In this ISSUE

Taft students visit NYC during the Tribeca Film Festival, where their documentary Fire won top honors in the Tribeca Film Institute’s The America I Am youth film competition. The film was also screened at the Ellis Island Theater during the National Parks Service Centennial Celebration.
A TALE OF TWO CAMPAIGNS

For the first 35 years of our history, Horace Taft refused to ask for money to support the school. It was a matter of principle for him, and we know this because of a critical decision he made in 1927, when he decided to turn what had been his school, technically but never practically a for-profit institution, over to the board of trustees. It had always been his school—privately owned and originally called "Mr. Taft’s School for Boys."—and when he needed to fix a roof or give a scholarship, he borrowed money. He then paid it back, and that’s how the school had run for almost 40 years: borrow and pay, borrow and pay. So incorporating the school was an incredibly important decision. It was about good governance, obviously, but it also allowed the school to do something: Taft had never been comfortable doing: raising money. Taft had been explicit over the preceding decades, saying that "We could ask for no contributions for a privately owned school." It just wasn’t right, and he was a man of deep integrity.

And so with this decision to incorporate the school, in 1927 Taft embarked on our first capital campaign. The goal of the campaign was for

"...new buildings, more teachers, better equipment, and funds for [faculty] pensions and scholarships. The drive for two million dollars which we decided upon was interesting but strenuous. We profited by the experience of Hotchkiss and other schools [?] and put the drive into the hands of experts…. This involved much labor…and strenuous speaking trips…that were enjoyable but quite exhausting."

The campaign changed Taft: among other things, it’s how CPT and Bingham were built. And Taft had it right: if it was labor, and exhausting, it was also enjoyable. How can it not be deeply satisfying to talk about supporting this great school? And if his goals sound familiar—if taking care of this beautiful campus, supporting the faculty, and increasing scholarship ring like an echo today—it is because those three goals have been at the heart of our capital campaign that has just ended.

The board of trustees launched our public campaign, Ever Taft, Even Stronger, in the spring of 2008, with a June 2016 end date. A few months later, we entered the worst economic downturn our nation had seen in decades. Yet the generosity of thousands of parents, alumni, and friends proved to be extraordinary. Our goal was bold and unprecedented: to raise $175 million, or $150 million in capital and $25 million in annual giving. Behind the campaign were three important ideas: first, that Taft has always been committed to becoming better; second, that excellence has a cost; and third, that we needed to ensure our future.

As of today, we have exceeded our goal and have raised a total of more than $188 million. Annual giving from more than 8,300 donors raised $55 million to support operations each year; capital gifts from nearly 2,000 donors total nearly $353 million. Much as Taft was changed forever when Horace Taft incorporated the school and embarked in our first campaign in 1927, this campaign has fundamentally transformed this school. This will not be our last campaign; I hope we never stop trying to get stronger, and I will be happy to make the case until my last day. But what alumni, parents, and friends have done is stunning.

The campaign has allowed us to invest in this beautiful physical plant: the Moorhead Wing and the dining halls, state-of-the-art classrooms, beautifully upgraded dormitories like Mac and Congdon, with HDT and CPT to follow; athletic facility improvements in tennis, baseball, and...
FROM THE Headmaster

"This campaign has bent the arc of destiny of this school."

FROM THE Headmaster

King Thunder Band
[Ed. note: In the spring issue’s Alumni Notes opening photo, we incorrectly captioned it as “1966 guys.” Thanks to the many who wrote us, and enjoy some excerpts here.]

Thanks for putting the picture of my band at the start of the Alumni Notes in the last issue. We were, in fact, King Thunder and the Lightning Bolts, and I was the lead Lighting Bolt (to the left of King Thunder, the late lamented Randy Palamar ’84, almost tone deaf but incredibly charismatic). I did the arrangements for the band and played lead guitar, but Randy (the King) was the star. His rearranging version of “Splish Splash” brought the house down! We were Class of ’64, not ’66, from left, standing, are Rick Stein and Hugh Caldara. The young drummer was Jeff Baxter ’66, a lower mid, whom we let in the group because he was such a good musician. He went on to become Skunk Baxter and play incredible guitar with Steely Dan and the Doobie Brothers, among others (too bad he didn’t make it as a drummer). I wish I could say I taught him everything he knows, but I’d like to think he learned a lick or two from me. We weren’t great, but we sure had fun. The picture brings back wonderful memories.

—Chris “Kit” Brown ’64, Taft faculty member

We opened our Taft Bulletin to page 48 and were surprised and delighted to find our friend Hugh Caldara ’84 as one of the King Thunder band members. Aren’t they all so handsome? Sorry we didn’t know them then...but their music was great!

—Robin and Ted Schur, parents of Jamie ’04 and Kirsten ’06

Opera Mutuality
It was wonderful to read the fine profile of my classmate David Hamilton ’52 in the spring issue of the Bulletin. Even as a schoolboy his knowledge of music was prodigious. My lifelong love of opera had its beginnings in the conversations he and I had at Taft. I continued to learn from him for decades, reading his erudite program notes in the Metropolitan Opera programs. My wife and I were fortunate to have been able to spend some time with him during his final years. Though clearly ailing, he never stopped instructing. I will be forever grateful.

—W. Alshul ’52

LETTERS

“1966 guys.” Thanks to the many who wrote us, and enjoy some excerpts here.

Correction
The Pond section of the spring issue included a quote that understated the full body of work by Taft’s student drama group, Masque and Dagger. Since the 1980s, Masque and Dagger productions have included shows like The Breakfast Club, Neil Simon’s Women, and The Servant of Two Masters.

King Thunder Band
Some of the comments above were offered at an address on Alumni Day.

Willy MacMullen ’78

Taft TRIVIA?
A flash from the past: Anyone recall where these murals were made? And if you’re one of the artists, let us know! Send your guess to the editor (lindabeyus@taftschool.org). The winner, whose name will be randomly chosen, will win a surprise Taft gift. Congratulations to Trevor Fearon ’86, who correctly guessed the formal name of the Black Box: the Woodward Theater.

FROM THE Headmaster
Finding Youth in Oregon

WHEN ANDREW EISEN’S grandfather turned 100, he started saying, “I wish I lived in Oregon so I could be euthanized.” He was kind of kidding, kind of not,” says Eisen, who was head monitor of his 2004 class at Taft. “It was a heavy, dark thing, but knowing him and his personality, it wasn’t as awful as it sounded. I always kind of saw the humor in it. And the humanity.”

Eisen did not start his professional career as a screenwriter. After studying creative writing at Middlebury College, Eisen took a corporate job in Westport, Connecticut. After the economy tanked, he was laid off in 2009 and finally had time to pursue writing as a career (“circumstances set me free,” he says). That year Eisen wrote the first of what would turn out to be nearly 40 drafts of the screenplay. He sent it out through his Taft and Middlebury networks and, “as often happens with scripts, I would imagine 10 to 20 percent of the people I sent it to actually read it,” Eisen says. “But I got lucky that one of the guys, a producer from Middlebury named Stefan Nowicki, actually read it and liked it, even though it was a very different story at that time.”

After a change in directors—Joel David Moore, an actor known for his roles in Dodgeball and Avatar, and a native Oregonian himself, was the final choice—four-time Tony Award winner (including in 2016) and Oscar nominee Frank Langella joined the cast in early 2015. A stream of heavy hitters followed: Christina Applegate, Josh Lucas, and Billy Crudup round out the top-billed cast. Filming took place in New York City as well as upstate over the summer in 2015, and less than a year later, the movie made its debut. Like the cross-country drive in the film, the process of getting the movie made has been a long haul, and Eisen says that while he’s “psyched that Youth in Oregon got made and very proud of that,” he questions whether he would write another movie about a man driving his father-in-law to be euthanized.

“It’s clearly where my interest is—telling these real, heavy stories that I try to deliver with comedy and lightness,” he says, and Youth in Oregon certainly has comedic elements. Eisen’s next projects are two television pilots, one of which examines death in a similar vein. Titled The Homestretch, it’s inspired by the last year of Eisen’s father’s life and his relationship with his home health aide, a “big, sweet, hulking guy from Ghana.” The other one is a lighter, 30-minute comedy, a satire of reality TV families.

The hardest part of being a screenwriter, he says, is “staying motivated and making sure you’re not only writing every day, but writing different things. The second hardest part is being aware of what is selling and asking yourself, ‘Is this a good idea?,’ which is tough because, of course, you think it’s a good idea. It’s very challenging to look at it from a broader industry perspective and ask yourself if it’s an idea that buyers are going to be into as opposed to just writing whatever you want and whatever moves you.” In this case, it worked; the material that moved Eisen clearly also resonated with a prominent cast and one of the top film festivals in the world.

—Sam Dangremond ’05
On the Road

THIS PARTICULAR DOCTOR HELPS
the mostly four-legged creatures among us, and does it from a work base on
four wheels—not to mention that her

clients are in two states separated by
mountain ranges and the Mississippi.
After working in veterinary clinics
for about 10 years, Alison Green
Hanson ’90 decided to start a differ-
ent kind of practice. “Lots of clients
had asked me if I would ever consider
making house calls,” she says, “and I
was enchanted by the idea of the UW
Creatures Great and Small,” old-timey
veterinarian who comes to people’s
homes and ends up taking care of
the whole family, not just the pets! It
seemed like a simpler, more practical,
friendlier way of practicing medicine.”

Now with a mobile vet practice in
Telluride, Colorado, and another in
Wilmington, North Carolina, Hanson
works part time in both places from
her trusty truck. September through
May she is in Telluride, then in
Wilmington June through August,
spending the summers there with
her children and near other family.
“I’m always working around mom-
ing simultaneously,” she says.

“We lived in Wilmington full time for
10 years, so I accumulated lots of won-
derful clients there. When we decided
to move to Telluride in 2013, many of
my Wilmington clients wanted to wait
for me to return the following summer
so that I could see their pets for their
annual exams, vaccinations, etc., rather
than finding a new vet,” Hanson says.
That started an annual cycle where
she would return to North Carolina
each summer and see the same clients
and pets, who had waited all year for
her to get back. “It is an amazing group
of folks,” she says. “Meanwhile, I have
equally loyal clients in Telluride who put
up with me being gone and are there
waiting when I return in the fall.”

As for what it’s like to live it two
places part of each year, Hanson says,
“It’s perfect for my nature and my fam-
ily. Telluride is a tiny town and the
winter’s very long—there’s snow on the
ground nine months out of the year,” she

We moved to Colorado because
my husband bought a place in 1990,
and we decided our kids needed sking
to be a major part of their lives,” says
Hanson. “Benji, 7, is a hockey star and
ski fanatic, and he and his buddies are
known around town as the ‘little rip-
pers.’ Lisa Jane, 12, is also a big skier,
big-time student, writer, and is learn-
ing lacrosse. Our oldest, Zella, 14, now
schooling online, plans to attend a hard-
core pre-professional ballet program.”

Hanson admits there are limitations
to practicing medicine outside of a clinic
or hospital, but says, “I had lots of sup-
port from vets in the community, who
welcomed my bringing patients to their
hospitals if or when needed. I predicted,
and was correct, that the bonds I would
form with pets and their owners would
be much stronger if I was able to take
care of the pets in their own homes.”

Media Metamorphosis

JOHN LAVINE ’59 HAS NEVER
taken a journalism course. He’s composed
all of one Tweet.

But when the story is written about
how information is consumed—
whether it’s in newspaper agate or
4-0 Twitter characters—Lavine’s
indelible byline will be on it.
From musty composing rooms to
multitasking millennials, it is the story
of an industry in a constant state of
flux. It’s one of paywalls and parachute
journalism, deadlines and digital con-
tent. Adapt or become irrelevant.

And Lavine, ’59, wouldn’t
have it any other way.
You see, for half of his adult life,
Lavine hasn’t just been a practitio-
nal of journalism. He’s lived it,
most notably as one of the coun-
ty’s most celebrated institutions:
Medill School of Journalism, Media,
Integrated Marketing Communications
at Northwestern University.
“Constant number one, there is a tidal
wave of information ever growing and
it is unstoppable, and you need to know
that it’s there and understand it and
your audiences,” says Lavine, who served
as Medill’s dean from 2006 to 2012.
Lavine is one of the constants, too.
In many respects, the arc of Lavine’s
career as a journalist, educator, and
media management pioneer follows a similar
trajectory as the industry’s evolving busi-
ness model. It harkens back to Wisconsin,
the fourth largest in the nation.
“It was clear to me that the world
was changing and the internet that had
started out at the [Department of Defense]
was going to have a profound impact
on everybody,” Lavine says. “I said I was
never in the ink on dead tree business.”

Lavine found himself asking more
than just the five “Ws” of journalism:
who, what, when, where, and why.

“The question that I have chased
from 1964 to now is the same question: how
do you help people be better informed
with whatever means they have now and
what’s coming in the future?” Lavine says.
“People get their information in different
ways and they don’t like to be told what
to pay attention to or stories.”

The academic world recognized
that Lavine was onto something, with
the University of Minnesota recruiting him to
be its inaugural John and Elizabeth Bates
Cowles professor of media management
and economics in 1984. In 1989, Lavine
founded the Media Management Center
at Northwestern, incorporating the
disciplines of journalism and the business
side of the industry under one umbrella.
A figure that Lavine often cites is
3,440, the number of minutes in a day.
Even more finite, he says, is the time
and attention span of a media outlet or
platform’s audience—about 40 minutes.

“When in doubt, rely on self-interest,”
Lavine says. “Understand the audi-
cee’s self-interest is what governs
the media’s universe. They’re in charge.”
Making Music That Sings

Alex Forbes ’76 (second from right) at a recording session for a song she co-wrote and produced—the theme song for the Nonhuman Rights Project. Its founder Steven Wise, second from left, is the subject of the HBO documentary Unchained: The Story of the Hijabi Mufti, which Forbes also composed.

FOR ALEX FORBES ’76, collaboration is the key to creative songwriting. The prolific Forbes has written hundreds of songs, many of which have hit the charts—and lit up dance floors—both in America and overseas. She also coaches other songwriters on how to make their music and lyrics really, well, sing. “I highly recommend it,” she says of collaboration. “When I write with other people, it brings other colors to the work. They may be strong where I’m weak. You have to have someone to spur you on.”

Forbes’ bread and butter is her ability to craft tunes that are both energetic and commercially viable. Her first major hit was “Too Turned On” by Alisha, and commercially viable. Her first major hit was “Too Turned On” by Alisha, and her first hit was “One Day in Your Life.”

“She also writes for television, including the theme song for the Nonhuman Rights Project. Its founder Steven Wise, second from left, is the subject of the HBO documentary Unchained: The Story of the Hijabi Mufti, which Forbes also composed. Forbes recalls Potter asking her one day if she was an “artist with a capital A.” “I stopped for a minute, then said yes. I could never go down the straight and narrow path, and he gave me permission and the willingness to take the path less traveled—to go down it and never doubt it.”

She graduated from Stanford with a degree in English and creative writing, only because the university didn’t offer a degree in songwriting. “I sort of made my own major,” she says with a laugh. After graduation, Forbes tried her hand as a graphic designer, but she says the pull of music won out. She has been self-employed as a songwriter and songwriting coach since she was 23, and has never looked back.

“I think the life of a painter is more solitary, and I’m more collaborative,” she says. “I don’t think you can necessarily teach songwriting, but you can give feedback. Over the years I’ve gotten to where I can constructively give feedback. The great thing about [coaching] one on one is you can really focus like a laser beam on that material.”

Forbes said beginning songwriters tend to imitate other singers and songwriters. “They helps them find discover and express their own unique voices. ‘It’s their willingness to take their stands and strike out on their own and... reveal it in a work of art—whatever that work of art is. I think that’s the beauty of teaching and the beauty of art itself. You’re pushing your own boundaries.’”

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow ’84

At Taft, her need to push creative boundaries found its muse in legendary art teacher Mark Potter ’48. “He certainly was the greatest influence. He blew my mind wide open,” she says. “I really took to [art] like a fish to water. I didn’t do sports, I did music and art. He took me under his wing, [because] he saw that I had that drive.”

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—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow ’84

How to Brew Two Magazines

Not everyone has a kegerator serving draft beer near their desk and is encouraged to sample the contents as part of their job duties. But for Brad Ring ’84, qualifying is all in a day’s work. As publisher of Brew Your Own and WineMaker magazines, Ring has combined his passion for journalism with his love of making his own beer and wine. And as president and publisher of Battenkill Communications in Manchester Center, Vermont, Ring oversees the production of these magazines dedicated to the exploding world of home winemaking and beer making.

“However, there has never been a better time to be a beer or wine lover in America. The booming diversity and availability of craft beer and wine over the last two years is jaw-dropping,” he says. “All this consumer interest in beer and wine now means more equipment options, great ingredient choices, and plenty of good brewing and winemaking information—like my magazines! You really can have a great experience making your own wine or beer from your first batch.”

Ring says he became interested in journalism and publishing while a student at Taft, and continued writing for his college newspaper before going to graduate school for journalism. After a few years as a television reporter, he switched to magazines for the job pace and the ability to really deeply explore subjects. “I took a series of publishing jobs to build up enough experience to give this goal of running my own business a better shot. I worked on titles such as Saveur, Worth, ArtNews, and Garden Design,” Ring says. “I was doing some consulting work for a special-interest publisher in California when the opportunity came up to buy his two start-up hobby magazines in 1999.”

Ring relocated the two magazines—Brew Your Own and WineMaker—to Vermont and has been publishing ever since. The subject matter of both magazines is a particular passion of his. “I feel very lucky that I’ve been able to marry up my professional skill set in magazine publishing with my personal 25-year interest of making my own beer and wine. Not too many people get a chance to earn a living doing something every day that they really care about as a personal interest,” he says. “While holding down other publishing jobs over the years, I always brewed my own beer as a fun hobby after work. I care about the subjects I cover. And I believe that not only makes my own workday more fun, but results in more authentic publications for readers.”

As part of his job, Ring visits beer festivals and wineries across the country, and he’s embracing the digital revolution in publishing as well. “To this last year, we’ve seen a real acceleration moving toward increased... continued on next page...
IN Print

A FRONT PAGE AFFAIR: A KITTY WEEKS MYSTERY Sourcebooks Radha Vatsal ‘91

New York City, 1915: The Lusitania has just been sunk, and headlines about a shoot-
ning at J.F. Morgan’s mansion and the Great War are splashed across every newspaper. Kitty Weeks would love nothing more than to report on the news of the day, but she’s stuck writing about fashion and society gossip over on the Ladies’ Page—until a man is murdered at a high-society picnic on her beat.

Determined to prove her worth as a jour-
nalist, Weeks finds herself plunged into the midst of a wartime conspiracy that threat-
ens to derail the United States’ attempt to remain neutral—and to disrupt her privi-
leged life. Vatsal’s novel is the first in a series featuring rising journalism star Kitty Weeks.

Vatsal, who lives in New York City, grew up in Mumbai, India, and came to the United States to attend boarding school, later earning a Ph.D. at Duke University.

H ow GOD BECAME GOD: WHAT SCHOLARS ARE REALLY SAYING ABOUT GOD AND THE BIBLE Sourcebooks H.P. Wood

From a historical perspective, the Bible is provably wrong, this book argues—a point supported by today’s archaeological and historical scholarship. Yet this emphatically does not mean that the Bible isn’t, in some real measure, true, says Smoley.

He reviews authoritative historical evi-
dence to demonstrate that figures such as Moses, Abraham, and Jesus are not only unlikely to have existed, but bear strong composite resemblances to other Near Eastern religious icons.

The author shows how concepts of the Hebrew and Christian God, including Christ, are an assembly of ideas that were altered, argued over, and edited—until their canonization. This process, to a large degree, gave Western civilization its consensus view of God.

Far from being “untrue,” Smoley explains that the Bible is quite true as it connects us to the insights of ancient ancestors and a unifying ethic behind many of the world’s faiths.

Smoley is a respected authority on the mystical and esoteric teachings of Western civilization and the author of several previous books.

JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY: EARLY AMERICAN NOVELIST, WHIG STATESMAN, AND ARNEDIAN SCHOLAR LSU Press Andrew R. Black ‘62

John Pendleton Kennedy (1795–1870) achieved a multidimensional career as a successful novelist, historian, and politician. He published widely and represented his district in Congress several times and serving as secretary of the Navy. He devoted much of his life to the American Whig party and campaigned zealously for Henry Clay during his multiple runs for president.

Black argues that literature and politics were inseparable for Kennedy, as his writ-
ing was infused with the principles and beliefs that coalesced into the Whig party in the 1830s.

Using Kennedy’s best-known novel, the enigmatic Swallow Barn, Black illustrates how the author grappled unsuccess-fully with race and slavery in this novel, also reflecting the fatal indecisiveness of both Kennedy and his party in dealing with these volatile issues. Black argues this failure caused the political collapse of the Whigs and paved the way for the Civil War. Black has a Ph.D. in history from Boston University.

MAGRUDER’S CURIOUSITY CABINET Sourcebooks (aka Hilary Poole ‘88)

Set at the turn of the 20th century, Kitty Hayward and her mother are ready to experience Cony Island’s new Dreamland amusement park. But when Kitty’s mother vanishes from their hotel, she finds herself penniless, alone, and far from her native England. The last person she expects to help are the characters at Magruder’s Curiosity Cabinet, a museum of oddities. From con men to strongmen, from con men to strongmen, Kitty’s new friends quickly adopt her and vow to help find the missing Mrs. Hayward. But even these unusual inhabitants may not be a match for the insidious sickness and the panic that begins to spread through Cony Island. Poole’s novel sweeps readers into a world where nothing is as it seems, and where “normal” is the exception to the rule. This is the first novel by Poole, the granddaughter of a mad inventor and a sideshow magician.
Catching Fire

WHAT STARTED WITH A SPARK, soon turned to Fire.

Inspired by the increased and open dialogue taking place on campus around race, gender, and social justice last fall, upper mids Lauren Fadiman and SeArah Smith crafted a powerful spoken-word poem contextualizing those global issues through their own experiences. They performed “Fire” at Taft’s annual Multicultural Arts Celebration. The impact was significant; their words unforgettable.

“Fire’ contains messages that need to be heard but that high school students are not particularly comfortable talking about,” said Eliza Price ’17, who, along with Katie Ajemian ’16 and Felicity Petruzzi ’16, produced a film of the same name built on that performance piece. The film won top honors—which included a $10,000 prize—in the Tribeca Film Festival.

Using their original audio as well as video footage from the performance did that.” said Felicity. “We wanted the film to capture that raw emotion and authenticity to put our audience back in that moment. Using their original audio as well as video footage from the performance did that.”

Video arts teacher Scott Serafine received word in February that Fire had made the first cut in the competition: of the more than 250 films submitted, five were named finalists, Fire among them. With that honor came the opportunity to create a more refined version of the film, a $1,000 production award and a mentorship with a professional filmmaker—part of the package. The Taft students were paired with mentor Loira Limbal, vice president and documentary lab director for Firelight Media. Her work, which fuses arts and activism, often explores themes of social justice and creating opportunity for young women of color. Limbal advised the team to consider reshooting some scenes.

“We realized that what we had done originally made sense in a Taft context, but that it was important to move off campus to better portray a more universal experience,” explained Felicity. They also had more running time for the final cut, which allowed them to include more of the original poem, and to drop in both personal interviews and clips of actual news footage from the events referenced in the poem.

“The emphasis in my classes is always on storytelling,” said Serafine. “I want students to tell their own stories, and to use the power of film to tell stories that make people more aware—more aware of their surroundings, more aware of what is happening outside of themselves.”

By adding news footage and interviews to the original soundtrack, Fire does that, and does it extremely well.”

Fire aired at two separate screening venues at the famed Tribeca Film Festival in April. All of finalists earned all-expense paid travel to the festival, with all access passes to Tribeca events.

“The connections we were able to make were just outstanding,” said SeArah.

For more information, visit www.taftschool.org/news
STEM Takes Root

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH (STEM) STUDENTS NOT ONLY BROUGHT INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION TO CAMPUS DURING THE SPRING TERM, BUT ALSO HELD A COMPETITIVE EDGE IN LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS.

Science
Taft's Sonny An '17 and Daniel Yi '18 sat for a high-level, competitive physics qualifier in an effort to represent the United States at this summer's International Chemistry Olympiad. Sonny was joined by Olymaid. Led by Taft team captain first step in the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad. Connecticut. Sponsored by the American Chemical Society, the competition is the first in the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad. The first qualifying round consists of a multiple-choice test assessing knowledge of New science. The first qualifying round consists of a multiple-choice test assessing knowledge of Newtonian mechanics. Of the thousands of competitors taking the test, both Sonny and Daniel were among the top 13 of the 402 students from Connecticut and Massachusetts who took the exam. Local competition coordinators nominated Joe and Leon to move on and sit for the national exam. Competing a science triathlon, Sonny was among 25 Taft students to compete in the Connecticut Science Olympiad. The Olympiad is comprised of 23 different events incorporating a multitude of STEM topics. Some events require advance construction or planning, while others involve on-the-spot skills application. Individual students win medals for placing in an event, with cumulative scores yielding overall team placement at a tournament. Forty-six students from around the state competed this year, with Taft placing seventh overall. A number of Taft students earned medals for their work on specific events:

- Sonny An '17 and Carter Taft '16, first place, Chemistry Lab
- Sonny An '17 and Ivory Zhu '17, first place, It's About Time
- Lexi Walker '16 and Joe Han '17, second place, Wind Power
- Tom Kosolpatanadueng '16 and Natalie Waldram '18, second place, Geologic Mapping
- Bill Lu '19 and Natalie Waldram '18, third place, Electric Vehicle
- Bill Lu '19 and Mihir Nayyar '19, third place, Robot Arm
- Lexi Walker '16 and Louise Gagnon '18, third place, Fossils

Technology
Under the tutelage of science teacher Theresa Albon and math teacher David Brundage, Taft students learned computer game design using Java programming language. The course introduces Java as a tool for designing and programming graphical and interactive applications. As their final project, students designed downloadable computer games, now available on Taft's website (taftschool.org/academia/java.aspx).

- "We developed the curriculum to be project-based," said Albon. "The students learned the basics of coding through designing smaller games and simulations throughout the semester. As a result, they had a solid foundation when beginning their final projects." Those projects were on display during a hands-on course showcase in May, where guests sampled the games built by Taft students.
- "After taking the class many of the students became interested in continuing to learn about coding," noted Brundage. "It was a great opportunity for them to learn the basics while producing intricate programs."

Engineering
Students in Dan Calore's Intro to Engineering class spent part of the spring term learning about Leonardo da Vinci and his impact on science and engineering. Students applied time-tested STEM principles to build modern, functional versions of ancient tools of war, catapults, crossbows, and trebuchets.

- "Our work taught students how to go from a problem to a final product," said Calore. "The final projects saw students learning to test then modify different aspects of their original designs."
- Engineering skills were also on display during the annual Trinity College International Robot Contest. Team Taft was one of more than 100 teams from around the world to travel to Hartford for the competition this year, which featured a firefighting contest. Robots navigated a model home in search of a fire, represented by a burning candle, then worked to extinguish it. Along the way, the robots encountered walls, furniture, animals, and other obstacles. Shasha Alvares '17 and Cauviya Selva '17 built a robot that was successful in extinguishing the candle on four of five attempts.
- Taft engineers earned accolades after the event from the Connecticut Chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, who bestowed Outstanding Robot from Connecticut honors on a robot built and programmed by Conrad Casstere '17 and Alex Kiiru '16.

Math
Ivory Zhu '17 qualified for the 2016 United States of America Math Olympiad (USAMO). Nearly 200,000 students from across the U.S. sat for the first-round contest, which consisted of 25 multiple choice questions to be completed in 75 minutes. Of those students, approximately 6,000 were invited to compete in second round, Ivory among them. The second qualifying round featured 15 free-response questions, to be completed within a three-hour window. After two rounds, Ivory was one of only 270 high school students to emerge from the original field of 200,000 with an invitation to participate in the USAMO, a two-day mathematics marathon.
- "In the last decade, Taft students have written 12 USAMO contests," noted math teacher Ted Heavenrich. "The great, great majority of U.S. high schools have administered zero USAMO contests over the last 50 years."
- Team Red Rhinos also posted an impressive fourth-place finish in The Purple Comet! Math Meet, an online, team mathematics competition attracting thousands of middle and high school students from more than 40 states and 55 countries. In their "small high school" field of 676 schools, the Rhinos tied for fourth place with 28 correct answers, behind three schools who tied for the top spot by correctly answering 29 of the 30 questions.


**Changing the Equation**

TED JEWELL AND DON PADGETT RETIRE

TED JEWELL AND DON PADGETT have held court in Taft’s mathematics classrooms for more than a decade. Both retired at the end of the academic year, leaving legacies of service, intellect, passion, and compassion.

In his 14 years at Taft, Padgett was a math teacher, Admissions Committee member, curriculum designer, and coach. From 2007 to 2009, he held the Littlejohn Family Chair for commitment to the whole student.

The course head for Accelerated Precalculus and developed most of the material used in the classroom. He has taught everything from Algebra and Accelerated Precalculus to AP Calculus AB/BC, with only one focus: student success.

“If there was an award given to the teacher who gave the most extra help, it might go to Don,” said MacMullen. “He just won’t let students fail. He sets a really high bar and then says, ‘You can reach it, it won’t be easy, and I’ll help you.’”

Padgett has also been a highly successful and respected cross-country and track coach: he’s worked with some record-setting runners and relay teams, and loyalty to him runs deep in his athletes.

Ted Jewell came to Taft in 2004 after a long and impressive career as an attorney: Noted MacMullen, “When Ted left the law, a lot of Taft students and teachers were really fortunate.”

Jewell graduated with a degree in mathematics from Harvard, then earned his law degree at the University of North Carolina. He and spent most of his career practicing law in Florida.

“He came into teaching almost by accident,” shared MacMullen. “He found an old undergraduate math exam he had taken at Harvard, and almost on a lark he solved a couple problems he had missed decades earlier. That got Ted thinking: ‘This math stuff is pretty fun.’ So he started tutoring and teaching, picking up a master’s in computer science from Yale on the way.”

Which he put to good use at Taft. In addition to traditional math courses, Jewell created and taught introductory and intermediate computer science courses, as well as AP Computer Science at Taft.

Said MacMullen, “When he interviewed at Taft, I knew he was a man of rare and fascinating intellect. Ted’s passion for problem solving and for trying to figure out how each student’s brain works is inspiring.”

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**Model UN**

LAUREN FADIMAN ‘17 WAS NAMED Best Delegate at the Cornell Model United Nations Conference (CMUNC), held on the Cornell University campus.

The annual event attracts more than 850 students from around the world. “I am most elated at Taft when I see students shine as intellectual scholars and leaders,” said Taft’s dean of Global and Diversity Education, Jamella Lee, who brought her Honors Model UN class to New York for the competition.

Fadiman represented Taft as Planned Parenthood on the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum. Lauren wrote a dynamic paper titled “Reasserting the Goals of Planned Parenthood in the 2016 Elections.” She also wrote compelling press releases and directives influencing the “Road to 2016: Democrats and Republicans Committees at Cornell Model UN.”

Tawanda Mulalu ‘16 was named Outstanding Delegate during the competition for his work representing Taft as Japan on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) 2030 Crisis Committee, while seniors Leon Vortmeyer and Johnny Morgart earned Honorable Mentions representing Denmark on the Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee, and representing Russian President Vladimir Putin on the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa Alliance, respectively.

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**College Matriculation**

AGAIN THIS YEAR, MORE TAFTIES WILL HEAD TO GEORGETOWN THAN TO ANY OTHER COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY, WITH EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2016 OPTING TO BECOME HOYAS. HERE IS A COMPLETE LIST OF COLLEGE CHOICES FOR THE CLASS OF 2016:

- Amherst College
- Babson College (3)
- Bates College (2)
- Bennington College
- Bentley University
- Boston College (2)
- Boston University (4)
- Bowdoin College
- Brown University (2)
- Bucknell University (2)
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Colby College (2)
- Colgate University (3)
- College of the Holy Cross
- Colorado College (2)
- Columbia University
- Connecticut College (3)
- Cornell University
- Dartmouth College (4)
- Denison University
- Dickinson College
- Duke University (2)
- Elon University (2)
- Emory University
- Endicott College
- Fordham University
- Furman University
- George Washington University (2)
- Georgetown University (2)
- Georgia Institute of Technology (2)
- Hamilton College, NY (4)
- Hampshire College
- Harvard University
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges
- Johns Hopkins University
- Kent State University
- Kenyon College
- Lafayette College (2)
- Lehigh University (2)
- Marist College (2)
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- McGill University
- Middlebury College (2)
- M.I.T. International University
- Muhlenberg College
- New York University (6)
- Northeastern University
- Occidental College (4)
- Pennsylvania State University
- Princeton University
- Purdue University
- Rice University
- Southern Methodist University (4)
- St. John’s College
- St. Lawrence University (3)
- St. Olaf College
- Stanford University
- Stockholm School of Economics
- Stonehill College (3)
- Texas Christian University (2)
- Trinity College (2)
- Tufts University
- Union College (5)
- University of Arizona
- University of California, Berkeley (2)
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of Chicago (2)
- University of Colorado at Boulder
- University of Denver
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Maryland, College Park
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- University of Miami
- University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of North Carolina at Wilmington (2)
- University of Pennsylvania (5)
- University of Nebraska
- University of Richmond (4)
- University of Southern California
- University of St. Andrews (4)
- University of Vermont
- University of Virginia (4)
- University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Villanova University
- Wake Forest University (2)
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Wesleyan University (4)
- Western University (3)
- Yale University (2)

(Note: Schools without a number have one Taft graduate attending.)
Student Leaders Take on Global Issues

THE INAUGURAL CLASS OF GLOBAL Leadership Institute (GLI) scholars completed the unique and highly competitive two-year program this spring. Designed to elevate thinking around global issues, the program’s mission is to develop a generation of global leaders with a genuine concern for world problems, multiple perspectives on global issues, and the skills to contribute toward the resolution of those problems.

Each fall, 20 second-year high school students are selected for the GLI scholar program—10 from Taft, and 10 from public high schools in Waterbury. GLI scholars complete the unique and highly competitive two-year program this spring. Designed to elevate thinking around global issues, the program’s mission is to develop a generation of global leaders with a genuine concern. The projects include a public presentation to school and community leaders. The first class of graduates explored topics ranging from ecology and sustainability, to special education, understanding problems in the Middle East, and homelessness.

“Selena Soto was our last and most powerful presenter,” said Lee. “Her mother had been homeless during her youth, and Selena shared her story.”

Soto, an artist, designed and sold a T-shirt; all profits from the sales were donated to a local homeless shelter.

“This students saw this culmination of two years of skill development and scholarly endeavor as a graduation—as an advancement to a new level of leadership and responsibility,” said Lee.

“The program has inspired them to take stronger leadership and advocacy roles in their community.”

As a component of his culminating project, GLI scholar Zygi Jievaltas ‘17 organized a town-wide cleanup day. Let’s Do It! Watertown was a Let’s Do It! World (LDW) affiliate event. Since 2008, nearly 14 million people in 112 countries around the world have participated in Let’s Do It! World cleanup projects, under Zygi’s leadership and coordination, Let’s Do It! Watertown worked at a number of sites around town, including Island Field and Steele Brook Common.

GLI scholar Shasha Alvares ‘17 talks with Waterbury Mayor and Taft parent Ned O’Leary about her culminating project on immigration. “I have always been interested in the topic of immigration into America, because all of my family members are recent immigrants,” explained Shasha. “My project focused on undocumented immigration into the United States, and explored the concept of undocumented immigrants as social and economic assets to the United States.”

TAFT STUDENTS TOOK HOME TOP honors in several major categories during the 2016 Halo Awards. Sponsored by Waterbury’s Seven Angels Theatre, the Halo Awards celebrate the best in Connecticut high school theater. More than 40 awards were presented to nominees from 64 schools.

Kaedi Dalley ’18 was named Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of Motormouth Maybelle in Hairspray. Producer Maggie Luddy ’16 and director Emily Asnberg ’16 accepted the Fearless Award for their production of The Laramie Project, while Carey Cannata ’16 took home the Artistic Director prize, a special recognition award given by Seven Angels Theatre.

A number of teachers and judges at the event commented on how many nominations Taft received, ”said music teacher TJ Thompson, who accompanied Taft students to the awards ceremony and is an integral member of Taft’s theater production team. “The nominations themselves are a reflection of how hard everyone in the program has worked. The nominations represent the excellence of our collective effort, and recognize everyone involved in each of our shows.”

Taft performers earned a total of nine nominations overall, including two for Best Featured Actress in a Musical, two for Best Standout Performance in an Ensemble Play, and Best Performance by a Cast in an Ensemble Production. 
A Life of Service
DONNA HENRY CRYER ’88 ELECTED TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

VOTES CAST, TAFT ALUMNI HAVE spoken: Donna Henry Cryer will serve her alma mater as the newest member of the Board of Trustees.

Cryer came to Taft in 1983 as a lower-mid day student. From dancing on the Bingham stage and singing in the chorus, to acting in the Black Box Theater and playing varsity softball, Cryer quickly hit her stride both in and out of the classroom. But it is that life in the classroom—and the many English classes she took with her advisor and coach Steve Schieffelin—to which Cryer credits finding her voice; a voice that laid the groundwork for her future career as a lawyer and advocate.

After a successful academic career and a degree in government from Harvard/ Radcliffe, Cryer hopped into the political arena, working on several successful campaigns, and a move to Washington, D.C., seemed inevitable. There Cryer worked on a number of voting rights initiatives, including Rock the Vote, led by the League of Women Voters. She ultimately enrolled in the then-experimental interdisciplinary legal curriculum section at the Georgetown University Law Center, where she served on one of the law journals, produced seminal work on protecting children on the internet through the Institute for Public Representation (later recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice), and served as president of the Student Bar Association.

And then life changed: Cryer needed a liver transplant. A previously diagnosed autoimmune condition triggered both the transplant and Cryer’s passion. She has since embraced the Taft motto by channeling her personal experience as an IBD and liver transplant patient into professional advocacy as founder, president, and chief executive officer of the Global Liver Institute, the innovation and collaboration platform for the liver community. She became the first patient to lead the American Liver Foundation in its 36-year history, serving as chair and chief executive officer. She also serves on the executive committee of the Forum for Collaborative HIV Research, the boards of directors of the Society for Participatory Medicine and the Personalized Medicine Coalition, and as a member of Stakeholder Advisory Group to the National Institutes of Health Learning Health Systems Research Collaboratory, to name a few.

Cryer lives in Washington, with her husband, Dr. Dennis Cryer, and their two Yorkies, Charlotte and Victoria. She also adores her three fabulous children by marriage.

All American Boys
2016 SUMMER READING SELECTION

EACH SUMMER, TAFT STUDENTS and faculty read a common, all-school literature selection chosen by the Summer Reading Committee. The shared experience builds community and fosters discussion at the beginning of the academic year. This year the committee has chosen All American Boys, a 2016 Coretta Scott King Author Honor book, and recipient of the Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children’s Literature.

All American Boys is the story of two teens—one black, one white—dealing with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and ultimately the country bitterly divided by racial tension. Authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely—who wrote the book in tandem, telling the story through the alternating perspectives of the two main characters—will visit Taft on October 4 to more deeply explore the book and its themes with Taft students and faculty.

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Cryer has been appointed to the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization Technical Expert Panel on Viral Hepatitis, to the U.S. Government Accountability Office’s Health Information Policy Committee as the patient and consumer representative; to the federal advisory body to the National Coordinators for Health Information Technology, and is serving her second, five-year term with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. She also serves on the executive committee of the Forum for Collaborative HIV Research, the boards of directors of the Society for Participatory Medicine and the Personalized Medicine Coalition, and as a member of Stakeholder Advisory Group to the National Institutes of Health Learning Health Systems Research Collaboratory, to name a few.

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LIDIA GUTU ’16 was one of 15 Taft students who spent spring break teaching English in the Dominican Republic. Led by Taft Science Teacher Laura Monti ’89, Director of Multicultural Recruitment Tamara Sinclair ’05, and Academic Dean Jeremy Clifford, Taft students designed English language lesson plans to meet the educational objectives prescribed in a curriculum built by their host organization, Outreach 360. “We taught English to grade-school students from kindergarten through sixth grade,” explained Monti. “We all developed quick friendships with the students we worked with. When many of the students approached us during recess and asked us our names and ages in English, which was something we had been working on with them, we all felt like we had accomplished something in our four days of tutoring.”

STUDENTS, FACULTY, staff, family, alumni, and friends gathered on campus in May for the Third Annual Taft 2B12K, a run/walk to remember Zoë B. Klimley, a beloved member of the Class of 2015, and to raise money for the Zoë B. Klimley Scholarship Fund. STUDENTS, FACULTY, staff, family, alumni, and friends gathered on campus in May for the Third Annual Taft 2B12K, a run/walk to remember Zoë B. Klimley, a beloved member of the Class of 2015, and to raise money for the Zoë B. Klimley Scholarship Fund.

TAFTIES MOUNTED THE ACCLAIMED 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee for this year’s spring musical.
Spring Sports WRAP-UP

BY STEVE PALMER / Photography by Robert Falcetti

Boys’ Golf 12–3
FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

The team’s Founders League Championship and 2nd-place finish at Newport Country Club in the Phillips Andover Invitational were two highlights. The Founders League Championship came in record-setting fashion with Drew Powell ’17 posting a 6 under par 65 to pace Taft to an 11-shot victory over rivals Loomis and Westminster. Drew’s scoring average for the season (74.5) established a new mark for Taft golfers. At Newport, the team set a new team record of 310 strokes, with all fours golfers posting scores in the 70s. Throughout the season the team received great efforts and low scores from Captain Mani Capece ’16, Joel Rheaume ’16, Grant Sweeney ’16, Hunter Ramee ’17, Charles Donaldson ’17, Chris Gaeta ’18, and Rex Riefler ’19.

Girls’ Golf 19–1
FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS, NEW ENGLAND RUNNERS-UP

Taft won the Founders League Tournament for the third year in a row, this time by two strokes over Loomis. Their 19–1 record adds to the impressive overall record of 143 wins, 12 losses and 4 ties since the team began. The Rhinos then came in a close second (only six strokes) in the Pippy O’Connor New England tournament, competing against 25 schools and over 100 individual golfers. Portia Wang ’18 was low medalist with a 75, becoming Taft’s fourth individual New England Champion. Close behind her was Jemima Villarreal ’17, who finished in 5th place with an 84. Other highlights included an early season win over New England champ Greenwich Academy, and the joint golf outing with the boys’ team in the Wilcox Tournament to raise money to send a child of domestic violence to summer camp. Key players all season were captain Hannah Wilczynski ’17, newcomer Olivia Wivestad ’19, captain-elect Grace Dreher ’18, and Founders League All-Stars Marisa Mission ’17 and captain-elect Avery Andreiski ’17.

Portia Wang ’18 tees off on the 7th hole at the Watertown Golf Club on April 29. Wang was a co-low medalist during the Founders League Championship, shooting a 42 and helping Taft win the league.

Team captain, four- year varsity, and No. 1 player Courtland Boyle ’16, who also won the SNETL Alban Barker Sportsmanship Award.
Boys’ Lacrosse 15–3
FOUNDEES LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

In winning the Founders League and tying the school record for wins in a season, the Rhinos defeated some very strong teams, including exciting home wins against Lawrenceville (13–4) and Trinity-Pawling (14–11). Taft finished the season ranked No. 19 in the USA Today National High School Poll. This powerful offensive team established a school record for goals in a season with 287 and held opponents to 126 goals. Under Armour All-American Michael Kraus ’16 set the new single-season goals record with 57, and his 86 points overall are third most in school history. Senior Brandon Salvatore ’16 finished with 18 points and was named All-Western New England for a third time.

Girls’ Lacrosse 7–9

The Rhinos were a high-energy team that pulled together with great team chemistry despite losing stellar goalie Becky Dutton ’16 part way through the season. Key wins included a 31–10 overtime victory against Sacred Heart, and strong performances against Northfield Mount Hermon (8–6) and Berkshire (8–6). Taft also played very well in close losses to Choate (8–10) and Andover (7–10). Leading the team throughout the season were captains Eliza Dunham ’16, Brooke Majewski ’16, and Dutton, as well as seniors Ellie Smith ’16, Emma Howie ’16, Ellie Carroll ’16, Caley Bogolaski ’16, and Megan Schonenholtz ’16. A strong group of returning players, including captains-elect Eliza Dennis ’17 and Nina Garfinkel ’17, will lead the team next year.

Boys’ Tennis 17–3
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND TENNIS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS: NEW ENGLAND RUNNERS-UP

This year’s team came within a volley or two of a perfect season. With the deepest lineup in decades, Taft’s bottom of the ladder provided the foundation for every win, and the traditionally strong doubles dominated all but two teams. After wins over perennial powerhouse Andover, Deerfield, Hotchkiss, Choate, and Brunswick, the team won the Southern New England Tennis League Tournament for the third straight year, and dominated Exeter (5–0) in the quarterfinals of the New England Championships. In a highly anticipated rematch vs. Andover in the semifinals, Taft took the critical doubles point, and lost only the No. 1 singles to land in the finals vs. Kingswood. Alas, in a repeat of an earlier season loss (3–4), Kingswood bested Taft in doubles, and Taft’s singles wins at No. 6 (Peter Ch ’17), No. 5 (Dylan Powell ’18), and No. 4 (Aaron Pezzullo ’17) were not enough. For the second consecutive year, the crown barely eluded the Rhinos. There were co-captain-elect Ogden Timpoon ’17, Peter Horne ’18, and Jacques Pellet ’17 returning at the top of the ladder, the team will aim for the New England title next spring. The only senior on the team, captain and No. 3 singles player, Courtland Boyle ’16, was honored with the League Sportsmanship Award.

Girls’ Tennis 6–6

The Rhinos certainly had the talent and dedication to make a run for the league title this spring. Despite losing Fran Hough ’18 to illness before the competitions began, Taft started strong with a win over Berkshire (8–1) and had close losses to strong teams from Deerfield (3–2) and Hotchkiss (4–5). Captain and George Gould Award winner Eugenie Greeff ’17 was great at No. 1 singles all season, and Founders League award winner Bella Horstmann ’16 provided a solid No. 2. Unfortunately, the team then lost Horstmann and newcomer Regan Brewer ’19 and never quite regained the full lineup and power of this crew. Thanks to the strong play of Greeff, Founders League award winner Lanting Lu ’16, Sydney Trevenen ’17, Lily Turner ’18, Mary Toppan ’18, and Minna Holleck ’18, Taft went on to defeat Loomis, Miss Porter’s, Kent, and Hopkins to finish a challenging season at 6 wins and 6 losses.

Baseball 6–12

A group of enthusiastic seniors led the team to a 5–9 Colonial League record—Miah Vargas ’16, Cashen Keeler ’16, Evan Lehner ’16, Ryan Parcella ’16, Carter Taft ’16, and Brian Tomasco ’16. Only Vargas, the team captain, had extensive playing experience on last year’s team. Nevertheless, the team beat Hotchkiss twice (14–4, 2–0) and Deerfield (3–0) in their only matchup. Keeler hit .333 for the season, and Tomasco hit the team’s only home run (a two-run shot) at Loomis on the last day of the season and was named Taft’s valedictorian four days later at graduation. The team’s top two pitchers, Kevin Mullhann ’17 and Eric Holzman ’17, are both Division I prospects and will be trio captains next year along with infielder Nick Cutler ’17, who started at either second base or shortstop all season and will serve as the school’s co-head monitor next year. Zane Segalas ’18 and Dylan Kao ’19 were also starters for the entire season and have bright futures in the program.

AWARD WINNERS

2016 SPRING ATHLETIC AWARD WINNERS

Softball Award
Dana V. Acosta-Rua ’16
Madeline R. Laski ’16

Crew Award
Michael R. Molder ’16
Katherine M. Tewksbury ’16

Wandelt Lacrosse Award
Eliza K. Dunham ’16

Odden Lacrosse Award
Brandon M. Salvatore ’16

George D. Gould Tennis Award
Eugenie R. Greeff ’17

Abrick H. Man, Jr. Award
Courtland J. Boyle ’16

Galeski Golf Award
Manuel V. Capera ’16

Seymour Willis Beardsley Track Award
Robert A. Dettmann ’16
Stephanie J. Houghton ’16
Jewaugh C. Sinclair ’16

Stone Baseball Award
Jeremiah P. Vargas ’16

Girls’ Golf Award
Hannah K. Wilczynski ’16

Girls’ Golf Award
Hamish K. Wilczynski ’16
Taft won 12 games including wins over strong teams from Loomis Chaffee, Northfield Mount Hermon, and previously unbeaten Ethel Walker, outscoring its opponents 171–46. The team batting average of .435 was based on seven starters who hit over .400, including tri-captain Daria Acosta-Rua ‘16, who batted .444; and newcomer Sidney Molnar ‘18, who hit .422. The team looks poised to take another run at New Englands. In that second straight year. He has had a hand in winning the 100m and 200m for the boys’ track team. In rewriting the Taft record book, this spring a 4th-place finish in the Founders League meet. led by captain Makari Chung ‘16, for the first time in recent memory the girls defeated perennial track power Loomis Chaffee in a meet that went all the way down to the final 4x400m relay. The quartet of Taylor Jacobs ‘18, Mary Alice Ewing ‘18, Haley Barr ‘18, and Sojung Kim ‘17 won that race and later went on to break the school record in the event at the New England meet. Also at that championship, Jacobs (800m, 3rd), Ewing (400m, 6th), Jada Newkirk ‘17 (200m, 6th), and Tse Ben-Eka ‘17 (javelin, 6th) all scored points. Kayla Robinson ’19 was a versatile addition to the team, scoring points in the 4x100m, long jump, shot put, and high jump at the league meet. Girls’ Track 8-3 With only four seniors and a bright future, the girls’ track team competed with the best in New England, and often came out the victor, finishing the spring a 4th-place finish in the Founders League meet. Led by captain Makari Chung ’16, for the first time in recent memory the girls defeated perennial track power Loomis Chaffee in a meet that went all the way down to the final 4x400m relay. The quartet of Taylor Jacobs ’18, Mary Alice Ewing ’18, Haley Barr ’18, and Sojung Kim ’17 won that race and later went on to break the school record in the event at the New England meet. Also at that championship, Jacobs (800m, 3rd), Ewing (400m, 6th), Jada Newkirk ’17 (200m, 6th), and Tse Ben-Eka ’17 (javelin, 6th) all scored points. Kayla Robinson ’19 was a versatile addition to the team, scoring points in the 4x100m, long jump, shot put, and high jump at the league meet. Girls’ Crew 52-25 The team enjoyed one of its best seasons in several years thanks to the excellent leadership of captains Kate Tewksbury ’16 and Emily Drakeley ’17, along with the incredible work ethic of the entire squad. This was the largest Taft crew team to date, with four varsity boats and three lower boats, a total of 34 athletes. The girls swept early races against Lyme/Old Lyme, Southfield, and Pomfret, as well as big individual wins over Deerfield, Choate, and Groton. As a result, the top four boats were 22-11 in head-to-head comparisons after the first three races of the season. The first boat went on to win the petite finals at the competitive Founders Day Regatta, and the second boat, made entirely of middlers, finished 2nd in the petities. At the du Pont Cup, Taft finished 3rd out of six teams and won back the Alumnae Cup over Gummery and Berkshire the following week. The final results at the New Englands were mixed, with the fourth boat placing a phenomenal 5th overall in the Grand Finals. It was a fantastic season with tremendous growth among all athletes. With the loss of only three seniors, the team looks promising for next year. Boys’ Crew 52-26 In their dual meet races and regattas, Taft’s four varsity boats compiled an overall record of 52 wins versus 26 losses. The 1st varsity lineup of Ben Olsen ’17, Thomas Muller ’18, Jay Lavallée ’17, captain Evan Miller ’16, and Shelby Hetherington ’16 (cox) won the du Pont Cup Regatta, making it the third time in five years that Taft has won this award. This same boat also won the Smith Cup, only the second time in 22 years that Taft has done so. All four varsity boats qualified for the New England championship regatta, all four finished either 2nd or 3rd in the morning heats and competed in the afternoon finals. At the end of the day, Taft finished 6th in the team points trophy—its best showing in the 25-year history of the program. SFBull 12-3 WESTERN NEW ENGLAND SEMIFINALISTS Taft won 12 games including wins over strong teams from Loomis Chaffee, Northfield Mount Hermon, and previously unbeaten Ethel Walker, outscoring its opponents 171–46. The team batting average of .435 was based on seven starters who hit over 400, including tri-captain Daria Acosta-Rua ’16 and Anna Rasmussen ’17, who hit over .500. That offensive production combined with strong pitching from Acosta-Rua and Alli Kalvaitis ’18 led Taft to secure a spot in the New England tournament. Taft traveled to Williston-Northampton School and lost 1–0 in a classic game between great teams. Tri-captain Madie Leidt ’16 led the team in runs scored and RBIs, and Acosta-Rua led the team in hits and had a 7–0 record on the mound. Western New England All-Stars were Rasmussen, who led the team in batting average and was second in hits and runs, and Mary Collette ’17, who batted .487 and was a force behind the plate. Other noteworthy performers were Kalvaitis, who led the team in strikeouts and innings and batted .487; Jillian Pappas ’16, who batted .444, and newcomer Sidney Molnar ’18, who hit .422. The team will miss the leadership of Acosta-Rua, Leidt, Pappas, and tri-captain Cecilia Sousa ’16. With captains-elect Collette, Rasmussen, and Morgan Sperry and a number of other returners, the team looks poised to take another run at the championship next season. Boys’ Track 7-5 Taft enjoyed another great season and continued its domination of the sprint events, winning the 4x100m relay, 100m, and 200m at the Founders League championships and the New England championships. Co-captain Jaevaghn Sinclair ’16 was named Outstanding Performer of the New England meet, coming very close to setting meet records in winning the 100m and 200m for the second straight year. He has had a hand in rewriting the Taft record book, this year adding the 200m record (21.82) that dated to 1925. Sinclair and co-captain Alexander Salytchev ’17 led a talented crew of seniors and underclassmen to fourth-place finishes at the Founders League meet and New Englands. In that
The school is thrilled to announce that the 2015–16 Annual Fund raised a record $5,063,593—our first time exceeding $5 million in annual giving—including a record $2,265,510 from 43% of alumni. Imagine the impact we could have if a majority of alumni were to make gifts! The Parents’ Fund had another terrific year, too, raising $1,854,794 from 93% of current parents.

On behalf of the entire Taft community, we must express our sincere gratitude to all of our wonderful volunteers for helping to make these achievements possible: Class Agents; the Parents’ Committee; Dylan Simonds ’99, Annual Fund Chair; Su Yeone and Jim McGee ’14, ’16, Parents’ Fund Chairs; Jean and Stuart Serenbetz ’03, ’06, ’09, Chairs of the Former Parents’ Fund, and Joanie Dayton and the late Bob Dayton ’64, Chairs of the Grandparents’ Fund. Needless to say, at the heart of this remarkable success are the many generous donors from every corner of the Taft community who know what it takes to be Taft. They continue to proudly set an example for others to follow, and for that we are deeply grateful.

We are happy to conclude our third and final year as chair of the Parents’ Committee with 59% of current parents joining to raise an impressive $1,854,794 for the Taft Parents’ Fund! Thank you to all the participating parents who enabled us to continue our 24-year streak of parent participation in the Parents’ Fund of 70% or greater.

Special thanks go out to all the Parents’ Committee members. Not only do they volunteer their time on behalf of this important effort, they had another year of 100% participation.

Finally, we want to introduce you to Marietta Lee and Jeff Keeler who will chair this wonderful committee next year. Wishing you all an enjoyable fall.

The Class of ’91, led by Pete Bowden, in addition to winning the Spencer Award, broke the records for 25th Reunion giving and participation—raising $39,265 from 57% of the class. The Class of ’06, led by Su Yeone Jeon, and the Class of ’11, led by Nick Auer and Sara Guernsey, broke the school records for highest participation in the 10th and 5th Reunion years, respectively, while the Class of ’14, led by John MacMullen and Russey Oppenheim, won the competition between Taft’s youngest four classes for highest participation. In June, our newest alumni in the Class of ’16, led by Maggie Luddy and Teddy Zoullis, officially broke the school record when an outstanding 97% of alumni should be very proud of all they accomplished in five days, and they deserve our thanks for their effort and generosity.

The Gift Committee, chaired by McKim Symington and Chip Cinnamond, and their many generous peers were rewarded for their efforts by winning both the Snyder Award and the Chairman of the Board Award.
Celebrating the Alumni Weekend 2016

The third week of May brought more than 600 alumni and friends with their families back to Taft's lush and beautiful campus.

Throughout the weekend, smiling faces of alumni and children were everywhere—enthusiasm filled the air as Tafties reunited, sharing stories of their lives both then and now.

And again, excitement was in the air before the bagpipers led the march of classes in the Alumni Parade to an address given by Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78 in Centennial Quad, welcoming the newest members of the Old Guard, the Class of ’66, who celebrated their milestone 50th Reunion.

Athletic fields were buzzing with generations of alumni and their families for sports contests, and others enjoyed an organ concert in Woodward Chapel. At sunset, alumni and guests streamed into a festive tent for Dinner at the Headmaster’s.

More vignettes: Alumni Golf attracted players for friendly matches; some went to Back to Class sessions to learn from a few Taft faculty members; and the always poignant Service of Remembrance recalled those alumni who had passed away, followed by an elegant Old Guard Dinner.

These are only a few glimpses into Taft’s perennial reunion festivities that help nurture the ties that bind.
1. Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78 greets some of his former students during the alumni games.

2. Jen Petrelli ’91, at left, and Jennifer Rhudy Cowenhoven ’91, second from right, with her parents, Charlie and Janet Rhudy, before the Alumni Parade.

3. Finding photos from the past at the 1986 class dinner at the Heritage Hotel.

4. Faculty member Ginger O’Shea with several of her returning volleyball players.

5. 2001 classmates spend an evening at the Heritage’s Timber Room.

6. An evening to remember at dinner at the Headmaster’s.

7. Josh Fleischmann ’96, Patience Smith Bloom ’86, and Edward Travers ’85 enjoy their 30th Reunion dinner at the Heritage Hotel.

8. 1986 alums Charlene English Fitzgibbon, Phoebe Sylvester Kaylor, Martha Bodner Heim, and Kristy McCullough Dassatti during the alumni games.


10. Alums enjoy a morning of golf at the Watertown Golf Club.
1. A Back to Class session for alumni with English teacher Linda Saarijoki.
2. Taft’s friendly rhino meets new friends at their own level.
3. Classmates Harry Grand, Emily Israel Pluhar, and Roo Reath at the 1996 dinner at John’s Café.
4. Chad Thomas ’96 with Lauren Dupont at the Heritage Hotel reunion party.
5. Emily Getnick Cooper ’96 with husband Aaron and their children.
6. Classes of all years join in the Saturday Alumni Parade.
7. Rusty Davis chats with Tony Guernsey ’96 on Alumni Day.
8. Andy Taylor ’72, with his parents and brother, at the Old Guard Dinner, where he was awarded the Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal.
9. Faculty member John Piacenza reunites with a few former students for Dinner at the Headmaster’s.
10. Fun on the dance floor for the young classes reunion bash at the Heritage Hotel.

Alumni Weekend
2016
1. 2006 classmates Laura McLaughlin Jennings, Emily Andrysick, and Sophie Quinton pay a visit to Abe Lincoln in CPT’s lobby.

2. Bill Sargent ’56, Russ Ingersoll ’56 with wife Pat and Roger Hartley ’57 after enjoying the Old Guard Luncheon.

3. The Class of ’76 marches in the Alumni Parade during their 40th Reunion weekend.

4. Young alums have a selfie moment at the Reunion Bash Saturday night at the Heritage Hotel.

5. Steve Lopez ’66 has fun looking at the 50th Reunion photo collages from his Taft years.

6. At the Class of ’71 dinner at Diorio Restaurant, Ted Wetherill, Rich Watkins, and Lou Frank.

7. A large group of alums played in the cool Alumni Soccer game on Saturday.

8. Elegance at the Old Guard Dinner in the Laube Dining Room.

9. Tyler Miller ’91 and wife Katie, front, and Jon Chen ’91 and his wife, Lei Nelson, back, attend Dinner at the Headmaster’s.

For more photographs from the weekend, including reunion class photos, visit http://www.taftphotos.com/Alumni-Weekend-2016
In simple terms, the goal of the Ever Taft, Even Stronger campaign was to sustain excellence in the future—to invest in and support Taft’s faculty, students, campus, programs, and endowment. That goal was met—and exceeded—with a final total of $188 million raised, $13 million above the campaign’s $175 million goal.

“Thank you to everyone who participated,” said Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78, “to the thousands of donors and volunteers who have supported Taft and made this such a successful campaign. Your belief in Taft is evident and your support of the school is already having a significant impact.”
Like all Taft faculty members, Laura Monti ’89 wears many hats. From teaching, to overseeing a dorm, to serving as an advisor and mentor and leading school service trips abroad, there isn’t much that Monti hasn’t done in service of Taft and its students. She spends the bulk of her days in the biology classrooms in Wu, surrounded by beakers, petri dishes, microscopes, and models of cells—the textbook example of what a science classroom should look like.

Monti adds a little extra sparkle to the room, though, with her well-known laugh and red hair. Last year, she dressed as everyone’s favorite cartoon science teacher—Ms. Frizzle—for Halloween.

In addition to being just downright fun (she even leads a casual knitting circle for Taft students in her home from time to time), Monti is a fierce scientist, advising students on independent projects on topics such as the effects of genetic inbreeding in fruit flies and methods for making plants bioluminescent.

Besides her regular teaching, advising, and dorm duties, Monti takes the Non sibi motto to the next level. Each summer, she and her husband, Academic Dean Jeremy Clifford, administer a free, four-week enrichment program for academically talented students from the Waterbury area in conjunction with the local Police Activity League.

Monti is also in charge of Taft’s informal “lending library,” a basement library of odds and ends (everything from bed risers and shower caddies to textbooks) that any student can borrow from. And for several years, Monti and Clifford have led Taft students on a service trip to the Dominican Republic to help elementary-school students in the impoverished country learn English.

Monti, who currently holds the Parish Family Chair, is just one example of a faculty member who has given so much of herself to make Taft a better place and Taft students better people.
The first time he visited Taft, **Fernando Fernandez ’14** decided the school would be a great fit for him. “I was right,” he says now, “and I am so grateful for the opportunity to attend Taft. The school gave me both structure and freedom to grow.”

And grow he did. Fernandez—who came to Taft from the Bronx as a scholarship student—excelled in Taft’s classrooms, on the fields, and on the stage. He served as a tour guide, played football and track, cofounded the Latin dance club, sang with Collegium Musicum and Gospel Choir, and led charity efforts to support orphanages in the Dominican Republic, where he had spent summers with family as a child.

He was the first recipient of Taft’s Frederick H. Wandelt III ’66 Scholarship, which was created by Ferdie’s family and friends to honor his four decades of leadership at Taft. Since being established in 2013, the fund has already benefitted five Taft students, including Fernandez.

Fernandez is now a student in the prestigious Huntsman Program at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is majoring in marketing and minoring in Latin American and Latino Studies. Fernandez has participated in Penn men’s rugby, the International Affairs Association competing in Model UN and the Special Events Board, and 180 Degrees Consulting as an international consultant to nonprofits and NGOs. He also represents the Grupo Quisqueyano, the Dominican group on Penn’s campus, and is part of the university’s dance trouped Onda Latina. Fernandez works at the Penn Law Legal Clinic where he serves as a student clerk and translator to Spanish-speaking clients. As for possible future career choices, Fernandez is keeping his options open, but is interested in working at the United Nations or studying business law.

Fernandez is just one of the hundreds of Taft students who receive financial aid each year. This year, 38 percent of students are receiving some form of financial aid.
Bingham Auditorium has been home to some of the most important moments in the life of Mr. Taft’s School. Generations of students have met each week in the auditorium for Morning Meeting—formerly called Vespers—and for special presentations and assemblies, where they have heard new voices and been introduced to new ideas. Students have rehearsed, performed, listened to, and spoken before their peers in Bingham. And they have met there in times of loss, as they did on December 7, 1941—the day Pearl Harbor was bombed—and immediately following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. In many ways, Bingham Auditorium is a sacred space for the Taft community. Thanks to campaign donors, Bingham has been renovated in preparation for the next 125 years of Taft students. Last summer, the auditorium’s wood paneling was cleaned, treated, and refinished, giving the space a lighter, softer feel. Damaged wood sections and decorative pieces were repaired and the walls painted. Bingham’s historic light fixtures were refurbished and the blackout panels on the windows were removed, allowing natural light into the auditorium for the first time in many years. LED lighting was installed, as were remotely controlled window treatments. The balcony has a new brass railing, and a soundboard was built into the rear of the auditorium’s lower level.

Stewarding Taft’s Campus

Taft is a stunning place to live, teach, and learn with one of the most beautiful secondary school campuses in the nation. A combination of new and historic buildings, the campus has been constructed, brick by brick, by the collective generosity of generations. Many of our buildings are historic, and we have an obligation to care for them. For these reasons, the campaign raised more than $31 million in support of Taft’s facilities. Gifts from the campaign have already helped sustain, steward, and improve this historic campus in ways that encourage the best teaching in and out of the classroom. The acquisition and renovation of historic properties such as Woodward Chapel have added beauty and functionality to the campus, as have the renovations of some of Taft’s oldest spaces, including the Martin Health Center, Congdon House, CPT, HDT, and Bingham Auditorium.

Thanks to generous support from campaign donors, the school has completed or is currently undertaking significant renovations of the following important spaces where students and faculty live and learn:

- Moorhead Wing, including new dining rooms and academic spaces
- McIntosh House
- Congdon House
- Laube Auditorium
- Bingham Auditorium
- History Classrooms
- Pinto Language Lab
- HDT
- Health Center
- Baseball/Softball fields
- Tennis Courts and Donaldson Pavilion
- Library Archives
- Telling Study
- Wu Biology/Botany Classroom and equipment
- Former Alumni and Development Office (now faculty apartments)

And Taft has been able to purchase facilities that will help support and grow the school, including:

- Baldwin School
- Woodward Chapel
- 25 The Green (Alumni and Development Office)
- 39 The Green (Business Office)
- Morris House (faculty residence)
- Hillman House (faculty residence)
- Keyless door locks/security system
Students benefit from a number of growing academic programs, among them (clockwise, from far left): an expanded STEM curriculum; special programs in environmental science, including an aquaculture lab; internships with The New York Botanical Garden; and a global leadership program that melds leadership training with service learning and travel opportunities, such as to New York’s United Nations headquarters.

Growing Taft’s Programs

Taft has extraordinary and continually evolving academic and extracurricular programs, particularly in areas such as global studies, environmental stewardship, and community service. The campaign has impacted these programs, helping to raise funds and grow programs that prepare students in and out of the classroom to develop the skills that will prepare them to be thoughtful and informed citizens and leaders in the 21st century.

Among Taft’s signature programs is The Center for Global Leadership and Service and its partnership with the city of Waterbury. At the core of the Center’s mission is the conviction that in order to become global leaders and thoughtful citizens after graduation, our students require rehearsal now. Campaign donations are already helping support travel experiences that build understanding of global issues; talks by visiting artists, writers, scientists, and renowned figures from a variety of fields; and other curricular and extracurricular experiences that allow students to gain a thoroughly international perspective.

Similarly, the school’s commitment to service and service learning has never been more vibrant or robust than it is today, thanks, in part, to support from campaign donors. From local efforts that include the schoolwide Community Service Day and thriving year-round partnerships with nonprofits and public schools across the greater Waterbury area, to summer travel grants, and service trips around the world, students are learning about service and global connections through real world experience.

In addition to this commitment to global leadership and community service education, Taft has introduced new courses in environmental science and partnerships with groups like The New York Botanical Garden. Today there are schoolwide efforts to lower our carbon footprint, to construct LEED-certified buildings, and to reduce overall fuel consumption. Again, these partnerships and initiatives have been strengthened by the generosity of campaign donors.
One of the most powerful and telling results of the campaign is that it has engaged so many people—more than any of Taft’s past campaigns.

This increased engagement is evident not just in the dollars raised or in the number of donors, but also in the growth of planned giving through the school’s Legacy Society. In fall of 2010, there were 93 living members of the Horace Dutton Taft Legacy Society. Today, the Legacy Society numbers 229 living members. In all, both living and deceased, 522 intentions have been or will be realized. Requests and other planned gifts are critical in supporting the school’s endowment and ensuring the future of Taft.

The Annual Fund, which was part of this comprehensive campaign for Taft, has also exceeded its goals at every stage, allowing the school to meet the gap between the operating costs and tuition revenue. Annual Fund dollars help both reduce Taft’s dependence on tuition and limit how much we draw from the endowment. This allows us to offer our students a superior education while keeping tuition costs lower than many of our peer schools.

Taft has always been a disciplined and efficient institution, especially relative to its peer schools. The school provides an excellent education, offers significant financial aid, generously supports faculty and staff, and stewards its campus prudently—all of this with an endowment half the size of that of peer schools. The campaign’s support of endowment will help sustain Taft’s excellence and bolster our security for the future.

Thank you to all who gave and volunteered their time for this campaign. Your generosity has been transformative for Taft.
I am very aware of the honor of speaking today. Thank you. A friend wished me luck in giving my “commencement address.” Oh dear, I thought, that formal? An “address”? No, not that. Not my style. Instead, this admittedly one-sided conversation is a series of musings. My theme is our mutual graduations—mine and yours.

Of course, my last graduation speech was 45 years ago, June 1971, when I graduated from high school. I began with a quotation. Lots of great speeches start that way, my reasoning went. Mine came from a hit song of the time. Don’t all good speakers quote song lyrics, my reasoning continued? So I quoted Simon and Garfunkel, their song “Bookends.” I think Paul Simon must have written it for adolescent girls to use as a quotation at graduation:

"Time it was
And what a time it was, it was
Time of innocence
Time of confidences
Long ago it must be
I have a photograph
Preserve your memories
They’re all that’s left you.

A bit cheesy, perhaps? But it makes you think, right? Although not: memories are all that’s left us? Really? Another popular Simon and Garfunkel song in my high school years was “Kodachrome,” a song perhaps familiar to parents in the audience. It has the memorable lines we all gleefully sang along with: “When I think back on all the crap I learned in high school, it’s a wonder I can think at all.” Oh we thought we were so cool! And so anti-establishment in those days. Rather ironic I would be quoting [and singing] it now, isn’t it? And we had no idea what we had really learned anyway.

But I digress. For those of you who don’t know, Kodachrome film for cameras was a revelation once upon a time: it gave us pictures not in blacks and whites and greys, but in vivid color....

Here I am at graduation 45 years later, Faculty member Linda Saarnijoki with Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78 before giving her Commencement address. Saarnijoki and Rusty Davis both retired from Taft after many decades of serving at the school.
still talking about photographs. I have been at Taft for 40 years. Ten times—10 times—longer than any of you. I remember telling my sister, in 1976, when she observed that I would likely be here for the rest of my life, that no, of course not, no one stays at her first job more than a couple of years. Well, um, yeah. It has indeed taken me a heck of a long time to graduate. What would that be, 36 PG years? So we are both graduating today, in a way. Perhaps my longevity means I have 10 times as many photographs in the album of my memory as you do….Here are just a few of the many photos:

Cranking out copies on a mimeograph machine or sitting at a typewriter, typing my class comments on triplicate paper because Xerox copiers had not yet been invented. Reading students’ handwritten papers, or trying to. No Google docs. None of you students knows what that life was like really—these are not your memories. I share these for the sake of your parents and grandparents. Yes, I’m that old. But here are other pictures, more vibrant for you seniors:

Here’s a particularly happy Kodachrome image: Super Sunday. Every bright color of paint imaginable spread over every face and every blade of grass, blue and yellow and red swirling in a deafening mess of colors and smiles and shouts and pie crust and new friends made on this first weekend of the year, every year.

Standing by the rock up there on the hill on a brilliant November Hotchkiss Day, surveying the fields below filled with red and blue teams in glorious battle, the many roofs of the school like a small village, and an army of red charging from field to field, the distant bleat of their horns clear over the hills. Here’s one from today: standing with my colleagues on the sidewalk under Centennial arch, watching you seniors walk between us, catching the eye of an advisee or a student, wondering what life will hold for them, thinking about what they had been when they came to school here and how much older [they are] now.

My favorite: On a winter night, small flakes gently drifting down through the light from the windows of the main building, I’m walking by the pond toward the library for duty. A young student comes off the dark pond into a circle of light, skates in hand, cheeks red with cold and fierce skating, smiling a greeting to me, and then running past and up the steps into HDT, hoping not to be late for study hall.

Memories. Kodachrome, full-color photos.

And the last photograph I want to share comes from a moment earlier this spring. After a meeting one evening, as I walked out of the back of Voge toward the parking lot by the softball field, I looked around at the softly lit buildings beside and behind me, and at the fields spread out in front of me, their imperfections lost in the twilight. I felt a profound sense of belonging, of knowing, of being an essential part of a familiar, vibrant, and comfortable place. A confident sense that I had had some influence on what Taft is.

“Today we will shift from the physical Taft to the Taft that is more abstract. The physical Taft is...this very campus, in all its glory, with students going about their daily routine. Abstract Taft is the realm we enter today as soon as our name is called. We are now living success stories, legends of the Taft community that validate why this place is so great.”

— Mani Capece ’16

Head monitors Mani Capece ’16 and Caroline Elliott ’16 carry the class stone to its placement in the Centennial wall.

“Today, I want to challenge us to look beyond the fact that we are losing high school and the many memories that accompany it, and to realize that even when we graduate college, our trajectory of growing, learning, and maturing will still have only just begun.”

— Caroline Elliott ’16

Head Monitor

Faculty member Philip Koski with Johanna Valdez, who received Taft’s William and Lee Abramsonits Award for Teaching Excellence at Commencement.

Nick Burnham ’16, who received the George H. Morgan Award for his contributions to singing organizations at Taft.

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"It is the evening of the senior dance at the headmaster’s house near campus... At a high point in the football field... you gaze at the distant light of the school windows at night and you breathe in and then sigh. It is both the beginning and the end of the world, you think as you breathe in another breath and then sigh another sigh. It is dark, it is wonderful, it is spring."

—TAWANDA MULALU ’16 CLASS SPEAKER

Some of my feelings I know had to do with the beauty of this place at any time of day but especially on this spring evening, some with the success of the meeting where I had just been among good people—students and teachers—talking and deciding together, and some feeling surely had to do with this remarkable, reflective time in my life when I am about to begin over again... Here are two thoughts about beginning again, as we are all about to do, and about this pause before the next stage: the moment is full of a most invigorating curiosity and anticipation, but also full of a kind of profound grief. Here’s the grief. A couple of weeks ago, I started crying as we were talking about a man, Ryder, who suffers overpowering grief over the loss of his wife, a terrible grief borne of and equal to the passion of his love for her. It struck that deep chord of both passion and grief I feel as I think of Taft and of leaving, especially this spring. And so I got choked up and the students and teachers looked down at their books and sat very quietly... I was as surprised as they were by the suddenness and depth of my sorrow. But of course it wasn’t sorrow for [the book’s character]. It was for myself. It is the evening of the senior dance at the headmaster’s house near campus... At a high point in the football field... you gaze at the distant light of the school windows at night and you breathe in and then sigh. It is dark, it is wonderful, it is spring.

And I suspect you feel those emotions too. And get surprised by them at odd and very inconvenient times. You must love a great deal of what you have encountered in this place—maybe it’s the place itself, maybe it is your friends, maybe it’s a teacher or two, maybe it’s playing the piano or soccer or sitting around in the dorm... My love is contained in those “photos” I showed you a few minutes ago. Sadly, though, you are about to lose all of the tangibility, all of the constant presence and life of this place, all the realness of being at Taft. And so am I. Yes, I hope, we will come back to visit, some with the success of the dorm.... My love is contained in those “photos” I showed you a few minutes ago. Sadly, though, you are about to lose all of the tangibility, all of the constant presence and life of this place, all the realness of being at Taft. And so am I. Yes, I hope, we will come back to visit, some with the success of the dorm. And so I got choked up and the students and teachers looked down at their books and sat very quietly... I was as surprised as they were by the suddenness and depth of my sorrow. But of course it wasn’t sorrow for [the book’s character]. It was for myself. It is the evening of the senior dance at the headmaster’s house near campus... At a high point in the football field... you gaze at the distant light of the school windows at night and you breathe in and then sigh. It is dark, it is wonderful, it is spring.

And I suspect you feel those emotions too. And get surprised by them at odd and very inconvenient times. You must love a great deal of what you have encountered in this place—maybe it’s the place itself, maybe it is your friends, maybe it’s a teacher or two, maybe it’s playing the piano or soccer or sitting around in the dorm... My love is contained in those “photos” I showed you a few minutes ago. Sadly, though, you are about to lose all of the tangibility, all of the constant presence and life of this place, all the realness of being at Taft. And so am I. Yes, I hope, we will come back to visit, some with the success of the dorm.... My love is contained in those “photos” I showed you a few minutes ago. Sadly, though, you are about to lose all of the tangibility, all of the constant presence and life of this place, all the realness of being at Taft. And so am I. Yes, I hope, we will come back to visit, some with the success of the dorm. And so I got choked up and the students and teachers looked down at their books and sat very quietly... I was as surprised as they were by the suddenness and depth of my sorrow. But of course it wasn’t sorrow for [the book’s character]. It was for myself. And I am starting a new life as “not a teacher.” But as what? New place, new activities, new calendar. After almost 60 years on an academic calendar, September will have a whole new meaning!... new, new, new. And you will be beginning a new school life... What will we be doing? What will our new lives be like?... Aren’t you eager, almost unbearably curious to know? Excited by possibility and opportunity? And probably wondering how long it will take before the new and strange will again become the familiar and the owned. We are not really, fully beginning again, though, because we are different people than we were when we walked through these doors one September one or two or three or 40 years ago. I am not beginning completely over because I have learned so much between them and now: I am no longer that young woman. I know now that I had much to learn, and now: I am no longer that young woman. I know now that I had much to learn, but as what? New place, new activities, new calendar. After almost 60 years on an academic calendar, September will have a whole new meaning!... new, new, new. And you will be beginning a new school life... What will we be doing? What will our new lives be like?... Aren’t you eager, almost unbearably curious to know? Excited by possibility and opportunity? And probably wondering how long it will take before the new and strange will again become the familiar and the owned. We are not really, fully beginning again, though, because we are different people than we were when we walked through these doors one September one or two or three or 40 years ago. I am not beginning completely over because I have learned so much between them and now: I am no longer that young woman. I know now that I had much to learn, but as what? New place, new activities, new calendar. After almost 60 years on an academic calendar, September will have a whole new meaning!... new, new, new. And you will be beginning a new school life... What will we be doing? What will our new lives be like?... Aren’t you eager, almost unbearably curious to know? Excited by possibility and opportunity? And probably wondering how long it will take before the new and strange will again become the familiar and the owned. We are not really, fully beginning again, though, because we are different people than we were when we walked through these doors one September one or two or three or 40 years ago.

—LINDA SAARNIJOKI FACULTY
“We are just a mass of people taking, borrowing, bartering each other’s personalities until we all become an awesome, ever-shifting kaleidoscope of all the people we have met, and the personalities are never lost, only replicated and added on as we grow and change.”

— KAYLA KIM ’16
CLASS SPEAKER

“...but I know you are much quicker to learn. I grew because I had nurtured and supported someone to tell me occasionally that I had made a mistake or that I was—gasp—wrong. And I grew because I had the help of this community at Taft and because I have a wonderful friend and mentor who is also my husband. I feel confident and talented and accomplished and resourceful.

Robin ’16 and Lidia Gutu ’16, front, with Maggie McNeill ’16, daughter of faculty member Andrew McNeill, back.

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A Faculty members Corey and Jennifer Chandler with daughter

Robin ’16 and Lida Gutu ’16, front, with Maggie McNeill ’16, daughter of faculty member Andrew McNeill, back.

WILLIAM R. MACMULLEN ’78
HEADMASTER

IN A LETTER JUST
about this time of year in 1905, Horace ‘Taft wrote to his dear friend and headmaster Sherman Thacher describing the senior class. Given what he said, I am glad none of the graduates are alive today. He wrote, “Our Senior Class was a very weak, [a] milk and water set, with no influence, and I am glad to get them started on their college course.” I don’t know exactly what “milk and water set” means, but I’m pretty sure it isn’t good, and he does not sound sorry to see them go.

His comment about this “milk and water” class, of course, got me thinking of the Class of 2016, as did a question from an alumnus I spoke with last weekend, a man who had graduated decades ago, and who, after talking in bleak and sad tones about the challenges our nation and globe face, asked me a simple question: “Given the problems we see, do the students here make you a pessimist or an optimist?” We might ask if it is right for us to even ask our children to be responsible for how we see the world: it seems a reversal of some sort. And we might ask how we can argue whether it is fair to blame this generation for the problems they have inherited, but they will surely wrestle with them.

So seniors: thank you for what you have done for the school, the faculty, your parents, and me. Thank you for deepening our wells of optimism and for giving us some measure of faith.
Befitting the Place

Perhaps in the deepest recesses of your memory you recall a space beneath the library, down the hall from Laube Auditorium, a large, dimly-lit vault filled with 126 years of Taft School history. Perhaps you remember it from when faculty members Leslie Manning and later Anne Romano presided there, in that unfinished basement space, a relic from 1969.

Well, the Leslie D. Manning Archives—a trove of school-related documents, photographs, music, films, publications, and memorabilia—has had a bright new home for the past few years, thanks to the generosity of John R. Welchli ’46 and Robert D. Welchli ’49. During the summer of 2013, the vault was renovated and outfitted with new lighting, storage racks, and rolling compact shelving. The archivist, students, and faculty now enjoy a spacious, comfortable, and well-lit place for working and doing research in the Archives.

—Alison Gilchrist, The Leslie D. Manning Archives, Taft School
Ever Taft Ever STRONGER

Our campaign has met success, thanks to all of you.

GOAL: $175 MILLION

TOTAL AMOUNT RAISED: $188 MILLION

Read more about the campaign on page 42.