin), Sam Erickson (Colgate), Isaac Korus (UPenn), Jamison Moore '22 (Princeton), Thomas Ricciardelli (Notre Dame), Matt Sheinberg (Amherst), Luke Smith (Oberlin), Ben Spinelli (Penn State), Trey Taylor (Brown), and Mason Whitney '22 (Michigan).

Girls' Lacrosse 13-4

Taft finished the season as No. 2 in the Founders League with key victories over league rivals Choate (17-7), Loomis (20-6), and Westminster (14-9). The Rhinos scored a total of 239 goals with 145 assists, and the 60-plus percentage of total goals being assisted was the story of the season, as teamwork drove this team to a 13-4 record. All-NEPSAC laurels were given to Truus van Wees '24 (47 G and 26 A) and Caroline Messer '22 (19 G, 20 A, 65 DC),



Evelyn Hidy '23 drives to the net against Berkshire on April 13.

while Chloe Meuse '22 (67 SA) and Evelyn Hidy '23 (41 G, 26 A) earned All-NEPSAC Honorable Mention. Chase Melchionni '22 (53 G, 12 A), Maisy Ricciardelli '24 (33 G, 18 A), and Grace Denious '22 (21 G and 7 A) paced the attack, while Margo Kahler '22 and Bridget Brockelman '23 led the defensive unit with their consistent caused turnovers and ground balls. Taft graduates 10 seniors, five of whom will play at the college level next year: Chase Melchionni (University of Virginia), Taylor Adduci '22 (Assumption University), Caroline Messer (Middlebury College), Grace Denious (Trinity College), and Abby D'Ercole '22 (Claremont McKenna College).

Boys' Golf 11-2-1

Playing a full competitive golf schedule for the first time since 2019, the Rhinos enjoyed a very successful season and finished with a record of 11-2-1. The high point of the match season was the sweep of Founders League rivals Avon, Hotchkiss, and Westminster in late April, where Taft posted a new match record of 377 strokes, led by captain Henry Kirkpatrick '22, who was medalist with a score of 73. Another highlight was Theo Allen '23 earning second place in the Western New England Prep School Invitational at Bulls Bridge Country Club. Theo's even par round of 72 was the team's low round of the spring.



Aman Dhiman '25 hits an approach shot during a match on May 4.

League Tournament for the ninth time in 12 years, this time by 11 strokes, easily outdistancing league opponents at Hotchkiss's course. Founders League award winners were Whitney Bartol '22, Sienna Mahmoodzadegan '23, and CC Kaplan. In addition, the Rhinos made a road trip to play at the famous west course at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, New York, site of many U.S. Opens, and again hosted the annual Daniel J. Wilcox Sadie Hawkins Memorial Tournament to support a child of domestic violence. Captain-elect Mahmoodzadegan won the John Villano-Taft '44 Golf Award, and captain Bartol won the Girls' Golf award.

Boys' Crew 12-3

The boys' crew team started the season in the erg room, learned to row in Florida, and learned to race on Bantam Lake. Ten athletes learned how to row, three athletes learned how to cox, and everyone learned how to make the boat go fast. The team

The season's success was due in large part to team depth. From three seniors to the No. 1 golfer, Aman Dhiman '25, team depth was crucial and sets up Taft well for the next year. At the conclusion of the season, Henry Kirkpatrick was awarded the Galeski Golf Award for his sportsmanship and love of the game of golf, and Theo Allen's teammates voted him team captain for 2023.

Girls' Golf 7-3-1

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

The golf team enjoyed a very successful return to a full schedule in 2022, culminating with a fifth-place finish in the Pippy O'Connor New England Independent School Girls' Golf Classic. There were 22 prep schools participating in this event, held at Woodland Golf Club in Auburndale, Massachusetts. CC Kaplan '25 was medalist with the low score among the entire field, and received All NEPSAC honors. To end the season, Taft won the Founders



2022 girls' varsity golf team.



2022 boys' varsity crew team, with coxswains in front.

was led by cocaptains Adam Pomerantz '22 and Edward Habboosh '22, who provided the group with good leadership and helped establish a culture of hard work and team camaraderie. The Rhinos enjoyed a full schedule of spring races, the first time in three years the team was able to make that claim. Taft finished with a 12-3 regular season tally, with two of the losses coming against New England Champion, Deerfield. Highlights of the season include team sweeps in the first two races, wins at the du Pont Cup (Buckingham Browne & Nichols, St. Mark's, Frederick Gunn, and Pomfret) and Smith Cup (Berkshire and Fredrick Gunn) in May, and great racing at the New England Championship Regatta. The top three boats won the B Final to finish seventh and the fourth boat placed fifth in

the A Final at the NEIRA Championships. The Rhinos graduate seven rowers, two of whom will row in college, Adam Pomerantz (Hobart) and Edward Habboosh (Wisconsin). Next year the Rhinos will be led by Michael Mangel '23 and Khai Shulman '23.

Girls' Crew 33-31

In their dual-meet races and regattas, Taft's four varsity boats compiled an overall record of 33 wins versus 31 losses. With 18 lower mids and mids on a squad of 29, including 13 novices, the team was a young one. Lineups in most boats changed nearly every week as conditioning improved and novices mastered the complexities of the rowing stroke. Weather abbreviated two major regattas in

May—Founder's Day and the New England Championships. The four varsity boats worked together to retake the Alumnae Cup over Berkshire and Frederick Gunn School. The first-varsity lineup of cocaptain Eliza Ford '22, Clara Piasecki '23, Sabrina Moffa '24, Esmee Clew-Bachrach '24, and Julia Pellegrini '23 concluded the season on a high note at New Englands, finishing third in the Petite Finals to end up placing ninth overall in the highly competitive NEIRA.

Boys' Track 13-3

It was a full season of action at Weaver Track with four home meets and many great performances. Boys' track finished with a 13-3 record, strong wins over Choate,



2022 girls' varsity crew team.



Brody Bowser '24 during a race on April 30.

Hotchkiss, Suffield, and Avon, and a third place at the Founders League Championship meet. Individual league champions were captain-elect La Zai Outerbridge '23 in triple jump and Nathan Harlow '23 in the 110m hurdles. At the Division I New England Championships, Demi Adeyeye '22 placed second in the 110m hurdles with a very fast 14.80, and Outerbridge placed second in the triple jump—both were named Founders League All-Stars. The success of the 2022 team came with multisport athletes in all areas: Dominic Rulli '22, Nico Schwikal '22, and Charlie Symonds '23 in the throws, captain-elect Jude Celebi '23 in the distance events, Adeyeye and Harlow hurdles, Remy Reynolds '23 and Jaylen Carter '23 in the sprints, and Nick Liebich '22 in many events. The Beardsley award winners were Rulli and Liebich.

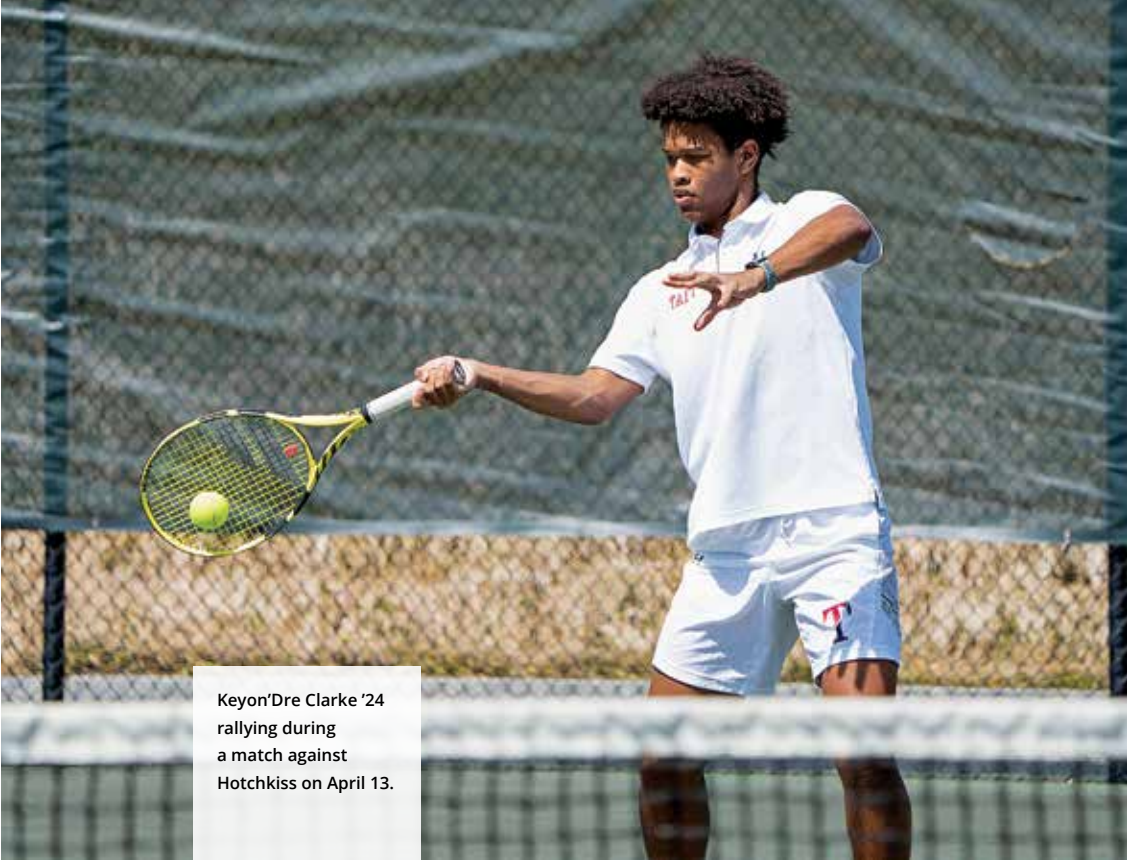
Girls' Track 10-4

The girls' track team put together a very successful regular season, finishing with a record of 10-4 with wins over Choate,

Porter's, Suffield Academy, Sacred Heart, and Greenwich Academy. Taft placed third overall in the Founders League Championships, a very competitive meet, where Faith Graziano '24 (javelin) and Maxine Maag '24 (pole vault) were individual event winners. At the Division I New England track championships, Rina Kurihara '24 was a medalist with her third place in the 800m. The teams strength came in its balance, with a strong distance squad in Kate Cicchetti '24, Kurihara, Emma Cook '23, and Charlotte Murphy '25, Skylar Johnson '23 in the jumps and hurdles, Finley Davignon '23, Leah Wasserstein '24, Emma Jacobi '22 and Ashley Wright '23 in the sprints, and Graziano and Rachel Turer '25 in the throws. Graziano and Maag were selected as Founders League All-Stars, tri-captain Annabel Pick '22 was the recipient of the Beardsley Track Award, and captains-elect are Annabell Sorensen '23 and Ashley Wright.



Annabel Pick '22 during a race on April 30.



Keyon'Dre Clarke '24 rallying during a match against Hotchkiss on April 13.

Boys' Tennis 9-5

With the most talented team in recent years, hopes were high for a league championship, a Founders title, and a strong showing at New Englands. A series of unfortunate events got in the way, however. The team was plagued by COVID-19, pneumonia, severe cramping, a torn ankle, and a paintball injury, each of which decided to arrive at precisely the wrong moment and scuttle was projected to be sure victories. So the team finished 9-5, losing to Andover twice, Brunswick, Hotchkiss, and Choate. Seven of our nine wins were 7-0 "bagels." No. 1 player Keyon'dre Clarke '24, No. 4 Lachlan Abbott '24, and No. 5 Shane Mettler '24 were all crowned SNETL League Champions. Clarke beat Hotchkiss's No. 1 in the semis, then beat the first seed from Kingswood Oxford in the finals, hitting a jaw-dropping "tweener" in the third set tiebreaker. Abbott finished the season 13-2, and Mettler finished at 12-3, and both were nearly undefeated in doubles. Taft will miss the leadership of two graduating cocaptains, Jack Kreisberg '22 and Scott Noh '22, both outstanding four-year varsity players. With six mids on the team this year, the youngest team in three decades, the team is really excited about the next two years.

Girls' Tennis 6-3

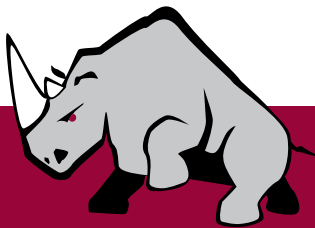
NEPSAC QUARTERFINALISTS

The girls' varsity tennis team had a successful spring, finishing with a record of 6-3 in the regular season. Led by captains Tatum Brewer '22 and Milli

Lydon '23, the team defeated Berkshire (8-1), Westminster (5-4), Miss Porter's (8-1), Kent (7-2), Kingswood Oxford (5-4), and Choate (5-4). Matches against Westminster and Choate were true thrillers. Both came down to one final match in a tiebreaker for the third set with Mia Berger '23 and Tatum Brewer earning those final wins for Taft. Despite tough matches against strong teams at Deerfield (1-8), Loomis (3-6), and Hotchkiss (3-6), the team continually battled for every point and every match. Although Taft ultimately lost to Andover (2-5) in the quarterfinals of the NEPSAC Tournament, the team played one of their best matches against an incredibly talented team. That day, Annabelle Williams '22 and Renata Mercedes '25 notched a huge doubles victory at No. 1 doubles, and Renata earned an impressive singles win at No. 2 singles as well. Annabelle, who had a winning season at the No. 1 singles and No. 1 doubles spot this year, was the recipient of the George D. Gould Tennis Award. Overall, it was a great season for this gritty and fun group!



Milli Lydon '23 in action on May 3.



SPRING 2022 ATHLETIC AWARDS

Boys’ Lacrosse

Odden Lacrosse Award—Thomas Ricciardelli ’22
Founders League All-League—Elliot Cohen ’22, Sam Erickson ’22

Girls’ Lacrosse

Wandelt Lacrosse Award—Grace Denious ’22, Chase Melchionni ’22
Founders League All-League—Margaret Kahler ’22, Taylor Adduci ’22

Boys’ Golf

Galeski Golf Award—Henry Kirkpatrick ’22
Founders League All-League—William Henderson ’22, Alexander Morris ’22

Girls’ Golf

Girls’ Golf Award—Whitney Bartol ’22
Founders League All-League—Whitney Bartol ’22, Sienna Mahmoodzadegan ’23, Celia Kaplan ’25

Boys’ Crew

Crew Award—Adam Pomerantz ’22
Founders League All-League—Edward Habboosh ’22, Michael Mangel ’23

Girls’ Crew

The Crew Award—Eliza Ford ’22

Boys’ and Girls’ Track

Seymour Willis Beardsley Track Award—Annabel Pick ’22, Dominic Rulli ’22, Nicholas Liebich ’22
Girls’ Founders League All-League—Maxine Maag ’24, Faith Graziano ’24
Boys’ Founders League All-League—Lazai Outerbridge ’23, Demi Adeyeye ’22

Boys’ Tennis

Alrick H. Man, Jr. ’09 Award—Jack Kreisberg ’22, Scott Noh ’22
Founders League All-League—Keyon’Dre Clarke ’24, Lachlan Abbott ’24

Girls’ Tennis

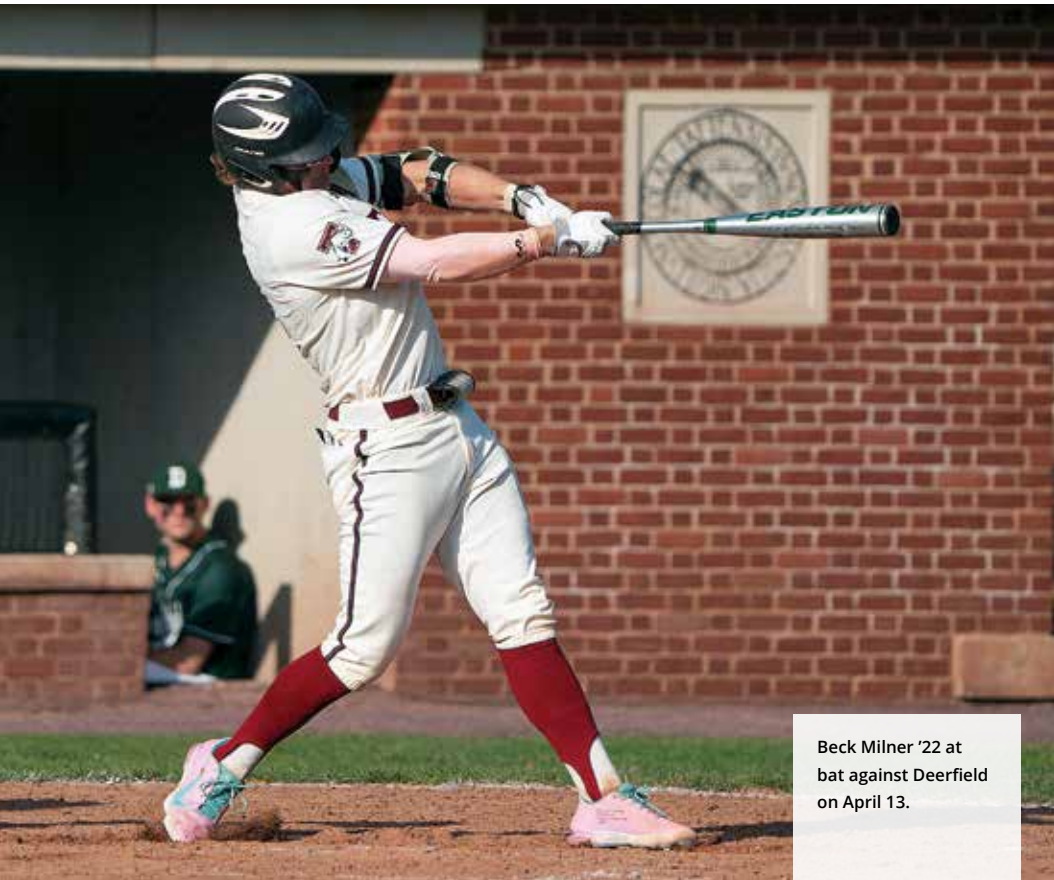
George D. Gould Tennis Award—Annabelle Williams ’22
Founders League All-League—Millicent Lydon ’23, Tatum Brewer ’22

Baseball

Stone Baseball Award—Beck Milner ’22
Founders League All-League—Jimmy Ayash ’22, Benjamin Phillips ’22

Softball

Softball Award—Jenna Guglielmi ’22, Isabelle Johnson ’22
Founders League All-League—Audrey D’Autorio ’22, Naomi Oliver ’23



Beck Milner ’22 at bat against Deerfield on April 13.

Baseball 11–9

The varsity baseball team had a successful season, finishing 11–9 overall and 10–8 in league play. A talented team that had some ups and downs, the Rhinos put together a string of five consecutive wins to end the season, including the final three against Avon (10–1), Hotchkiss (5–1), and Choate (1–0) to finish on a high note. The team was led by a pitching staff of senior captains Ryan Egan ’22 (57 strikeouts), Ben Phillips ’22 (1.99 ERA), and Beck Milner ’22 (0.00 ERA), and also got big contributions from Mike Lorenzetti ’22 (50 strikeouts), Jon Chatfield ’22, and Ben D’Amico ’23. The offense was led by Beck Milner (.434 BA), and other Rhinos who had strong offensive campaigns were Jacob Podhajsky ’23 (.393 BA) and Theo Gold ’22 (.339 BA and 17 stolen bases). Founders League Awards went to Jimmy Ayash ’22 and Ben Phillips (who also received All-League honors); the Coach’s Award went to Ryan Egan; and the Stone Baseball Award went to Beck Milner.

Softball 6–6

The Taft softball team finished the season 6–6 and missed qualifying for Western New England’s by one win. The team played arguably the toughest schedule in the league and only lost one game to non-play-off qualifiers and beat two playoff teams

(Williston and Green Farms). Cocaptains and cowninners of the Softball Award Jenna Guglielmi ’22 and Isabelle Johnson ’22 led the team with their play and provided essential leadership for a successful season. Guglielmi led the team in most offensive categories, including batting average and runs. She also played stellar defense at third



Isabelle Johnson ’22 in action against Loomis on May 5.

base and led the team in assists, including six assists and two putouts in the Senior Day victory over Greens Farms. Johnson once again returned to the mound and won three games. She also contributed at the plate and had a team-high three hits in an opening day win against Founders rival Kingswood Oxford. Four-year letter winner Audrey D’Autorio ’22 also had a large impact, particularly in the outfield where she made catch after catch in the victory over Founders rival Ethel Walker. After two years, Omi Oliver ’23 made her Taft softball debut and pitched brilliantly, winning three games and earned a shutout victory over Williston Northampton. Veterans Kayli Henderson ’23 and Celia Torino ’23 were joined by newcomers Emily Brownell ’25, Molly Hagymasi ’25, Alayna Mariani ’24, and Ellie Qudeen ’25, who instantly contributed to the team and set the stage for future success. Oliver, Torino, and Mariani will lead the team next year as tri-captains. ■

Spring Signing Ceremony



Six student-athletes participated in Taft’s Athletics Spring Signing Ceremony on May 3 in Bingham Auditorium. The ceremony celebrates those students making commitments to continue their academic and athletic careers at the college or university level. Coaches, families, teammates, and the full Taft School community were invited to the event. Individual photos of each student-athlete can be found on our Instagram and Facebook pages. *Congratulations to:*

Baseball
Benjamin Phillips ’22, *Husson University*

Football
Jack Englert ’22, *Fordham University*
Steve Mayer ’22, *Georgetown University*

Men’s Crew
Adam Pomerantz ’22, *Hobart College*

Men’s Cross Country
Nate Dexter ’22, *Vassar College*

Men’s Soccer
Conrad Coyanda-Parkzes ’22, *Haverford College*



This has been a year of major milestones and accomplishments for Taft and the Annual Fund. In addition to seeing the most successful Day of Giving in Taft’s history (\$808,416 raised from 870 donors), this was also the first year, since the surge of COVID, that Taft has been able to host our amazing reunion and alumni events on campus. Despite rising demands on everyone’s resources, donors gave their all, finishing with an astounding \$6,126,760 raised with 35% alumni and 91% current parent participation. Without the commitment from our amazing constituents, none of this would be possible, thank you!

This year is also one of remarkable transitions for Taft and, indeed, for the Annual Fund as well. After 16 dedicated years of service, Dylan Simonds ’89 is stepping down from the Annual Fund helm to make way for Charlie Watson ’88, P’21,’24, who will join Tamara Sinclair ’05 as co-chair. Charlie brings incredible insight as an alum, current parent, and longtime class agent to the leadership team, and we welcome him warmly. In similar fashion, Neile and Chad Messer ’90, P’20,’22 will pass the reins of the Parents’ Fund to Jane and Chris Hentemann P’19,’21,’24. Jean and Stuart Serenbetz P’03,’06,’09 have dutifully chaired the Former Parents’ Fund since 2013. The Grandparents’ Fund is being led by Linda Stroh GP’23. It is through the support and guidance of these stewards that Taft has met and exceeded expectations each and every year.

With this spirit of service, we soldier on to set and surpass even higher goals for 2022–23. Thank you all again for your continued support. Go Rhinos and Go BIG RED!

—Dylan Simonds ’89 and Tamara Sinclair ’05
Annual Fund Co-Chairs



Annual Fund Class Awards

Chair of the Board Award
Highest percent participation from a class 50 or fewer years out
Class of 1984: 44%
Head Class Agents: Ed Fowler and Jeanne Pocras

Class of 1920 Award
Greatest increase in Annual Fund dollars from a non-reunion class
Class of 1978: Increase of \$121,784
Head Class Agent: Chris Marvin

Kerr Award
Highest percent participation from a class more than 50 years out
Class of 1960: 73%
Head Class Agent: Sam Crocker

McCabe Award
Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a non-reunion class
Class of 1978: \$172,631
Head Class Agent: Chris Marvin

Romano Award
Greatest increase in participation from a non-reunion class 50 or fewer years out
Class of 1998: 40% from 31%
Head Class Agent: Devin Weisleder

Snyder Award
Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a reunion class 50 or fewer years out
Class of 1997: \$227,223
Head Class Agent: Charlie Wardell

Spencer Award
Highest percent of gifts from classmates who have not given in the last five years
Class of 1997: 9%
Head Class Agent: Charlie Wardell

Young Alumni Dollars Award
Largest Annual Fund amount contributed from a class 10 or fewer years out
Class of 2013: \$8,843
Head Class Agents: Jagger Riefler and Elizabeth Shea

Young Alumni Participation Award
Highest percent participation from a class 10 or fewer years out
Class of 2018: 34%
Head Class Agents: Joe Hardison and Maddie Savage

Awards determined by gifts and pledges raised as of June 30, 2022.

Parents’ Committee

Neile and Chad Messer ’90, P’20,’22, *chairs*
Hilary and David Allen, P’18,’20,’23
Jaiyeola and Tim Ashaye, P’24
Anne and Eric Baurmeister, P’19,’21,’24
Marjaleena and Jonathan Berger, P’23
Kirstin Boncher ’87 and David Bank, P’24
Alisa and Curt Brockelman, P’19,’23
Kate Betts and Chip Brown, P’23
Jisun Chung and Surim Hwang, P’23
Steve Cohen and Lisa Kitterman-Cohen, P’21,’22
Leslie and Kevin Coleman, P’17,’19,’23
Deysi and Ed Costanzo, P’22
Melissa and Brook Dane, P’24
Carrie and Beau Delafield ’87, P’20,’21,’22
Allison and Rick Elfman, P’22
Bonita and Howard Erbstein, P’19,’21,’24
Malia and David Frame, P’22
William Graham, P’23

Alissa and Ron Henderson, P’21,’23
Jane and Chris Hentemann, P’19,’21,’24
Andrea and Christopher Ip, P’20,’23,’25
Geoffrey Kao and Grace Cheung, P’24
Keiko and Yatsumi Kawakami, P’20,’24
Mary Jane and Dave Kirkpatrick ’89, P’23
Diane and Joe Koziol, P’20,’22
Amie and Louis Kreisberg, P’22
Courtney and Chris Kunzelmann, P’20,’23
Patricia and Gerrity Lansing, P’24
Les Levi and Leslie DeBauge, P’24
Guochang Li and Yan Su, P’24
Cindy Nie and Zheng Lian, P’20,’22
Chad Liu and Wendy Chen, P’22
Navid Mahmoodzadegan and Joanne Gappy, P’23
Gloria and Michael Masterson, P’20,’25
Paige and Chad Meuse, P’22,’25
Kay Noh and Chloe Kang, P’22
Shawna and Jay Owen, P’22,’24
Wensheng Peng and Xueyun Zhu, P’22



Betsey and Ted Pick, P’22
Kara and Rusty Reed ’93, P’21,’23
Cesar Reyes and Kim Famous, P’24
Alexia and Baird Ryan, P’24,’24
Annie ’90 and Alex Sacerdote ’90, P’22
Marni and Bill Schwartz, P’18,’20,’23,’25
Kate and Toby Symonds, P’23
Anne and Wally Sze, P’18,’21,’23
Jiraporn and Varun

Taepaisitphongse, P’21,’23
Annette and Mitch Theiss, P’24
Sharon and Xiaoyong Tong, P’23
Lu Wang and Xiaojin Xiang, P’23,’25
Lisa and Jake Watkins ’93, P’24,’25
Anne and Charlie Watson ’88, P’21,’24
David Xu and Tiffany Hu, P’25
Lida Yan and Zheng Wan, P’23
Sheng Zeng and Margaret Wu, P’24





Alumni Weekend 2022

Photography by Robert Falcetti, Anne Kowalski, Seamus Conway, and James Shannon



Together AGAIN



From the Alumni Parade and All-Alumni Dinner to celebrations of **50** years of coeducation at Taft, more than **500** alumni from **16** different reunion classes attended **40** different events over three days during Alumni Weekend 2022!

*It was big, **bold**, and a blast!*



Together AGAIN



Class of 1957 **65th Reunion**



Class of 1987 **35th Reunion**



1



Class of 1982 **40th Reunion**



2



Class of 1977 **45th Reunion**



3

1. Karen Stevenson '75, recipient of the 2022 Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal, with Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden and Head of School Willy MacMullen '78.
2. Ted Pratt '43 came back to enjoy Alumni Weekend with his friend Sally Waugh.
3. Several members of the Wynne family attended the Women of Taft opening at the Potter Gallery on Alumni Weekend. Jessica's, Amy's, and Gail's works were on display with several other artists: from left, Molly '25, Jessica '90, Amy '84, Celeste Derry (Amy's daughter), and Johnathan Derry (Amy's husband).



Class of 1952 **70th** Reunion



Class of 2012 **10th** Reunion



Class of 1962 **60th** Reunion



4

Together AGAIN

4.
A great turnout of players for the Alumni Soccer Game, refereed by Willy MacMullen '78.



Class of 1997 **25th** Reunion



Class of 2017 **5th** Reunion

Together AGAIN

Class of 2007 15th Reunion



Class of 1992 30th Reunion

Class of 1967 55th Reunion



Class of 2002 20th Reunion



Class of 2020



Class of 1972 50th Reunion



1 CAMPUS — 52 COUNTRIES

BY DEBRA MEYERS

ERIC & MARKUS PFAFF / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

IN THE FALL OF 1904, ALFREDO AND CHARLES PARDO DE TAVERA TRAVELED MORE THAN 8,000 MILES FROM MANILA, PHILIPPINES, TO WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT. THE BROTHERS BECAME THE FIRST STUDENTS TO ENROLL AT TAFT FROM OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES; THEY STAYED FOR THREE YEARS. OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS, A FEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS MADE THEIR WAY TO TAFT: ONE FROM CHINA, ANOTHER FROM THE PHILIPPINES, AND ONE FROM MEXICO.

Today—nearly 120 years after Alfredo and Charles arrived in Watertown—the Taft School community includes students from 52 unique home cultures and countries. The multitude of unique, authentic, and diverse voices they represent helps shape conversation and culture at Taft, and elevates every aspect of the Taft School experience.

“The cultural diversity in our student body is unprecedented,” says Director of Admissions Peter Frew ’75. “It reflects the deliberate efforts of our full Admissions team to build an intentionally diverse community of bright and talented young learners from across the globe.”

This type of diversity, Frew notes, creates immeasurable advantages for everyone in the Taft community—advantages that are woven into daily life at Taft. Each day, students have countless opportunities to consider a range of culturally diverse perspectives, while developing a deeper understanding of what it means to live and learn in a global community—opportunities that present themselves in our dormitories and dining halls, through service work, in clubs and activities, and on playing fields, and perhaps most profoundly, in our classrooms.

“Globally diverse classrooms elevate learning for every person in the room,” says History and Economics Teacher Brianne Foley. “Learning history in this setting introduces students to perspectives and

lenses that help us reshape global issues and set them into more accurate and empathetic global and historical contexts. Students gain a greater understanding about how different cultures process information differently and how all learning and all experiences are culture-bound.”

Nicholas Schwikal ’22 lives in a city steeped in both local and world history: Berlin, Germany. Though the prospect of studying United States history at Taft was not one he relished, the class quickly became his favorite.

“Our teacher presented the historical facts very accurately and without bias, allowing students to share perspectives they’d grown up with and understandings they’d held,” Nico says. “The comparisons between the German and American culture were especially interesting to me. We engaged in really meaningful discussions about the importance and lessons of history.”

Those discussions and their by-products, Foley notes, effectively reflect the value of the global classroom.

“When we listen to each other, debate with each other, and share with each other, we show that we value each other and all ways of experiencing the world,” she says. “Ultimately, we all grow, academically and as human beings. It enhances our abilities to think creatively and in more complex ways, and makes us better learners and global citizens.”



^ History and Economics Teacher
Brianne Foley

v History Teacher and Assistant Director of Admissions
Mark Traina



Both of those concepts—deeper learning and global citizenship—are articulated in the tenets of Taft’s Portrait of a Graduate, which has, for nearly 20 years, helped shape Taft’s curriculum and teaching, and defined the knowledge, skill, experiences, and understandings our graduates need to succeed in the increasingly interconnected and globally diverse workplaces and communities they will enter.

“As our community has become increasingly diverse and multicultural, my teaching has undergone some fundamental changes,” explains History Teacher Mark Traina. “It is more focused on designing exercises that help students to collaborate, to understand their own

biases, and to consider the varied perspectives of their classmates on any range of historical events or social issues. Students listen carefully to one another, cultivate informed opinions, and ultimately build skills that will allow them to flourish in their learning and as citizens of the world.”

Each day, students engage with and learn from people from different cultural, political, and socioeconomic backgrounds and upbringings, leading to increased innovation and collaboration. As a result, Taft has become a forum for widely diverse points of view, and a laboratory for the exploration of global issues. A member of the Class of 2022, Diana Braghis came to Taft from Moldova, in the northeastern

corner of Europe’s Balkan region. The cultural diversity Diana found at Taft has shaped her experience here and broadened her educational worldview.

“I come from a demographically homogeneous country, so getting to meet and learn from people from all over the world challenged many of my preconceived opinions,” Diana says. “For me, discussions in English and history classrooms really reflect the diversity of perspectives that people from all over the world bring to Taft. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have learned more about how different cultural upbringings mark an individual’s beliefs and how such beliefs are reflected in today’s society.”

Read more about Taft’s Portrait of a Graduate by scanning this QR code with your smartphone.



PHOTO: PUMADOL JATURAWUTHICHAI/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

“As an international student at Taft, it is easy to connect with not only other people from different countries around the world, but also with the American students, who are eager and very excited to learn about your heritage and your story.”

▲ **NICO SCHWIKAL ’22**
Berlin, Germany

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

ON BEING PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY

“Being an international student at Taft opens up opportunities to experience different traditions, cultures, and perspectives. I am able to exchange opinions with people with life experiences from different countries and corners of the world, all in one community.”

> **ANFISA LJUBCIC ’22**
Belgrade, Serbia



“Being an international student and being surrounded by other international students has allowed me to learn so much about other cultures. Not only am I able to share some knowledge about where I come from, but I have also been able to learn from other students from all over the world. The community at Taft is so diverse yet so inclusive—everyone has a sense of belonging. Taft truly does become your home away from home, and you constantly have support from all your peers and faculty.”

< **EMMA COOK ’23**
St. Francis Bay, South Africa

DURING THE 2021–22 ACADEMIC YEAR, TAFT STUDENTS CAME FROM 52 COUNTRIES:

AFGHANISTAN
AUSTRALIA
BAHAMAS
BERMUDA

BRAZIL
BULGARIA
CANADA
CAYMAN ISLANDS

CHINA
COLOMBIA
COSTA RICA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ECUADOR
FRANCE
GEORGIA
GERMANY

GHANA
GUATEMALA
HAITI
HONG KONG





"At Taft, I am surrounded by people from all over the world. This allows me not only to see more perspectives, but to gain an appreciation of many different cultures and to make friends from across the globe in the dorm, the classroom, and on the soccer field or the tennis court."

^ **JULIAN PRENTICE '24**
New York, NY

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

ON LIFE AT TAFT

Taft's diverse community provides countless learning opportunities. This year, alone, I am a dorm monitor on HDT4; chair of the diversity committee and co-chair of the special events committee in the Red Rhino Fund; founder and editor-in-chief of Taft Business Review; and I am doing an Independent Study Project (ISP) on the pricing of carbon credit."

> **FIGO WANG '23**
Shanghai, China



"Being an international student, you get to add new perspectives to an already diverse and ever-changing communal lens. It is very interesting to hear others' stories and to learn about their traditions, music, and food. Taft is unique in the sense that being from a far away or distinct country is the norm."

< **LAZAI OUTERBRIDGE '23**
Hamilton Parish, Bermuda



"What I most love about Taft is the ability to respectfully disagree with others. As much as being around like-minded peers is comfortable, Taft gives me an everyday opportunity to challenge my own thoughts as well as those of the people around me. Growing intellectually while with my friends and being kind to each other even though we have different political, economic, or social views is very important to me, and Taft allows me to do that."

^ **THERESA OLIVEIRA ALVES DE OLIVEIRA '24**
Aracaju, Brazil



"When I first visited Taft, the school spirit and sense of community were so strong—I felt an immediate connection. But I had attended the same school in Hong Kong since the age of four, so when I arrived as a student, the first few weeks were a big adjustment for me. But I met people and made new friends from countries and cultures across the globe. I soon realized that Taft is a new experience for everyone and I was not the only one who adjusting to a new environment, and that being a Rhino not only means to be a part of a community, but also always continuing to build and strengthen that community by being kind and inclusive toward everyone."

v **DANI IP '25**
Hong Kong



"Taft is a place where you are able to express your true self in a community of diversity. I learn and grow from the perspectives of the people I encounter each day. From the beautiful campus and the diverse community of students, to the boundless opportunities in academics, arts, and athletics, Taft offers students space to grow as a whole person."

> **ANFISA LJUBCIC '22**
Belgrade, Serbia



"I believe it is the community that has made my experience at Taft so special. There are so many opportunities available to me here. I am most involved in the Dance Department. I love the adrenaline on stage, and it has been very humbling to receive the support of the Taft community for each one of our shows. I am also a residential monitor in Mac House, an I-Block teacher, a new student mentor, and the co-head of the European Affinity Group (a member of the Alliance Coalition). This fall I also completed the GLI (Global Leadership Institute) Program, a partnership between Taft and Waterbury public schools to create projects tackling local issues. My partner and I built a website with resources for English Language Learners as our GLI project."

< **DIANA BRAGHIS '22**
Chisinau, Moldova ■

HUNGARY
INDONESIA
ISRAEL
JAMAICA

JAPAN
KAZAKHSTAN
KENYA
KUWAIT

MALAWI
MALTA
MOLDOVA
MOROCCO

MYANMAR
NEW ZEALAND
NIGERIA
POLAND

RUSSIA
SERBIA
SINGAPORE
SLOVAKIA

SOUTH AFRICA
SOUTH KOREA
SPAIN
SRI LANKA

SWITZERLAND
TAIWAN
THAILAND
TURKEY

UKRAINE
UNITED KINGDOM
UNITED STATES
VIETNAM



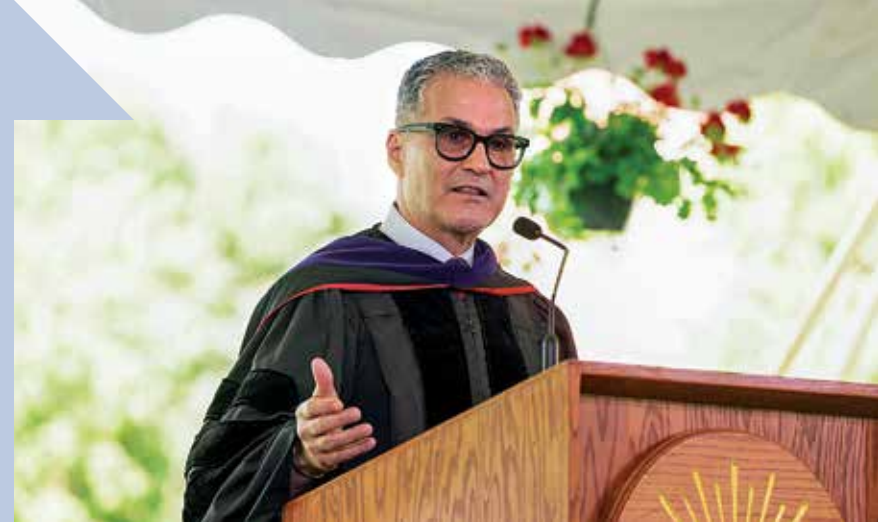


132nd *Commencement*



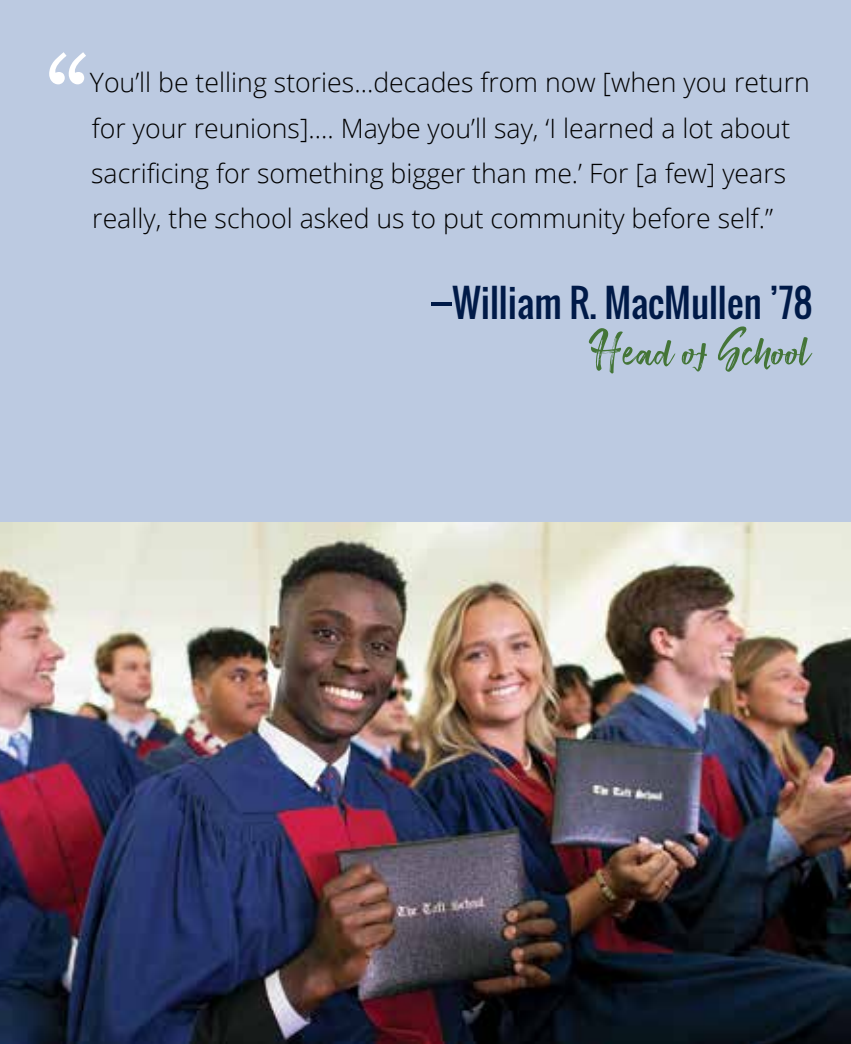
“Each and every time you consider others’ wants and needs, their opinions and perspectives, whether it’s friends or strangers, you are telling them...I see you, I hear you, I respect you, I embrace that we, as fellow travelers, are in this together.”

—Bill Groner P’18
Commencement Speaker





Head of School Willy MacMullen '78 greets faculty members before Commencement begins. From left, Peter Frew '75, Al Reiff '80, Bob Campbell '76, Pam MacMullen, and Pilar Santos.



“You'll be telling stories...decades from now [when you return for your reunions].... Maybe you'll say, 'I learned a lot about sacrificing for something bigger than me.' For [a few] years really, the school asked us to put community before self.”

—William R. MacMullen '78
Head of School



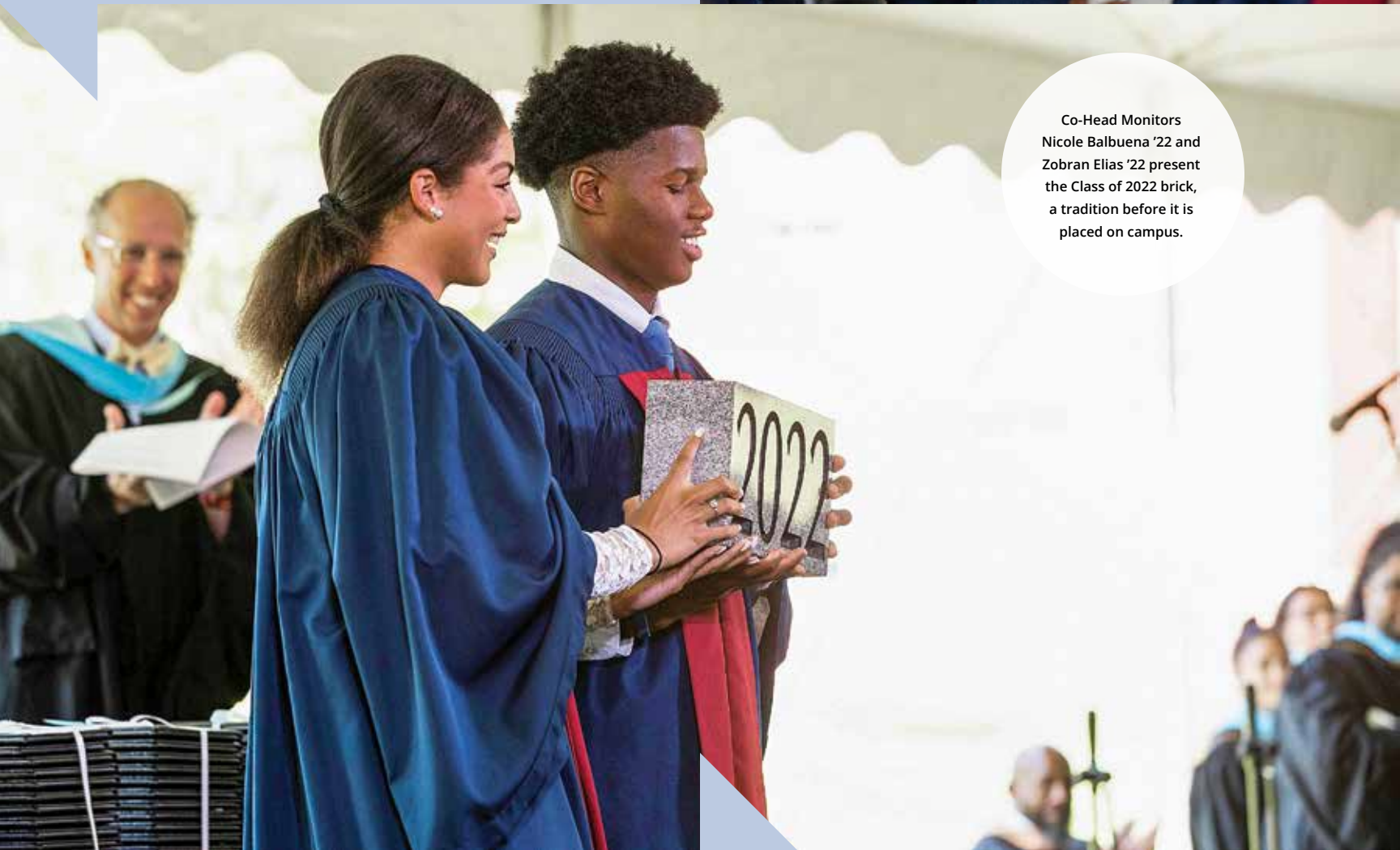
Valedictorian William Roberts '22, who also received the Aurelian Award, Chemistry Prize, Chinese Prize, and Wilson-Douglas Mathematics Prize.

“One day we'll look back on our time at Taft and all we will see is magic. We won't remember...what we wish we had done differently. All we will see is that within our uncertainty was also our potential—within our discomfort was also a chance to see what we needed to change and changing it. It was us becoming the person we were always meant to be.”

—Nicole Balbuena '22
Co-Head Monitor



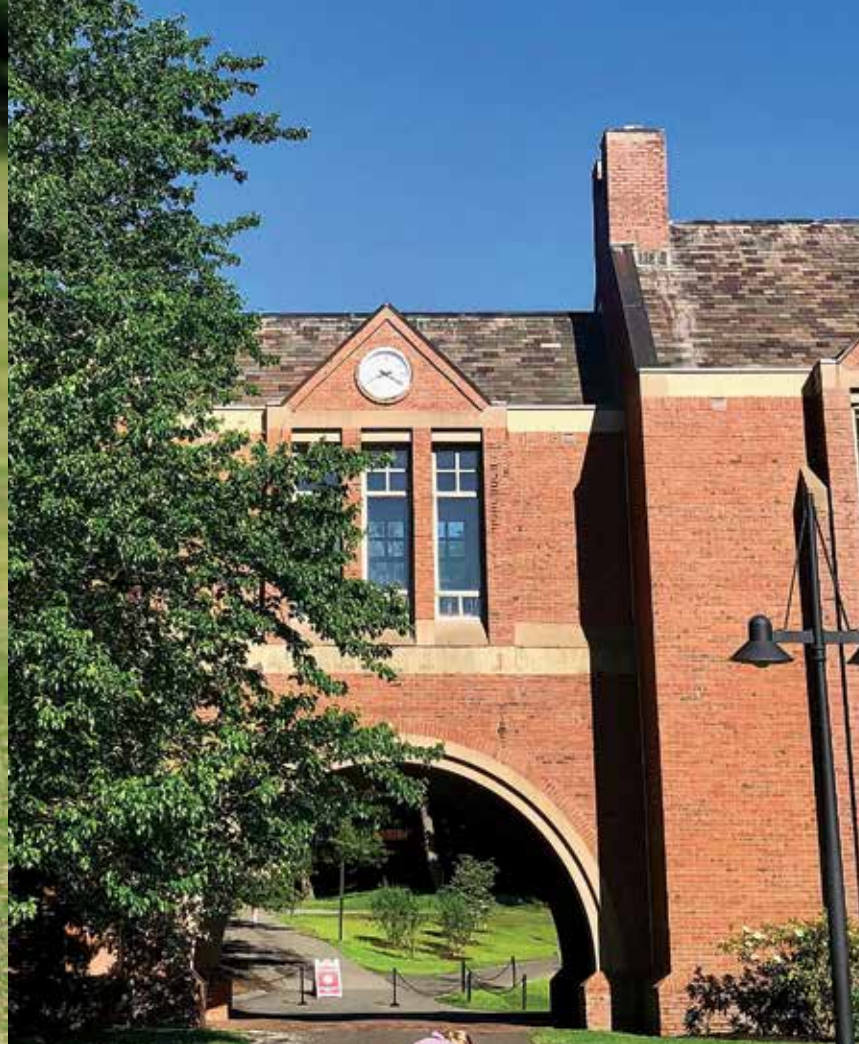
Co-Head Monitors
Nicole Balbuena '22 and
Zobran Elias '22 present
the Class of 2022 brick,
a tradition before it is
placed on campus.



“Be present, be passionate, appreciate how you got to where you are. Live: Live life to the fullest, and live life for more than just you alone. Love: Love life. Love others. Love yourself. LOVE: because if you don't, then are you truly living?”

—Zobran Elias '22
Co-Head Monitor





“Today truly is a celebration of each of you and also our collective achievements as a grade....The Class of 2022 encompasses a group of students that have truly experienced everything at The Taft School, from a completely normal lower mid year to an upper mid year [and] the COVID pandemic that featured a hybrid model.”

—Jin Young Min '22
Class Speaker



“Continue to be the bright, adventurous, and driven young people I have grown to love. Continue to be the tight-knit community that Taft has allowed us to become. As you move forward with your various paths in life, don't forget your roots.”

—Jada Dawkins '22
Class Speaker





Faculty Emeritus Jerry DePolo

1939–2022

Faculty Emeritus Gerald “Jerry” DePolo died on July 19 at the age of 83. Loved and respected by students and colleagues at both Taft and Watertown High School, DePolo was known for his sense of humor and dedication to teaching.

DePolo was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, and attended schools there before earning a bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Providence College. While substitute teaching at his alma mater, Crosby High School in Waterbury, he earned a master’s degree in education from Fairfield University. He later received an administration certification in education.

He taught math at Watertown High School from 1963 to 1985 and was the mathematics department chair there for many years. In 1983 he was the first recipient of the Teacher of the Year Award from the Watertown School System.

DePolo taught math at Taft from 1985 until his retirement in 2002. “Jerry was one of the most beloved teachers on campus,” Head of School Willy MacMullen ’78 wrote in an email to Taft employees. “When he arrived at Taft, Jerry had already written a legendary career teaching in Watertown: he couldn’t walk into Daveluys for dinner without grown graduates calling out to him.”

He first came to teach at Taft as part of the Summer School and was soon hired by Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden to join the faculty. DePolo’s first wife, Lois, joined him at Taft as a teacher the following year, and their three daughters—Anna ’89, Beth ’92, and Sarah ’94—soon became students. Sadly, Lois passed away in 1997.

“Jerry loved math—the puzzling, questioning, solving, testing. His classes were lively and fun—and funny,” MacMullen wrote.

“Students could tell he loved the material and, even more, loved being with them.”

At Taft, he was awarded the William and Lee Abramowitz Award for Teaching Excellence in 1991, and he was the recipient of the Henry Hillman Chair for Teaching Excellence in Mathematics and Science from 1994 to 1999.

DePolo always seemed to be smiling, MacMullen remembered. “He believed every student could succeed; he would do anything to help them achieve; he gave extra help at all hours. There were a lot of students who said he was the best teacher they had, and that could mean Algebra II or AB Calculus.

“For colleagues, he was a mentor and friend,” MacMullen wrote, “the kind of teacher who always volunteered to help cover a class, to cross-read a test, to help a new teacher, to share a joke in the dining hall. Afternoons he was at games, and Sunday evenings he was in his office. He loved being at Taft, and his sense of gratitude that he was there was inspiring and infectious. And always there was laughter. People just wanted to be around him, to be one-tenth as good a teacher and person.”

Retiring in 2002, DePolo pursued his passion for golf. He was a regular on the Crestbrook Golf Course as a member of the Watertown Retirees Men’s League.

He is survived by his wife, Flavia DePolo, his three daughters, Anna DePolo Shultz ’89, Elizabeth DePolo Ciarleglio ’92, and Sarah DePolo Clemente ’94, and 10 grandchildren.

Contributions can be made to Taft’s Lois and Gerald DePolo Memorial Scholarship. ■

“Adventure is worthwhile.” —Aesop



1

Travel teaches us compassion, lets us experience other cultures and see history with our own eyes. We taste, hear, and see life from a different perspective. Taft students have visited locales around the globe to explore, entertain, and perform community service. From Horace Taft's trip with students in 1912 to the more recent service and Collegium trips and those made by the Jazz Band and athletic teams, Taft students have been able to experience the world beyond Watertown.

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



2



3

1. Horace Dutton Taft
aboard a ship headed
to Bermuda in 1912.

2. Horace's travel case.

3. Vintage travel label
from the Wofford Hotel
in Miami Beach.

4. Taft students on
a past service trip
to Guatemala.



4

Annuities *An Elegant Solution*

Annuities get a bad rap from some quarters. But not from **Hank Brauer '74**, who says they provide “an elegant solution.” Hank created an annuity that only starts generating cash flows after he retires. He funded it with cash from his business, which generated sporadic distributions.

When you have an asset with a low-cost basis, you can donate it to Taft, avoid a tax consequence, and increase your cash flow. Simple. And with the recent rise in annuity rates, your cash flows can be far more attractive than other fixed investments.

Scan the QR code below or call the Planned Giving Office at Taft, and we can run scenarios on how a Taft Annuity might work for you.



For more information about including Taft in your will, please contact Stephen Starnes '76 in Taft's Planned Giving Office at 860-945-7747 or email plannedgiving@taftschool.org. Sample bequest language, as well as other planned giving ideas, may be found on our website: taftschool.giftplans.org.

Taft BULLETIN

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1 Campus, 52 Countries



Read about Taft's global community on page 50.

Taft's annual WorldFest celebrates the global diversity of our school community, which included students from 52 countries last year. Pictured, from left, Marion Ombola '23 (Kenya), Elise Taylor '24 (Waterbury, Connecticut), and Marion Ayeh '25 (Ghana) were a few of the students who attended last spring's WorldFest in Centennial Courtyard. At the festival, students wear their country's native dress, prepare regional foods, and celebrate their heritage in song and dance.