

Taft

BULLETIN

SHAPING THE FUTURE

CONVERSATIONS WITH ALUMNI PROFESSORS



SPRING 2017

In this **ISSUE**



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Act Locally

Spanish and geography teacher Baba Frew has spent 30 years showing students how to walk the walk.
By Julie Reiff

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Shaping the Future

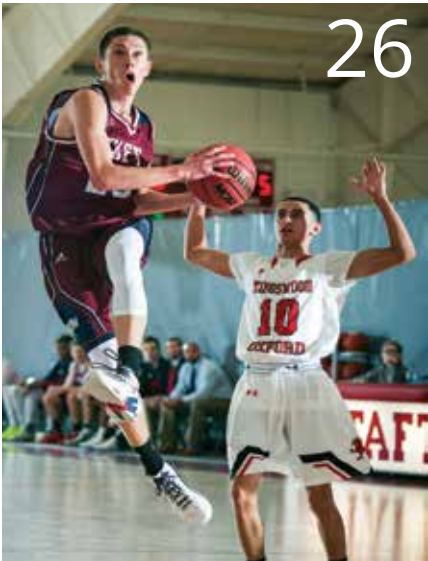
From classrooms to research labs, seven Taft alumni teach the next generation of college students.
By Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84



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▲ Students proudly represented countries and regions around the world, such as Hong Kong, at WorldFest, part of the school's 2017 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day activities. PETER FREW '75

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EDITOR
Linda Hedman Beyus

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Kaitlin Thomas Orfitelli

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Debra Meyers

PHOTOGRAPHY
Robert Falcetti

ALUMNI NOTES EDITOR
Hillary Dooley

DESIGN
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The Taft School
110 Woodbury Road, Watertown, CT 06795-2100
taftbulletin@taftschool.org

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taftrhino@taftschool.org

860-945-7777 | WWW.TAFTALUMNI.COM

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Linda Hedman Beyus, editor
Taft Bulletin
110 Woodbury Road
Watertown, CT 06795-2100
beyusl@taftschool.org

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ON THE COVER

Our feature "Shaping the Future" is a Q&A with seven alumni professors that takes a look inside the world of higher education through their lenses.

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On Main Hall

A WORD FROM HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78

TRAVEL, LEARN, GROW

When the bell rang on Wednesday, March 8, the winter term had ended and spring break had arrived. A lot of you will remember that moment: suitcases being dragged down the dorm stairs, buses idling on the Headmaster's Circle to take students to the airport, parents hugging children in the Main Hall, boys and girls cheerfully yelling to faculty, "Have a great break!" The combination of feelings—we are at once depleted and energized—happens only a few times a year. And so our 590 students scatter like leaves blown across the world.

But here's something else that happens as vacation begins: we send a number on student trips. I think they are really important, a critical part of the school's offerings, and in many cases transformational for students.

During spring break, we saw six varsity teams take trips. The crew teams rowed in Tampa, Florida; girls' golf played in Tampa; baseball competed in Cocoa Beach; girls' lacrosse was in Clearwater; and boys' lacrosse was in Boston. This is not new, in that spring teams have long had such trips. I have fun memories of driving varsity lacrosse vans, filled with boys singing badly to country music stations, for 20 hours on I-95 to Florida. These are important trips, opportunities for teams to work hard, bond with each other, and enjoy training with and against schools we don't normally play.

But there were other trips this spring as well, and they speak to the richness of opportunity at Taft as well as the way our students can represent the school, contribute to others, and gain new experiences. Faculty couple Jeremy Clifford and Laura Monti '89 led a service trip to Jinotega, Nicaragua, much as they have led similar trips to the Dominican Republic in the past. The bonding that happens on trips like this is amazing. After all, you have a Taft contingent, itself made of students from the United States and around the world, flying to another country to experience culture and language—and to serve. Monti shares, "The Outreach trip began as a way for Spanish-language students to practice speaking Spanish over spring break. It quickly evolved into a trip that allows Taft students to travel to parts of the world they may never be exposed to otherwise, to live the school motto even during a vacation, and to bond with other Tafties that they might not have much overlap with on campus."

Anyone who has traveled knows it is as much about a journey into the self, and students learn, grow, and change. For many, this becomes a transformative week. Monti says, "The participants come home with a



"Today, you can't think of the Taft experience separate from the fact that we send students out into the world, to travel, learn, and grow."

“[Student trips] can spark new interests, instill the confidence to take risks, and widen the lens through which they see the world.”

new perspective on the world. It is a highlight of my year, watching our students shine in decidedly rustic conditions as they work patiently with rambunctious grammar school students. It warms my heart as a teacher.” She and Clifford see the trip not as some appendage to our work, but an extension. Monti says, “I think this trip is integral to the school’s mission. It takes students well outside of the Taft bubble in a safe, productive way. It creates friendships between otherwise unlikely groups of students. It is based on a long-term partnership with one charity, thus serving as another bond between the school and the global community. It is about service and self-discovery.”

Arts Department head Bruce Fifer led a trip to San Francisco with the Collegium Musicum, our top level choir. He’s brought this group all over the world in recent years: to Rome, Florence, Venice, and Faicchio in Italy; Paris and Aix en Provence in France; Hong Kong, Beijing, and Shanghai in China; Madrid, Barcelona, and Seville in Spain; and San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia in this country. They learn a lot about performance, of course, and the incredibly hard work of preparing for a musical tour could be enough justification for a trip like this. But Fifer sees it as much more: “The purpose is really to expand their visions of other cultures and people, and we need this more than ever. Domestically it gives Collegium an opportunity to interact with alumni—a fun way to share an experience. In a place like Italy, where we’ve totally immersed ourselves in the Living the Arts program in Faicchio, it gives students an opportunity to learn a different culture: sing in a great space, get to know families in their home, cook meals, make art—to live culture!” Music is the medium, but the concert is not really the goal. There’s a bonding with others that is rare and beautiful. This is critical to the school program, Fifer argues. “It’s an opportunity to get our students out into the world and to break down the walls that separate us.”

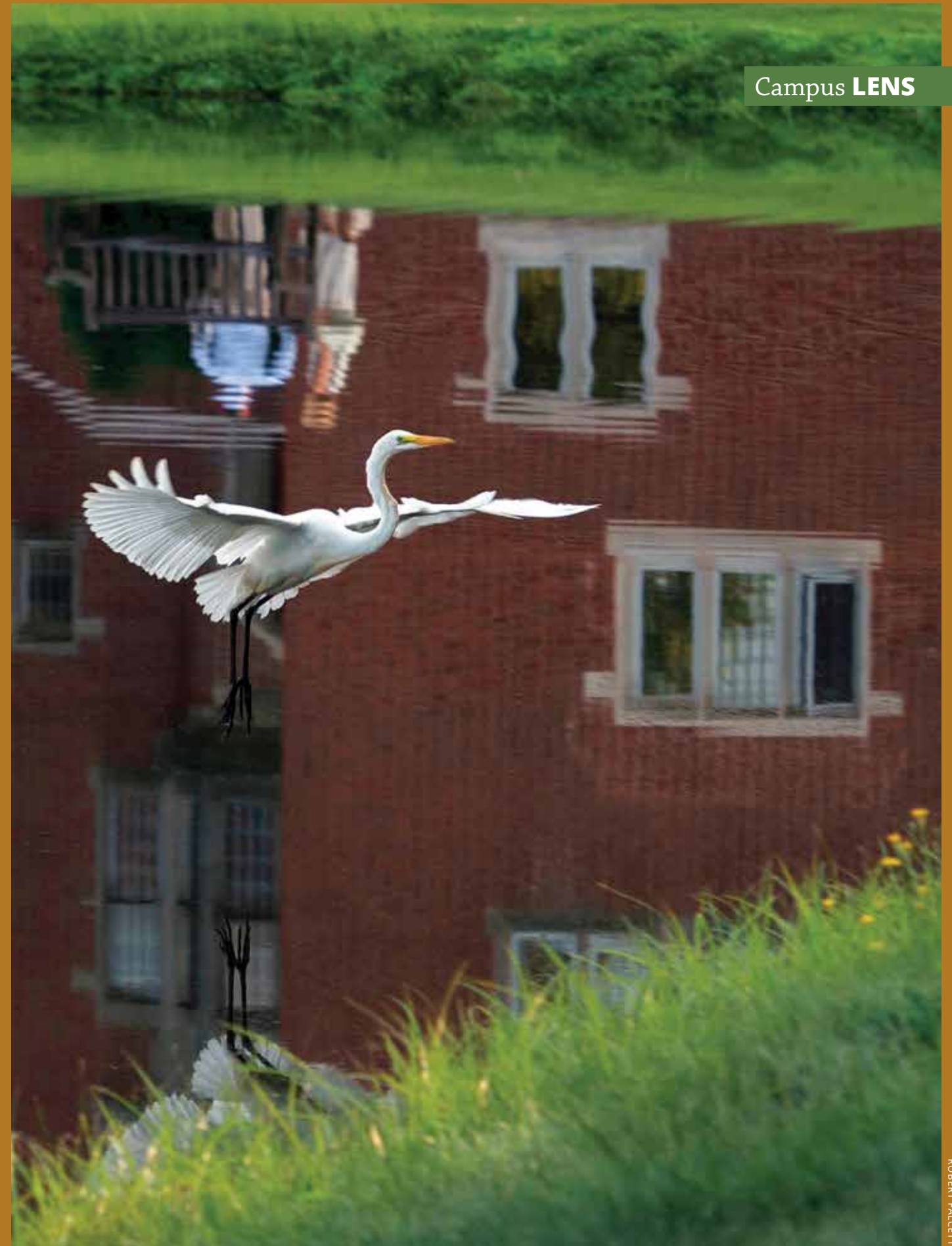
Music teacher T.J. Thompson has toured the Jazz Band and Chamber Ensemble all over the world in his years here: Barcelona, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Lisbon, Boston, San Francisco, Memphis, and New Orleans. This year they played clubs and halls in Texas. He, too, sees these trips as both musical and personal training. As musicians playing in front of strange audiences, experiencing what it is to be a “real” musician, they learn a lot. Thompson says, “They come to understand the benefit of hard work when they finally play for a room of strangers and get applause. The repetition of playing the same program really helps them understand performance in a way they don’t at school, especially the value of work, concentration, and cooperation.” But like Fifer, Thompson sees other lessons. His players, he says, “form emotional attachments with people. They face challenges of all sorts together, appreciate their common interests, and become stronger and more cooperative people. And they discover cultures they may not have known even existed.” For him, music is a thread that binds.

I don’t see these trips as extracurricular: there’s nothing really “extra” about them. Indeed, students often see them as singularly important, and they can spark new interests, instill the confidence to take risks, and widen the lens through which they see the world. Our students are lucky, of course, and more than one parent or alumnus has said, “I wish I had those opportunities when I was their age!” To be sure, Taft students are blessed. But what they gain becomes legacy, and so new students hear of these trips and want to take part themselves. The numbers increase, the commitment grows.

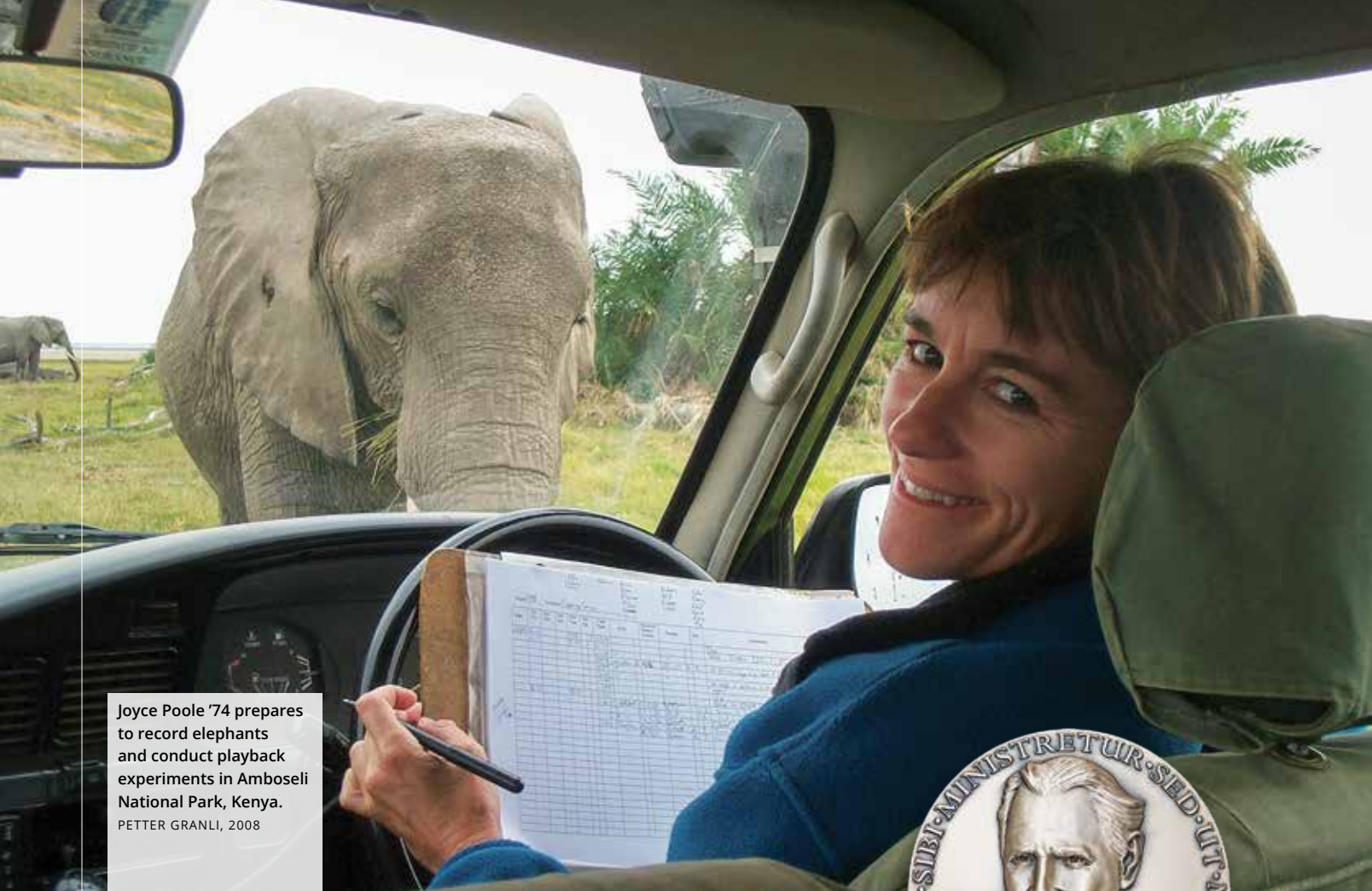
Today, you can’t think of the Taft experience separate from the fact that we send students out into the world, to travel, learn, and grow. More students will be traveling this summer on various programs. It’s not new, of course, but the commitment by the school and the breadth of offerings have deepened and broadened. And that’s a good thing, for those students bring back the lessons and experiences in ways that make us a better school—and will make them more curious, empathic, and confident adults.



Willy MacMullen '78



ROBERT FALCETTI



Joyce Poole '74 prepares to record elephants and conduct playback experiments in Amboseli National Park, Kenya. PETTER GRANLI, 2008



Alumni SPOTLIGHT

A Passionate Voice for Justice

JOYCE POOLE '74 NAMED 2017 HORACE DUTTON TAFT MEDAL HONOREE

“MY HEROES HAVE A FEW THINGS in common,” Joyce Poole '74 told *National Geographic*. “They stand up for what they believe in, without fear of what others might think or say, and they are passionate voices for justice, for the environment, and for those who cannot speak for themselves.”

By her own definition, Dr. Joyce Poole is a hero. For more than 40 years, she has been a passionate voice—a protector and defender—of elephants, dedicating her life to their conservation and welfare. Poole is one of the world’s foremost authorities on elephants. Her work has advanced a broader global

understanding of elephant social behavior and communication, and has led to the adoption of more humane elephant management practices, including the banning of performing animals in circuses in several countries, and an end to the use of elephants in Ringling Brothers shows. Poole’s critical finding that ivory poaching destroys the social fabric of elephant society was instrumental to the enactment of the international ban on the ivory trade in 1989. Her ongoing research has documented that elephants use over 200 different calls and gestures to communicate with one another and are capable of vocal imitation.

“Joyce’s passion for elephants specifically and conservation generally makes her not just one of Taft’s great treasures, but indeed the globe’s,” notes Taft Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78. “Her leadership, perseverance, and commitment put her in the tradition of the great conservation leaders we have known, and I am so proud of what she has done—and how she has embodied our school motto in a singular and inspiring way.”

Poole’s dedication to the environment, her service to the global community, and her passionate voice for justice will be celebrated in May, when she is honored with Taft’s highest alumni award, the

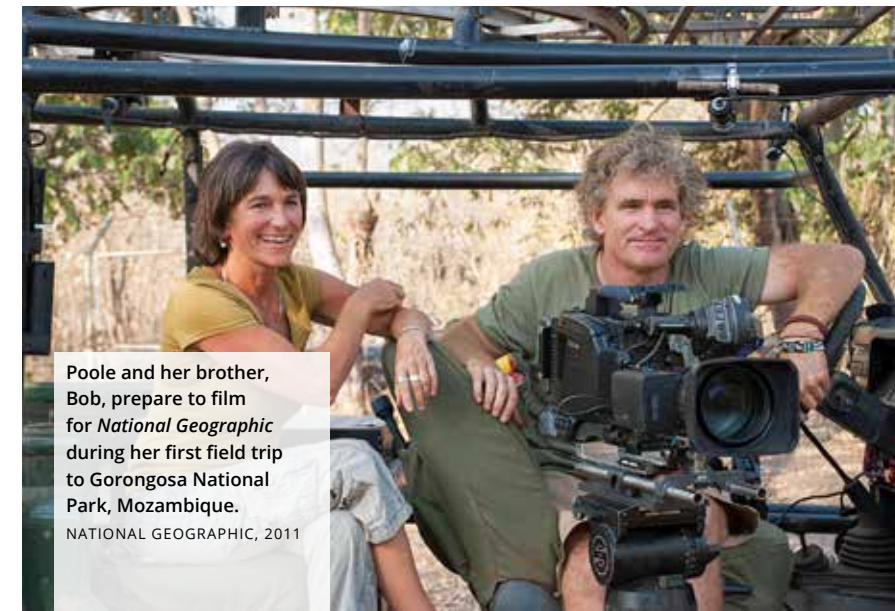
Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal.

“Joyce is an outstanding recipient of the Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal,” says Holcombe T. Green III '87, trustee and chair of the Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal Committee. “Few individuals, let alone Tafties, have had a more significant impact on the conservation movement. Joyce has lived a life dedicated to the pursuit of scientific knowledge and the protection of our natural resources—and especially of the majestic African elephant. Her work provides a perfect example of the ideal embodied in our school’s motto.”

Born in Germany, Poole spent the first six years of her life at Taft, where her father, Robert, taught history. She spent the rest of her childhood in Africa, enjoying school holidays on safari, sleeping in a tent in the national parks, and observing the behavior of animals around her. In 1966, at the age of 11, she attended a lecture by Jane Goodall at the National Museums of Kenya.

“After the lecture I told my mother that I wanted to study animal behavior when I grew up,” Poole says.

In 1975, after her first year of college, Poole’s father accepted a job as head of



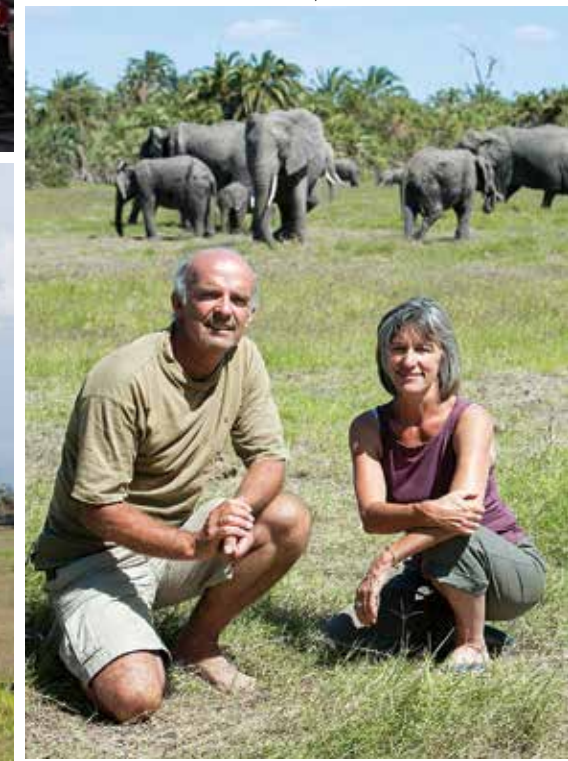
Poole and her brother, Bob, prepare to film for *National Geographic* during her first field trip to Gorongosa National Park, Mozambique. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, 2011

African operations for the African Wildlife Foundation in Nairobi, Kenya. She took a year off from college and returned to Kenya where, at the age of 19, she began her life’s work in Amboseli National Park studying under a mentor, Cynthia Moss.

“It was a dream come true,” notes Poole. “Early on I discovered that African elephants come into *musth*—a period of heightened sexual and aggressive behavior. I published my first paper on the topic at the age 25 in the journal *Nature*. It was to be the first of many discoveries about these fascinating and intelligent animals, and it whetted my appetite to learn more.”

Poole transferred to Smith College in 1976 and received her B.A. with high honors in 1979, a Ph.D. from Cambridge University in 1982, and carried out post-doctoral research at Princeton University between 1984 and 1987. She was head of the Elephant Program of Kenya Wildlife Service from 1990 to 1994, inspiring a generation of young Kenyans who today hold key elephant conservation

▼ Poole and her husband, Petter Granli, pose with the EB family at the Amboseli Elephant Research Camp, where for many years home was a tent. MARTYN COLBECK, 2008



Poole prepares to record elephants and conduct playback experiments in Amboseli National Park. PETTER GRANLI, 2008

positions in the country. She has written numerous articles, scores of scientific publications, and has authored two books, *Coming of Age with Elephants* and *Elephants*. Poole has participated in scores of TV documentaries, continuously shining a spotlight on elephants and their interests and working consistently for their better treatment and protection. She is a leading author of The Elephant Charter and has appeared as expert witness on behalf of elephants in legal cases around the world.

In 2002, Poole and her husband, Petter Granli, founded ElephantVoices “to inspire wonder in the intelligence, complexity, and voices of elephants, and to secure a kinder future for them” through research, conservation, advocacy, and the sharing of knowledge. In 2008 ElephantVoices was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. After working in Amboseli for over three decades, in 2011, Poole and Granli founded elephant conservation projects in the Maasai Mara, Kenya, and in Gorongosa, Mozambique.

“For me, saving elephants is not just about saving a species from extinction, but about protecting the lives and well-being of individuals. If I could, I would ask everyone to consider ways that we can each reduce the impact that our lifestyles are having on others. We need to work hand in hand to find ways to ensure the protection of the other species, other individuals, who also have an inherent right to a place on our planet,” she says. ■

—Debra Meyers

The Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal is given each year to a person whose lifework best typifies the school motto: Not to be ministered unto but to minister. Awardees are celebrated for their humanitarian efforts—for going beyond the call of duty in service. The award is bestowed at the Old Guard Dinner on Alumni Weekend and memorialized with a citation hung in Main Hall. The Medal is a reminder of Taft’s commitment to serve others.

Learn more about ElephantVoices at elephantvoices.org, or on their Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram channels.

A Shining Restoration

AS A BOY FISHING AND SAILING around New London’s Ledge Lighthouse, Todd Gipstein ’70 would never have believed that one day he’d have the keys to the three-story, brick and granite landmark sitting a mile off the coast. But after an exciting career shooting photographs for *National Geographic* and running his own multimedia production company, he found himself back on those same shores preparing to restore the once-radiant beacon.

President of the New London Ledge Light Foundation since 2010, Gipstein, together with his wife, Marcia, began as a community volunteer. “About four years

objected to the “ugly can of light” model adopted by most lighthouses at the time, and instead pushed for elements of nearby estates to be incorporated into the design. The result, a dignified, 11-room tower, has both Colonial Revival and French Second Empire influences.

The U.S. Coast Guard took over ownership of the Ledge Lighthouse in the late 1930s, and a three to four-man crew of keepers lived in the lighthouse full time. In between their daily rounds maintaining the lamps and foghorn, the men kept busy “sunbathing, fishing, listening to records, and playing Monopoly,” Gipstein says. “Some of the



Todd Gipstein '70 and his wife, Marcia, volunteers of the Ledge Light Foundation.

after we moved back to Connecticut,” he remembers, “Marcia and I were taking our regular lovely mile walk along the coast. We bumped into a casual friend, and he asked if we’d be interested in being on the Ledge Light Foundation.”

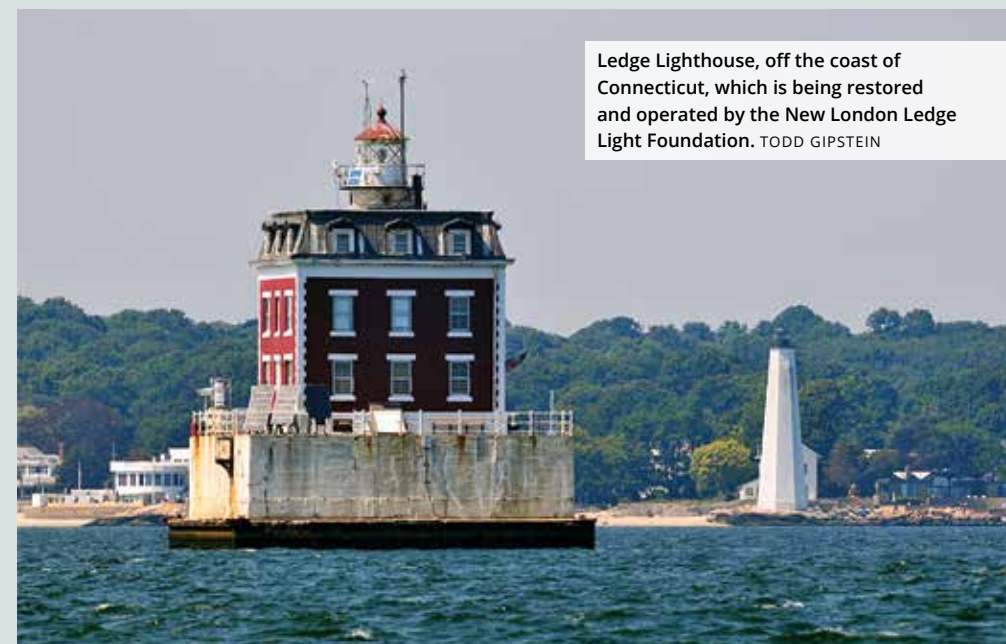
Believing that anything—such as a lighthouse—or anyone turning 100 deserves a celebration, and with their background in educational presentations, the Gipsteins organized a major gala to celebrate the occasion and raise funds to save the crumbling structure.

Completed in 1909, Ledge Lighthouse is unlike any other. Before construction began, two wealthy local homeowners

guys had musical instruments, so they had some little impromptu bands.”

In 1987, the lighthouse operations became automated and a permanent crew was no longer necessary. Without routine maintenance, the interior fell into disarray. When he and Marcia first set foot inside, “it was pretty beat up, with piles of wood and junk everywhere,” Gipstein recalls.

And the challenges didn’t end after they cleared away the clutter. Just to repair anything, from cracking plaster to a rotten window frame, “you have to get a skiff and a captain to take you out and find a day that isn’t too foggy



Ledge Lighthouse, off the coast of Connecticut, which is being restored and operated by the New London Ledge Light Foundation. TODD GIPSTEIN

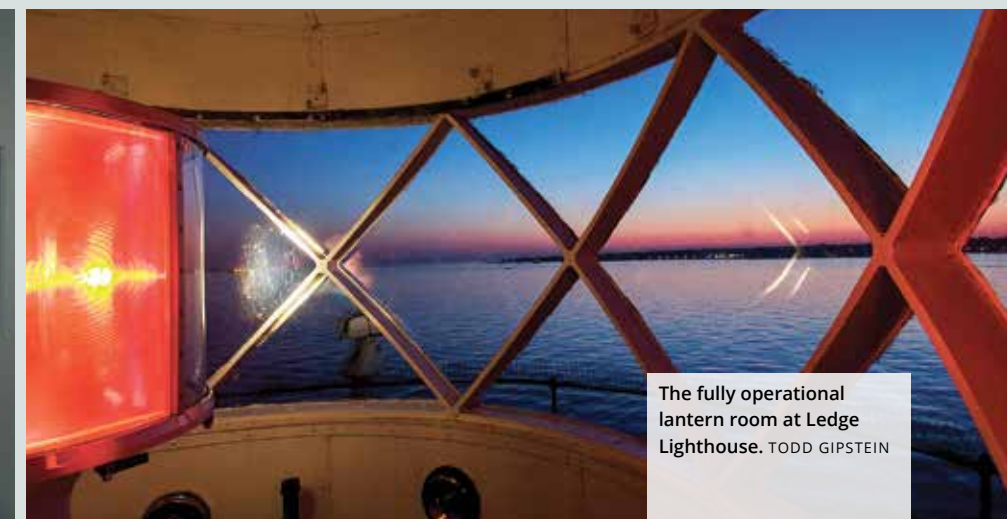


The lighthouse's new exhibit room. TODD GIPSTEIN

or too windy,” Gipstein says. “You go out and basically camp out there all day and do your work.” Not to mention that, due to the rough seas, the lighthouse is only accessible between April and October.

Looking back, says Gipstein, “It didn’t seem like we were making much progress, but one day, by God, we started putting paint on the walls, and it looked like it actually was going to happen.”

“It’s a terribly hostile environment out in the middle of the ocean,” he adds. “The baseline is improved, but we’re still behind the curve. There’s a big crack in one of the walls that goes all the way through the brick, and we



The fully operational lantern room at Ledge Lighthouse. TODD GIPSTEIN

have to address the roof again.”

Still, he and Marcia, with other volunteers, have been able to restore the lighthouse to a point where every summer, twice a week, they run tours for visitors and demonstrate how everything was once kept in ship-shape order. Inside the lighthouse they created an interpretive center with exhibits in each room, a theater for an orientation film, a gift shop, and a furnished keeper’s room with a somewhat spooky figure of the resident ghost, a former lighthouse keeper named Ernie.

Gipstein even drew inspiration from Ernie when writing his third novel, the “paranormal thriller” *In the Shadow of the Light*.

▼ Gipstein’s third novel, the paranormal thriller *In the Shadow of the Light*, was inspired by the former keeper of the lighthouse named Ernie.



Fully operational, Ledge Lighthouse still serves as a guide for vessels of all kinds—from Navy submarines and cargo tankers to commuter ferries and private sailboats—but it represents much effort and commitment from the Gipsteins. “It’s a treasured maritime landmark,” he says. “It’s part of the soul of this area. If we lose it, we lose part of what makes us unique.” But thanks to the dedication of the Gipsteins and the whole Ledge Light family, this gem off the Connecticut coast promises to shine brightly for generations to come. ■

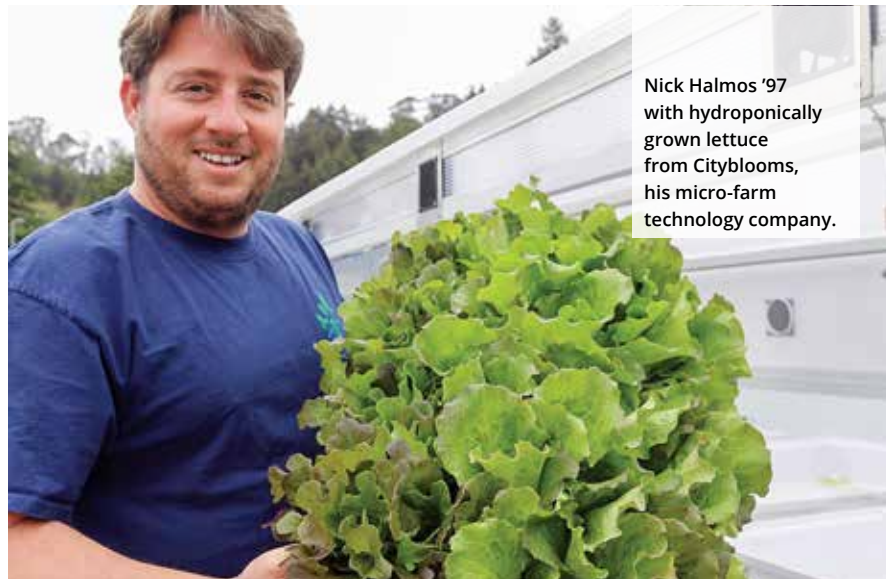
—Christopher Browner ’12

Farming on Rooftops and Parking Lots

“WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE could bring the farm to the people and measure seed-to-fork in yards rather than miles?” Nick Halmos ’97 first posed this question as an undergraduate at Brown University. He wanted to explore “improving supply chain inefficiencies in our food system by growing food in underutilized nooks and crannies of the urban environment.” So Halmos spent the remainder of his time at Brown studying plant biology, urban planning, and engineering.

He went on to spend several years operating a hydroponic farm inside a shipping container, earning a degree from Vanderbilt Law School (with a focus on corporate and environmental law), and running a legal technology start-up.

After settling in Santa Cruz, California, with his wife in 2011, Halmos once again became interested in exploring new ways to efficiently grow food in urban environments. Putting to use his previous knowledge and experiences, Halmos built almost 50 prototypes and filed four



Nick Halmos '97 with hydroponically grown lettuce from Cityblooms, his micro-farm technology company.

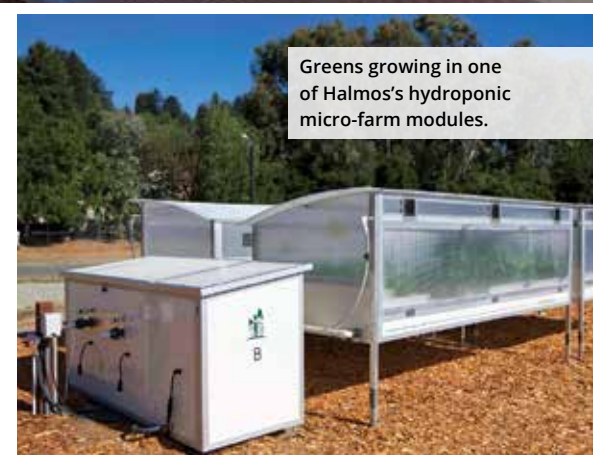
patents to establish Cityblooms, a micro-farm technology company that can grow fresh food in a range of climates and everywhere from rooftops to parking lots.

These micro-farms combine hydroponic systems (growing plants in water instead of soil) with automation and

live data to safely and sustainably grow produce in urban areas. “By coupling the ability to cheaply deploy complex sensor networks with machine learning and robotics, these systems precisely control conditions to create a stable environment for plant growth,” Halmos



An example of Cityblooms' modular technology that couples sensor networks with robotics to control conditions for plant growth in any setting.



Greens growing in one of Halmos's hydroponic micro-farm modules.

explains. “The end result is healthy, delicious, and sustainable sources of food.”

One of the first organizations interested in this food production technology was Plantronics, a technology company in the Bay Area. Plantronics offered to host an installation to provide fresh food to its campus eatery. “This gave us the incredible opportunity to put our ideas into action and push forward with our technology,” says Halmos. “That first ‘food-growing robot’ has been remarkably successful and has produced over

100 different varieties of crops in the three years since our first harvest.” Not long after this successful partnership, Cityblooms was working with large companies like Apple, as well as helping smaller community organizations.

Halmos is leading the way in the rapidly growing food-sustainability industry. “With a global population projected to reach nine billion by 2050, global agricultural output must increase by 70 percent,” he says. “As Nobel Prize winner Norman Borlaug pointed out, over the next 50 years we have to produce more food than we have in the past 10,000 years. Cityblooms will not be the single silver bullet that solves this tremendous challenge, but it will be a part of the larger solution.”

Halmos and his team are passionate about transforming the food system and connecting people with the food they eat. “Our company roots are in the art of growing healthy and delicious food, so the most rewarding part of the job is when we get to interact with the people who enjoy eating our crops,” he says. ■

—Hillary Dooley

Enter Sandman: The Science of Sleep

WE’RE ALL GUILTY OF IT: prisoners of our email, updating our Facebook status from the comfort of those Egyptian cotton sheets, and stealing that one last glance at Instagram before our head hits the pillow.

But this new age of enlightenment isn’t all that it’s cracked up to be, in the words of sleep expert Emerson Wickwire ’91, who has been studying the effects of what is known as “blue light” emitted from electronic devices on

the body’s natural circadian rhythms.

Because of its short wavelength and high intensity, blue light suppresses the release of the sleep hormone melatonin.

“We need more dusk in our lives,” Wickwire says. “Artificial light has changed the evening routine so that the day has been prolonged.”

So you should probably put down your smartphone and follow the advice of this modern-day Mr. Sandman, who resides in Baltimore with his wife, Danita, and the couple’s 3½-year-old son. Wickwire is the director of the Insomnia Program at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, where the U.S. Army sends its sleep medicine fellows from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center to study under his tutelage. Wickwire has been working with the military to enhance

non-drug treatments for sleep disorders, which active service members and veterans are particularly susceptible to, especially those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries.

“Soldiers have an awful lot of sleep problems,” Wickwire says. “Medications can negatively impact operational readiness.”

It was Ben Franklin who popularized the adage, “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.” Well, Wickwire can quantify the value of a good night’s sleep—or, rather, the cost of a restless one.

The optimum is seven to nine hours for a healthy adult. Get less than five hours of sleep, and your risk of getting into a motor vehicle accident doubles, according to Wickwire. A person who has been awake for 24 hours has the

neurocognitive impairment of a person with a .10 blood alcohol content, above the legal limit in drunk driving cases.

“You should know how much sleep your driver, pilot, or surgeon has had,” Wickwire says.

So how did a former Academic All-American wrestler for Boston College and private school wrestling coach become an innovator in the science of sleep? Wickwire was pursuing a Ph.D. in sports psychology when he had an epiphany. When looking at productivity and performance, he says, sleep was the missing variable.

“The majority of costs of untreated sleep disorders are actually borne by employers,” Wickwire says. “Employees who aren’t sleeping well are less productive.”

Wickwire completed a fellowship in behavioral sleep medicine at the

prestigious Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, where he also served as an assistant professor. From 2009 to 2014, he was sleep medicine program director for the Howard County Center for Lung and Sleep Medicine in Maryland. Wickwire is on the editorial advisory board of *Sleep Review* and is associate editor of the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*.

“I’m the most popular guy at the cocktail party,” Wickwire says. “No matter where you go people are curious about sleep.”

The snooze button—the global addiction of squeezing in a few more precious z’s—is the bane of Wickwire’s existence.

“If you need to snooze, it means you haven’t gotten enough sleep to begin with,” he says. ■

—Neil Vigdor ’95



Emerson Wickwire '91, director of the Insomnia Program at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.
STEPHEN SPARTANA

Falling for Hand-Dyed Yarns

AFTER GROWING UP IN CARIBOU and Waterville, Maine, Kendra Millis '89 spent several years “roaming around various places,” she says, even though she hoped to make it back to Maine somehow.

“When my daughter was born, I decided that was it, I was going home,” Millis says. She looked into work that she could do from home and almost immediately found book indexing “a perfect fit” (she had always wondered how book indexes were done). So eight months after her daughter was born, Millis was in Maine, hanging out her shingle as an indexer. While Millis Indexing keeps her busy, she recently launched a new hand-dyed yarn business, Maine Fiber Workshop.

How did you get interested in knitting?

“I was living in Russia for a while, and there were hand-knit socks everywhere. I loved them and bought several pairs. When they started to wear out, back

in the States, I decided to learn to knit them myself (at age 40), so I could replace them. I really love hand-knit socks!”

What made you want to dye your own yarns?

As I became a more accomplished knitter, I realized how many great sock yarns there are, so it was a short step to wanting to dye my own.

Hand-dyed yarns have so much more character and depth than many of the commercially dyed ones—there are some great ones, but they tend to be expensive. Dying my own is more affordable and allows me to tailor the colors to just what I want. Plus, it’s fun to experiment.

What made you want to set up your own yarn business?

I was originally just going to dye for myself, and maybe sell some informally. But I was enjoying it so much that, before I knew it, I was dying more yarn and fiber than I could

ever possibly use. I was also getting positive comments from fellow knitters and spinners about my colors, so selling more widely seemed like the logical next step.

Is all your yarn hand-spun by you or others?

I have a mix of hand-spun and commercially spun yarn. Most of the yarn that I dye is commercially spun; for a number of projects, its consistency is important. In other instances, I dyed the fiber and then also spun the yarn. Even though I now dye a lot, I haven’t stopped buying fiber from other dyers. There’s always some new amazing color or a different breed’s fiber that I haven’t spun yet.

Is there a lot of competition in Maine?

There are other independent dyers in Maine, but they don’t seem like competition, more like colleagues. They have been extremely encouraging and have



Kendra Millis '89 selling her hand-dyed yarns and roving (unspun wool) at a show through her business, Maine Fiber Workshop.

really helped with information about the business aspects I need to know about in order to sell at fairs and festivals.

Even though many of us use the same yarns and fibers, the end products are all different. We all have our own “dye personalities.” The more of us there are, the wider the variety of options available, and the better chance there is that knitters and spinners will find and appreciate hand-dyed products.

Is having both your yarn and fiber business and indexing business a good combination?

My main priority has to be indexing, so the yarn and fiber business takes up less than half my time. But since my dedicated dye kitchen is in my home, as is my indexing business, I can do some every day. If I need a break from my desk, I can go to my workroom and get some yarn ready to dye that evening or pick

out some new colors to try or organize inventory. So far, it’s been really great. Having the yarn business has allowed me to try new fibers and techniques faster than I would have if this was just a hobby and I was only producing yarn and fiber for my own use. It’s also been fun to go to the various events and talk to the knitters and spinners that come by.

Do you still have enough time to knit?

Is there ever enough time to knit? I do still knit, and at any given moment I have several projects going. I’ve expanded way past socks, and have started knitting sweaters and intricate lace shawls. But I also dye, spin, weave, read, quilt, cook, play ice hockey, ride horses, and take care of a 9-year-old daughter.

Fitting all that in around running a full-time indexing business is a constant challenge, and I never have time for it all. I do the best I can and don’t worry too much if it takes me a year to complete a pair of socks. ■

Top of His Game(s)

OWEN MAHONEY '85's first job was selling video games at a computer store in San Francisco in the early 1980s, a role he was given as a 14-year-old because none of the adult salespeople wanted to do it. Now he leads one of the biggest and most successful gaming companies in the world.

“When I was at Taft,” Mahoney says, “most of my classmates knew that I was into computers and things like that, but in those days it was considered very nerdy, so I mostly tried to hide the nerdy aspect of my personality.”

While he may have hidden it, Mahoney continued playing video games throughout his time at Taft and during his years at the University of California, Berkeley. And today, what began as a hobby has turned into a lucrative career leading Nexon, an online gaming company



▲ Owen Mahoney '85, CEO of Japanese gaming company Nexon.

with 5,500 employees worldwide.

Mahoney is the only Western public company CEO in Japan, where Nexon is now based. The company pioneered the concept of free-to-play games, which are free to download. The game’s producer

makes money when players buy items within the game—an animal, say, to get from point A to point B, or clothing for an avatar—each of which costs about a dollar.

While about 80 percent of Nexon’s customers don’t pay anything, the free-to-play game type can be “a very powerful monetization model” since the company has 200 games worldwide and tens of millions of players. “It adds

up pretty nicely,” Mahoney says.

So how did he go from being a nerdy kid at Taft to the CEO of a major international gaming company?

While he was working at a start-up following graduate school in Japan, the then-COO of video game behemoth Electronic Arts (EA) was on the board of directors. “During board meetings,” Mahoney says, “we got along, but we debated regularly. Out of that process I had a pretty high regard for him, and he appeared to have a high regard for me.”

After the start-up was sold, Mahoney was invited to work for Electronic Arts, where he stayed for nine years running corporate development as “the person responsible for buying companies on behalf of EA.”

“I tried to buy the company that I’m currently at three times,” he says. “They

kept turning me down and kept inviting me over to go work for them. So, long story short, I ended up joining Nexon as CFO in 2010 and became CEO in 2014.”

The CEO position is one he calls “either the best job in the world or the worst job in the world. It’s the best when things are going well. It’s a terrible job when things don’t go well.”

Fortunately, things have been going very well for Nexon. The company earns \$1.8 billion a year in revenue, and while it has a very large footprint in Asia, it’s not as well-known in the United States. Part of that disparity is because of social stigma. While Koreans seriously play from age 16 to at least 60—with at least half of the population of hardcore gamers being women—video games in the U.S. are “something people don’t admit to playing after a certain

age of respectability,” Mahoney says.

It’s something Mahoney is working on changing, starting with trying to increase Nexon’s Western business accounts, which now account for less than \$100 million of its annual revenue.

“What’s both challenging and really fun is the cross-cultural aspect of this job,” he says. “We’re based in Japan, we were founded in Korea, our largest market is China, and I’m a Caucasian, and we’re building a Western business.

“It’s hard enough to get different groups together working on a task when you’re in the same building. It’s an order of magnitude harder to do when you’re working across multiple time zones, languages, and business cultures, but I find that a lot of fun,” Mahoney says.

—Sam Dangremond '05

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

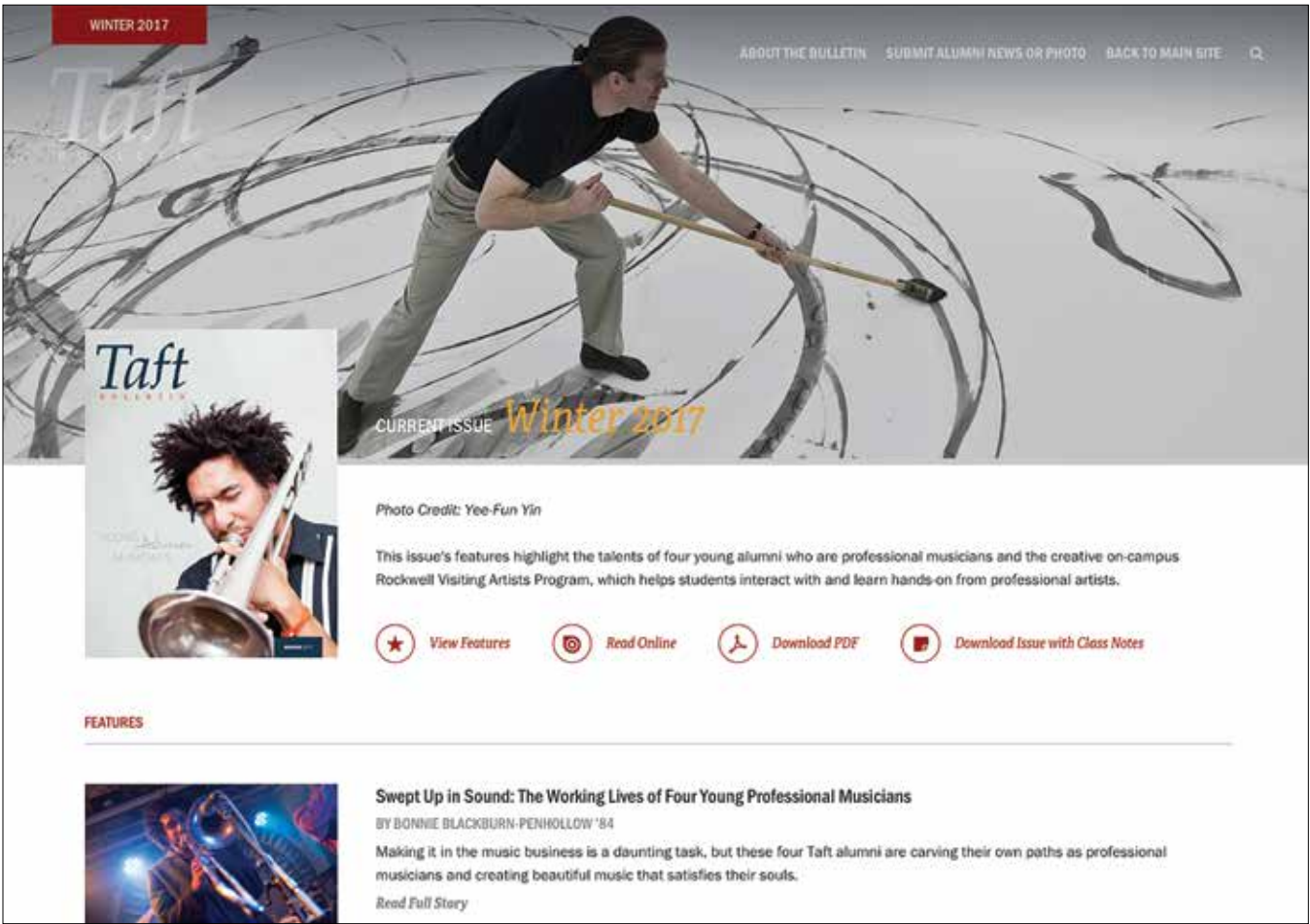
Around the POND

BY DEBRA MEYERS

“...a ground-up rebuild, from technology to design.”

A Fresh Look at Taft Online

Taft is a community in motion—vibrant, growing, and constantly moving forward—a trait that is effectively captured and celebrated on our new website. Launched in February and described by Director of Marketing and Communications Kaitlin Orfitelli as “a ground-up rebuild, from technology to design,” the new website features expanded content set on a dynamic foundation that feels fresh and is built for growth, showcases Taft through a multitude of progressive media platforms, and shines a spotlight on all that makes Taft, Taft.



HIGHLIGHTS OF TAFT’S NEW WEBSITE:

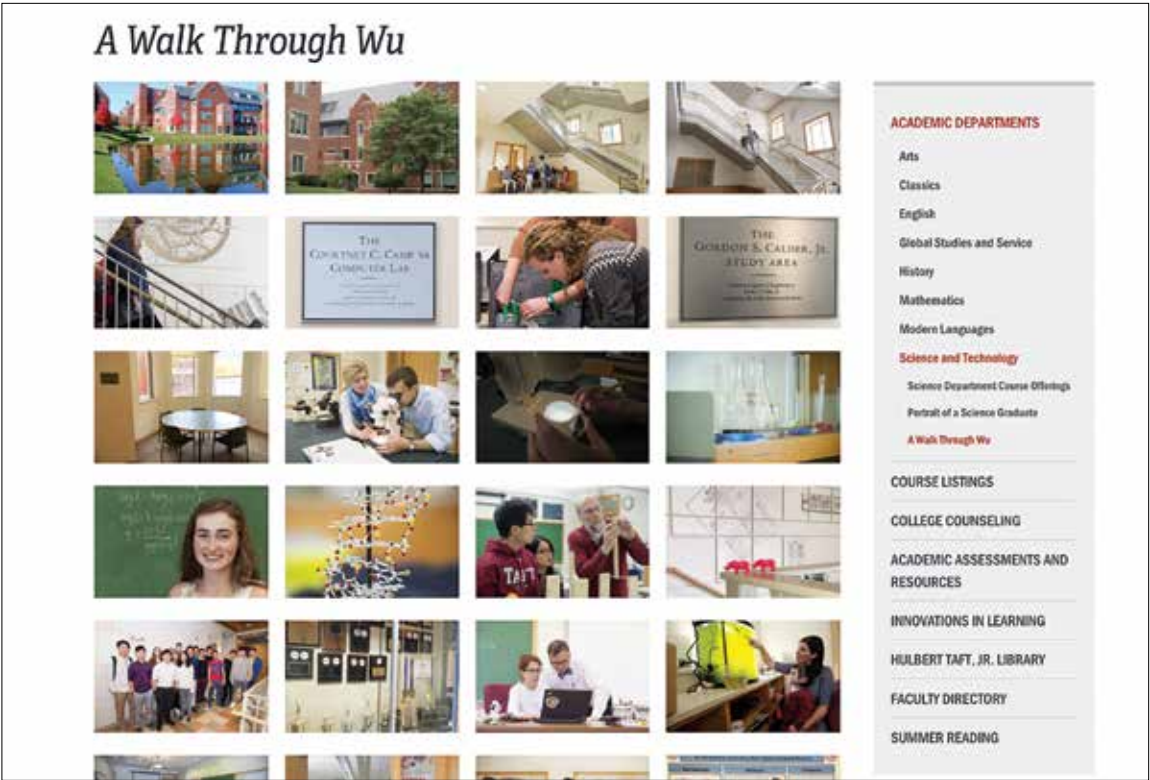
A Focus on Who We Are

What makes Taft, Taft?
Our people.
Our programs.
Our commitment to service.



▲ OUR PEOPLE

The new website is filled with personal stories by and about students, faculty, and alumni. You can read about drummer Ciara Connolly '18 on the Instrumental Music page, about alumnus Andy Taylor '72 on the Community Service page, or about teacher and coach Ozzie Parente on the Athletics landing page. We've gathered all of our “Taft Voices” in the About section of the website, in an ever-changing, rapidly growing catalog of Taft stories.



▲ OUR PROGRAMS

First and foremost Taft is a place to learn: we are a school focused on exceptional academics delivered by an extraordinary faculty. The website has dedicated sections for each academic department on campus, a meaningful addition to our online profile. This new feature affords visitors a closer look inside our curriculum and classrooms, while features like “A Walk Through Wu” in the Science and Technology Section highlight the breadth and depth of our academic facilities.

Two of our largest programs, Arts and Athletics, have new “microsites,” essentially mini-websites with their own look, feel, and navigation. This treatment allows us to more effectively showcase the robust content these programs consistently generate. ▼

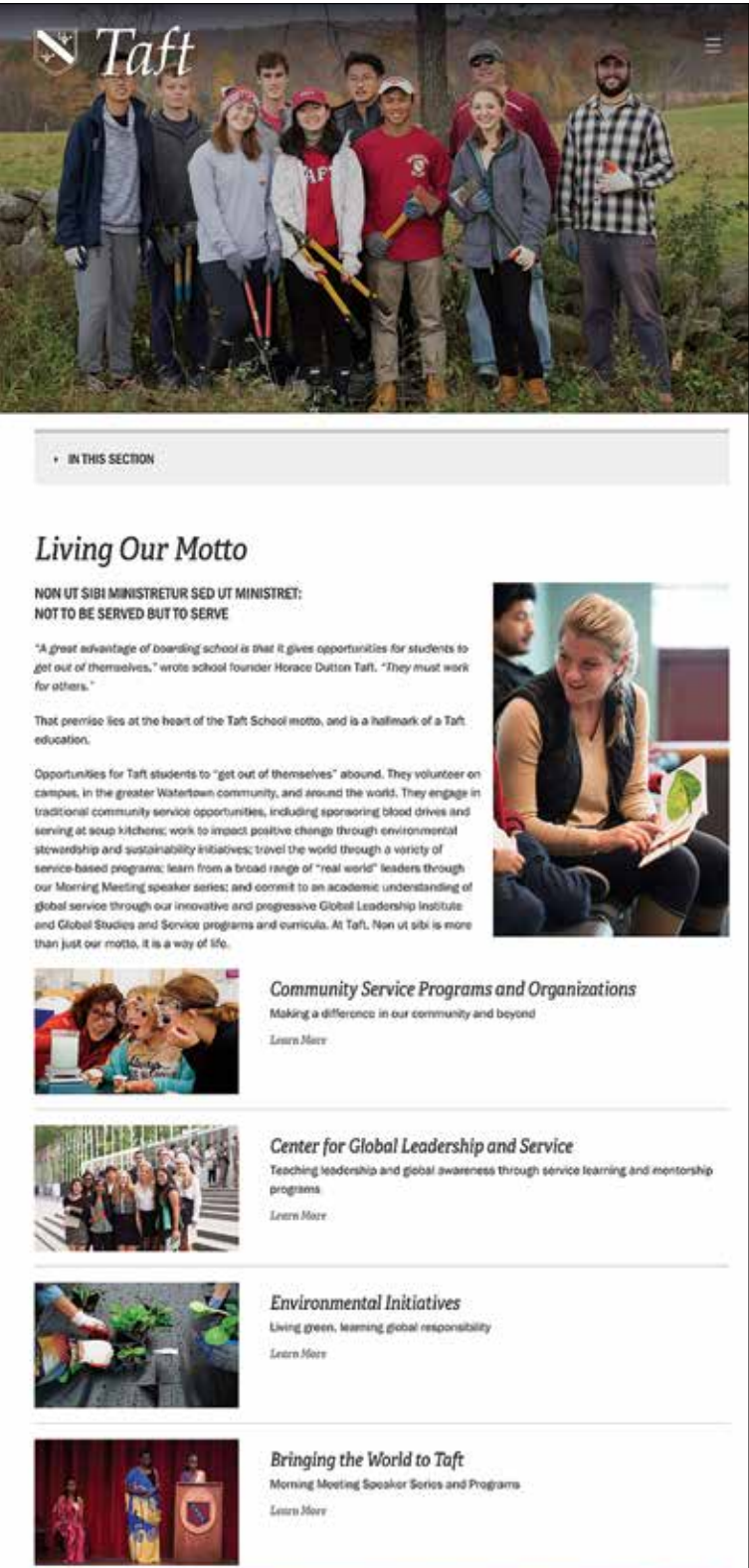


OUR COMMITMENT TO SERVICE ►

Our motto is the foundation on which so much of daily life at Taft rests, and the moral compass that guides our actions as a community. It is important, then, to shine a bright light on our commitment to service—to living our motto—in a meaningful way on the new website. Visitors can learn about our service courses and programs, ongoing environmental initiatives, service travel, mentorship programs, and more through the Living Our Motto section of the site.

Responsive Web Design ►

A few years ago, Taft's talented web developer addressed the advent and proliferation of smartphones by adapting our website for mobile access. Our new website goes one step further with Responsive Web Design, which automatically reconfigures desktop webpages in response to the size of the user's screen, device, or web browser to maximize the viewing experience.



Video Integration

From “hero” videos anchoring landing pages—including our Home and Campus Life sections—to heartfelt testimonial clips and arts performances in our Taft Voices section, our community comes to life throughout the pages of our new website. ■

Remembering Our Past, Shaping Our Future

THE TAFT COMMUNITY PAUSED in February to reflect on the work and passion of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., while recognizing the social and cultural progress achieved through the civil rights movement. The multiday event began with an annual Taft tradition, WorldFest. WorldFest is an opportunity for members of the Taft community—who hail from more than 40 countries—to share the customs, culture, food, and traditions of their homeland. Students don native dress, prepare regional

foods, and celebrate their heritage in song and dance during the festival. On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Taft welcomed many of our service and program partners from the greater Waterbury community to a Unity Breakfast in Laube Dining Hall. The breakfast featured a performance by Taft’s Gospel Choir, with a keynote address by Waterbury, Connecticut, Police Chief Vernon L. Riddick, Jr., who was named the city’s first African-American police chief in 2013. Artist and activist Ayanna Gregory

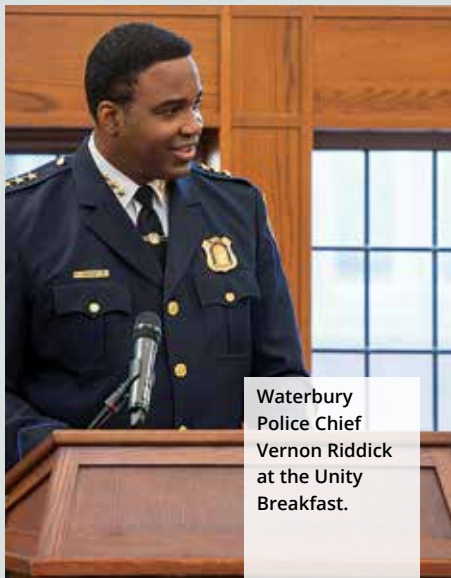
brought her one-woman show, *Daughter of the Struggle*, to the Bingham stage. The show reflects Gregory’s life as the daughter of renowned civil rights activist Dick Gregory, and of Lillian Gregory, who raised 10 children largely alone while her husband traveled, and whose lesser-known but equally heroic work as an activist changed many lives. The day concluded with a powerful Taft tradition, the Multicultural Arts Celebration, which featured song, dance, and spoken-word performances by students and faculty.



Multicultural Arts Celebration



Ayanna Gregory



Waterbury Police Chief Vernon Riddick at the Unity Breakfast.



WorldFest



▲ Taft’s Red Rhino Fund student board members with grant recipients representing three local nonprofit organizations.

Serving Those Who Serve

TAFT’S RED RHINO FUND awarded three nonprofit organizations grants totaling \$5,250 in February, the culmination of a months-long process designed to support groups working to impact the lives of children in the Greater Waterbury community. Bravo Waterbury!, the Children’s Community School, and Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury each received funding from the Red Rhino Fund. “All of the applicants do important work in our community,” explains Red Rhino Fund President Caroline Moore ’17. “It is wonderful to honor their work.” Founded in 2007, the Red Rhino Fund is an endowed, charitable fund run by a

nine-member student board with faculty and staff advisors. At its core, the fund’s mission is an extension of the school motto, Not to be served but to serve. The board works to create positive change in the Greater Waterbury community for children, especially those who are underprivileged, by awarding monetary grants and promoting local organizations in support of education, literacy, and the arts. Along the way, they gain solid perspectives on both the mechanics and importance of philanthropic work. In September, the board set a budget for the academic year, which included grants and marketing costs on one side and income generated through events

like Denim Day, a badminton tournament, and Spring Fling on the other. “Our objective is to fund grant applications in the full amount requested,” says Caroline, “and to do so through our fundraising initiatives and a draw from the endowment using a 4 percent spending plan.” Grants Chairman Nick Morgoshia ’17 began reaching out to charitable organizations in the fall, making them aware of the availability of Red Rhino Fund dollars and encouraging them to apply. Applications in hand, Nick then built a portfolio about each applicant to share with the board. “Once the applications were in, it was important to us to have as many board members as possible visit as many organizations as possible,” Caroline explains. “We wanted to get to know the applicants not just on paper, but to develop personal relationships. We wanted to meet the people who would be administering the grants and see the spaces where they do their good work.” In making their awards, the Red Rhino Fund board considers things like the breadth of an organization’s reach and how they plan to spend the grant dollars. They extend their own reach by adhering to a policy that prevents any organization from receiving a fund grant in two consecutive years. ■

EVERY SUMMER, TAFT STUDENTS CHASE THEIR DREAMS through a broad range of artistic endeavors, some with assistance from the Kilbourne Summer Enrichment Fund. Established by John Kilbourne ’58, in memory of his parents, Samuel W. and Evelyn S. Kilbourne, these summer grants support student participation in enriching programs in the arts. Recent Kilbourne Fellows shared details of their summer study during Morning Meeting in February. In photo, from left, John Kilbourne ’58, Joanna Kleszczewski ’18, Jasmine Galante ’18, Ciara Connolly ’17, Clyde Ramos ’18, Kaedi Dalley ’18, theater teacher Helena Fifer, and Arts Department Head Bruce Fifer.



On Stage

TAFT STUDENTS TOOK to the stage throughout the winter months to showcase their talents during the winter dance concert, celebrate classic theater through a performance of *Arsenic and Old Lace*, pay homage to the Bard of Avon during classes with guest artist Blythe Coons and through Taft's annual lower mid *Macbeth* recitations, and dabble in progressive theater with Masque and Dagger. ■





The Future of Journalism

AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST

Bob Levey visited Taft in March to share his thoughts on the future of journalism. Levey has covered news from our nation's capitol since the Johnson administration, and is perhaps best known for his 36-year tenure with *The Washington Post*, where he wrote a column, "Bob Levey's Washington," for 23 years.

"The issues in journalism right now, the future of the media right now, the connection between the media and the political process right now...we have never been at a moment like this," Levey told the Taft community. "The speed with which change has overtaken the media, the speed with which certain norms have been discarded, the speed with which the media has gone from being among the most successful businesses in America to among the most threatened is truly mind-boggling."

Levey reflected on a meeting at *The Washington Post* where two young men sought to educate *Post* brass on the next big thing in news, the internet. It was 1992, and newspapers were still being published the same way they had been for 400 years, since the printing press was invented. The changes that would follow were inconceivable to the journalists in the room that day.

"There were 5,500 newspapers in the United States 40 years ago," said Levey. "Today there are 1,700. The number of people employed in daily journalism has fallen 40 percent in the past 15 years. The web itself has broadened journalism into precincts that were unimaginable. But it has also brought about trials for journalism that it never had before, mostly having to do with accuracy and mostly having to do with the idea that anyone with a cell phone

and a camera and a keyboard can be a journalist. We're struggling in the media. We're struggling to shape a future of the media where accuracy is prized. And yet more and more speed is prized and candy is prized. This will be the tension of your lives going forward, this is the tension of your lives right now."

Levey noted that the number of people getting their news through social media outlets is staggering. More people followed election night coverage on Facebook last November than through any other media outlet. Facebook, Levey said, is the "dominant future of news in our world."

"All of you in this room have to understand that you have the potential to determine this outcome," Levey advised students. "You have the potential to decide which media survive and which do not." ■

Putting Words in the President's Mouth

SPEECHWRITER MARC THIESSEN '85 VISITS TAFT



MARC THIESSEN '85 came back to Taft this week to give a Morning Meeting talk about his experience as a writer and political commentator. Thiessen's work has appeared in dozens of leading publications, including *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street*

Journal, *USA Today*, and *National Review*. He is a visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution and appears regularly on Fox News, CNN, the BBC, C-SPAN, and numerous talk radio programs.

As chief speechwriter to both President George W. Bush and Secretary

of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Thiessen spent eight years at the center of history. He was in the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and collaborated with Secretary Rumsfeld on all of his major speeches during the first three years of the war on terror. After moving to the White House, Thiessen worked closely with President Bush on hundreds of speeches, including televised addresses from the Oval Office and most of the president's major speeches on the war on terror during his second term. Thiessen helped the president craft his public arguments on issues ranging from defense and national security, to energy, healthcare, taxes, trade, social, and economic policy.

Thiessen is a graduate of Vassar College and completed additional post-graduate studies at the Naval War College. He is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and in 2004 was awarded the Pentagon's highest civilian honor, the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service. ■

AS PART OF COMMUNITY Service Day in October, Tafties created artwork with students from the Children's Community School in Waterbury, Connecticut. It was the second consecutive year that students from both schools worked on the Let It Be a Quilt project, conceptualized by Taft art teacher Loueta Chickadaunce. CCS students in grades K-5 worked with Taft volunteers to create their own personalized paper quilt squares. Chickadaunce talked to the children about how a quilt is made by many different people that are in a community to benefit another; the individual pieces were combined into quilts representing each CCS classroom. The quilts were displayed in Potter Gallery February. The event included a meet and greet with the artists and a wine tasting event to benefit the Children's Community School.





A HERD OF RHINOS came back to Watertown in February for our annual Winter Alumni Games. Hockey players competed for the Scott W. Richardson '82 Memorial Cup, while a few squash players came for the fun and camaraderie.

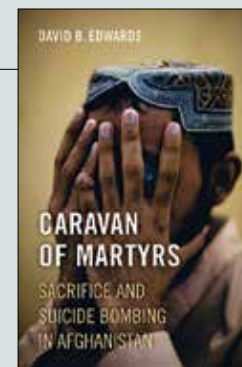


FACULTY MEMBER AND ALUMNUS JOSEPH ZIPOLI '84 shared his love for the city of Rome with the Taft community this winter through an exhibit in Potter Gallery. *Rome: Reflections on The Eternal City* featured Zipoli's personal collection of prints, photographs, sculpture, and books celebrating the history, culture, and beauty of Caput Mundi, "the Capital of the World."

ENGLISH TEACHER CHRIS BROWN '64 took advantage of unseasonably warm weather in February by holding class on the Jig patio. Temperatures climbed into the 70s in Watertown, bringing the campus to life in a most extraordinary way.



IN Print



CARAVAN OF MARTYRS:
SACRIFICE AND SUICIDE
BOMBING IN AFGHANISTAN
University of California Press
David B. Edwards '70

What compels a person to strap on a vest with explosives and blow themselves up in a crowded street? Scholars have answered this question by focusing on the pathology of the "terrorist mind" or the "brainwashing" practices of terrorist organizations. In Edwards' latest book, he argues that we need to understand the rise of suicide bombing in relation to the cultural beliefs and ritual practices associated with sacrifice.

Before the war in Afghanistan began, the sacrificial killing of a sheep demonstrated a tribe's desire for peace. After the Soviet invasion of 1979, as thousands were killed, sacrifice took on new meanings. The dead were venerated as martyrs, but this informal conferral of status on the casualties of war became the foundation for a cult of martyrs exploited by political leaders for their own advantage.

Drawing on years of research in the region, Edwards traces the transformation of sacrifice using a wide range of sources, from the early poetry of jihad and illustrated martyr magazines to Facebook posts that promote the virtues of self-destruction.

Read more about Edwards, the James N. Lambert '39 Professor of Anthropology at Williams College, in our feature on page 47.



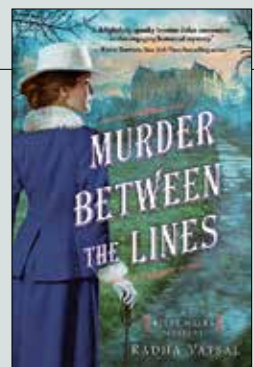
**MAGELLAN: OVER THE
EDGE OF THE WORLD**
Roaring Brook Press
Laurence Bergreen '68

Bergreen's adult bestseller about Ferdinand Magellan's historic voyage around the globe has been adapted for grades 7 to 12. In 1522, a battered ship manned by 18 malnourished, scurvy-ridden sailors appeared on the horizon near a Spanish port. They were survivors of the first European expedition to circle the globe. Originally comprised of five ships and 260 sailors, the fleet's captain and most of its crew were dead. How did Magellan's voyage to circle the world—one of the largest and best-equipped expeditions ever mounted—turn into this ghost ship? The answer is provided in this tale of mutiny marked equally by triumph and tragedy.

**CASANOVA: THE WORLD OF
A SEDUCTIVE GENIUS**
Simon & Schuster
Laurence Bergreen '68

Bergeen has written a definitive biography of the impoverished child, abandoned by his parents, who became the famous writer, notorious libertine, and self-invented genius: Giacomo Casanova. It is also a portrait of 18th-century Europe from serving girls to kings and courtiers.

Today, "Casanova" is a synonym for "great lover," yet his real story is little known. He was raised by his grandmother, an illiterate peasant, and his birthplace, Venice, was a republic in decline and reputedly the most debauched city in Europe. Casanova would add to its reputation. Over the course of his lifetime, he claimed to have seduced more than 100 women, among them



married women and women in convents. Casanova came of age in a Venice filled with spies and informers. He was intellectually curious and read forbidden books, for which he was jailed. He staged a dramatic escape from Venice's notorious prison and fled to France. He crisscrossed Europe and in St. Petersburg was admitted to the court of Catherine the Great. He corresponded with Voltaire and met Mozart. And he wrote what many consider the greatest memoir of the era, the 12-volume *Story of My Life*.

Bergreen is an award-winning biographer and historian who lives in New York City.

MURDER BETWEEN THE LINES
Sourcebooks
Radha Vatsal '91

In the second novel of Vatsal's Kitty Weeks mystery series, the specter of the Great War hangs over the country and a promising young student turns up dead. When Weeks' latest assignment writing for the *New York Sentinel Ladies' Page* takes her to Westfield Hall, a well-regarded girls' school in New York City, she expects to find an orderly establishment teaching French and dancing—standard fare for schoolgirls in 1915. But there's more going on at the school than initially meets the eye. Weeks takes note of the studies of Elspeth Bright, the daughter of a scientist involved in naval technology, who has inherited her father's interest and talent for scientific inquiry. The more Weeks finds out about Elspeth and her family, the more the intrepid reporter suspects that her "accidental" death may not have been an accident after all.

Vatsal now lives in New York City, after growing up in Mumbai, India, and later earning a Ph.D. at Duke. ■

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



Connor Printz '19 goes in for a shot against Kingswood-Oxford.

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

Winter Sports **WRAP-UP**

BY STEVE PALMER
Photography by Robert Falcetti

Girls' Basketball 12-9 CLASS A NEW ENGLAND TOURNAMENT QUARTERFINALISTS

After impressive wins over Kingswood-Oxford and Pomfret to start the season, the Rhinos dropped seven of their next nine contests. But resilience and selflessness—personified by co-captains Karalyn Baird '17 and Sam Manfreda '17, and by fellow seniors Jalissa Rodriguez '17, Emily Drakeley '17, and Morgan Sperry '17—were this team's defining characteristics. A huge road win over Choate led by co-captain-elect Juliana Yamin '18's career-high 23 points turned the season around. Five more wins followed, and the team entered the Northeast 8 Tournament confident and having secured a home contest against Andover. A heartbreaking overtime loss to the visitors left the team reeling. But again the Rhinos rebounded, winning two of their last three games—one a Founders League tilt against a strong Porter's team and the other a second win over arch-rival Hotchkiss—to secure the #6 seed in the Class A New England Tournament. Playing its best ball of the year in a loud and rowdy gym, the Rhinos gave highly ranked and eventual champion Marianapolis Prep all it could handle before falling just short. But it had been a fun and successful season. Co-captain-elect Lauren Pelosi '18 and Kayla Robinson '19 both were selected as All-New England Class A All-Stars.

Boys' Basketball 17-7

Taft finished the season among the top teams in New England with a winning percentage that placed them third overall. The Big Red played at a fierce pace this season, pressing their opponent and pushing the ball on offense. Point guard and captain Xavier Rucker '17 initiated

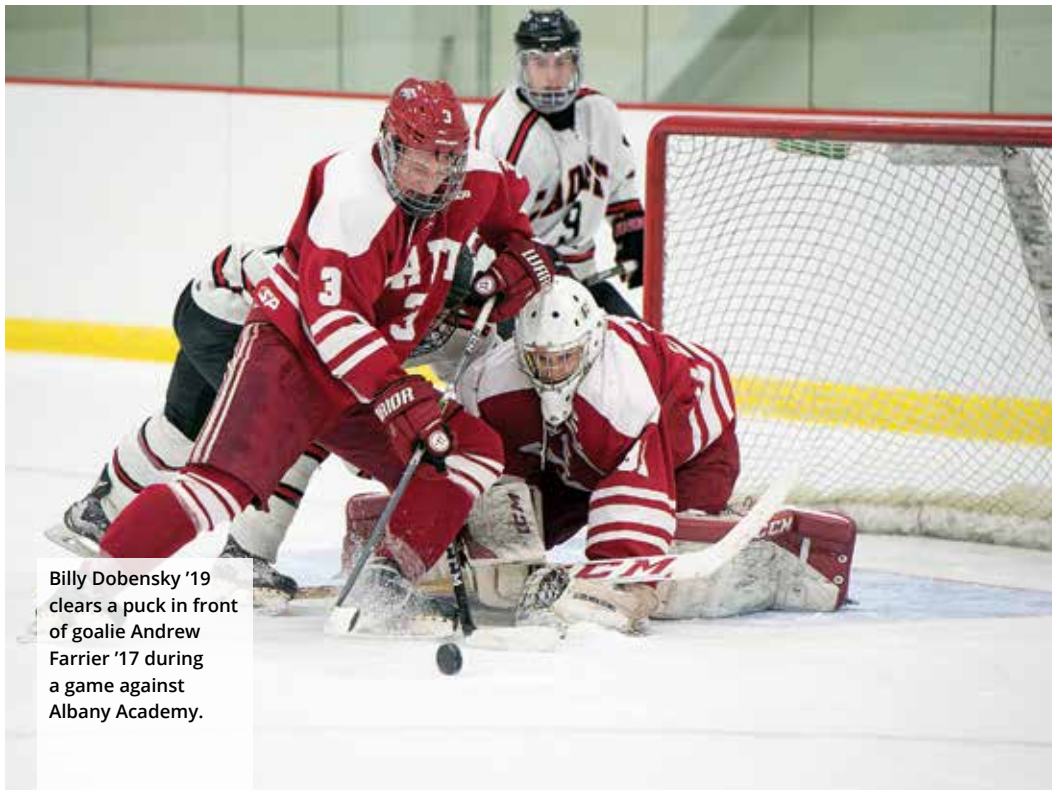
the speedy tempo and was often dishing to teammates for open shots in transition. Rucker led the team in assists (84), while keeping turnovers a minimum. A bulk of the scoring came from Shamir Johnson '18 and Darius Chester '17, who scored 11.4 and 10 points per game, respectively. Johnson also led the team in rebounding with 5 per contest. The season's success



Kayla Robinson '19 powers her way past a Hotchkiss defender



Taft students cheer for boys' varsity hockey after they scored a goal against Albany Academy during a game in Odden Arena.



Billy Dobensky '19 clears a puck in front of goalie Andrew Farrier '17 during a game against Albany Academy.

in large part came because of the stifling defense played by Taft's front court players. Moses Poelking '17, Elliott Brown '17, and Eric Holzman '17 all displayed mobility, toughness, and intelligence when defending near the basket. Season highlights included defeating Choate for

the third straight year and sweeping the two-game series with rivals Hotchkiss and the extremely talented Kent team. The 2017–18 team will be led by Shamir Johnson '18 and Connor Printz '19, who have proven themselves to be hard workers and thoughtful leaders.

Boys' Hockey 15–8–1 NEW ENGLAND LARGE SCHOOL QUARTERFINALISTS

This year's team will be remembered for its outstanding senior leadership, winning both the Founders League regular season title (record of 4–2–1) and the 69th Annual Lawrenceville Christmas Invitational Tournament, and earning the #4 seed in the "Martin/Earl" Large School New England Prep School Ice Hockey Association Tournament. Key wins came against New England tournament qualifiers Avon (3–2), Kent (5–3), and Brunswick (8–4). In a fast-paced, high-level first-round tournament game at home in Odden Arena, Taft suffered a tough 3–1 loss to eventual finalist Albany Academy. Founders League selections were awarded to Andrew Farrier '17 and Jeremie Lavallée '17. Co-captain Chris Adamsons '17 was the recipient of the Angier Award, which is given to the player that demonstrates dedication and improvement to their game. The Coach's Award, the team's most valuable player award, was given to



Girls' varsity hockey player Vivian Lu '18 works hard along the boards against a Hotchkiss player.

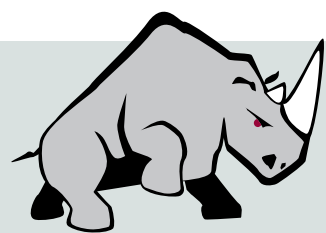
co-captain Farrier, who started in goal for the Rhinos in 22 of the 24 games and posted a .929 save percentage, placing him among the top 10 goaltenders in New England. Senior Lavallée and postgraduate Misha Mrotchek '17 led the team in scoring and total points with 24 points each. Lavallée led the team in goals (15) and Mrotchek assists (17). Next year's varsity hockey team will be led by co-captains-elect Jordan Tonelli '19 and Billy Dobensky '19.

battles against Choate (3–3, 1–1) and a late-season 2–2 tie with Westminster—and a fantastic 0–1 loss to top-rated Kent were the best games of the season. Clearly, Taft proved themselves to be a sound defensive team, backed up by Patsy K. Odden Award winner Sidney Molnar '18's great play in net (.937 save percentage). Founders League All-Star

defensemen Sarah Ince '18 and Claudia Vira '18 anchored the disciplined and tough defense. The squad bids farewell to the three senior captains, but looks to remain solid with a large core of returning players to boost their offense next year, led by captain-elect Natalie Witkowski '18.

Skiing 21–4 (Boys) 11–14 (Girls)

The Taft boys' and girls' ski teams skied as two separate teams in the Brigham Ski League this year. The switch from the coed team speaks to the depth of skiers Taft has on both the female and male sides and an increase in the number of skiers in the varsity races from eight to 16. In the league championship, Taft girls defeated the three other all-girls' teams, and the boys finished a solid third out of 13 overall. At the New England Class B championships, Abby Ford '19 and Natalie Waldram '18 both earned All New England Honors, placing in the top 10 in both the slalom and giant slalom, while the team placed 2nd out of 10 schools. On the boys' side, Max Fossland '19 had a strong showing, finishing 4th in the slalom, and the team placed 7th out of 13 teams. Captains Maddie Savage '18 and Michael Wasserstein '17 successfully



WINTER ATHLETIC AWARD WINNERS

Patsy Odden Hockey Award
Sidney Molnar '18

Coach's Hockey Award
Andrew Farrier '17

Angier Hockey Trophy
Chris Adamsons '17

Boys' Ski Racing Award
Michael Wasserstein '17

Girls' Ski Racing Award
Abigail Ford '19
Natalie Waldram '18

Logan Memorial Basketball Trophy
Zavier Rucker '17

1978 Girls' Varsity Basketball Cup
Karalyn Baird '17
Samantha Manfreda '17
Jalissa Rodriguez '17

Wynne Wrestling Award
Hunter Ramee '17

Harry F. Hitch Wrestling Award
Michael Hennessy '17

Boys' Squash Award
Kyle Salvatore '17

1986 Girls' Squash Award
Madison Chuilli '17

Girls' Hockey 6–11–6

Taft continued to grow and develop this year, going undefeated in nine sudden-death overtime periods, and capturing wins in three of those games, including an exciting shootout win in the Patsy K. Odden Tournament against rival Hotchkiss. Led by senior tri-captains Sasha Bridger '17, Natalie Lima '17, and Anna Rasmussen '17, the team focused on developing chemistry and found themselves in eight one-goal games and six ties. Several of those ties—hard-fought



Beau Root '19

led the team all winter, and with only two seniors, Taft looks forward to continued strong performances next year.

Wrestling 12-4

The Rhinos improved on their strong season from last year moving from a 4th-place finish to 3rd at the Western New England championships, despite losing five league placewinners to graduation. In the dual-meet season, Taft notched a 12-4 record, beginning with a tight win over Canterbury and ending with a thrilling victory over Hopkins. In between, Taft rolled over strong teams from Suffield, Avon, and Hotchkiss. One of their four losses, to Williston, was balanced by beating that same team the following weekend. Come tournament time, Taft had medal winners in Jonathan Elkins '20 (113 pounds), Liam Fitzgerald '19 (138), Michael Hennessy '17 (2nd place at 152), Drew Dye '18 (160), Frank Robertshaw '18 (170), Hunter Ramee '17 (2nd place at 182), and JB Andreski '18 (220). Despite not having a single overall

champion, the team showed great balance and depth, as almost every wrestler at the tournament scored points. With only co-captains Hennessy and Ramee graduating from that group, the future looks promising. Taft had seven wrestlers qualify for New Englands, and though only upper mid Robertshaw medaled, five of those wrestlers are returning.

Boys' Squash 10-5

Taft finished with a record of 10-5 as well as a 7th-place finish at the Division II High School Nationals, behind five seniors, captain Kyle Salvatore '17, Billy Fleurima '17, James Darling '17, Jacques Pellet '17, and Jackson McAtee '17. Highlights of the season included wins against Choate (6-1), Exeter (7-0), and Darien High School (6-1), as well as individual wins for Salvatore (3-2 win at #1) against Deerfield, Fleurima (3-0 win at #3) against Brunswick, and Darling (3-2 at #4) against Hotchkiss. The team will be led by co-captains Peter Keigher '19 and Raunak Advani '19, as well as returner Hunter Lord '19.

Girls' Squash 6-11

Taft was led this year by four returning players, including captain and #1 player Maddie Chiulli '17, as well as seniors Maria Serrano '17, Gaby Gura '17, and upper mid Zoe Eberstadt-Beattie '18. Newcomers Aariya Patel '19, Yasmeen Bae '18, Eliza King Freedman '19, Libby Knowlton '19, and Wilson Hafner '18 rounded out a deep team that finished the regular season with six wins and eight losses and again competed in the Division II National team tournament and the top division of the New England tournament. This year, these two tournaments held their fair share of challenges, and the overall season record, including tournament play, was six wins and 11 losses. Team highlights were early victories over Groton (6-1) and Exeter (5-2), and later season wins over Westminster (5-2) and Hotchkiss (4-3). Individual success included Chiulli's 11 wins at #1 and Patel's 3-0 performance at Nationals. Taft will be led next year by co-captains Eberstadt-Beattie and Patel. ■



Michael Hennessy '17 controls his Brunswick opponent during a match at Taft.



JV SQUASH DIVISION V CO-CHAMPIONS

BASED ON THE BOYS' JV SQUASH RECORD AND RECENT PERFORMANCE, US Squash allowed Taft's JV team to enter this year's Nationals tournament, and in February they traveled to Wesleyan University to play in Division V (out of VII). The team won three matches and ended up co-champions, with St. Andrews, of Division V.



Maddie Chiulli '17 returns a shot against a Loomis Chaffee player during a match.

Act Locally

Spanish &
geography teacher



Baba Frew

has spent 30 years showing students how to walk the walk.

by Julie Reiff



► A group of Taft students and Frew working on one of many Community Service Day projects.

It's 7:30

on a Thursday morning, and Baba Frew, a bag over her shoulder and her hair blown from the wind, takes a seat at the table in the dining hall. Several students are already there for the weekly Community Service Council board meeting. For such a busy group, it's difficult to find another time to gather.

With a few snowflakes still in her silvery red hair, Frew gets right to work. She typically walks or rides her bike from her house on the upper side of campus.

This is a packed month for Frew and her posse of service-minded students. First there is the Dress Exchange, where students (and a few faculty members and mothers) loan or donate dresses to rent for the Winter Formal, a way to make the event more affordable and also raise money for Girls Inc. in Waterbury.

Then there is the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, an interactive event that raises awareness of hunger and poverty issues, followed a few days later by the Red Cross

Blood Drive, which the council organizes three times a year on campus. Frew will be there at 1:45 p.m. and stay until nearly 8. Two days later, she organizes students to help distribute at the monthly Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry in Watertown.

On Monday, she and fellow teacher Laura Monti '89 will take a cohort of the Global Leadership Institute (GLI)—a mix of students from Taft and Waterbury public schools—to a social entrepreneurship panel event at Wesleyan University.

"One thing that GLI emphasizes," says senior Lauren Fadiman, a former participant and now on the Community Service Council board, "and that Mrs. Frew makes a priority in her own life, is service learning. She's done a really good job of taking the varied things she does and creating one cohesive community service program."

In many ways, Frew has become the face of Community Service at Taft, although she is the first to tell you she gets plenty of help. She took over the Volunteer



"Kids are taking the initiative now because Baba has put that bug into them of giving back,

of living the motto."

—Spanish teacher Kevin Conroy

If Not For Frew

Baba Frew is the last person who would take credit for all of the groups and events listed here, but ask people on campus, and they will agree that her commitment and organizational skills make the volunteer program as robust as it is.





"I keep coming back to that mantra that the person who does the work is the person

who's learning."

—Baba Frew

▲ Frew teaches a young student in the Dominican Republic during a Taft student service trip hosted by Outreach 360.



▲ During a Red Cross Blood Drive at Taft, Frew and student volunteers register donors.



▲ At a benefit event for the Children's Community School in Waterbury, Frew enjoys quilts created by CCS and Taft students displayed in the Woolworth Faculty Room.

Program (as it was known for many years) from Emily Jones in the late '90s.

"We continue to deepen these roots with the community and really make them meaningful partnerships," says Frew. "We're trying to develop in our students a sense of what it means to serve in a way that is beneficial for the community, to really look at what the issues are and why you're needed in this community."

The message has certainly reached Lauren. "Mrs. Frew has shown me the importance of being an open ally toward the programs we're trying to support and being really willing to listen to what people need," she says. "The work we do has to be the work other people need done and not what feels good or feels easy."

Today, the program isn't just about volunteering, even for the students who are doing after-school community service work. Each Friday they have a reflection

of their week. "We didn't used to have that reflection piece," says Frew, "but now we have specific activities for them to do, lesson plans to create. The other big difference is that we're really listening to the needs of our service partners and how we can meet them. It's a great model, I think."

"Her drive comes from the fact that our kids are so good," says fellow Spanish teacher and head of the Modern Language Department Kevin Conroy. "The kids that work on the Community Service Council or that raise record-setting funds for the food bank, as they just did over Parents' Weekend—those kids are taking the initiative now because Baba has put that bug into them of giving back, of living the motto. The program is thriving. And kudos to her for that."

Frew has taught Spanish for 30 years. She joined her husband, Peter '75, on the faculty in 1988, and now teaches Advanced

Placement Human Geography as well. She majored in geography at Middlebury and minored in Latin American studies, and later went back to Middlebury for her master's degree in Spanish.

"My Latin American studies minor—yes, it was Spanish, but it was also about seeing all these demographic, political, and economic issues through a geographic lens. It's exciting to teach in two different departments now" (Modern Languages and the newer Global Studies and Service). "Service is certainly part of it, but with GLI, there's a big global aspect—global leadership is very much a part of it."

"It's about educating the whole student," adds Frew, "because if I look at the classes that I teach, Spanish, that's certainly a lifelong, global skill, and geography is a class that I think every single student at Taft should take. It's such a great course. I like the fact that you can open the

Community Service Council:

12-member student-run board that coordinates service events on and off campus throughout the school year, including:

Watertown and Connecticut Food Banks
Red Cross Blood Drives
Dress Exchange for Girls Inc.
Oxfam Hunger Banquet
Spring Fling
Serving weekly dinner at St. Vincent de Paul Homeless Shelter
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer
Lee National Denim Day

“She’s really good at *encouraging* kids to be their best selves and to do the best job at the task at hand.”

—Faculty member Laura Monti '89



Baba

newspaper or listen to the radio or look at the news, and there’s something that’s totally relevant. What we’re talking about and doing is all relevant to their lives.”

Her energy and positivity definitely carry through into her classes, adds Conroy. “She’ll have students stand up in the first five minutes and have a party-style chat about anything just to get them moving and talking and using the language. There’s really very little dead air in a Baba Frew classroom.”

As a former head of the Modern Language Department (the position rotates every five years at Taft), Frew has worked with a number of new faculty. But Taft’s recent partnership with the teaching fellow program at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn Fellows) has brought increased

structure and rigor to the process. This year she serves as a mentor to Anna LaSala-Goettler, a Penn Fellow in French.

“I love being a mentor,” Frew says. “Honestly, it’s the best thing that’s ever happened to my teaching, because it’s so intentional. It’s an awesome program, and what’s fun is applying all of this information that I’m getting, along with Anna.”

After three decades in the classroom, Frew is a teacher who is genuinely excited about new teaching methods, who asks herself, Why would I do this? What is the purpose of that?

“The classroom is less teacher-centered now,” says Frew. “That can be challenging in a content-heavy A.P. class like geography—we have to get through so much. But I keep coming back to that

◀ Frew teaches a Spanish class in the Pinto Language Lab.

▶ Frew stands out at the Palais Royal during a trip to Paris.



Community Service Learning:

Students volunteer as their afternoon extracurricular at local schools or nonprofits like Girls Inc., Children’s Community School, and Waterbury Police Activity League.

Global Leadership Institute:

Part of the Center for Global Leadership and Service created in 2013 with a grant from the Edward E. Ford Foundation. 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 knowledge and skills needed to contribute to worldwide change.

Red Rhino Fund:

An endowed, charitable fund created in 2007 and run by a nine-member student board with faculty and staff advisors to create positive change in the Greater Waterbury (Connecticut) community for children by awarding nominal monetary grants and promoting local organizations in support of education, literacy, and the arts.

Hatfield, Page, and Poole Fellowships:

Grants available to Taft students to help defray the cost of summer service programs and travel.

Baba

► As codirector of the Global Leadership Institute, Frew meets with Waterbury and Taft students working on a project together.



mantra that the person who does the work is the person who's learning."

That's quite a statement, coming as it does from one of the hardest-working people on campus.

"I don't think anyone knows how hard she works because she doesn't tell anybody," says Laura Monti, who codirects the Global Leadership Institute with her this year. "She's focused on what she's doing with you, when in reality she has eight million other things going on at the same time. She's concerned about how *you* feel and how much work *you* have, so it's easy to overlook her and how amazing she is." Monti adds that it's hard to explain how vital Frew's work is to life at Taft.

But Frew's strength, Monti says, is that she brings out the best in students because she's gentle with them but still knows when to push. "She's really good at encouraging kids to be their best selves and to do the best job at the task at hand, while at the same time understanding that they're kids and there's a lot going on, and that too much pushing is counterproductive."

They studied leadership styles as part of their work with GLI, says Monti, "and Frew is clearly a deer"—someone known to be collaborative and supportive. People considered "deer" are trusting, careful of others feelings, and concerned with creating positive work environments. "She's the person who wants to make sure everyone feels taken care of. She's much less concerned with how she comes out in the process," Monti says.

"Mrs. Frew is really passionate about what she does," says Lauren Fadiman '17. "And she does a lot, so that's a lot of passion in one woman. She's been a great mentor in discovering all the varied inequities and problems that still exist in society, and also helping me think about even small efforts to fix those issues, how we can at least do something, helping me discover what riles me up and makes me passionate."

It's Thursday again, and the Community Service Council board is back at the breakfast table, looking ahead to their spring events. Frew, seated to the side, has a plate of scrambled eggs with

cottage cheese and is already taking notes. Ostensibly one of the students is the secretary, but she does it anyway.

They discuss the Earth Day carnival, which they will cohost with the EcoMons, as they did the Hunger Banquet and the annual Spring Fling fundraiser at the Watertown Golf Club, cohosted with the Red Rhino Fund.

After the meeting, Frew catches Lauren and tells her how organized they've become. Perhaps, she suggests, they don't even need her at the meetings anymore. They seem to have things under control. Lauren is quick to contradict her.

"I find it a comfort to know she's on the periphery," Lauren says later, "to offer advice, guidance, and encouragement, and just to remind us of what needs to be done and when. I don't know how much we'd get done without her around, but she does a really good job making Community Service at Taft feel like it's as much ours as hers." ■

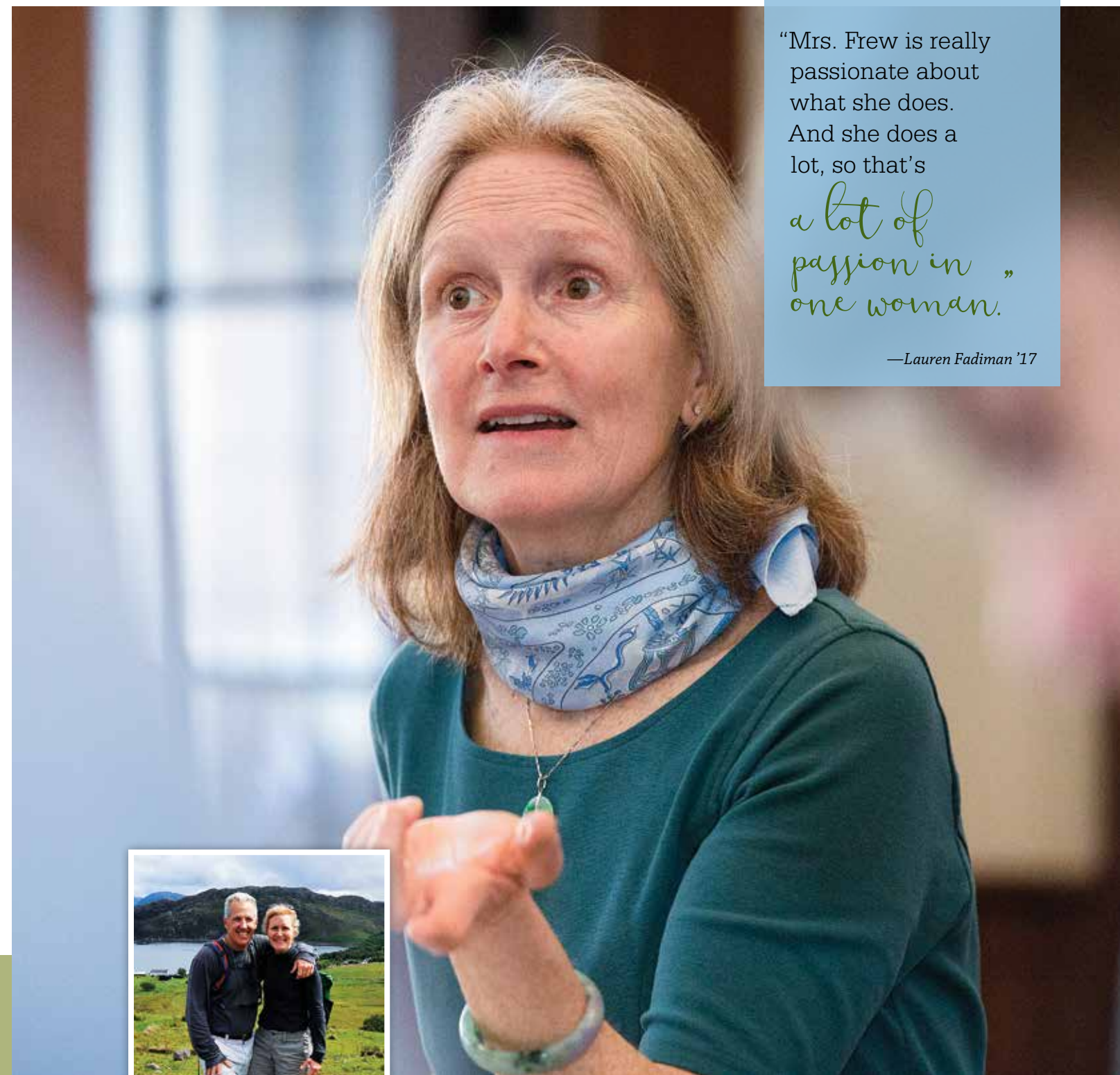
Photography by Robert Falcetti and Peter Frew '75

WorldFest:

An opportunity for members of the Taft community—who hail from more than 40 countries—to share the customs, culture, food, and traditions of their homeland.

www.taftschool.org/communityservice/events
www.taftschool.org/gli

for more, visit ↗



"Mrs. Frew is really passionate about what she does. And she does a lot, so that's

a lot of passion in one woman.

—Lauren Fadiman '17



◀ Peter '75 and Baba in Applecross, Scotland.



SHAPING

the FUTURE

From classrooms to research labs, seven Taft alumni teach the next generation of college students.

By Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

Maybe it's something about engaging in intense discussions in the hallway with teachers at Taft, maybe it's the stimulation that comes later in college, but a number of Taft alumni

have continued studying beyond graduate school and now stand in front of the classroom themselves.

We asked seven alumni who are professors at some of the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities about life in the hallowed halls of academia and their thoughts on the future of higher education.

We know, of course, that in addition to these seven, there are many other dedicated alumni teaching in colleges and universities. This is simply our glimpse into the current world of higher education.

"There is no greater satisfaction than hearing a student say that you've opened up their mind to new possibilities."
—NIKKI MAYHEW GREENE '93

■ Nikki Mayhew Greene '93, Wellesley College.
RICHARD HOWARD

NIKKI MAYHEW GREENE '93

DR. NIKKI MAYHEW GREENE '93 is assistant professor of art history at Wellesley College, examining African-American and African identities, the body, feminism, and music in modern and contemporary art. On sabbatical for the 2016–17 academic year, she is the Richard D. Cohen Fellow at the W.E.B. Du Bois Research Institute at Harvard University's Hutchins Center for African and African American Research. She is finalizing her first book manuscript, *Rhythms of Grease, Grime, Glass, and Glitter: The Body in Contemporary Black Art*.
"In general, my book looks at the intersection between visual art, music, and black identity," Greene says. "For my last chapter, I have been doing a lot of reading, listening, and viewing of Michael Jackson material, photographs, albums, concert performances, you name it. So much fun!"

Q WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

A I love being a student, and I love public speaking. Academia allows me to combine my passions for art, research, and teaching into a single career. As an art historian, every time I walk into a museum, I'm "working." Then, the next time, I can drag my students with me. What job could be cooler than that?
Teaching is a great privilege.

At Wellesley, I have the honor of teaching some of the brightest and most ambitious students in the world that come from a wide range of socioeconomic, political, sexual orientation, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. I am often in awe of their brilliance, which motivates me to learn more and to offer them a distinctive experience in my classroom. There is no greater satisfaction than hearing a student say that you've opened up their mind to new possibilities.

DR. ELIZABETH HOWE BRADLEY '80 will become the 11th president of Vassar College in July, following more than 20 years at Yale University, where she was head of Branford College and was the director of Yale's Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy and founder and faculty director of the Yale Global Health Leadership Institute. Bradley's career has focused on improving health care across the globe. She has published more than 300 peer-reviewed papers and three books, including *The American Health Care Paradox: Why Spending More Is Getting Us Less*.
"This is a critical time for leadership in liberal arts education," she says, "with many complex issues facing our campuses, our nation, and our world. Working with students here in the U.S. and globally, I have seen how access to higher education changes lives, and it makes me even more committed to making certain we maintain Vassar as a diverse and inclusive community."

Q WHERE DO YOU SEE ACADEMIA GOING IN THE NEXT DECADE?

A Academia has challenges [facing it] to demonstrate its value to our social fabric. How can we make the connection between studying history, literature, arts, and a broad range of humanities, social sciences, and basic sciences, and greater capacity to address

global, pressing problems? How can we be living examples of engaged pluralism where diverse students and faculty manage differences in ways that strengthen rather than divide campuses? Those are the 21st-century challenges for academia—and if higher education can lead in demonstrating these kinds of communities, we will have contributed importantly to the country and globe.

▼ Elizabeth Howe Bradley '80, new president of Vassar College.
VASSAR COLLEGE/
JOHN ABBOTT

ELIZABETH HOWE BRADLEY '80



"How can we make the connection between studying history, literature, arts, and a broad range of humanities, social sciences, and basic sciences, and greater capacity to address global, pressing problems?"

—ELIZABETH HOWE BRADLEY '80

DR. ROBESON TAJ FRAZIER '99 is an associate professor in the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism at the University of Southern California and director of the Institute for Diversity and Empowerment at Annenberg (IDEA). His research and teaching explore popular culture, Black political culture, urban history, and the formation and conditions of globalization. He is the author of *The East Is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination*, and coproducer of the documentary film *The World is Yours*.

Q WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO GO INTO ACADEMIA?

A I've always had a curiosity for information and a passion for the practice of unceasing questioning and self-questioning. From

a young age I was constantly surrounded and influenced by different kinds of genuine intellectuals, artists, and critical thinkers. Academia seemed like a fruitful institutional place to generate more interactions with such people, as well as build my own legacy of critical and creative work.

ROBESON
TAJ FRAZIER '99



Taj Frazier '99 speaking at a USC Annenberg Master Class series event at CBS Studios New York City in 2017.
USC ANNENBERG/DANA MAXSON

Q WHAT RESEARCH ARE YOU DOING NOW?

A Right now I'm working on a cultural history of masculinity and race that weaves autobiography with cultural analysis, interviews, and archival work. I'm also directing an institute that explores the role of media, the arts, culture, and technology in struggles for identity and social justice.

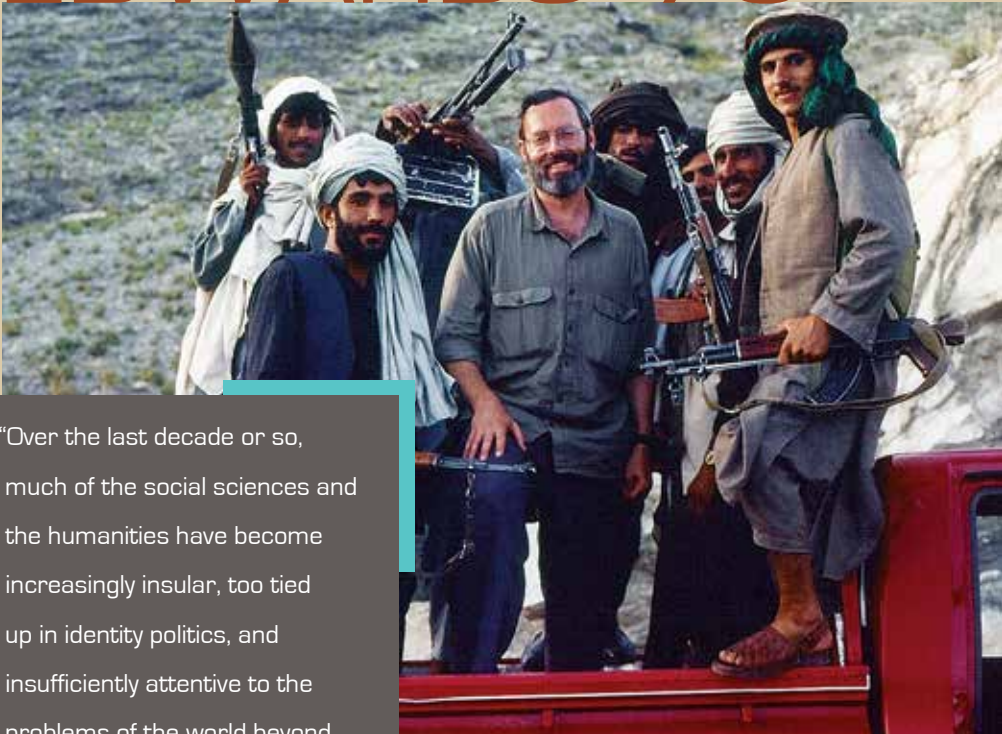
Q WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

A The best part is twofold: 1) spending meaningful time interacting with and engaging bright minds of different generations, class backgrounds, and life experiences; and 2) having the privilege of being afforded time to learn and think deeply, and then communicate these evolving thoughts and analysis via writing, teaching, public speaking, and facilitating workshops.

Q WHERE DO YOU SEE ACADEMIA GOING IN THE NEXT DECADE?

A That's a tough question. Like many institutions, academia is becoming more privatized, and access to higher education is becoming more limited as a result of the rapidly increasing cost of attending a university. It's high time that we as a country really take action regarding what kind of ethics we truly want reflected in our education system—not just regarding what we teach, but also who gets the opportunity to learn and be a contributing member to the space, and at what cost.

DAVID B.
EDWARDS '70



"Over the last decade or so, much of the social sciences and the humanities have become increasingly insular, too tied up in identity politics, and insufficiently attentive to the problems of the world beyond the confines of the university."

—DAVID B. EDWARDS '70

▲ David Edwards '70, Williams College, in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province during a research trip to the Pech Valley for his book *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad*. Edwards was traveling with a group of mujahidin and their commander as bodyguards. SHAHMAHMOOD MIAKHEL

DR. DAVID B. EDWARDS '70 is the James N. Lambert '39 Professor of Anthropology at Williams College. He has been conducting research on and writing about Afghanistan for more than 30 years. A graduate of Princeton University and the University of Michigan, he is the author of three books on Afghanistan—*Caravan of Martyrs: Sacrifice and Suicide Bombing in Afghanistan* (May 2017, for more see page 14); *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (2002); and *Heroes of the Age: Moral Fault Lines on the Afghan Frontier* (1996)—along with numerous articles on Afghan history, religion, and culture. Edwards is also the codirector and producer of the film *Kabul Transit* (2006), which was an official selection at many film festivals. Edwards has received research fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, and the National Science Foundation. He has also been a Fulbright Fellow, and in 2002 was named a Carnegie Scholar by the Carnegie Corporation.

Q WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO GO INTO ACADEMIA?

A I decided to go into academia quite by chance. I did not have a great academic record in college (or at Taft). I excelled in the summers, working in an immunization program in Guatemala, voter registration in Mississippi, a salmon boat in Alaska, and hitchhiking across North Africa. After college, I spent two years in Afghanistan and fell in love with the country. That experience led me

to anthropology, the one academic discipline for which I was suited, after having failed at my original ambition of becoming a novelist. I just completed my third book, *Caravan of Martyrs: Sacrifice and Suicide Bombing in Afghanistan*. I have another book that's about half completed that is more or less a memoir of my experiences working in Afghanistan since the mid-1970s, and I also am working on a book on Czech culture and history.

Q WHERE DO YOU SEE ACADEMIA GOING IN THE NEXT DECADE?

A It's difficult to predict where academia is going. Over the last decade or so, much of the social sciences and the humanities have become increasingly insular, too tied up in identity politics, and insufficiently attentive to the problems of the world beyond the confines of the university. If there is a silver lining to our recent election, it might be that it galvanizes sectors of society that have been in the doldrums in recent years—journalism and academia, in particular.

Q WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB?

A The best part of the job is the flexibility it affords. Teaching at a small liberal arts college, with good students, and teaching anthropology, I get to teach on a wide range of subjects, basically whatever interests me.

JESSE LANDER '84



"If the current situation teaches us anything, it is that the interpretive skills and the ability to think historically that have been the backbone of humanities disciplines are more essential than ever."

—JESSE LANDER '84

◀ Jesse Lander '84, Notre Dame.
ANDREW DELIYANNIDES

Q WHERE DO YOU SEE ACADEMIA GOING IN THE NEXT DECADE?

A My hope is that we will soon see a resurgence in the humanities. The theory wars of the '90s, the extraordinary success and cultural cachet of the tech sector, and the financial collapse of 2008 all damaged the appeal and prestige of the humanities, but if the current situation teaches us anything, it is that the interpretive skills and the ability to think historically that have been the backbone of humanities disciplines are more essential than ever. I don't expect we will return to the numbers that were typical in the '70s and '80s, but I do expect that our numbers will improve as more students seek an educational experience that will allow them to engage questions of meaning and value.

myself increasingly concerned about undergraduate teaching. I worry that early-period material doesn't get the attention it deserves; even English majors tend to want to focus on contemporary writers. We face a significant challenge: attracting greater numbers of students while remaining true to our disciplinary identity.

DR. JESSE LANDER '84 is the chair of the English Department at Notre Dame University.

Q WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF ACADEMIA?

A Having smart colleagues and brilliant students. As chair, I feel lucky to be able to help

my faculty succeed as writers, scholars, and teachers. Though I remain deeply committed to my own research, and am eager to get started on my next book project, which will be about the long history of Shakespeare quotation, I find

DR. JENNIFER BURNS '93 is an associate professor of history at Stanford University, where she teaches courses on American political, cultural, and intellectual history. As a historian of the 20th century United States, she is working at these intersections and how they play out in policy and politics.

Q HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO GO INTO ACADEMIA?

A Before I went to college, it never occurred to me that being a college professor was a job. I wanted to be a journalist. I was the editor of the *Taft Papyrus*, and that was a role I really enjoyed. However, I remember early in college sitting in a class on European history, and the professor strolled in wearing his black turtleneck and holding a cup of coffee, and began the lecture, "In the history of

western civilization..." and the thought went through my head, this is a cool job to have. A lot of people warned me how difficult it was to find work in academia—I still warn my students of this, and the employment climate has gotten worse. But for the lucky few who make it, being a college professor is a great life. I am currently writing a biography of the economist Milton Friedman, who was also an important figure in the conservative movement. I am learning a lot about the history of economics, which I only studied a little bit in college. What interests me are the connections between economics and politics.

▼ Jennifer Burns '93,
Stanford University.
LINDA A. CICERO/STANFORD

JENNIFER BURNS '93



Q WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF ACADEMIA?

A The best part is the time and freedom to explore whatever it is that catches my interest intellectually. I love to read and write, and those are essential parts of the job. I also have a great deal of freedom to structure my own time, as long as I get the work done and the classes taught.

Q WHERE DO YOU SEE ACADEMIA GOING IN THE NEXT DECADE?

A Unfortunately, I think academia will become even more bifurcated as our society becomes more divided. There is a vast difference between the top 100 schools in the country and the rest. At the top tier,

students are given a rigorous education, by and large, and most professors and teaching staff can make a decent living. But the rise of for-profit schools will erode standards. It is also clear we are facing a crisis of student debt. I'm not sure how it will play out, but it is not sustainable for so many students to graduate with such significant debt.

Q WHAT'S BEEN THE BIGGEST CHANGE YOU'VE SEEN IN THE CLASSROOM?

A Technology is probably the biggest change. In the classroom, smartphones and laptops can be a real distraction. Also, with the rise of the flipped classroom—parts of the instruction available online—it can mean students discount the face to face, com-

munity aspect of education. Social media has also been disruptive. Ideally, college is a time for reflection and experimentation. But in a few seconds an email, video, or tweet can go viral, pulling students and professors into the news cycle and politicizing the campus. The acrimonious and angry tone of ensuing debates is the opposite of the connections we are trying to foster. Students deserve the space and time to work out their ideas without the whole world watching.

DR. CATHERINE STANGER '80 is an associate professor at the Center for Technology and Behavioral Health at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, studying behavioral interventions with adolescents and their families. She has conducted extensive research on the development and evaluation of innovative family-based interventions, specializing in parenting interventions for diverse populations including substance-abusing parents and adolescents with substance-use problems. Stanger's clinical research has focused on innovative ways to use incentives to motivate behavior change in both teens and parents, and she has collaborated with groups across the country to use her interventions.

▼ Catherine Stanger '80,
Geisel School of
Medicine at Dartmouth
TOM BRODEUR

CATHERINE STANGER '80

Q WHAT RESEARCH ARE YOU DOING NOW?

A I primarily develop and test interventions to help adolescents improve their health. Much of this work over the past decades has focused on interventions for adolescent substance-use problems, but most recently has included adolescents with type 1 diabetes and adolescents with obesity. My background is in a field called developmental psychopathology, or the study of the processes throughout childhood and adolescence that result in mental health problems. One idea that has informed my interventions is that unhealthy behaviors often have immediate rewards (drug use, eating junk food),

and negative consequences that are often far off in the future. So we try to offset the immediate benefits of unhealthy behavior and motivate people to make healthier choices by offering immediate rewards for making healthier choices. Offering teens monetary incentives for abstinence improves substance-use treatment outcomes over and above evidence-based counseling approaches. Research in psychology has tended to focus narrowly on specific conditions—depression, substance use, obesity—but there is growing evidence that there are similar processes that underlie many conditions. We are also working on ways to use technology (smartphones, the web) to deliver our interventions. ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84
is a writer living in
Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Change Service Requested

Student Art in Taft's Potter Gallery

