

Taft

BULLETIN

NEXT TO HONOR
AND DUTY, WE H

COUNTED HARD WORK

AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT

CHARACTER TRAINING.

Alumni
WEEKEND

Ever *Taft*
Even STRONGER

126th
COMMENCEMENT

SUMMER 2016

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Taft

BULLETIN

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COMMENTS? TELL US!
We'd love to hear what you think about the stories in this *Bulletin*.
We may edit your letters for length, clarity and content, but please write.
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On Main Hall

A WORD FROM HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78

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 hand 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 8,500 donors raised \$35 million to support operations each year; capital gifts from nearly 2,000 donors total nearly \$153 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

“The generosity of thousands of parents, alumni, and friends proved to be extraordinary.”



ON THE COVER

An inspiring quote from Horace Dutton Taft adorns a window in the Belcher Reading Room. PETER FREW '75

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softball; full renovations to critical spaces like Bingham Auditorium, the Tremaine Art Studio, Laube Auditorium, Pinto Language Lab, Martin Health Center, alumni and business offices, and numerous faculty homes and apartments. The campus has never looked better, and we continue to steward it with a deep sense of responsibility.

The campaign has meant our commitment to financial aid is even deeper. Already we give more financial aid, as a percentage of budget and endowment, than our peer schools—a larger slice of a smaller pie. We do so because the board and I believe this is how we create the ideal learning community and because many families need our help. And so we were fortunate to receive nearly \$30 million specifically supporting financial aid, and we have added 36 new scholarships, ranging from \$100,000 to \$5 million, so that we can bring more deserving students to Taft.

The campaign has affirmed that the faculty is our greatest resource. We have fully funded six new faculty chairs—in disciplines as varied as environmental stewardship, classics, and physics. We have added 13 new professional development grants to support faculty travel, study, and growth. We have invested heavily in faculty housing. If you believe that a world-class faculty is marked by passionate lifelong learners who are perpetually trying to grow in their craft and who live where they labor, you have to be able to support them.

It is not hyperbole to say that this campaign has bent the arc of destiny of this school. Much as Horace Taft thanked the alumni, parents, and friends of the school many years ago, I thank all of you who have supported this great school. The generosity, spirit, and loyalty of the Taft family is inspiring.

[Some of the comments above were offered at an address on Alumni Day.]

Willy MacMullen '78

“This campaign has bent the arc of destiny of this school.”

LETTERS

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 head Lightning Bolt (to the left of King Thunder, the late lamented Randy Palamar ’64, 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 rousing 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 knew, 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 ’64 as one of the King Thunder band members. Aren’t they all so handsome! Sorry we didn’t know them then...bet their music was great!

—Robin and Ted Scheu,
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.

—Vic Altshul ’52

continued on page 12—

Correction

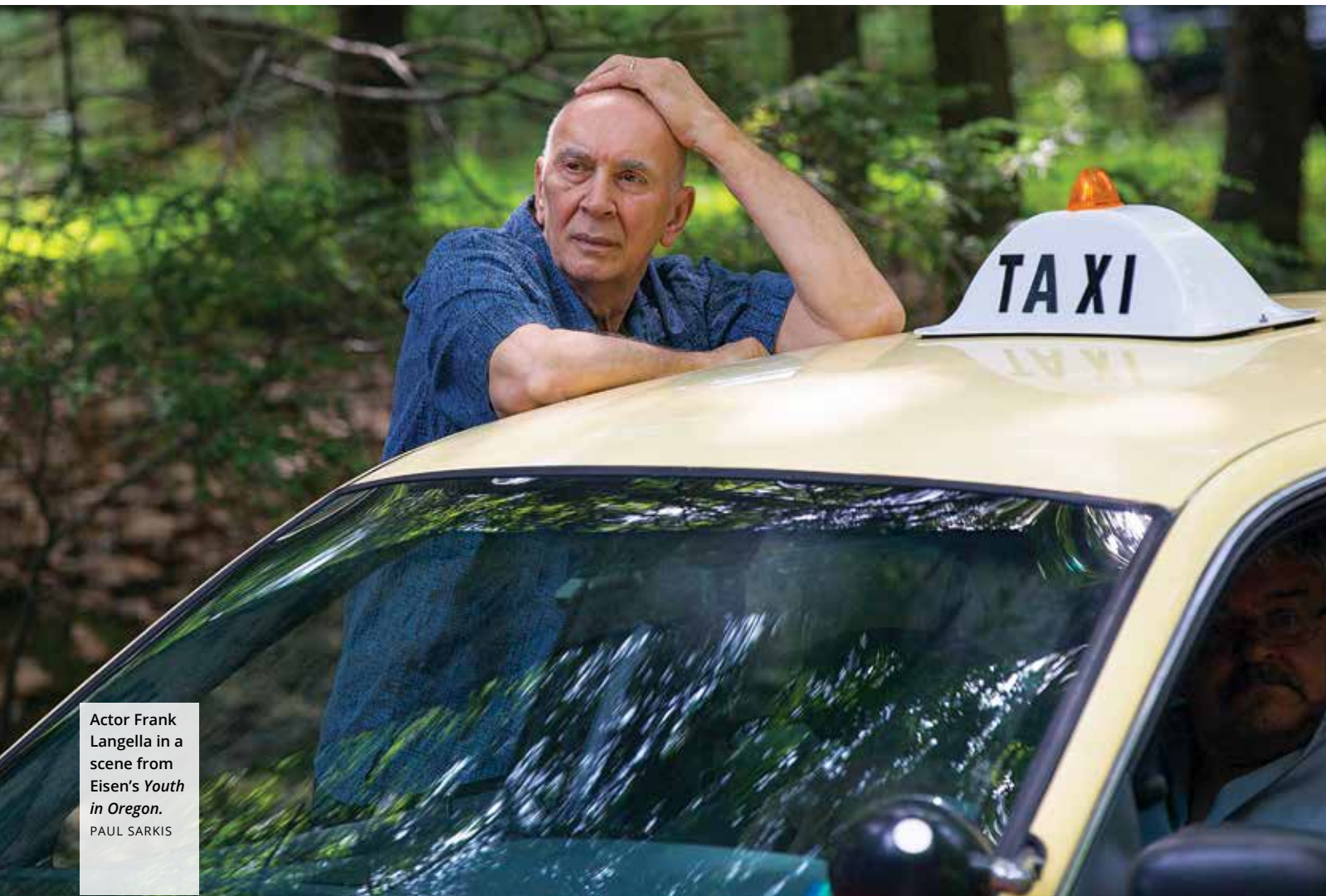
The Pond section of the spring issue included a quote that understated the full body of work by Taft’s student drama group, Masque and Dagger. Since the 1980s, Masque and Dagger productions have included shows like *The Breakfast Club*, Neil Simon’s *Jake’s Women*, and *The Servant of Two Masters*.

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.



Alumni **SPOTLIGHT**



Actor Frank Langella in a scene from Eisen's *Youth in Oregon*.
PAUL SARKIS

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."

The story became the basis of *Youth in Oregon*, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in April, and which Deadline.com describes as "a very touching family road-trip dramedy with surprising comedic moments and superb performances

depicting the raw emotions involved in dealing with such a weighty subject."

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

► After finishing the film *Youth in Oregon*, a "wrap" photo with director Joel David Moore; actor Mary Kay Place; producers Joey Carey, Morgan White, and Stefan Nowicki; actor Billy Crudup; screenwriter Andrew Eisen '04; and actor Frank Langella.



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



► Mobile vet Alison Green Hanson '80 in her rig in Telluride, Colorado.



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 different 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 ‘*All 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 moming simultaneously,” she says.

“We lived in Wilmington full time for 10 years, so I accumulated lots of wonderful 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’s 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 family. Telluride is a tiny town and the winter’s very long—there’s snow on the ground nine months out of the year, and snow is not unheard of there in June. My sun-craving heart is only too eager and grateful to get back to the ocean the minute my kids get out of school. My children are equally thrilled to get back ‘home’ to Southern culture, family, and

friends each summer, and to get some oxygen, both literally and figuratively.

“We moved to Colorado because my husband bought a place in 1990, and we decided our kids needed skiing 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 rippers.’ Liza Jane, 12, is also a big skier, big-time student, writer, and is learning 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 support 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 140 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 content. Adapt or become irrelevant.

And Lavine, 75, wouldn’t have it any other way.

You see, for half of his adult life, Lavine hasn’t just been a practitioner of journalism. He’s lived it, most notably as the dean of one the country’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 business model. It harkens back to Wisconsin, where Lavine was the publisher and editor of a group of four daily and four weekly newspapers for 25 years. Among them was the *Herald Telegram* in Chippewa Falls, the hometown of Woody Allen’s character Annie Hall. In the 1960s, 85 percent of Wisconsinites subscribed to their hometown paper. But gone are those days.

“If you wanted to know that the world survived, you read my newspaper,”

Lavine says. “Nobody has anywhere near that kind of penetration today.”

Chippewa Falls was also home to the manufacturing plant of Cray Inc., a supercomputer developer. The advent of the computer age was not lost on the young newspaperman, who at the age of 30 was tapped to be a regent of the University of Wisconsin system, 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. “What prompted audiences to engage with stories, and what prompted them to not pay attention to 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 1,440, 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 audience’s self-interest is what governs the media’s universe. They’re in charge.”



Even though newspaper readership is declining, Lavine sees opportunities for growth elsewhere, whether it be through social media or online courses. “If there was ever a time to be

in the media and content business, it’s now,” Lavine says.

Lavine, who is married with three children and resides in Marin County, California, is showing no signs of slowing down since stepping down as Medill’s dean. “As my wife, Meryl, says, if you love what you do, you never go to work.” He is the CEO of StrategicMediaGroup.com, which specializes in multimedia content, social media analytics, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The reach of Lavine’s online seminars, which he pioneered at Northwestern, would make newspapers green with envy. Nearly 41,000 professionals in 194 countries have taken advantage of the burgeoning learning platform.

“I never got a participant from Antarctica. I feel badly about it,” Lavine wryly says.

—Neil Vigdor '95

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 *Unlocking the Cage*, about the legal rights of animals, by filmmakers Chris Hegedus, far right, and DA Pennebaker.

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, then Taylor Dayne's version of "Don't Rush Me" hit the top 10 of the pop, adult contemporary, and dance charts. She also writes for television, including *Nurse Jackie* and *The Hills*, and her song "Melt Away" was featured in

Denzel Washington's film *Déjà Vu*. She's the author of *Write Songs Right Now* and leads workshops for the ASCAP Foundation and NYU's Steinhardt School.

Forbes is particularly proud of her work on behalf of animal rights. Her song "Where Will the Giants Roam" is aimed at fighting poaching, and "Meant to Be Free" addresses the rights of animals such as chimpanzees, elephants, and cetaceans.

"Writing animal rights or human rights theme songs, those are things I believe in at the core of my being. Those are a lot more scary [to write than pop songs]," she says. "I'm changing as a person. My writing is going to change over time."

Forbes started learning to play guitar while a student at Taft, after hearing another student playing in a dorm room. She had taken piano lessons as a child, but her teacher wasn't the "kind of teacher" that she needed.

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."

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. She 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

How to Brew Two Magazines



◀ Brad Ring '84, publisher of *WineMaker* and *Brew Your Own* magazines, visits a winery.



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, quaffing 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.

"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.

"In the last year, we've seen a real acceleration moving toward increased

continued on next page—

—Ring continued from previous page

digital delivery of our content. Print is still alive and well for us, but more and more readers want our information on brewing and winemaking in a variety of different digital formats, so we’re working hard to deliver our content to hobbyists in ways they want to consume it,” he says. “We’ll also continue adding more in-person events related to brewing and winemaking, since that has been

a real area of growth and success for us with beer- and wine-related conferences, workshops, trips, and competitions.” Ring says his job is more than just a way to pay the bills. “The best part of my job is helping people pursue a passion,” he says. “Our readers want to improve their craft, and we help them achieve their goal of making better beer and wine. There’s a definite

pride in making something yourself and the fun of sharing your beer and wine with friends and family. Making beer and wine blends plenty of creativity and science, where you get to use both sides of your brain. And of course you are surrounded by great beer and wine as part of your job. I’m pretty lucky.” ■

—Bonnie Blackburn Penhollow ’84

—Letters continued from page 5

Thank you so much for the informative and well-researched article about David P. Hamilton ’52 in the spring *Bulletin* written by Christopher S. Browner ’12. I’m sure many of my classmates would convey the same sentiments. —Henry Giguere ’52

Jewell Rules

When I heard through the grapevine that Mr. Ted Jewell would be retiring at the end of the current school year, I was not surprised. In fact, I had foreseen this news with 100 percent certainty, because Mr. Jewell himself had informed me of his retirement plans more than a year ago.

One could always count on Mr. Jewell to have a plan.

In that conversation, over lunch in a Mortara classroom during the Taft Summer School session (where I was teaching math and theater), Mr. Jewell half-jokingly presented his decision as being based partly on a desire to complete an “even dozen” of years of service at Taft. This was a man who liked everything nicely in its place; he saw the value of order, a carefully designed system, a routine.

Like the mathematical paradigms and programming languages he taught us, Mr. Jewell’s classes had rigid rules. Show up late to class, and you knew you would be subject to a harangue that seemed to last several minutes.

(Why is Mr. Jewell wasting all this class time berating me for wasting the class’s time?) Of course, almost no one showed up late more than once.

No classroom environment will be perfect for every student in a given class, but Mr. Jewell’s combination of clear expectations, consistent consequences, and elimination of distractions worked for me. Knowing what to expect in Mr. Jewell’s class (from the agenda of a typical lesson to the typeface on quizzes and tests), I felt at ease. I could put my lower functions (do you think he’ll keep us in class this H-block, or will I have time to get a snack?) on autopilot and save my mental energy for figuring out the math.

As a high school student, I was never afraid to make noise about rules and systems I thought were arbitrary or stupid. It took Mr. Jewell, that architect of reasonable structure, to show me by example what I am now finding myself reconfirming again and again, a few years into a teaching career of my own: that careful planning, routine, structure, and, yes, even rules can be not only powerful tools for productivity and efficiency, but sources of comfort themselves.

—Benjamin H. Zucker ’09, former advisee of Mr. Jewell

Rusty and Linda

I thought the cover story on Rusty [Davis] and Linda [Saarnijoki] was one

of the best ever. As a proud graduate of the Class of 1948, I admire so much people like them. Such dedication, service, and contribution to so many young people’s lives. I think of my father’s nearly 25 years at Taft. My congratulations to them and the writer of the article.

—Dave Fenton ’48

A Grateful Reader

In years past, I merely glanced at the *Taft Bulletin*, first at the class notes for my year and at the two class years past that, seeking information about those whom I knew or remembered. Next I looked over what the athletic teams had accomplished and with that, put the magazine aside.

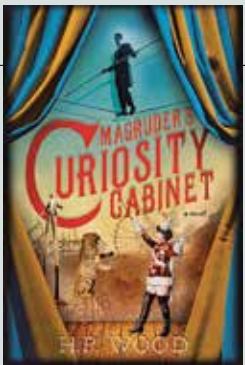
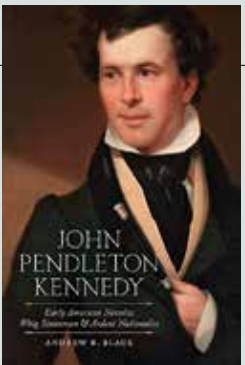
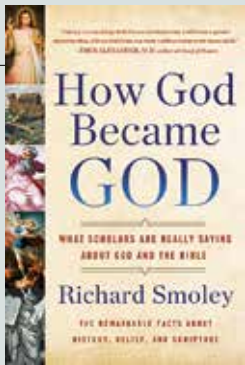
Over the years I’ve been exposed to many more alumni publications, both secondary and college level (including my own from Yale). I don’t know if there’s a prize for alumni publications, but I’m quite sure the *Taft Bulletin* would be right at the top of the honorees.

I may, as class secretary, be biased, but the *Bulletin* has morphed into an all-around high-quality publication, informative, at times provocative, but professional in all respects. I know that I’m not alone in saying that I read it from cover to cover. The editorial staff is to be complimented.

Well done, and keep it up.

—Pete Greer ’53

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 shooting at J.P. 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 journalist, Weeks finds herself plunged into the midst of a wartime conspiracy that threatens to derail the United States’ attempt to remain neutral—and to disrupt her privileged 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.

HOW GOD BECAME GOD: WHAT SCHOLARS ARE REALLY SAYING ABOUT GOD AND THE BIBLE TarcherPerigee Richard Smoley ’74

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 evidence 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 assemblage 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 our 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 ARDENT NATIONALIST 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 the Maryland legislature before being elected to 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 writing 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 unsuccessfully 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 PhD in history from Boston University.

MAGRUDER’S CURIOSITY CABINET Sourcebooks H.P. Wood (aka Hilary Poole ’88)

Set at the turn of the 20th century, Kitty Hayward and her mother are ready to experience Coney 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 people she expects to help are the characters at Magruder’s Curiosity Cabinet, a museum of oddities. From con men to strongmen, from flea wranglers to lion tamers, 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 Coney 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. ■

If you would like your work added to the Hulbert Taft Library’s Alumni Authors Collection and considered for this column, please send a copy to: Taft Bulletin | The Taft School | 110 Woodbury Road | Watertown, CT 06795-2100

▼ As one of the sponsors of the competition, the Statue of Liberty National Monument played host to both the final screening of *Fire* and the awards ceremony, where Taft's student filmmakers took home the top prize, which included \$10,000.

For more information, visit www.taftschoool.org/news

Around the POND

BY DEBRA MEYERS

student SPOTLIGHT

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 Institute's The America I Am youth film competition earlier this year.

"*Fire* is heavily based on our personal experiences," explained Lauren. "For me, it is about coming to terms with privileges I hold as a young woman, but also coming to terms with privileges I don't hold. The challenge was to express that in a way that would be palatable to those who have had a different experience."

The open dialogue on campus, SeArah said, created an environment

that allowed the authors to face that challenge with confidence.

"In the past year, the conversation has changed at Taft," explained SeArah. "We have had speakers on campus talking about issues surrounding race and gender. Our community has been learning more and seeing more. There is momentum—the walls are breaking down. I am more able to fully and confidently express everything that I am about."

It is that connection to what is happening in America today—that full expression of self in reference to society as a whole—that made "Fire," the poem, the ideal foundation for the film. Co-sponsored by the Tribeca Film Institute and the Statue of Liberty National Monument in celebration of the National Park Service's centennial, The America I Am competition invited young filmmakers to submit short films about their American experience.

Using the audio from Lauren and SeArah's spoken word performance as their soundtrack, Eliza, Katie, and Felicity shot companion footage around Taft's campus—footage designed to show fear, isolation, and the manifestations of racist and sexist attitudes.

"We all remembered how powerful that performance was—how it moved us," 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 were 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

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.



▲ Video Arts Teacher Scott Serafine, right, traveled to the Tribeca Film Festival for the premiere of *Fire*. The film was created by, from left, poets Lauren Fadiman '17 and SeArah Smith '17; filmmakers Felicity Petruzzi '16 and Eliza Price '17; actor Makari Chung '16; and filmmaker Katie Ajemian '16.

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.

"Having my name recognized and being able to personally connect is incredible. We talked to writers, and publishers want to get our work out there."

Added Katie, "We were surrounded by producers of PBS documentaries, famous directors, the executive director of Tribeca, and they wanted to talk to us—they wanted to hear about us and about our film. It was just incredible to have this way in; we were so honored." ■

To watch the awarding-winning short film *Fire*, visit Taft's Vimeo channel at vimeo.com/taftschoool

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 Physics Olympiad. Sponsored each year by the Association of Physics Teachers and the American Institute of Physics, 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 only 300 U.S. high school students advancing to the second round. Sonny was one of 35 gold medal winners topping that round.

Sonny also competed in the local Chemistry Olympiad at the University of Connecticut. Sponsored by the American Chemical Society, the competition is the first step in the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad. Led by Taft team captain Cauviya Selva '17, Sonny was joined by

senior Leon Vortmeyer and upper mid Joe Han in the competition. Each placed 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.

Completing a science trifecta, 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 teams 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
- Ton Kosolpatanadurong '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 Nayar '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 (taftschoool.org/academics/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, specifically catapults, cross-bows, 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 Cassirer '17 and Alex Kiiru '16,

Students, faculty, staff, family, and friends attended a hands-on computer game design open house featuring games built by Taft students. "The end results showed students' creativity, problem-solving skills, and knowledge about coding with Java," said teacher Theresa Albon.

with help from Leon Vortmeyer '16, Lexi Walker '16, and Jona Vithoontien '17. The honor came with a cash prize, to be applied to Taft's robotics program.

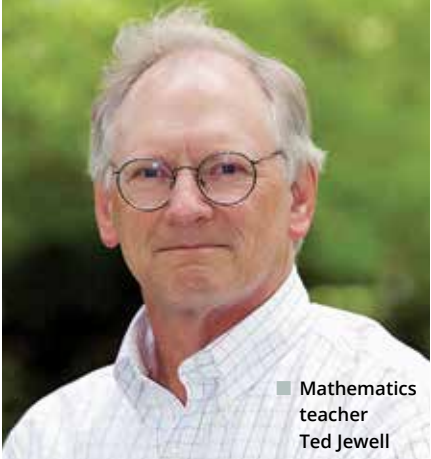
Math

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 667 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. ■





Mathematics teacher
Ted Jewell

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.

“They don’t make math teachers much better than Don,” said Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78. “His ability to challenge and stretch all kinds of students—from BC calculus to lower level algebra—is legendary.”

A brilliant classroom teacher, with a tough, no-nonsense approach, Padgett was the course head for Accelerated

“Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.”

—Seneca

Precalculus and developed most of the material used in the classroom. He has taught everything from Algebra and Accelerated Precalculus to AP Calculus AB/C, 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.” ■



Mathematics teacher
Don Padgett

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 650 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 position 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. ■

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 (3)
Georgetown University (8)
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)
Misr 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 (3)
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 Redlands
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.]



CENTER FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE
A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GREATER GOOD

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 spend the next two years building leadership knowledge and skills by attending monthly talks by global

leaders and scholars, participating in team-building and diversity leadership workshops, and completing a summer service experience. Students also traveled to the United Nations to witness global leadership in action.

"This year's UN visit was quite extraordinary," explained Jamella Lee, dean of Global and Diversity Education at Taft. "We attended a session of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Our students were on the floor of the UN with the delegates. It was a tremendous opportunity for them."

At the end of the two-year program, GLI Scholars complete a culminating project investigating a local, national, or global problem for which they have 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.

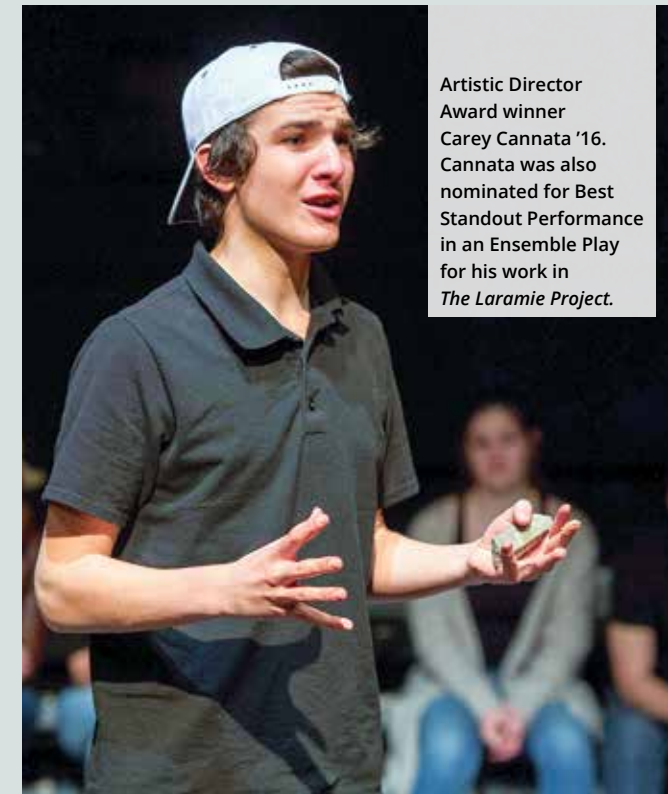
"The students saw this culmination of two years of skill development and scholarly endeavor as a graduation—as an advancement to a new level of leadership and responsibility," said Lee. "The program has inspired them to take stronger leadership and advocacy roles in their community." ■

▼ 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 (LDIW) 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 Deland Field and Steele Brook Common.



▲ GLI scholar Shasha Alvares '17 talks with Waterbury Mayor and Taft parent Neil 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 Theater Honored



Artistic Director Award winner Carey Cannata '16. Cannata was also nominated for Best Standout Performance in an Ensemble Play for his work in *The Laramie Project*.



Best Featured Actress Kaedi Dalley '18 in *Hairspray*.

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 Axelberg '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



Taft's production of *The Laramie Project* was named the winner of the 2016 Fearless Award.

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. ■



▲ Alumni Trustee
Donna Henry Cryer '88

A Life of Service

DONNA HENRY CRYER '88 ELECTED TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

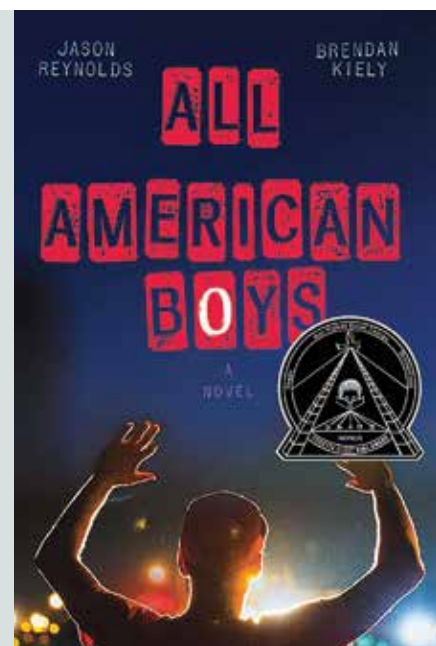
including Rock the Vote, led by the League of Women Voters. She ultimately enrolled in the then-experimental interdisciplinary legal curriculum section at the Georgetown University Law Center, where she served on one of the law journals, produced seminal work on protecting children on the internet through 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 led CryerHealth, a health care consulting firm providing strategic counsel to top biopharmaceutical companies, patient

advocacy organizations, and emerging technology firms on patient engagement in health information technology, drug discovery, and clinical decision making.

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 Coordinator 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.

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. ■



MEMBERS OF TAFT'S DANCE ENSEMBLE and spring term dance class students joined in performance and celebration at the annual Spring Dance Showcase.



Around the POND

► STUDENTS, FACULTY, staff, family, alumni, and friends gathered on campus in May for the Third Annual Taft ZBK 2K, 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.



TAFT MUSICIANS traveled to Prague, Czech Republic, during spring break, where they absorbed history and culture between performances.



TAFTIES MOUNTED THE ACCLAIMED 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee for this year's spring musical.



HORACE DUTTON TAFT Alumni Medal honoree Andy Taylor '72 brought the Maru-a-Pula School Marimba Band to Taft for a memorable Morning Meeting performance. Taylor is the principal of the Maru-a-Pula School in Botswana.



ON THE EVE OF THE conclusion of their Taft careers, seniors came together as a group for one last day of service. Students lent a hand at Brass City Harvest, Waldingfield Farm, Truelove Farms, the Children's Community School, Flanders Nature Center, the Carrington School, Camp Mataucha, and White Memorial.



◀ 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."



Team captain, four-year varsity, and No. 1 player Courtland Boyle '16, who also won the SNETL Alban Barker Sportsmanship Award.

For more on the spring season, please visit www.taftsports.com

Spring Sports **WRAP-UP**

BY STEVE PALMER / Photography by Robert Falcetti



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.

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 Sweeny '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 Jimena Villarreal '17, who finished in 9th 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 '16, newcomer Olivia Wivestad '19, captain-elect Grace Dreher '18, and Founders League All-Stars Marisa Mission '17 and captain-elect Avery Andreski '17.

Boys' Lacrosse 15-3
FOUNDERS 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. Kyle Salvatore '17 finished with 39 goals and 18 assists and was named Western New England Midfielder of the year and an All-American. Captain Matt Davies '16 scored 42 goals, Jack Collins '18 set

a middle class scoring record with 64 points, and two-time captain and defenseman 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 an 11-10 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,

Elle Carroll '16, Caley Bogolawski '16, and Megan Schoenholtz '16. A strong group of returning players, including captain-elects Eliza Denious '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 powerhouses 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 Oh '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. With co-captain-elect Ogden Timpson '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. 1 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



Former top-ranked professional tennis player Chris Evert visited Taft in April to work with the girls' tennis teams talking about skill development, stamina, and playing under pressure, while putting them through their paces with a series of drills. Evert is the aunt of Tatum Shane '18. ANNE KOWALSKI

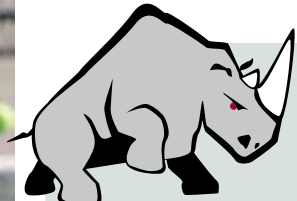
win over Berkshire (8-1) and had close losses to strong teams from Deerfield (3-6) and Hotchkiss (4-5). Captain and George Gould Award winner Eugenie Greeff '17 was great at No. 1 singles all season, and Founders League award winner Bella Horstmann '16 provided a solid No. 2. Unfortunately, the team 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, Macy 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 Parcells '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 Mulhearn '17 and Eric Holzman '17, are both Division I prospects and will be tri-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 Kim '19 were also starters for the entire season and have bright futures in the program.



**2016 SPRING ATHLETIC
AWARD WINNERS**

Softball Award
Daria V. Acosta-Rua '16
Madeline R. Leidt '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

Alrick H. Man, Jr. Award
Courtland J. Boyle '16

Galeski Golf Award
Manuel V. Capece '16

Seymour Willis Beardsley Track Award
Robert A. Dettmann '16
Stephanie J. Houghton '16
Jevaughn C. Sinclair '16

Stone Baseball Award
Jeremiah P. Vargas '16

Girls' Golf Award
Hannah K. Wilczynski '16



Kyle Salvatore '17 makes his way past a Salisbury defender in a game on May 11.



Jill Pappas '16, from Toronto, gets a hit during a game against Kent on May 11.

Softball 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 .489; 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 Jevaughn 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 '16 led a talented crew of seniors and underclassmen to fourth-place finishes at the Founders League meet and New Englands. In that

last meet, Marcus Alleyne '17 (200m, 2nd); Andrew Farrier '17 and Chris Adamsons '17 (javelin, 3rd, 4th); Michael Wasserstein '17 and Robert Dettmann '16 (800m, 5th, 6th); Ludwig Swanstrom '16 (discus, 6th); Salytchev and William Bailey '16 (4x100m, 1st); and Matteo Mangiardi '17 and Calvin Palmer '18 (4x400m, 3rd) also contributed to the scoring.

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, 4th), and Tise 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.



Jayden Thompson '19 prepares to release his throw during the shot-put event during a track and field contest in April.

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 then 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.

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 petites. At the du Pont Cup, Taft finished 3rd out of six teams and won back the Alumnae Cup over Gunnery 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 immense growth among all athletes. With the loss of only three seniors, the team looks promising for next year. ■

Annual Fund 2015–16



Class Agent Awards

Snyder Award
Largest amount contributed by a reunion class
Class of 1966: \$356,507
Gift Committee Chairs:
McKim Symington and Chip Cinnamond

Chairman of the Board Award
Highest percent participation from a class 50 years or less out
Class of 1966: 67%
Gift Committee Chairs:
McKim Symington and Chip Cinnamond

McCabe Award
Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a non-reunion class
Class of 1964: \$133,280
Head Class Agent: Carl Wies

Class of 1920 Award
Greatest increase in Annual Fund dollars from a non-reunion class
Class of 1958: Increase of \$79,628
Head Class Agent: Charlie Yonkers

Romano Award
Greatest increase in participation from a non-reunion class less than 50 years out
Class of 1994: 24% from 19%
Head Class Agents:
Andy Bernard and Chauncey Upson

Young Alumni Dollars Award
Largest Annual Fund amount contributed from a class 10 years or less out
Class of 2006: \$6,715
Head Class Agent: Su Yeone Jeon

Young Alumni Participation Award
Highest participation from a class 10 years or less out
Class of 2006: 46%
Head Class Agent: Su Yeone Jeon

Spencer Award
Largest number of gifts from classmates who have not given in the last five years
Class of 1991: 17 new donors
Head Class Agent: Pete Bowden

Awards determined by gifts and pledges raised as of June 30, 2016.

What does it take to be Taft?



▲ Annual Fund Chair
Dylan Simonds '89

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 '89, Annual Fund Chair; Sawnie and Jim McGee P'14, '16, Parents' Fund Chairs; Jean and

It takes **consistent, deep, and broad support** from our great Taft community.

Stuart Serenbetz P'03, '06, '09, Chairs of the Former Parents' Fund; and Joanie Dayton and the late Bob Dayton '60, 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.

Thank You!

The **Class of '66** celebrated a terrific 50th Reunion and contributed a record-breaking \$356,507 to the Annual Fund (as well as an additional \$134,700 in capital campaign commitments). 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**.

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 \$93,265 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 Rosey 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 Zoellner, officially broke the school record when an outstanding 97% of the class committed to making their four-year pledge to the Annual Fund!

Highlights of 2015–16

The **Classes of 1996 to 2015**, at both Taft and Hotchkiss, competed November 9–13, 2015, to achieve the highest alumni participation in the Annual Fund. Taft had beaten Hotchkiss in the previous three young alumni participation challenges, but fell short in this competition by just one donor! The final score was Hotchkiss at 18.64% and Taft at 18.62%. The loss notwithstanding, Taft's young alumni should be very proud of all they accomplished in five days, and they deserve our thanks for their effort and generosity.

We are happy to conclude our third and final year as chairs of the Parents' Committee with 93% 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 90% 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.



▲ Sawnie and
Jim McGee P'14, '16

Parents' Committee 2015–16

Sawnie and Jim McGee, *Chairs*
Beth and Roger Ailes
Hilary and David Allen
Sarah and Jeff Andreski
Michelle Andrews
Bridget Baratta
Pam and Scott Bowman
Megan and Courtland Boyle
Rhys and Amanda
Shepard Brooks '91
Joe and Mary Pat Greeff Cabrera
Constance and Michael Carroll
Laurent and Wendy
Weaver Chaix '79
Leslie and Kevin Coleman

Janet and Jonathan Conner
Mary and Michael Darling
Becky and Michael Elrad
Chinyere Emole
Hiram and Molly McCann Ewald '82
Alicia and Bill Ewing
Stefanie and Paul Feidelson '85
Icy and Scott Frantz
Sue and Bill Groner
Debbie and Paul Guiney
Shelly and Bill Himmelrich '82
Ann and Lee Hobson
Stephen '85 and Laura Black Holt '85
Liz and Keith Howie
Jeff Keeler and Marietta Lee

Youngbum Kwon and Misook Yoon
Betty and Francis Lam '77
Beaumont and Ben Lett
Winnie and Barry Ma
Cindy and Jim Meeker '69
Ronald Milardo
Gigi and Averell Mortimer
Eileen and Michael Nelson
Liza and John Nugent
Tom Olsen and Mary Boosalis
Bridget and Doyle Queally
Elizabeth and Robert Russell
Sara and Robert Savage
Mark and Jane
Isaacs Schoenholtz '83

Staley and Carter Sednaoui
Lisa and Harry Segalas
Anne and Joe Sheehan
Laurie and Scott Sommer
Ryder and Brooke
Sheppard Stahl '84
Denise and John Trevenen
Lydia and Ted Verheggen
Karen and Ray Winicki
William Woodworth '79 and
Lisa Zonino '79
Lin Xu and Stanley Xu
Jenn and Joe Yamin '85
Alison and Scott Zoellner '83



Celebrating the Ties That Bind

Photography by
**Robert Falcetti, Anne Kowalski,
and Jim Shannon**

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.



Alumni Weekend 2016





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1. A Back to Class session for alumni with English teacher Linda Saarnijoki.
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 '06 with Lauren Dugard 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.



Alumni Weekend
2016



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7. Rusty Davis chats with Tony Guernsey '66 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.



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.



Alumni Weekend
2016



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 coed 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.



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For more photographs from the weekend, including reunion class photos, visit
<http://www.taftphotos.com/Alumni-Weekend-2016>

The **IMPACT** of Giving

Edited by
Kaitlin Thomas Orfitelli

Photography by
Robert Falcetti

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."

Ever *Taft*
Even **STRONGER**

Supporting Taft's Faculty

Teachers are, and have always been, the single most important resource at Taft. Every graduate can tell a story about a Taft teacher who made a difference in his or her life. Taft teachers are tasked with opening minds and challenging students inside and outside the traditional classroom. For faculty, "going home" means sit-down dinner, dorm duty, extra help, and advisee meetings. Taft teachers are never really off duty.

Being able to offer faculty a comprehensive package of salary, benefits, professional growth, and housing is necessary to allow Taft to be competitive with peer schools and to attract and retain the best teachers. Ensuring that those teachers also have the tools and support to meet the ever-increasing expectations in delivering an unparalleled education of the whole student is critical.

Gifts from the campaign are already helping to attract, retain, and grow a diverse, talented, and passionate faculty who are committed to the education of the whole student. Relative to peer schools, Taft has greatly improved compensation of faculty over the past decade, and has made a deliberate commitment to improving faculty housing and quality of life for teachers. Gifts from the campaign have already impacted professional growth opportunities for faculty, including the addition of six new faculty chairs and 13 new professional education grants that allow faculty to further their education and hone their teaching skills.



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 ut 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 benefited 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 troupe 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.

PHOTO: SCOTT H. SPITZER



Impact on Taft Students

The school's commitment to financial aid, while always strong, has grown considerably thanks to the generosity of campaign donors.

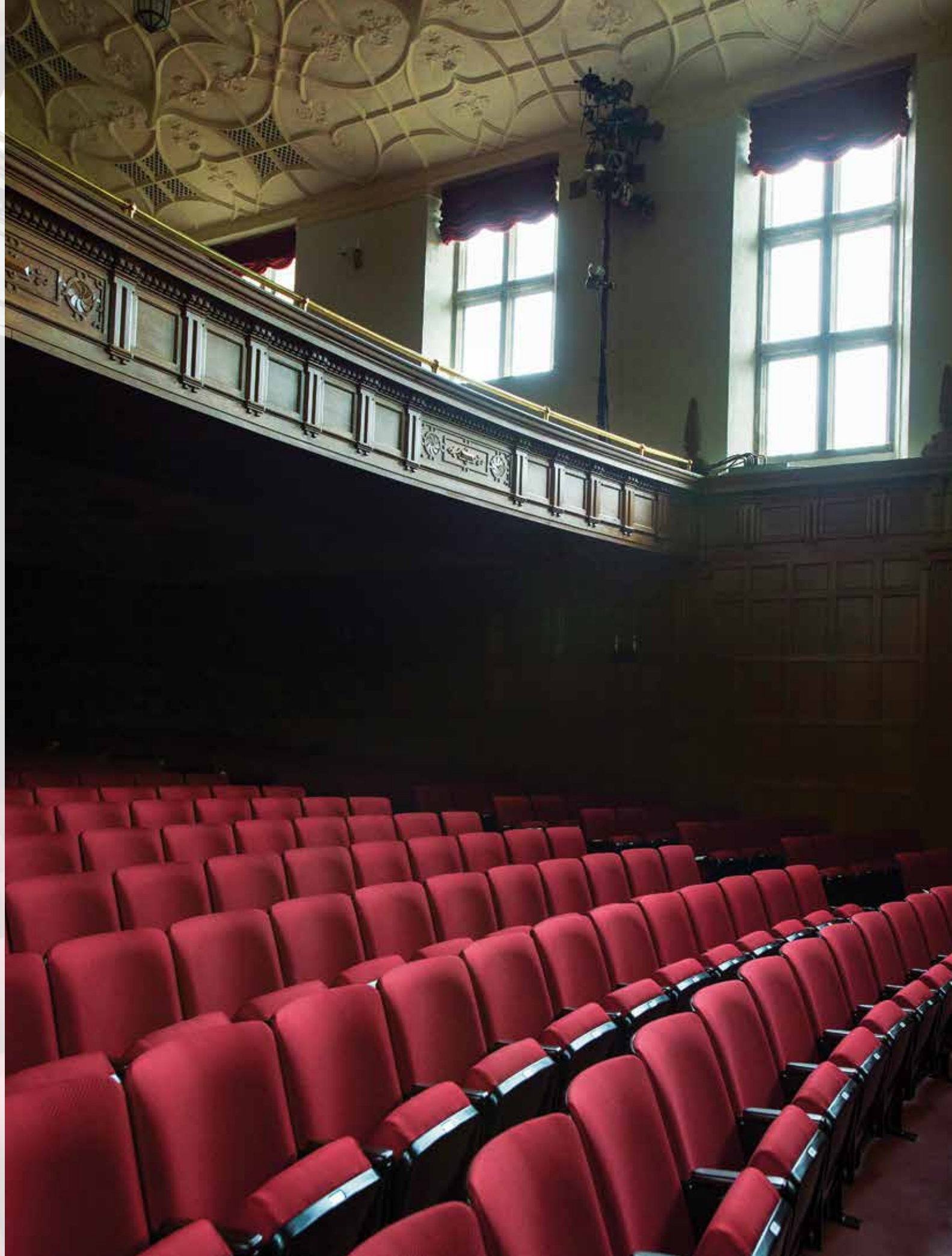
At the beginning of the campaign, the group of students applying to Taft was large and competitive. The campus was diverse, with students from 21 countries and 33 states, from a full range of socioeconomic classes, and representing a spectrum of races, ethnicities, and religions. But the school still faced a great challenge. As tuitions have risen and increasing numbers of families need financial aid, how can Taft admit the best and the brightest, have the ideal diverse student body, and compete with peer schools? Taft has historically committed more of its resources to financial aid than at peer schools with larger endowments. Put simply, the school's commitment to financial aid has meant that every year we give a larger slice of a smaller pie. Each year we must turn away highly qualified students because we do not have enough scholarship dollars.

Since the campaign's inception, Taft has added 36 endowed scholarships and has grown the diversity of the student body. This year, students hailed from 47 countries, making Taft one of the most diverse secondary schools in the world. Thanks to the campaign, the school will add in excess of \$55 million to the endowment in support of financial aid.

With this renewed commitment to financial aid, Taft can now better attract and enroll an even more diverse and talented student body, enriching the lives of all Taft students.

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

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.



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.

GOAL: \$175 MILLION

TOTAL AMOUNT RAISED: \$188 MILLION

Commitment to Taft's Legacy

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. Bequests 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.

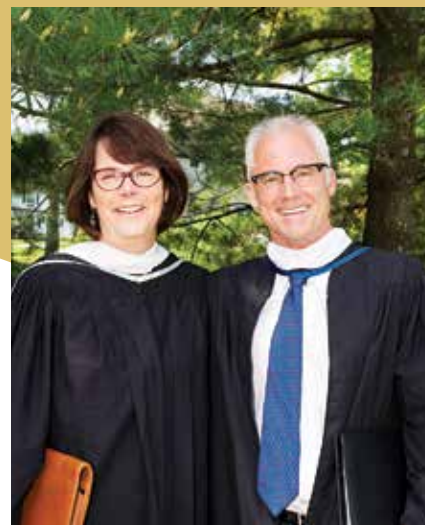
Taft has always been a disciplined and efficient institution, especially relative to its peer schools. The school provides an excellent education, offers significant financial aid, generously supports faculty and staff, and stewards its campus prudently—all of this with an endowment half the size of 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. ■



126th COMMENCEMENT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ROBERT FALCETTI



▲ 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.

Memories in Full Color

LINDA SAARNIJOKI
SPEAKER

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
A time of innocence
A 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 *wait*: 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,

"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



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

► Faculty member Phillip Koshi with Johanna Valdez, who received Taft's William and Lee Abramowitz Award for Teaching Excellence at Commencement.



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



"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 MONITOR

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.

Tawanda Mulalu '16 with classmate Kanin Nandabhiwat ▶

"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



▲ Abokor Ismael '16, from Hargeisa, Somalia, with his mother and father and brothers.



▲ A proud Kevin Perez '16 with his parents, Domingo Perez and Mirna Alvarez.



◀ Two classmates celebrate their sons' graduations: from left, Joseph Dillard '84 with son Aaron '16, and Tennant Maxey '16 with his father, Jack '84.

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, to the great discomfort of my English class, I started crying as we were talking about a story we had been reading. It's not

that unusual for me to cry over something like a book or a movie...but I try hard to control that emotion in class....That day we had been 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 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.

We are decidedly *not* talking about death here today, I know, but still a loss of a daily presence, a parting, a change, a graduation.

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 tangibleness, 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, or we will meet Taft friends wherever we can, but we will never again be here with the right and privilege to walk its halls and into its classrooms and dorms and onto its fields as if we owned the place.

Right now, you do own it, and with a stronger hold than anyone else here today. You are the oldest. The seniors. The Class of 2016. And this is your graduation day. But when you leave this afternoon, you give up that special ownership that your age and daily presence here bestows; you give it up to those who will stay behind or who will come next September or the many Septembers after that.

The statement "I'm sad to leave" cannot begin to describe the emotions you feel in your heart or that I feel after 40 years....We will always be connected to "our school," but it will never again be daily in our consciousness as it is now, at this moment.

Okay, so that was the sad part.

Now for the excitement of beginning again. But not really *again*.

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 then and now: I am no longer that young woman. I know now that I had much to

"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

▲ Kayla Kim ’16 receives the Aurelian Award, along with the John T. Reardon Prize and Sherman Cawley Award.



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 view the world: it seems a reversal of some kind, some unfair burdening, a shameless abdication. But perhaps it has always been thus, where one generation asks the next to provide its foundations of faith.

And you can guess my answer: I am profoundly, irreversibly, and fervently optimistic.

I’ll always remember [the Class of 2016] in this way: resilient after setback, eager to follow passions, caring for others, drawn to ethical dilemmas, and able to bridge divides.

When we look out on a world that is at once intensely interconnected

and frighteningly balkanized, it’s clear we need a generation like this class. As a school, we have tried very hard, and with planning and purpose, with trial and triumph, in every venue and at all hours, to help shape graduates with these qualities. This class is not perfect and they are still growing, but we need them in our universities, and I hope they will head to their many campuses and shape a discourse there that sounds like ours here. And in four years, I hope they will become global citizens and leaders and bring the civility, intelligence, and generosity they showed here, and which I see in public so rarely.

We need them. They did not create the problems they have inherited, but they will surely wrestle with them.

We can argue whether it is fair that you seniors should provide the answer to the question the alumnus asked me about whether I was optimistic or not. Certainly you did not ask to be burdened by our dreams of a better future, to be freighted with our fears, to drag the luggage of our regrets. But perhaps we have only left with you what we knew you could carry.

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 gifting us some measure of faith.



▲ Faculty members Corey and Jennifer Chandler with daughter Robin ’16 and Lidia Gutu ’16, front, with Maggie McNeill ’16, daughter of faculty member Andrew McNeill, back.



learn then—about every aspect of life, from working with adolescents to working among professional colleagues to learning to be a mother and a wife and a friend. I grew because I had nurturing and support and 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.

And you should, too.

Now it took *me* 40 years to graduate, but I know you are much quicker to learn. You got into Taft, after all. And now you are graduating. You have learned how much you don’t know, but more important, you have learned to be resourceful in

finding what you need. You have figured out how to do six hours of homework in a two-hour study hall... You have figured out how to speak your ideas with respect and to listen to others. You have figured out how to have friends and how to be a friend. You have figured out how to talk to your teachers and peers and get their help. You have learned how to be a leader either behind the scenes or in front of the crowd. More important, you have learned the value of and how to create and support a community.

And more important than all of that, of most importance, you have learned about honor and integrity and caring for others and who you are as your own best self.

We are not really beginning again, you and I. We know how this goes. We *know*

how to do this, and we can do it...whatever it is that’s next. But also know that you must take the *initiative* to make the most of whatever it is that good luck or bad luck will hand you next. Be assured that you are powerful and smart and creative and talented and honorable and that you can make and even remake your world. Please take the initiative to add, to change, to grow something that you know will make a difference. Don’t wait for someone to tell you what to do. Don’t wait for permission. Certainly don’t wait for someone else to do it. Don’t wait for someone to come up with a better idea. There are no better ideas than yours. *You* are the best person for it. *You*. So do it—for yourself and for the others who will benefit. On the windows of the Belcher Reading Room behind me are Mr. Taft’s words etched on the glass:

“The elevating aspect of work at Taft,” he said, “is to do it well and to do it for others.” My little bit of advice: take what you are given and make it better, always.

I started this speech a long time ago—about 13 minutes and 45 years ago. I have the most beautiful Kodachrome photos to take with me when I leave in a few weeks, and I know you have photos too. You will carry them through all that comes next and next and next, through all that you will do for yourself and for others. They will sit in your heart forever.

Be well. Make your own happiness. Do it well and do it for others. ■

To read the complete remarks from Commencement, see a list of award recipients, or find a link to photos visit <http://bit.ly/1TXJpsq>.

FROM THE Archives



Archives before



Archives after

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

A personal note:

In June, I left Connecticut for the coast of Maine. During my 14 years at Taft, one of my favorite tasks was the pleasure of sharing the history of the school with you. I have really enjoyed your feedback and integrating your stories in to the Archives. Many thanks for help keeping Taft's history alive!

never too young

pay it forward
by giving back

help pave the path ahead...

As a young alumnus, there are many ways, regardless of one's resources, to leave a legacy gift that can help support Taft for future generations.

To learn more about naming the school in your retirement plans, life insurance policies, or mutual funds please contact Director of Planned Giving Paul Parvis at 860-945-7751 or paulparvis@taftschoool.org.



www.taftschoool.org
planyourlegacy.org

Ever **Taft** Even **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.

