

Taft

B U L L E T I N

A DAY IN THE *Life*

*Alumni
Weekend*

127TH
COMMENCEMENT

SUMMER 2017

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 Photography by Robert Falcetti, Anne Kowalski, and James Shannon

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 By Debra Meyers

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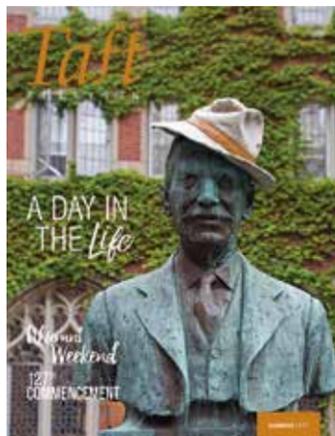
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ON THE COVER

Even Horace Dutton Taft was sporting a jaunty hat on Alumni Weekend to greet hundreds of alumni and their families and friends for a several days of celebrations. ROBERT FALCETTI

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On Main Hall

A WORD FROM HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78

LIVING ON THE COMMONS

AN EXCERPT FROM 2017 COMMENCEMENT REMARKS

Earlier this week, I snuck out of my office and drove to New Haven, where I hide, in a wood-paneled reading room in Yale's Sterling Library, whenever I have a talk to write. The parking meter maxed at two hours, so I twice had to take breaks, emerging blinking into the sunlight to take get some air, and to walk by the Green. In every way, the Green is the center of the city.

Colonists arrived in New Haven in 1638, seven men wintering over, and about 250 arriving in April to try to somehow wrest a life out of thick woods and thin soil. That they survived is something of a miracle, but what is

more astonishing is this: one of the first things they did was to plan the town Green. It's amazing. Barely able to eke out survival and with arable land scarce, the first thing they did was to commit to a space where they could *gather*—to trade, worship, discuss, remediate, resolve, educate. Think of what that said about their conviction that a community of desperate and diverse voices could only endure if there was a commons. And so the 16-acre, nine-section plot has remained.

And that's where this talk starts and finishes, where you seniors once began and now end: on a green, and with my hope that the work we have done with you will help you for life in the commons.

As you know, the history of New England is, in some ways, about how we have gathered on communal spaces; and if our discourse as a nation is inevitably imperfect, at turns divisive and rancorous and uniting and uplifting, that it even happens can be traced to our commitment to the



The New Haven Green
F11PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

“Common spaces, we are reminded, are about the bringing together of citizens, around religion, trade, civics, and education. They are physical and spiritual loci, the means by which in our best moments as a people we are our most humane, visionary, and wise, and where we find ways to gather, debate, and listen, *to experience literally and figuratively commonality.*”

“I will remember you as the class that grew enormously, who cared deeply and publicly for others... and which gave me a stubborn optimism that the voices we need on the global commons would be arriving soon.”

commons. Some 170 towns in this state still have a green, a commons, like the one just a few steps from this campus. Common spaces, we are reminded, are about the bringing together of citizens, around religion, trade, civics, and education. They are physical and spiritual loci, the means by which in our best moments as a people we are our most humane, visionary, and wise, and where we find ways to gather, debate, and listen, *to experience literally and figuratively commonality.*

The authors of a favorite book titled *Common Fire* write:

Many Americans in an earlier time...participated in some kind of commons—a shared space that anchored the American vision of democracy. Whatever its form, the commons marked the center of a shared world.... By happenstance and intention, [diverse] people met and talked together with some sense of shared stake, something in common.

As the world has never been more complex and dynamic, the irony is that it has also never looked more like a colonial commons, never more in need of disparate citizens who can gather and converse to meet the pressing planetary challenges. I like to think you seniors learned here something about participation in the commons.

Here's *Common Fire* again, noting that technology and transport have created a new commons—a *global town green* where we are inextricably tied and interdependent:

[This] new commons is global in scope, diverse in character, and dauntingly complex. We are simultaneously fragmented into loose and shifting associations of individuals, interest groups, and tribes, yet drawn more closely into a larger web of life. As the world shrinks, as the diversity of our species and the... limitations of the planet...[on which] we all depend become more evident, [we] must reach out for some new set of connections, some more adequate way to make sense of a world gone boundaryless, a world now paradoxically larger, smaller, and more complex.

We all see a shrunken world, with economic interconnectedness, strains on basic resources, need for environmental cooperation, concerns about security and tribalism. We will need people who can collaborate across difference, who can together think critically and creatively, who can be part of diverse teams, who can debate and empathize with equal parts passion and compassion, who see both shared responsibility and opportunity.

Seniors, I hope you understand that what we have tried to do is prepare you to participate in this global commons. Your years here have been *rehearsal*: every class debate you took part in, every essay you completed, every conversation with an advisor, every team or group you were on, every speech you heard, every political discussion we hosted, every group project you presented, every editorial you penned, every dorm problem you resolved—it was *all* to help you as a citizen and leader in the commons.

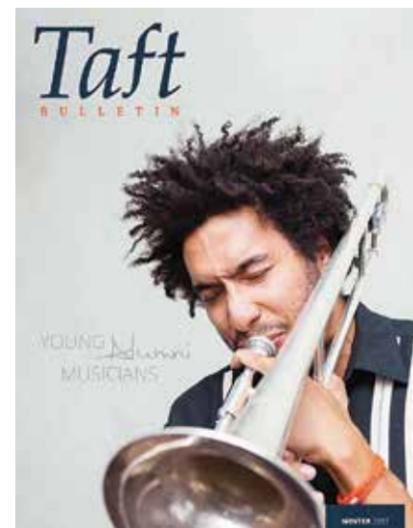
You make me optimistic. Not because of what you *did*—though your accomplishments in academics, athletics, arts, and service were remarkable. Because of what you *are*. I see in you a rare empathy, caring, resilience, and humility. You were not perfect. You wrestled with sociopolitical issues of incredible complexity and potency. You perhaps said things you wished you had not, or realized you might have listened more closely. But I will remember you as the class that grew enormously, who cared deeply and publicly for others, whose empathy vastly expanded, and which gave me a stubborn optimism that the voices we need on the global commons would be arriving soon.

Perhaps we are all like those starving New Haven colonists, living precious and vulnerable lives, dependent on each other, desperate for cooperation, our survival assured only if we can find common ground. That we must debate and argue, even fiercely, is a given. Surely those colonists on that muddy green in the early 17th century did. But for that discourse to be productive, for our shared existence on the commons to endure, we will have to have a deep, empathic conviction that we share together a small and fragile space.



Willy MacMullen '78

LETTERS



Alumni Notes Appreciation

I am not sure when or why I began to read the Alumni Notes all the way through. I think it has something to do with my intellectual curiosity that was stoked at Taft some 40-plus years ago. Some of what I have gleaned from the notes over the years: potential vacation destinations from pictures and descriptions; books to add to my “to read” list; a better understanding of the many Taft graduates that have left—and are leaving—their mark in the world. I have learned about history from the people that lived it. I have laughed out loud at the political discussions and the inside jokes that run from issue to issue.

I have read tidbits of wisdom and have wanted many times to thank the individual for taking the time to put it into writing. In the Winter 2017 *Bulletin* (page 55), it is Nick Giobbe '51 that I would like to thank for sharing his philosophy of life and his “life’s little lessons.” Having turned 60 recently, I appreciate his opening statements: “At our age it is easy to contemplate the end rather than the future. Life is still full of exciting opportunities and challenges, which motivate us mentally and physically.”

I think back to the three years I spent at Taft and can only be thankful for how

my experiences prepared me for my life. I have just retired from 10 years of teaching nursing students. I never imagined myself at Taft becoming a teacher, but I know that my Taft teachers supported me, encouraged me, and influenced me. Funny, that is how my students described me at the end of each semester.

I receive a number of alumni magazines: Chatham Hall, Wheaton College (Norton, Massachusetts), and Georgetown University. The *Taft Bulletin* is always the most interesting and informative.

—Holly Holmes Williams Ross '74

Connected by Class Notes

The Bulletin was pleased to receive this letter from longtime class secretary Pete Greer '53, who agreed to let us share it with our readers.

When I was asked to take on the task of class secretary, I thought it might be a burden, but that has not been the case. I've had the best people to work with at Taft and cherish the rapport and friendship that has grown up. I also enjoy the contact with my classmates, and while I'm not overly aggressive about contacting them—not wanting to intrude in anyone's life—I do look forward to hearing from them and sharing their news with the others in our class.

My brother, Jay '50, attended Taft for three years before I went there, so I can look back in class notes and see names of alumni dating from 1946 to 1947 that I recognize or know. I read their class notes and those about three years beyond 1953, so I keep up with people who were lower mids when we were seniors. I really feel connected to Taft and enjoy it immensely.

—Peter Greer '53

Correction

In the spring issue's Alumni Spotlight about Joyce Poole '74, the 2017 Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal honoree, on pages 6–7, we neglected to add that her father, Robert (former faculty member and coach), was also a graduate of the Class of '50.

Oriocos' Origins

After the Class of '62 celebrated their 55th Reunion in May, an email discussion followed about the origins of the names of Taft's student choral groups, Hydrox (who sang at their Reunion Dinner) and Oriocos. Here are two excerpts:

A little more back ground about the choral groups. The Orinoco is one of the longest rivers in South America. Most of the length of the river is in Venezuela, where Beezer Manning was a young petroleum engineer for Standard Oil and part of a team that discovered one of the biggest oil fields in the world. And it remains so today. He contracted malaria and had to be evacuated back to the States. It was determined that he could not return to Venezuela. He was given a medical separation with a significant financial package.

He then joined the staff at Taft. He started the Oriocos, which was to be called the Orinocos but the *Pap* misspelled the word, dropping the 'n.'

I know this how? After we graduated from Taft, my parents moved to Liberia, West Africa, and over that summer I contracted malaria. Over the years Beezer and I had many conversations about malaria as we both contracted the repeating type.

—Marty Keller '62

Hydrox

Whoever came up with the name thought the all-male group was called Oreos, like the cookie, instead of Oriocos, and so named the female group after the parent company Hydrox. By the time the school learned of the mistake, everybody decided it was OK.

—David Forster '62

Alumni SPOTLIGHT



Driver Nick Firestone '84, left, at the 50th anniversary of the NORRA 1000, a Mexican off-road/rally race, with his co-driver/navigator PJ Jones, son of Parnelli Jones, the 1963 Indy 500 winner and one of the best drivers in the U.S. Their fathers used to race in the Baja 1000 and other off-road races at the same time, but this was the first time that Nick and PJ had ever raced together.

Four-Wheeled Love Affair

NICK FIRESTONE '84 has loved racing since age 3. It's in his blood; his great-grandfather, Harvey Firestone, started the eponymous tire and rubber company that still dominates the roads today.

And while the 51-year-old has now raced among the most acclaimed drivers in the world, his decision to follow the passion may have received a boost during his years at Taft—where his daughter,

Annabel '20, just finished her lower-mid year. While touring colleges with his mother, in town from their hometown of Phoenix, Firestone floated the idea of borrowing \$5,000 to build an off-road race car. He vowed to document the process and submit it with his college application.

"She went for it," he says, and while he ended up at Princeton, he believes Duke accepted him "on the

back of racing." When he told his interviewer there that his dream was to win the Indianapolis 500, the man shut Firestone's file and the two spent the next 25 minutes talking about racing. "It got to the point that my mom came up and interrupted the interview because the tour was leaving!" Firestone says.

Firestone's racing career got a start thanks to friend and classmate Derek



Mitchell '84, who reached out to another alum, Adam Bronfman '81, to sponsor Firestone. "I never would have been able to race that off-road car that many times had Adam not helped us out. It was just too expensive," he says, "so I'll be forever beholden to Adam because we got our foot in the door and got a lot of experience."

While "the car broke a lot when we were first driving," Firestone finished in third place the first time he entered the Baja 1000, the off-road race that takes place in Mexico's Baja California Peninsula. After he returned to Princeton following the palate-whetting racing experience, he got a call from 1963 Indy 500 champion and family friend Parnelli Jones, who offered to coach him over a summer.

"I've always said I can teach someone to drive, but I can't teach them the desire to win," Jones told *Motor Sport* in 1999. "Nick has never given up on his racing dream, and now that he's gotten the right opportunity, I plan to be track-side wishing him the best of luck."

Firestone is the first member of his family to race professionally (that's saying something considering he has 44 cousins), and he set his sights on winning

the 1999 Indy 500. Jones encouraged him to get into go-karts, the training ground of the exclusive race car world.

Firestone nabbed 12 top-three finishes in International Karting Federation races between 1987 and 1989. After he graduated from Princeton that year, he headed to Europe to compete with some of the most competitive drivers in the world in the Opel Lotus Euroseries and the British Formula 2 for about three and a half years before his team went bankrupt.

He returned to the United States and joined the Firestone Indy Lights series, the highest step on the Road to Indy driver development program for the elite IndyCar Series. He finished his 1993 season by achieving the fastest race lap and took sixth place in Indy Lights in 1993 and 1994.

A few years later, after going through the Rookie Orientation Program for the 1999 IndyCar 500, Firestone's ultimate dream was crushed when he didn't make the field. "I did everything except the race, which was kind of a bummer," he says.

But it didn't turn out so badly. Now Firestone is "back to his roots," racing the go-karts he started his career with. But unlike the five-horsepower, one-gear

◀ Firestone in the SuperKarts! USA Pro Tour Spring Nationals in Sonoma, California, where he had a second-place finish.

▼ Firestone, a board member for Race Day Foundation, demonstrates data acquisition for kids enjoying the SuperKarts! USA Pro Tour Spring Nationals in Sonoma, California.



electric carts we might see at an amusement park, the ones that Firestone races and tunes himself have six gears and 38 horsepower, allowing them to blast from 0 to 60 miles per hour in 3.5 seconds. (For comparison, a 2017 Porsche 911 Carrera does it in four seconds.)

He's on the national series for the karts, has "won a little bit of prize money," and races every few weeks. He recently competed in the National Off-Road Racing Association (NORRA) Mexican 1000 Rally, which is a lot like the Baja 1000 that he competed in back in his school days.

"Really," Firestone says, "I race go-karts because I was forced out of the sport before I wanted to be." But the sport he's stumbled into is still "extremely competitive," perhaps even "more competitive than NASCAR," according to seven-time Formula One World Champion Michael Schumacher.

Firestone sums it up like this: "I'll do this until I physically can't do it anymore, because I love it." ■

—Sam Dangremond '05

A Healing Counselor

RISDON PRISON in Risdon Vale, Tasmania, can be a grim place. It houses men and women who have committed all sorts of crimes and, until recently, was cited for an outdated design that penned prisoners in cells that did nothing to help an inmate's mental health.

Enter Liila "Lee" Hass '77.

A trained naturopath, yoga instructor, and counselor, Hass works as a high-needs support counselor at Risdon, and her role is to focus on inmates with mental health issues and other disabilities—people who have brain injuries from long-term drug use or trauma or who have other mental health issues.

"I would say that at least 50 percent of the inmates at Risdon have some kind of mental health condition, so that's a lot of people to see," Hass says. "I recognize that most of the people who are incarcerated have a history of either witnessing or experiencing some form of trauma, usually during childhood. Besides causing distress and offending behavior, that can also lead to substance abuse and the potential for suicide and self-harm. So a big part of our role is to help make sure that prisoners who are at risk of self-harm

are stabilized and coping while in prison."

A typical day starts with an early morning meditation class for inmates with complex needs, followed by anger management classes or a nonviolent communication class, and then she sees inmates for one-on-one counseling. Hass also oversees groups that help inmates with writing, fitness, and even basic spelling. Paperwork takes up the rest of her days.

Caring for herself is key to being able to reconcile her peaceful work and the challenge of her work counseling inmates at the prison.

"I don't know how peaceful I really am," she admits. "You should see me in a traffic jam, even after 35 years of daily meditation practice. But I think what it takes is remembering who I am, my own history of struggles, and my own ability to move through adversity. So I bring some of that, and I bring the calmness I get from daily yoga and meditation practice."

Hass also tries to walk outside every day, and on the weekends she hikes in the Tasmanian bush, communing with the wild and wonderful natural beauty.

"Basically, I like people and being around challenging situations, so I

actually feel pretty motivated, and I guess I bring that to my work," she adds.

This summer, Hass is returning to the United States to catch up with her family, but she plans to return to Australia, and potentially her work at the prison. Meanwhile, she'll focus on her naturopathic practice. Naturopathy is one of the oldest forms of medicine on earth. It originated in India, in the form of Ayurveda, though the Greeks also used naturopathy for healing. Naturopathy focuses on treating the whole person, rather than focusing on just treatment of the diseased part of the body. As Hass notes, the "father" of medicine, Hippocrates, often prescribed fresh air, sunshine, a healthy diet, rest, and herbal medicine as primary treatments for disease.

Hass says naturopathy involves assessment and treatment of illness in a non-invasive way. Her treatments include dietary advice, the use of supplements, and herbal medicines.

Yoga, too, plays an integral role in Hass's life, and it's a practice she began at Taft under the tutelage of dance instructor Janet Mariani, who incorporated sun salutations and other yoga poses as part of her warm-ups in dance classes.

"During my senior year at Wesleyan, I took a yoga and meditation class as an extracurricular subject, and have been doing them both ever since," Hass says.

She traveled to India and studied yoga, and taught yoga classes while in graduate school at New York University. Since then, she's taught yoga all over the world, from the Philippines to Central America to Russia to Uganda, landing back in Australia, where she's lived since 1993, and settling into work at the notorious Risdon Prison.

While she takes a well-earned break, Hass will continue her efforts to live a peaceful life. "Yoga and meditation every morning without fail," she says. "Keeping fit and enjoying what I do." ■



Hass hiking on the Myrtle Gully Track in the Cascades, in Tasmania. ROBERT BLAKERS

▲ Liila "Lee" Hass '77, at the Risdon Prison Complex, where she is a prison counselor, in Risdon Vale, Tasmania. JODI THORNE

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

A Baker Who Serves

FROM ROSEMARY FOCACCIA and pistachio olive baguettes to Asiago sour-dough crisps and sundried tomato and cheese rolls, the Old School Bakery in Delray Beach, Florida, is known for fresh bread with a delicious combination of taste and texture. Since 1999, owner Billy Himmelrich '82 has been running the bakery and providing bread to the top restaurants, hotels, and country clubs in Southeast Florida, including Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade counties.

Despite his passion and success, Himmelrich says he ended up in the bakery business by accident. It started with learning French at Taft. "After my mid year, I went to France and did an exchange program with the U.S. Trust for Historic Preservation and worked in the countryside." He returned to France to study for his junior year of college. Taking advantage of a great exchange rate, he spent some of that time being wined and dined by family friends. "Within a year, I had eaten at half of these Michelin 3-star restaurants," says Himmelrich. "I fell in love with French food, and when I went back to Emory, I taught myself how to cook with Wolfgang Puck's *Modern French Cooking for the American Kitchen*."

After college he worked at J.P.Morgan, but had a change of heart when the stock market crashed. "I told my parents I wanted to go to graduate school. They said, 'That's great! What do you want to do?' I said, 'I want to go to cooking school in France.'" Himmelrich enrolled



in the second class ever held at the professional cooking school at the Ritz Hotel in Paris.

The following years included several jobs learning from famous French chefs before he moved to Washington, D.C., and got a job making the bread and pasta at I Ricchi, a Tuscan restaurant. After a few other successful restaurant jobs, he opened his own bakery in Baltimore.

In the late '90s, Himmelrich, his wife, Shelly, and their children, Max and Charlie '17, relocated to Delray Beach to be closer to Shelly's family. Right away,

he bought a local bakery (the original Old School Bakery) and set out to get customers. "I would bake through the night and drop samples off," he says. "I got the Breakers Hotel as a customer. Once I got the Breakers, I found it easy to get other hotels and restaurants on 'The Island,' similarly in Delray. We grew organically that way, and we grew by 50 percent every year for the first six or seven years." Today, the bakery has evolved into mainly wholesale with a small storefront.

As the bakery grew, so did Himmelrich's involvement in the community. He expanded his philanthropic endeavors and convinced the Palm Beach



Billy Himmelrich '82, in front of one of his ovens at Old School Bakery. DAVID DURBAK



Scan this page to see Billy bake baguettes!

County Food Bank to take his unsold bread. More recently, he and his wife chaired Delray's first Empty Bowls event—a grassroots effort to raise money for hunger relief. With the purchase of a \$25 ticket, attendees receive a meal of soup, bread, and a handcrafted bowl to take home.

For the Delray Empty Bowls event, the Himmelriches partnered with the Center for the Arts and rented the public park from the city. They adopted the Empty Bowls slogan, "Eat simply so others can simply eat" and organized a strong volunteer base by involving the local high schools, churches, and businesses. "What was really cool is that our servers were 'celebrity servers,'" says Himmelrich. "We got the president of the local university, Florida Atlantic University, the city commissioners, and the local newscaster. We had an NBA star, past mayors, and the current mayor. In addition to the artisan bowls we gave away to everyone, the student pottery that we sold was from the local schools who had made Palm Beach County Food Bank their community service project, and had volunteered to work at the event as well."

Historically, the neighboring Palm Beach Empty Bowls event usually had 600 attendees and raised \$20,000–\$25,000. The Himmelriches' Delray event attracted 1,500 attendees and raised \$150,000 for local people in need.

As for what he likes most about his job, he says, "I love feeding people. Not to be served, but to serve...I chose to be a baker over a chef because by baking for more than 250 restaurants, I get to participate in the lives of all 250 places." But the truth is, Himmelrich has benefited the lives of many more. ■

—Hillary Dooley

A Q&A with Max Sandvoss '98 of First Light Farm & Creamery



WE WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE GOAT farm and creamery owned by Max Sandvoss '98 in upstate New York and his transition from actor to experienced farmer and cheesemaker. Max, known as Stephen while at Taft, runs First Light with his brother, Trystan, and their team of employees.

With evocatively named cheeses like Sun-Kissed Caprese, Tuscan Sunset, and Moonshot, he and his brother are committed to the entire natural process, with grass-fed animals and organic pastures, and they sell their cheeses at farmers' markets and to stores and restaurants across their region.

Why raise dairy goats?

What made you and your brother start with them, and how did the cheesemaking begin?

I have always loved goat cheese and goats, but my life didn't head in that direction at first. After college, I was an actor for a couple of years, mostly TV and indie movies, and I lived in LA. Toward the end of my time there, my agent got in a major car accident and was in a coma for many months. I got a chance to rethink what I wanted to do with my life.

At the time, my brother was working at a small farmstead creamery in the Pacific Northwest. I visited a couple times, and it felt right, so I moved there and learned how to care for goats and

make cheese. We moved to Western New York and started First Light in 2010.

Do you still purchase milk from a neighboring organic cow farm for cheesemaking?

First Light is right up the road from an extremely well-managed organic Jersey dairy. Right now our goat herd is 190 milking does strong, so we make fresh and aged organic cow's milk and goat's milk cheeses of many different kinds.

What's the current focus for your products, and where is your time directed most?

Right now First Light is on the menus of about 150 restaurants. Our cheese is carried

▲ Sandvoss with his goat herd at First Light Farm & Creamery.

in many wineries and high-end co-ops and small markets in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and throughout the Finger Lakes. We're in 52 Wegmans in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. The next step for us is Whole Foods, hopefully in the Tri-State Area and the Northeast soon. Look out for it!

Do you still do a Dairy Share CSA (community supported agriculture) program for your dairy products?

We have a dairy CSA that delivers our milk, cheese, and yogurt to members in Buffalo and Rochester.



Sandvoss at the vat making one of the creamery's artisanal cheeses.



Max Sandvoss '98 runs with the herd at First Light Farm & Creamery in Upstate New York.

What do you love the most about doing this work?

I love where I live. I love making the kind of food I want to eat. It's particularly gratifying to develop friendships with chefs who love our cheese.

What are some of the hardest parts of your farming life?

The hardest part of this job is kidding season, when hundreds of babies are born. It is busy.

What's one of the crazier funny moments?

We make a wine-brined goat's milk Gouda called Moonshot. Two years ago, using a GoPro camera, we decided to try to catch some footage of goats drinking "wine" that was really just molasses and water. They went nuts for it, and we got lots of awesome footage of our goats drinking "wine" from wine glasses and even right out of the bottle. Goats are pretty great on-camera talent, and they always get a laugh out of me.

Are you glad you moved back East?

Between my brother, Trystan, and me, we've been exposed to a lot of what's out there, what's possible. I've lived many different places, and I miss most of them, but I'm glad to be where I am.

[Ed. note: Sandvoss's mother and stepdad happen to have a dairy farm up the road from where he and his brother started First Light. The area is perfect for dairying, with a temperate climate with fertile soil.]

What's next for your business?

Our goal is to bring our cheese east to New York City, Boston, and everywhere great in between, including Connecticut, and west to Ohio and beyond. Wegmans is taking us company-wide this fall, so we'll be in six states beginning Labor Day! ■

—Linda Hedman Beyus

See more about First Light at firstlightfarmer.com and [instagram.com/firstlightfarmer](https://www.instagram.com/firstlightfarmer).



A Climate of Change

AMY LYND LUERS '84 is not one to wilt from a challenge—even as the planet warms.

When Latin American villagers needed help getting access to clean water, she answered the call. She cofounded an NGO called Agua Para La Vida to help build potable water systems in the region.

When Google wanted to explore how it could help with environmental issues, Luers again answered the call. She co-initiated the effort, a project to use Google's technology for monitoring of the environment and deforestation, which led to the creation of Google Earth Engine.

So, when the Obama administration came calling on Luers to join the Office of Science and Technology Policy as a climate change expert, it only seemed logical that she would jump at the offer, right? Not so fast. Uprooting her family from their Bay Area home gave Luers, who is married with a son, pause.

"Someone asked, 'Would you be

interested?'" Luers says. "I said, 'No, because I'm not moving the family to D.C.' My husband said, 'That's ridiculous. Of course, you should do it.'"

Several months later, Luers finally did answer that call, signing on to be the assistant director for climate resilience and information, a position she held for the final 19 months of Barack Obama's presidency.

Perhaps now more than ever, Luers and her scientific peers face the toughest gauntlet in the great climate change debate. It's not rising ocean temperatures or melting polar ice caps. It's not super storms or smog.

It's political climate change—and a pivot by the Trump administration on the very environmental policies espoused by Obama.

That shift started with Trump's appointment of global warming skeptic Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, which is trying

to unwind Obama-era clean-air standards for power plants and cars.

"It's obviously a really tough time in the context of the leaders that President Trump has brought in to lead the different areas and agencies of relevance," says Luers, who returned to California this year to a senior leadership post at the Skoll Global Threats Fund.

The San Francisco-based foundation was created by Jeff Skoll, the first president of the online auction giant eBay and a philanthropist. Luers is director of climate change at the grant-making organization, whose mission is to "confront global threats by seeking solutions, strengthening alliances, and spurring actions to safeguard the future."

Even more dramatic of a departure was Trump's recent decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate accord.

"I think it will be a hard thing for the secretary of defense and the secretary of the state to engage in the world if we pull



Amy Lynd Luers '84 in Washington, D.C.

out of that," Luers says. "This is an area that we need to continue to lead on."

Trump's EPA head has come under heavy fire for saying he does not believe carbon dioxide emissions are a primary contributor to global warming. Luers shares her thoughts.

"I really believe you're not going to convince someone of something unless they're open and willing to be convinced," Luers says. "I do think there are folks that do think this is a very important issue for their kids, for the economy, and for our leadership in the world."

She traces the origins of her life's calling to Taft and to Middlebury College, where she gained an affinity for science and the outdoors.

"At Taft, I remember I took AP Physics," Luers said. "Certainly, I remember there hadn't been many girls that had taken the AP Physics exam for years."

After graduating from Middlebury, Luers moved to California, where she worked in the theater. When she saw a *Science for Society* magazine in a Berkeley, California, bookstore, it spoke directly to her passion for science as a means

to help society. She went and knocked on the door of its nearest office to learn more about the organization and wound up meeting the colleagues with whom she started Agua Para La Vida.

Luers went on to earn a Ph.D. in environmental science and a master's degree in international policy studies from Stanford University, as well as a B.S. and M.S. in environmental systems engineering from Humboldt State University in California.

She has recently been named the new executive director of Future Earth, a 10-year initiative to advance global sustainability science, and will start at the organization in September.

It's been a circuitous route for Luers, and thanks to her efforts at Google, scientists were able to see the forests through the clouds. The problem solver in Luers has always been able to see the forest through the trees. ■

—Neil Vigdor '95

Perfecting His Craft

FOR DONALD MOLOSI '05, it's hard to remember a time when he wasn't performing. Born and raised in Botswana, he spent much of his childhood as an actor and was involved in children's shows sponsored there by UNICEF, from an early age. "When I grew up," he recalls, "we had no TV station. When we did get a national TV

station, I was one of the first children to ever work on TV in Botswana." Television was a natural fit for Molosi, who at that time was already performing in various stage shows around the country.

A top student at Maru-a-Pula School in Botswana, he won a scholarship to attend Taft for a postgraduate year. "It

was such a life-altering experience in all the best ways," he says. As soon as he arrived, he threw himself into the arts. "I was in every play and musical. I did *Damn Yankees* and *You Can't Take It With You*, as well as many other smaller performances."

After Taft came Williams College, an experience that also provided one of the major turning points in his acting career. There, Molosi performed *Blue, Black and White*, his own one-man show, as part of Dialogue One, a theater festival organized by his mentor, Omar Sangare. Due to the success of that show, the off-Broadway festival United Solo invited Molosi to perform in 2012. Not only did

◀ Donald Molosi '05 performs in an award-winning play he wrote, *Blue, Black and White*, at Maitisong Theatre, in Gaborone, Botswana. The play was also the first-ever Botswana play staged off-Broadway in New York City.

that off-Broadway debut earn him critical acclaim, he also won Best Actor and Best Solo awards for his work.

Committed to perfecting his craft, Molosi continued to study, earning a master's in theater and performance studies at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Since then, he has performed on stage and in film, recently appearing alongside David Oyelowo and Rosamund Pike in *A United Kingdom*, a film focused on Botswana's first president, Sir Seretse Khama.

Khama was also the subject of Molosi's *Blue, Black and White*, which, as he explains, "tells of how Botswana's inaugural first couple was interracial. That broke taboos, upset the British Empire, and set in motion the creation of a non-racial African republic." That work, along with his play *Motswana: Africa, Dream Again*, which looks

at the Botswana of today, was recently published in the collection, *We Are All Blue*, marking the first time in Botswana that a play has gone from the stage to print.

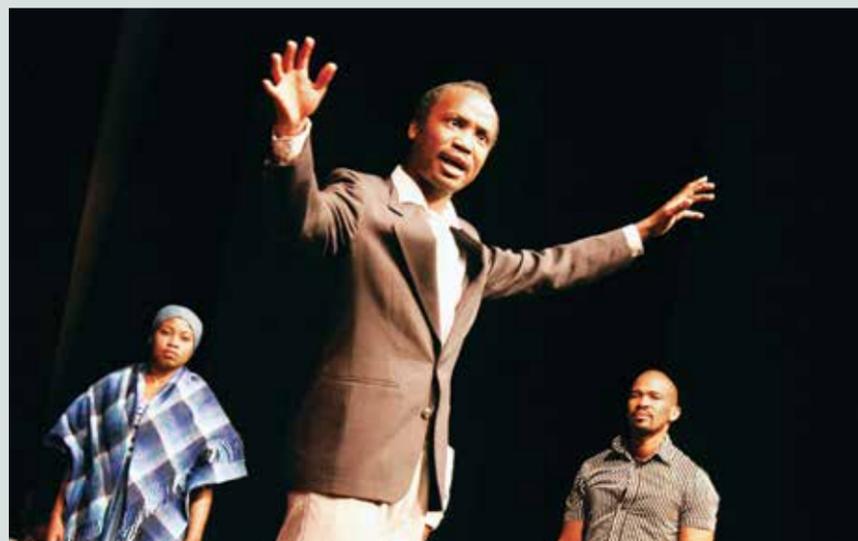
Although Molosi acknowledges that he's "primarily an actor by training," he felt compelled to write when he discovered a lack of strong African characters. "I became a playwright by necessity because stories that I wanted to tell were not in plays. I wanted to portray dignified and complex African protagonists, and I could not find them," he says. And, Molosi says, learning the art form from the other side has "only helped me approach other playwrights' work better as an actor myself."

For Molosi, the theater brings an incredible magic. "Plays are immediate," he says, "and you get lost for two hours in another reality. I love that immersive aspect." But beyond just entertainment,

he also sees how drama can be used to improve his community. For over a decade, he's worked with the United Nations and the African Union on various humanitarian projects. Mostly recently, he has been "closely involved with campaigns to place African history in African classrooms. It will be through the arts that Africa's education revolution will come, and I am thrilled to be witnessing that already."

To this day, he credits Taft with giving him the tools to succeed. "Taft was a crash course in how to remain faithful to your humanity in a world that might sometimes contest that humanity," he says. "Our motto, Not to be served but to serve, is at the heart of all I do today. I am extremely grateful to Taft for setting me on a path of possibility for the rest of my life." ■

—Christopher Browner '12





A KIND OF FREEDOM
Counterpoint
Margaret Wilkerson Sexton '00

Sexton's debut novel explores the legacy of racial disparity in the South through a poignant and redemptive family history.

Evelyn is a Creole woman who comes of age in New Orleans at the height of World War II. Her family inhabits the upper echelon of black society, and she is forced to choose between her life of privilege and the no-account man she loves.

In 1982, her daughter, Jackie, is a frazzled single mother grappling with her absent husband's drug addiction. As she comes to terms with his abandoning the family, he returns, and she must decide if resuming their life together is worth the near certainty he'll leave again.

Jackie's son, T.C., likes the creative process of growing marijuana more than the weed itself. After Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans he had known didn't survive the storm. Fresh out of a four-month stint for drug charges, he decides to start over. For Evelyn, Jim Crow is an ongoing reality, and in its wake new threats spring up to haunt her descendants.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Sexton studied creative writing at Dartmouth and law at UC Berkeley. She spent a year in the Dominican Republic working for a civil rights organization and writing. Her stories have been published or are forthcoming in *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Limestone Journal*, *Broad! Magazine*, and *The Massachusetts Review*. She lives in the Bay Area, California.

MRS. SMITH'S SPY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
Simon & Schuster
Beth McMullen '87

In McMullen's middle grade debut novel, a girl discovers her boarding school is actually an elite spy-training program, and she must learn the skills of the trade in order to find her mother.

After a botched escape plan from her boarding school, Abigail is stunned to discover the school is actually a cover for an elite spy ring called The Center, along with being training grounds for future spies. Even more shocking, Abigail's mother is a top agent for The Center and she has gone MIA, with valuable information that many people would like to have, at any cost.

Along with a former nemesis and charming boy from her grade, Abigail goes through a crash course in Spy Training 101, often with hilarious—and sometimes painful—results. But Abigail realizes she might be a better spy-in-training than she thought, and the answers to her mother's whereabouts are a lot closer than she thinks.

McMullen lives and works in Northern California with her husband and two children. Visit her at bethmcmullenbooks.com.

HOUSING THE NEW ROMANS: ARCHITECTURAL RECEPTION AND CLASSICAL STYLE IN THE MODERN WORLD
Oxford University Press
Edited by Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis '98 and Katharine T. von Stackelberg

In the last 20 years, reception studies have significantly enhanced our understanding of the ways in which classics have shaped modern Western culture, but little attention has been directed toward the reception of classical architecture.

Housing the New Romans addresses this gap by investigating ways in which appropriation and allusion facilitated the reception of classical Greece and Rome through the requisition and redeployment of classicizing tropes to create neo-antique sites of "dwelling" in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The volume, across nine essays, covers both European and American iterations of place making, including Sir John Soanes' house in London, the Hôtel de Beauharnais in Paris, and the Getty Villa in California.

By focusing on structures and places that are oriented toward private life—houses, hotels, clubs, tombs, and gardens—the book provides a multiplicity of interpretative frameworks that may be applied to the study of architectural reception. This critical approach makes this volume the first of its kind in the emerging field of architectural and landscape reception studies.

ODE TO MY AUTUMN
Antrim House
Victor Altshul '52

"Like all the best poetry, Altshul's *Ode to My Autumn* is written out of the poet's sense of mortal urgency," writes poet Clare Rossini in her endorsement. "Whether taking on the perspective of a ruminative blue heron, exploring the tragedy of a brother's mental illness, or coming to terms with one of the many writers, artists, and musicians who serve as co-conspirators in his art-making, Altshul tracks his thought and emotion with an intensity and clarity that draw us in.

"This is a poet equally at home in free and formal verse, and the music of the poems is consistently convincing. His voice has similar range, moving from tender compassion to incisive political commentary to rueful self-awareness. And the author is also capable of being scintillatingly funny in his poems, a rare feat. But finally, it's the felt sense of the life behind the work that makes it hard to put down *Ode to My Autumn*."

Altshul is a practicing psychiatrist in New Haven, Connecticut, and is a faculty member as well as a graduate of Yale University School of Medicine. He has published several books of poetry, and lives in New Haven with his wife, Laura, also a published poet.

SIMPLE COMPLEXITY: A MANAGEMENT BOOK FOR THE REST OF US
A GUIDE TO SYSTEMS THINKING
Morgan James Publishing
William Donaldson '74

Every manager knows a business is a system, yet very few have studied systems thinking or systems dynamics. This is a critical oversight, one which *Simple Complexity* helps remedy.

Management consultant, repeat CEO, and business professor Donaldson describes how systems naturally form and behave, and reveals systems tenets that all managers must know. The author reveals the fundamental system archetype at work in any enterprise and prescribes new ways to reinvigorate management thinking. *Simple Complexity* provides a systems context that powerfully enriches traditional management thought and practice.

Donaldson is a professor of management at the Joseph W. Luter III School of Business at Christopher Newport University and has over 30 years of experience in his roles as a board member, president, and CEO of eight companies. He is the founder and president of Strategic Venture Planning, a management consulting firm that assists boards, investors, and senior management teams maximize results.

GOLF...THE CRUELLEST OF GAMES
The Choir Press
Cheever Hardwick '59

In his latest book, Hardwick takes an irreverent, humorous, and insightful look at the game of golf and all it involves. Decades of struggle with the dreaded game have resulted in this work, which is based on the assumption that golf is a game—and a rather odd one at that. As such, golf should be a source of amusement rather than anguish, certainly in the case of amateur players. A word of warning: This is not a book for those who take themselves or the game very seriously.

"Sports were always a bit of an obsession, [but most have disappeared] due to injuries," the author writes. "I am now left with a bit of shooting, clumsy efforts at fishing, and golf. I have played golf sporadically since childhood, hence I have been witness to the silly game for over 60 years and have watched it grow exponentially over that period. I have been living in the English countryside for over 25 years and move between England, Scotland, and Portugal chasing little white balls into bushes."

The author of several books, Hardwick graduated from Washington & Lee University with a bachelor of arts in journalism, and later received a doctor of jurisprudence from the University of Colorado Law School. ■

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

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

Around the POND

BY DEBRA MEYERS

Opening Doors to Change

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



Grace Dreher '18 collected comfort items for children in foster care.

CHANGING THE WORLD is not an abstract concept to Taft's Global Leadership Institute (GLI) scholars, it is an imperative. This year's class of GLI program graduates tackled projects that not only raised awareness about global issues, but took meaningful steps toward impacting them.

"Sometimes we're so focused on all we have to do here—sports, academics, extracurriculars—it's hard to turn outward and remember that there are other issues in the world that we should be doing something about," says GLI Scholar Grace Dreher '18. "This program showed me how easy it can be. If high school kids can do something that makes such a difference, everyone can."

Dreher was one of 10 Taft students selected to join the program's second cohort in the fall of 2015. With 10 students from Waterbury schools rounding out the class, the group embarked on an 18-month experiential learning journey, carefully crafted to enhance their understanding of global issues, while developing the knowledge and skills they need to effect meaningful change. The curriculum includes talks by local and global leaders and scholars, teambuilding events and experiences, diversity leadership workshops, and field trips. Students also participate in a summer service internship.

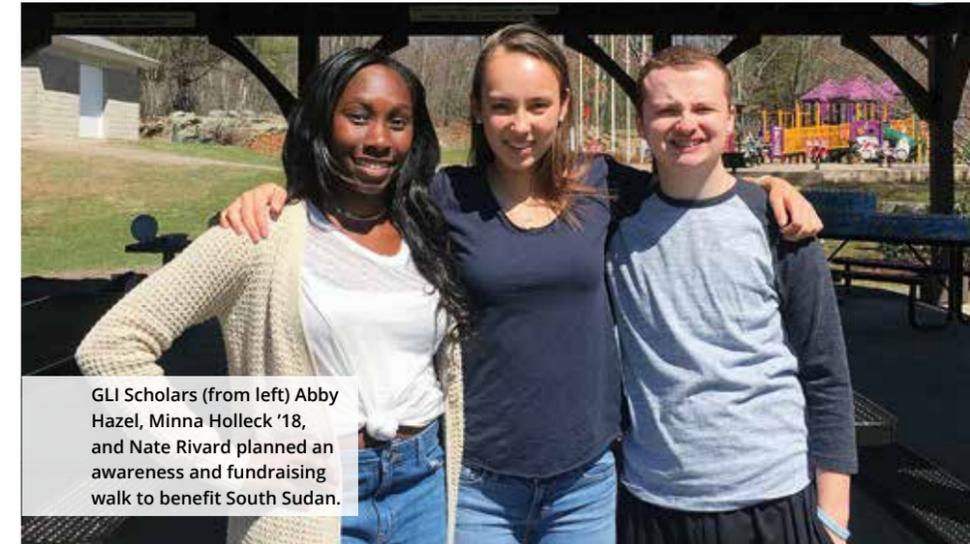
"The GLI experiences are all scaffolding for the culminating project," explains Baba

Frew who, along with Laura Monti '89, directs the program. "Their 32-hour internships and inquiry-based research papers form the basis of the culminating project."

Dreher adds, "Preparing a research paper builds understanding around an issue, then actually doing something hands-on makes for a very well-designed program."

This year, GLI Scholars worked in pairs or small groups on their projects.

"There were some logistical challenges with the students being spread across schools throughout Waterbury and Watertown," notes Frew, "but it better represents the true collaborative experience we



GLI Scholars (from left) Abby Hazel, Minna Holleck '18, and Nate Rivard planned an awareness and fundraising walk to benefit South Sudan.



Walk for South Sudan participants experienced what it was like to carry heavy buckets of water, a fact of life for many women and children in the region.

want to achieve through this partnership."

Dreher worked with Waterbury Careers Academy junior Heaven Begum to lessen the trauma of the foster care experience.

"Our research showed us that there are a number of issues with the foster care system, and that many children end up with huge deficits due to their foster care experiences," says Dreher. "But what struck us the most was how often children move—it is not uncommon for children in foster care to have 10, 20, or 30 homes in their lifetimes. And when they move they are often only given a black trash bag to carry their belongings—really just basic necessities—in."

Dreher and Begum found a California-based foundation, My Stuff Bags, that

provides children in crisis with pieces of comfort to call their own, things like books, clothing, toys, and school supplies. Armed with brochures about the organization and lists of the items most needed to fill comfort bags, Dreher and Begum spent an afternoon outside of a local retailer talking about foster care and collecting donations for the project.

"Some people made purchases in the store," says Dreher, "but others donated cash. We collected huge bins filled with books, toys, and clothing. It was really amazing to see how generous people were."

Dreher also held a fundraiser on campus, selling doughnuts after study hall, which went toward the purchase of backpacks. She and Begum are now sorting the

donations and stuffing age-appropriate backpacks filled with comfort items, to be donated to a local My Stuff Bags affiliate.

"We're fulfilling the Global Leadership Institute motto of thinking globally but acting locally, which is very exciting for us," notes Dreher.

Minna Holleck '18 and Waterbury GLI Scholars Abby Hazel and Nate Rivard also took action locally to impact a problem thousands of miles away. The trio hosted a walk at Watertown's Veterans' Park to benefit Water for South Sudan, a nonprofit organization that brings clean, safe water to hundreds of thousands of people in remote South Sudan villages.

As a middle school student, Holleck read *A Long Walk to Water*, by Linda Sue

Park. *The New York Times* bestseller shares the true stories of two 11-year-olds living in Sudan at different points in the nation's history. In 2008, Nya works to secure water for her family by walking two hours each way to a freshwater pond; she makes the trip twice each day. In 1985, Salva becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan—refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for safety and shelter.

"I was captivated by and shocked at the conditions described in the book," explains Holleck. "In South Sudan, women and children are walking up to eight hours each day in 100-degree heat just to get a small amount of dirty water."

The story stuck with her, and immediately came to mind for her GLI project.

"I started thinking about the idea of the walk, and thinking about distance," Holleck says. "I thought it would be a meaningful connection to walk 3.7 miles here, as 3.7 miles is the average distance that women and children walk for water in Africa."

Nearly 50 people turned out for the walk, where Holleck, Hazel, and Rivard raised more than \$1,200 for Water for South Sudan. Participants also experienced just a small taste of what it is like for the children of South Sudan, carrying heavy buckets of water at the event and walking while balancing jugs of water on their heads.

"I think that a lot of people know a little bit about the difficult situation in South Sudan," says Holleck, "but not enough. The reality is that many, many people

simply do not have access to clean water."

"There were some remarkable projects this year," Frew says.

Students tackled everything from renewable energy and urban gardening to LGBT rights in schools and early childhood education and literacy.

"Many of my friends are also GLI Scholars," says Peter Horne '18, who studied gang violence in Chicago for his culminating project. "When you sign on for a program like this you don't realize how much it will touch every aspect of your life—that you and your friends are going to spend so much of your free time talking about your projects, sharing insights about renewable energy or gang violence. The doors this program opens are pretty amazing." ■



Margaret Fitzgerald Wagner '93 Joins Board of Trustees

TAFT ALUMNI HAVE ELECTED

Margaret Fitzgerald Wagner '93 to serve her alma mater as the newest member of the board of trustees.

Wagner is a graduate of Yale (B.A., 1997), and MIT (M.S. R.E.D., 2005). She has worked in the affordable housing industry since 2000, first with a consulting firm and since 2005 as a developer and investor. Wagner is currently a managing partner of First Atlantic Capital LLC, a real estate investment company in Boston that focuses on the acquisition, ownership, and redevelopment of affordable multifamily housing communities throughout the United States. Her interest in housing was sparked by her first "real" job after college, as an analyst of housing and health care bonds with Standard & Poor's in San Francisco.

Wagner is involved with a number

of industry groups that work to shape public policy around affordable housing, including the Institute for Responsible Housing Preservation, of which she became president in January. Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker recently appointed her to the board of directors of the Community Economic Development Assistance Corp., a quasi-public corporation that provides funding and other support for community-based nonprofit affordable and supportive housing developments in Massachusetts.

At Taft, Wagner served on her Class Committee for three years and was a member of one of the great groups of monitors in Taft history who instilled good citizenship through fun. After a sports injury ended her effectiveness as a participant, she devoted herself to managing teams,

including Patsy Odden's New England champion girls' hockey teams. She treasures her Taft classroom experiences and is grateful that they made her both literate and numerate. At graduation, she was class speaker and was awarded the Aurelian Award.

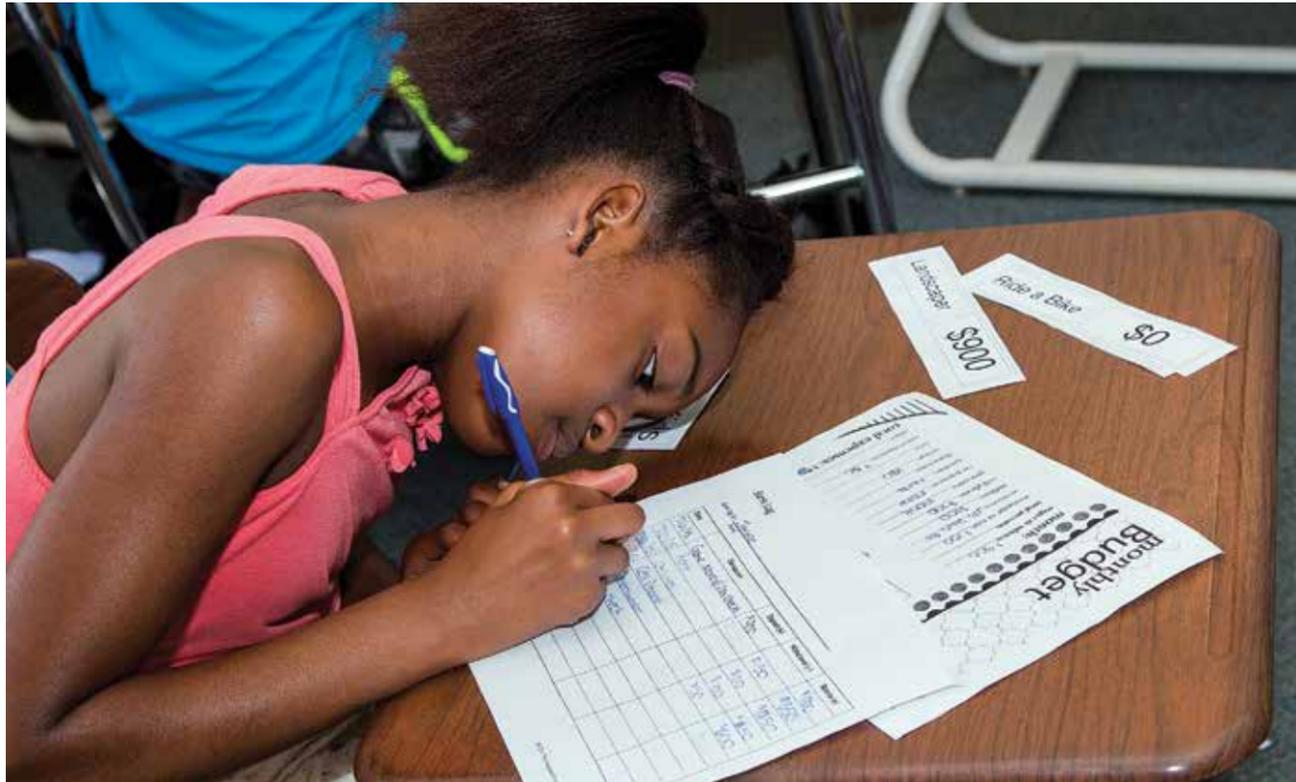
Wagner's interest in Taft was awakened early in life, as her family lived next to the headmaster's house. Many members of her family are Taft graduates, and her mother was on the faculty for several years. She has been active in Taft affairs since graduation, working at the summer school, serving as head class agent, reunion chair, and a capital campaign fundraiser.

Wagner and her husband, Rod, are the parents of two smart and humorous children, Jack, 10, and Annie, 8. They live in a repurposed industrial loft in Boston's Fort Point neighborhood. ■



TAFT STUDENTS PLANTED FOUR TREES ON CAMPUS—ONE FOR EACH CLASS—TO CELEBRATE EARTH DAY AND ARBOR DAY. There are now three new sugar maples in the field behind Bingham Auditorium, and a new beech tree by the main gate. The Taft community also raised funds to donate to the Nature Conservancy's Plant a Billion Trees project, which is working to counter the effects of global deforestation by planting one billion new trees by 2025.





Taft-PAL Summer Program Awarded Local Grant

THE TAFT SCHOOL-POLICE ACTIVITY League (PAL) Summer Enrichment Academy has been awarded a generous grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation. The funding supports the enrollment of 85 local students in the academy.

The Taft-PAL Summer Enrichment Academy was established in 2011 by Waterbury native and Taft faculty member Laura Monti '89, with her husband and Taft Academic Dean Jeremy Clifford. Their goal was to provide meaningful summer opportunities for area students while opening educational doors. The original curriculum was built around SSAT preparation.

"A lot of Waterbury students are interested in applying to Taft and schools like Taft," says Clifford, "but sometimes do

not do well on the required standardized testing. These are highly motivated learners with very good grades who are just not familiar with the kinds of questions they will see on the SSAT. It is not a question of ability so much as it is exposure to the type of material presented on the test."

Seven rising eighth-grade students enrolled in the first summer session. In six short years, the program has grown exponentially, now enrolling 85 rising sixth- through ninth-grade students in the four-week program, and hiring Taft students and alumni, as well as program alumni, to lead classes in SSAT preparation, academic skill development, study habits, and an array of electives that cover topics like astronomy, public speaking, music, and financial management.

In each year, the progress has been measurable and meaningful: individual SSAT scores have increased by an average of six to nine percentage points in all three areas, verbal, math, and reading.

"We're very proud of the way this program has grown and the results we have achieved," Monti says. "Helping students recognize that they have the academic ability to strive for things they might not otherwise have thought possible is incredibly important and very rewarding. We could not do any of it without the generosity of organizations like the Connecticut Community Foundation."

The Taft-PAL Summer Enrichment Academy also receives financial support from the Edward E. Ford Foundation and the Ion Bank Foundation. ■

Based in Waterbury, the Connecticut Community Foundation offers resources and services to nonprofits, students, and donors in 21 towns that make up Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills. Learn more at conncf.org.



Bien Joué

TAFT STUDENTS MAY NOW JOIN the celebrated ranks of national French language scholars. French teacher Sarah Gray established a Taft chapter of the Société Honoraire de Français—the French National Honor Society—this year. Thirty-nine students were inducted into the inaugural class.

"Bringing the French National Honor Society to Taft is part of a broader initiative to create more visibility and opportunity for our language students," says Gray. "It is important to celebrate their accomplishments within the academic realm at Taft while opening the door to national

achievement and recognition."

Students also established a French Club on campus this year, and for the first time, 16 students sat for Le Grand Concours, the national French exam. Both the exam and the Honor Society are sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of French.

"More than 79,000 students took the exam nationwide," Gray explains. "Fourteen of our students earned awards, ranging from honorable mentions to gold medals."

Two Taft students did exceptionally well: Magda Kisielinska '18 and Macy Toppan '18 earned

second- and fourth-place finishes in the state of Connecticut, respectively; both earned sixth-place honors at their level nationwide.

The French National Honor Society recognizes high school sophomores and above in the United States who have maintained a 90 average all year in their French language courses; its motto is *L'homme qui sait deux langues en vaut deux*, "The man who knows two languages is worth two men." Community service is mandatory for members, as is a high grade point average overall, in addition to an A in French classes during the semester of selection. ■



2016 NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR JAHANA HAYES visited Taft to share her thoughts on the role of educators, and to reflect on the honor that elevated the Waterbury, Connecticut, teacher to the world stage. "Education is about building both knowledge and character," Hayes told the Tafties. "Everyone has an obligation to go out into their communities and help."

Dance



▶ VERONICA RISUCCI '18 performed *Ljósið*, the Icelandic word for light during the Spring Dance Concert. Risucci choreographed and performed the piece with Haley Snow '19, with lighting by Zygmantas Jievaltas '17.

▼ LIBBY DAWE '17 choreographed *Boys* as part of her Independent Dance Tutorial. The work incorporates both music and dance moves from "boy bands" through the ages, from The Temptations to the Back Street Boys.



◀ ERIN FARRELL '20 performed excerpts from *Giselle*, featuring original choreography by Marius Petipa, with additional choreography by Meghan Buchanan.



You'll be entertained if you scan these pages!

STEM Students Shine

STUDENTS IN TAFT'S SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH (STEM) PROGRAMS ROUTINELY TEST THEIR METTLE AGAINST THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST STUDENTS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE. TAFT ENJOYED A PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFUL YEAR ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION CIRCUIT, EARNING HONORS AND ACCOLADES ACROSS DISCIPLINES. HERE ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST ACADEMIC YEAR.

SCIENCE

- ▶ Taft scientists Sonny An '17, Daniel Yi '18, Yejin Kim '18, and Portia Wang '18 faced 50 teams from across the Northeast at Yale University's 19th annual Physics Olympics. The team was awarded the bronze medal after five rounds of competition. The five, 45-minute challenges were developed by members of the Yale physics faculty to test students' knowledge of complex physics concepts, and their ability to apply that knowledge effectively and creatively to solve problems.
- ▶ Two teams of 15 students traveled to the University of Connecticut to compete in the Connecticut State Science Olympiad. Within each team, competitors worked in pairs to tackle

"events" across a range of disciplines, from forensics and astronomy to physiology and ecology. At the end of 23 events, Taft's "A" team earned a sixth-place finish overall in a field of 49 teams. Taft's teams earned six medals overall, including a second place medal by Taft Team B members Bill Lu '19 and Mihir Nayar '19 for their robotic arm. Approximately 15,000 schools participate in Science Olympiad events across the nation.

- ▶ Taft was the regional winner in the 2017 Physics Bowl competition, sponsored by the American Association of Physics Teachers. Taft bested perennial regional powerhouses, including the Academy of Aerospace/Engineering, for the win. Of the more than 7,000 students from nearly 600 schools

around the globe that competed in the event, Daniel Yi '18 finished fifth in Division 2, while Sonny An '17 earned the second-highest score in the region.

TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING

- ▶ Two teams represented Taft at the 2017 Trinity College International Robot Contest. The challenge requires teams to build autonomous robots that can navigate a model home in search of a fire, represented by a burning candle, and then effectively extinguish the flame. Shasha Alvares '17, Jona Vithoontien '17, and Julia Kashimura '20 built a robot that successfully extinguished the candle on all five trials, the best a Taft team has ever done. Teams are also encouraged to prepare presentations that describe the process of developing their robot; Alvares won first place in her division for her presentation. Taft also earned a 2017 Outstanding Connecticut Robot award from the Connecticut chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

- ▶ The Technology Students Association (TSA) Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics, and Science (TEAMS) competition is a one-day challenge in which teams of eight students apply math and science knowledge in solving real-world engineering problems. The theme for this year's competition was Engineering the Environment, which consisted of three categories: an essay on the development and improvement of the use of renewable energy; an 80-question test on topics related to identified scenarios and researched by teams prior to the event; and the construction of a



▲ Math Team

robotic arm that can move objects with precision, using a specific set of materials. There were separate categories for students in grades 9 and 10 and those in grades 11 and 12. In the Grades 11–12 Competition, Taft did best in the design category, with Taft A taking first place and Taft B placing third. In the Grades 9–10 Competition, Taft finished first in the essay category and second on the test, securing a second-place finish overall. Nearly 600 schools from across the nation competed for the overall prize.

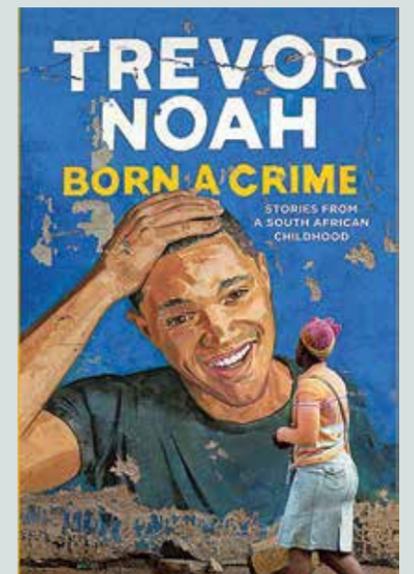
those problems, earning one point for each correct answer. The team's 163 cumulative points earned them the top spot in Litchfield County, besting second-place finisher Kent School by more than 30 points, and nearly doubling Hotchkiss's score. It also gave them the Connecticut state title and a top-10 spot in New England.

- ▶ More than 350,000 students from over 6,000 schools participate in the American Mathematics Competition (AMC) each year. Only 5 percent of all 11th- and 12th-grade competitors advance from the first round to the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME), while only 2.5 percent of 9th and 10th graders are invited to move on to the prestigious second round. Taft had seven students qualify for the AIME. Peter Yu '20 was particularly impressive, earning a near-perfect score in the competition. Yu and An were among the 500 competitors chosen to go on to the United States of America Junior Mathematical Olympiad (USAJMO) and the United States of America Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO), respectively.

"Making this cut is a significant accomplishment," math teacher Joe Zipoli '84 explains. "We're talking about a fraction of the top, of the top, of the top."

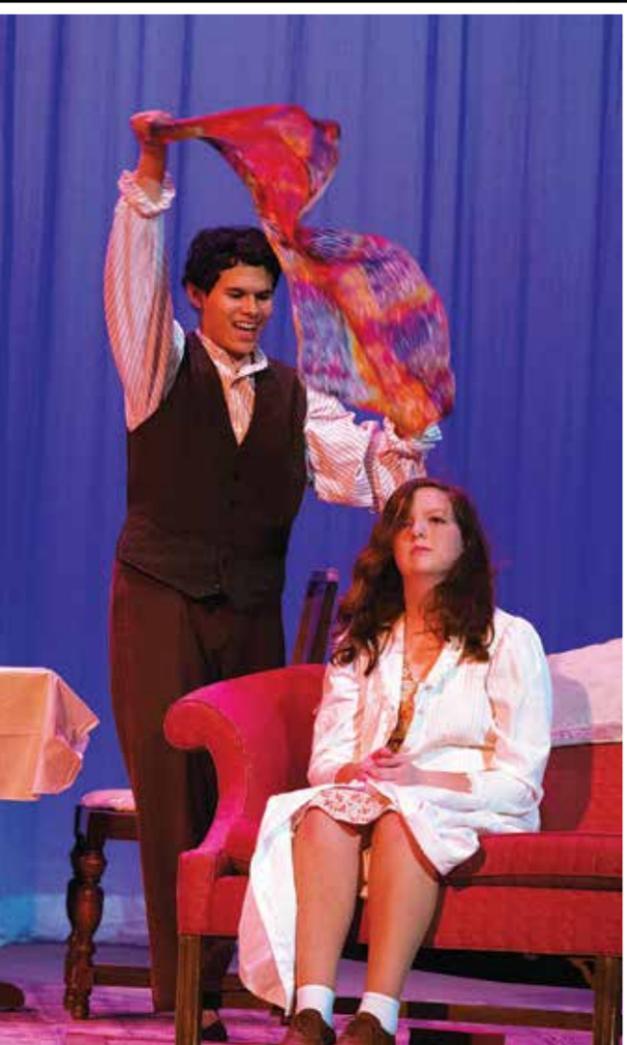


THE TAFT SCHOOL SUMMER READING COMMITTEE has selected Trevor Noah's memoir, *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*, as the all-school summer reading book. A *New York Times* bestseller, *Born a Crime* is a comedic yet compelling and inspiring story of one man's coming of age, set during the twilight of apartheid and the tumultuous days of freedom that followed. In addition to reading *Born a Crime*, each Taft student is asked to read a second book chosen from a list of more than 50 selections offered by faculty members.



TAFTIES MOUNTED THE TENNESSEE WILLIAMS CLASSIC,

The Glass Menagerie

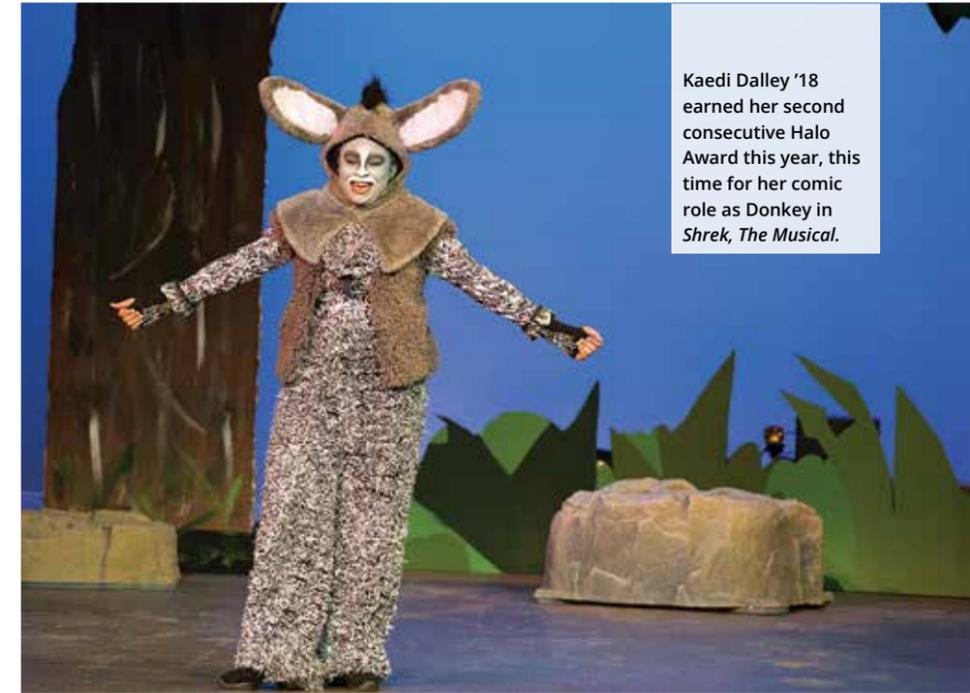


And the Halo Goes To...

TAFT STUDENTS TOOK HOME TOP honors in several categories during this year's Halo Awards. Sponsored by Waterbury's Seven Angels Theatre and presented at the Palace Theater, the Halo Awards celebrate excellence in theater arts productions across Connecticut high schools. More than 40 awards were presented this year to nominees from 64 high schools.

Kaedi Dalley '18 was awarded the 2017 Halo for Best Comic Female Performance in a Musical for her inspired and memorable turn as Donkey in Taft's production of *Shrek, The Musical*. This was Kaedi's second consecutive Halo, having been named 2016's Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of Motormouth Maybelle in *Hairspray*.

Taft students were also repeat winners in the Fearless category, which honors nontraditional productions that often explore social issues. Raymond Bai '18 directed this year's Fearless Award winner, *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead*, an "unauthorized parody" that imagines the lives of the characters



Kaedi Dalley '18 earned her second consecutive Halo Award this year, this time for her comic role as Donkey in *Shrek, The Musical*.

from the *Peanuts* comic strip during their teenage years. The play debuted in New York in 2004. This was also Taft's second consecutive Fearless Award, with student directors taking home the prize last year

for their work on *The Laramie Project*.

Tafties earned Halo Award nominations in 12 unique categories this year. Congratulations to everyone involved with all of this year's productions. ■



(From bottom, clockwise) Lauren Anderson '20, Gabby Gonzalez Carpio '17, and Joanna Kleszczewski '18 were among the 13 Taft students who traveled to Jinotega, Nicaragua, during Spring Break, where they established a "pop-up" school and taught English to local children.

Non ut Sibi in Nicaragua

KNOWN AS "THE CITY OF THE MIST," Jinotega is 1,000 feet above the sea level, in a valley surrounded by spectacular mountains. Here Taft students designed English language lesson plans to meet the educational objectives prescribed in a curriculum built by their host organization, Outreach 360. The program consisted of two, two-hour English language camps each day.





In Focus: NYBG

Shasha Alvares '17

Taft is fortunate to enjoy a tremendous partnership with the New York Botanical Garden. During Spring Break, photography teacher Yee-Fun Yin traveled to The Garden with five Taft students, where they were welcomed by an NYBG photographer who took them through the storied conservatory, sharing tips on the care of cameras in humid environments, and offering technical instruction on capturing great still images of flora.



Cauviya Selva '17



Hail and Farewell

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, more Tafties made Georgetown University their destination than any other single school. This year the tide has turned, with the University of Virginia taking the top spot, followed closely by Colgate. Overall, Taft will be effectively represented at the nation's finest colleges and universities.

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

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Amherst College (3) | Fairfield University | Pitzer College | University of California, Santa Barbara |
| Babson College (2) | Fordham University (2) | Pomona College | University of Colorado at Boulder (2) |
| Bates College (3) | Franklin & Marshall College (2) | Princeton University | University of Connecticut (2) |
| Boston College (3) | Georgetown University (3) | Quinnipiac University | University of Maine |
| Boston University (4) | Georgia Institute of Technology | Rollins College (2) | University of Miami (2) |
| Bowdoin College (3) | Gettysburg College | Saint Michael's College | University of Michigan |
| Brown University (4) | Grinnell College | Sewanee: The University of the South (2) | University of Notre Dame |
| Bucknell University (2) | Hamilton College (2) | Simmons College | University of Pennsylvania (2) |
| California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo | Harvard University (3) | Skidmore College | University of Richmond (4) |
| Carleton College | Harvey Mudd College | Southern Methodist University (3) | University of Southern California |
| Carnegie Mellon University (2) | Haverford College | St. Lawrence University (3) | University of St. Andrews (3) |
| Chapman University (2) | High Point University | Stanford University | University of Vermont |
| Clarkson University | Indiana University at Bloomington | Stonehill College | SUNY Buffalo State College |
| Colby College | Johns Hopkins University | Marist College | Swarthmore College |
| Colgate University (5) | Colby College | Massachusetts Institute of Technology | Syracuse University |
| College of the Holy Cross (2) | Massachusetts Institute of Technology | McGill University (2) | The University of Alabama |
| Columbia University | McGill University (2) | Michigan State University | The University of Texas, Austin |
| Concordia University—Montreal (2) | Middlebury College (2) | Middlebury College (2) | Trinity College (2) |
| Connecticut College | New York University (2) | Northeastern University (3) | Tufts University (2) |
| Cornell University (4) | Northeastern University (3) | Northwestern University | Tulane University |
| Dartmouth College (2) | Northwestern University | Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences | Union College (New York) |
| Davidson College | Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences | Occidental College (3) | United States Military Academy—Army |
| Dickinson College | Occidental College (3) | | University College London |
| Duke University (2) | | | |
| Elon University (3) | | | |



Campus LENS

Logan Clew-Bachrach '20
cools off at
Bantam Lake.



TAF T'S GREATEST SPORTS SEASON EVER!

In his opening remarks at the Spring Sports Awards ceremony, Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 described the extraordinary success of Taft athletics this past spring:

"I have not done a thorough check of the archives and records, but by any measure, this season stands out as remarkable and probably historic in terms of wins and championships."

Taft's varsity teams, which all had winning records, compiled a total record of 211-65-1, just over a 76 winning percentage. Four teams were Founders League champions, two with undefeated seasons, and two were New England champions.



BOYS' TENNIS
18-0

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
★
NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONS



GIRLS' GOLF
12-3-1

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
(four consecutive years)
★
NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONS



BOYS' GOLF
12-0

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
★
ANDOVER INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONS
★
WESTERN NEW ENGLAND INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONS



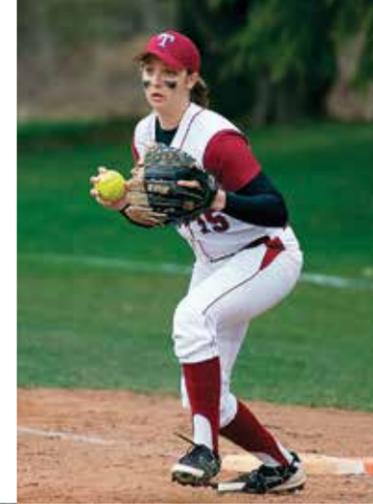
GIRLS' TRACK
10-3

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS



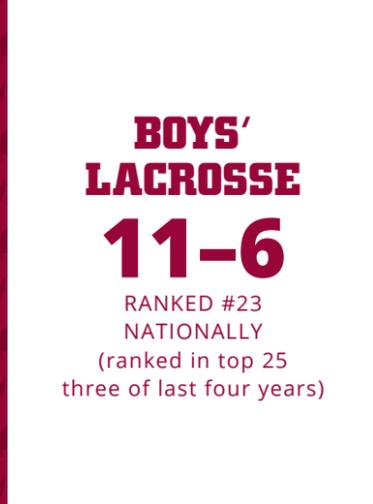
GIRLS' CREW

FOURTH BOAT
★
FIRST EVER NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONS



SOFTBALL
9-5

WESTERN NEW ENGLAND SEMIFINALISTS



BOYS' LACROSSE
11-6

RANKED #23 NATIONALLY
(ranked in top 25 three of last four years)



BOYS' CREW

THREE BOATS TO GRAND FINALS AT NEIRA CHAMPIONSHIP
★
BEST-EVER TEAM FINISH



Drew Powell '17
tees off at the
Watertown
Golf Club for a
Deerfield match.



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

Spring Sports **WRAP-UP**

BY STEVE PALMER
Photography by Robert Falcetti

Girls' Golf 12-3-1

- ▶ FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
- ▶ NEW ENGLAND CHAMPIONS



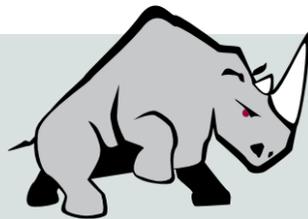
Taft won the Founders League Tournament for the fourth year in a row, this time by four strokes over Hotchkiss. Taft had three Founders League All-Stars, co-captain Grace Dreher '18, Portia Wang '18, and Julia Kashimura '20, who combined for the team-low score of 169. For the first time in five years, the Rhinos were victorious in the Pippy O'Connor New England Tournament, competing against 25 schools and over 110 individual golfers. Kashimura tied for 2nd with a round of 82 and Wang tied for 4th with a round of 83, both helping to distance Taft from the rest of the field on a rainy and windy championship day at the Watertown Golf Club. Taft shot a combined team score of 345, nine strokes better than the 2nd-place team. Key victories for the season included matches against Greenwich Academy and Loomis. In addition to Dreher, Wang, and Kashimura, key players all season were co-captain Avery Andreski '17, Marisa Mission '17, and Olivia Wivestad '19.

◀ Julia Kashimura '20 checks the slope of the green before putting at the Watertown Golf Club during the Founders League Championship.

Boys' Golf 11-0

- ▶ FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
- ▶ ANDOVER INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONS
- ▶ WESTERN NEW ENGLAND INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONS

The 2017 boys' golf team will go down as one of the most dominant teams in the history of golf at Taft. The Rhinos won three tournaments with a combined team stroke average of 75.4. A 16-stroke victory over Loomis in the

**SPRING ATHLETIC AWARD WINNERS****Crew Award**

Ben Olsen '17
Ben Moffa '17
Sophie Kamhi '17

Softball Award

Anna Rasmussen '17

Wandelt Lacrosse Award

Eliza Denious '17

Odden Lacrosse Award

Griffin Adair '17
Kyle Salvatore '17

Girls' Golf Award

Marisa Mission '17

George D. Gould Tennis Award

Sydney Trevenen '17

Alrick H. Man, Jr. Tennis Award

Ogden Timpson '17
Aaron Pezzullo '17

Galeski Golf Award

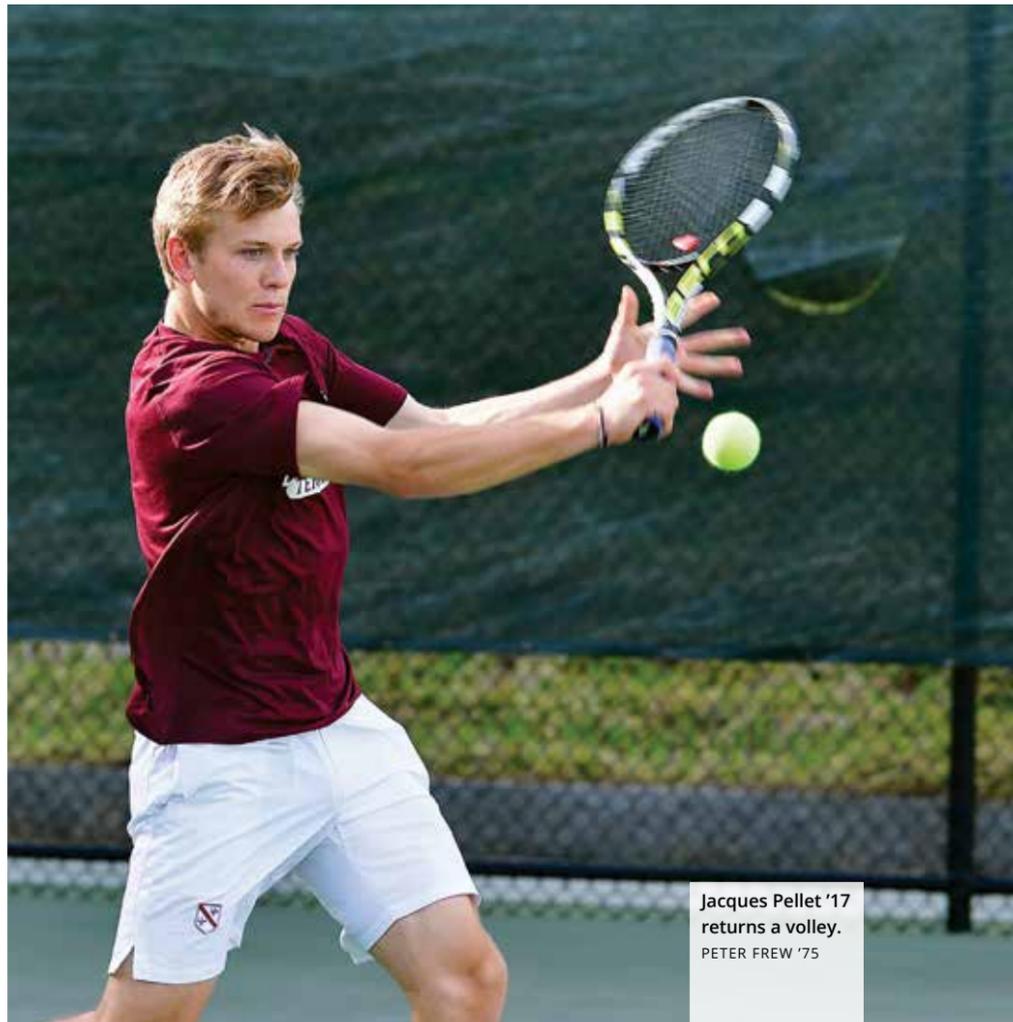
Drew Powell '17
Hunter Ramee '17

Stone Baseball Award

Eric Holzman '17
Kevin Mulhearn '17

Seymour Willis Beardsley Track Award

Michael Wasserstein '17
Sojung Kim '17



Jacques Pellet '17
returns a volley.
PETER FREW '75

Western New England Invitational was particularly memorable as Taft played excellent team golf on one of Connecticut's top courses, Bulls Bridge, and Beau David '17 won the individual title with an even-par score of 72. In winning the Founders League Championship for the third time in four years, Chris Gaeta '18 won the individual title with an even-par round of 71 and paced the team to an excellent total of 375 strokes. To achieve so much on the golf course, team depth was a huge factor, and throughout the spring, the team received great efforts and low scores from co-captain Drew Powell '17, co-captain Hunter Ramee '17, Jonathan Elkins '20, Rex Riefler '19, Henry Horne '20, and Charles Donaldson '17.

Boys' Tennis 18-0

- ▶ FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
- ▶ NEW ENGLAND CLASS A CHAMPIONS

This may have been the best tennis team in the history of Taft, and the Rhinos have been on a roll, making the New England finals three times in recent years. This year's team was the deepest in school history, as Taft marched through the regular season with 6-1 or 7-0 wins against Deerfield, Choate, Hotchkiss, and Loomis. The real tests came against power Kingswood, last year's New England champ (4-3 win) and Brunswick (4-3 win), and those two wins sealed Taft's #1 tournament ranking for the third year in a row. The

Rhinos dispatched Cheshire Academy and Choate in the first two rounds, and then went toe to toe again with Kingswood, a rematch of last year's final. This time, Taft won the day and the New England title, a hard-fought 4-3 win. Throughout the season co-captain Ogden Timpson '17 led the way at #1 singles, and with four-year player Jacques Pellet '17 formed the #1 doubles team. Dylan Powell '18 and co-captain Aaron Pezzullo '17 locked down the #2 and #3 singles spots and the second doubles team, while Peter Oh '17, Gabe Rissman '19, and Peter Horne '18, rounded out the singles. After their New England title, Taft had one more challenge, facing New England Class B champions Hopkins, away. This match was tighter than the tournament finals, with Taft prevailing 4-3 only with the final match when Oh came back from 1-5 down to win at #4 singles.

Girls' Tennis 8-5

The Rhinos were a talented and dedicated team that made a strong run for the league title and qualified for the New England Class A tournament

as the #6 seed. Captained by George Gould Award winner Sydney Trevenen '17 and Eugenie Greeff '17, the team went 6-0 early on, defeating Berkshire (9-0), Deerfield (5-3), Loomis (6-3), Miss Porter's (7-2), Westminster (5-4), and Sacred Heart (6-3), with the last of these matches played without Greeff and Fran Hough '18 due to their season-ending injuries. The second half of the season saw the Rhinos lose matches to talented teams from Hotchkiss, Greenwich Academy, and Hopkins (0-9), but rebounding with wins against Kent (7-2) and Choate (7-2). The Rhinos took on Hotchkiss (#3 seed) in the first round of the New England but could not turn the tables on their rivals. Individual highlights included Founders League award winner Kate Zhang '20 going 8 and 5 on the season playing in the #1 and #2 singles positions, and captain Sydney Trevenen's impressive 6 and 3 record playing as high up as #2. Next season the team will be captained by Lily Turner '18 and Hough, and they will be joined by returning players Kate Zhang '20, Macy Toppan '18, Minna Holleck '18, Regan Brewer '19, Kira Siebrecht '19, and Nico Gusac '19.

Boys' Lacrosse 11-6

The Rhinos won exciting one-goal games versus Hotchkiss (12-11) and Trinity-Pawling (15-14) to finish with a final *USA Today* national ranking of 23. Five of Taft's losses came to teams ranked in the top 15 nationally. Tri-captain Kyle Salvatore '17 led the way with 37 goals and 30 assists, earning All-America honors for the second consecutive year, and was named the Lance Odden Midfielder of the Year for Western New England. AJ Barré '17 earned Academic All-America honors for his performance both on the field and in the classroom. Newcomers George Grell '17 (34g, 13a) and Jake Simon '17 (0.56 save percentage) joined tri-captain Griffin Adair '17 and Salvatore as Western Division I All-Stars. Billy Dobensky '19 and tri-captain Joe Hardison '18 (86 ground-balls) earned All-Founders League honors. The highlight of the season was a thrilling 10-9 win over #13 Deerfield in which the Rhinos played hard-nosed lacrosse to down one of the best teams in the country. From this talented senior class, Taft graduated at least four Division I players (Harvard, Duke, and two to Brown) and two Division III players (Hamilton and Gettysburg).



Goalie Jake Simon '17
anticipates a Deerfield
shot as Taft captain
Griffin Adair '17 moves
in to defend.

Girls' Lacrosse 12-3

The Rhinos were focused and ready to put in the work necessary for a successful season from the first day this spring. Finishing in 2nd place in the Founders League, Taft came away with big wins against Deerfield (12-8), Hotchkiss (10-9), and Choate (15-4). Taft's crew of seniors made for a deep and well-balanced team, led by co-captains Eliza Denious '17 and Nina Garfinkel '17, as well as fellow seniors Bridget Slocum '17, Katherine Queally '17, Sam Manfreda '17, and Natalie Muskin '17. Denious and Paisley Eagan '18 led the team in total points and goals

scored, and Eagan earned All-America honors. A great group of returning players, including captain-elects Katie Piechnik '18 and Natalie Witkowski '18, will lead the team next year.

Girls' Crew 50-15 (Individual boat record)

This season Taft fielded seven full boats (four varsity, three lower boats) and over 30 rowers. The Rhinos raced well early but really proved their talent at the Founders Day regatta, where each boat earned a spot in the afternoon heats and the team earned an overall 5th place. The

Paisley Eagan '18 moves toward the net in a game against Sacred Heart.



Girls' crew practicing on Bantam Lake.

Boys' Crew 57-22 (Individual boat records)

In their dual-meet races and regattas, Taft's four varsity boats compiled an overall record of 57 wins versus 22 losses. The first varsity lineup of co-captain Ben Olsen '17, Thomas Muller '18, Jay Lavallée '17, co-captain Ben Moffa '17, and Taro Sochi '18 (cox) earned a bronze medal at the Founders Day regatta. The second varsity boat, with Jack Ewing '18, Ben Roberts '18, Jason Bab '17, Nick Mortimer '18, and coxswain Zoe Eberstadt-Beattie '18, was beaten by only two opponents all season long, posting a record of 20-2. This same boat won a silver medal at Founders Day. All four varsity boats qualified for the New England Championship regatta; three of four qualified for the afternoon finals—the first boat doing so for the first time since 2004. At the end of the day, Taft finished 5th in the team-points trophy—its best showing in the 25-year history of the program.

following weekend, the girls' first boat earned a 2nd place behind Winsor in the DuPont Cup, winning over St. Mark's, Miss Porter's, Gunnery, and Pomfret. The whole team swept the final varsity race of the season, winning the Alumnae Cup for the third year in a row over Gunnery, Berkshire, and Canterbury. All four boats were seeded well going into the NEIRA, and both the first and fourth boats earned spots in the final races. The first boat—Lily Thebault '18, Emma LaRose '18, and tri-captains Sophie Kamhi '17, Emily Drakeley '17, and Sumi Kim '17—went on to place 9th in New England. The fourth boat became Taft's first-ever New England champion: Sarah Ince '18, Kaia Whiteley '18, Phoebe Autio '18, Taline Almasian '19, and Megan Sng '19 won the Grand Final. With only four seniors on this year's squad, the Rhinos will be an experienced and talented crew again next year. Kamhi will continue her rowing career next year at Dartmouth.

Boys' crew practicing on Bantam Lake.



Boys' Track 11-3

After dominating the sprint events for the past several years, the Rhinos used a balanced lineup this past spring to earn a record of 11-3 and race to a 2nd-place finish in the Founders League meet, falling just short of champion Loomis, but edging out Hotchkiss by half a point. There were many heroes that day as the boys scored in 14 of the 17 events, led by tri-captains Michael Wasserstein '17 (800m, 1,500m, 4x400m relay), Andrew

Farrier '17 (discus and javelin), and Matteo Mangiardi '17 (400m and 4x400m), who together accounted for 38 of Taft's 83.5 points. Trevor Esilu '17 (300m hurdles), Marcus Alleyne '17 (4x100m relay, 200m) and Sammed Bawa '20 (200m, long jump, 4x100m relay) also contributed crucial points. At the New England meet, Wasserstein had a great day, winning the 800m (1:58), placing 6th in the 1,500m, and combining with Alleyne, Mangiardi, and Calvin Palmer '18 (4th, 800m) to finish second in the 4x400m relay.



Micah Umeh '19 competes in a shot put event.

Girls' Track 10-3

► FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

This strong team of multisport athletes won the Founders League title in dramatic fashion, coming from behind to nose ahead of Choate by 2 points on the final event. This was the Taft girls' first Founders League title since 2005 and the 4th overall. In a true team effort, many athletes scored in multiple events: So Kim '17 (800m, 1,500m, 4x400m relay), Molly Lohuis '18 (100m hurdles, 300m hurdles, 4x400m relay), Mary Alice Ewing '18 (4x100m relay, 4x400m relay), Taylor Jacobs '18 (800m, 1,500m), and Tise Ben-Eka '17 (javelin, discus). But no one typified the all-in effort more than Kayla Robinson '19, who scored in the shot put, triple jump, long jump, and 4x100m relay, and Liz Barré '20, who won the pole vault and scored in the 4x400m relay, 100m hurdles, and high jump. The Rhinos also had a great day at the New England meet as Kim (1,500m), Jacobs (800m), Lohuis (300m hurdles), Barré (100m hurdles, pole vault), and Robinson (shot put) all placed in their events with personal records. Top sprinter and co-captain Jada Newkirk '17 won the 200m and finished 4th in the long jump, breaking the school record in a leap of 17-10.5.

Softball 9-5

► WESTERN NEW ENGLAND SEMIFINALISTS

Taft reached the Western New England Semifinals again as they finished the season with a 9-5 mark. Playing one of the tougher schedules, Taft earned a #4 seed in the playoffs and hosted a strong Deerfield team. In a closely contested battle, Taft won 4-2 and played the following day against undefeated Westminster. The team battled but could not find a big hit in a 2-5 loss. With a team batting average of .396 and an 8-4 regular season mark, Taft's offensive attack was led by tri-captains Mary Collette '17, Anna Rasmussen '17, and Morgan Sperry '17. Rasmussen led



Liz Barré '19 competes in the hurdles.

the team in hits, runs, and RBIs and won the Softball Award for her outstanding play. Collette earned Founders League honors and was a stalwart behind the plate. Another Founders League All-Star, Alli Kalvaitis '18, pitched well, including four shutouts and 106 strikeouts to only six walks on the season. For their excellent seasons, Rasmussen and Kalvaitis were named Western New England All-Stars. The team will miss the leadership of Collette, Rasmussen, and Sperry, as well as three-year starter Reece Olmstead '17.

Baseball 11-7

Senior tri-captains Eric Holzman '17, Kevin Mulhearn '17, and Nick Cutler '17 led the team to an 11-7 overall record, and an 8-6 Colonial League record. Holzman (pitcher/first base) was 3-3 with 1 save, hit .342, and will pitch at Army next year. Mulhearn (pitcher) was 2-1 with 1 save and will pitch at Holy Cross next year, and Cutler hit .326 for the season. Troy Shepherd '17 (McGill next year) led the team in hitting with



Twins Morgan, left, and Ally Trimper '19 during the Berkshire game.

a .410 average and 18 RBI. The team beat Choate twice in the same season for the first time in recent history, and just as they did last year, beat Hotchkiss twice. Zane Segalas '18 and Winston Salk '18 will serve as co-captains next year.

Middlers Dylan Kim, Nolan Grooms, Beau Root, and Dom Patille, and lower middlers Walker Wonham, Cole Torino, and Stefan Kim saw significant playing time this season and will form the core of the team for the near future. ■

Because of **YOU**



Taft students are educated today for tomorrow.



Dylan Simonds '89, Annual Fund Chair

P'03, '06, '09, Chairs of the Former Parents' Fund; Joanie Dayton, Chair of the Grandparents' Fund; and hundreds of Class Agents across more than a half-century of class years. I am grateful and humbled to work with such a wonderful group of talented and dedicated people. I also want to take this opportunity to extend special thanks to the staff of the Alumni and Development Office for keeping the Taft community connected and strong—they work tirelessly and without much fanfare, but their impact is great and deserving of our sincere appreciation.

It takes consistent, deep, and broad support from all corners of our community to build and sustain the Taft we know and love. And while we are fortunate to be able to build upon a strong foundation of past giving, the future wellbeing of Taft has been entrusted to our stewardship.

I am truly grateful to all of the donors who have made this year's Annual Fund a success, and I look forward to working with many of you to reach higher and achieve even more in the year and years to come.

With my warm regards and thanks,

With another solid year for the Annual Fund on the books, I am very pleased to announce that we exceeded this year's budgeted goal with contributions of \$4,518,232 from 43% of alumni and 92% of current parents. I know that I speak on behalf of all of Taft in expressing my gratitude to our Annual Fund donors for their generosity and devotion, and for the example they set for the rest of our community to follow.

We owe much of the success of the Annual Fund to the commitment of an incredible team of volunteers, including the Parents' Committee; Marietta Lee and Jeff Keeler P'16, '18, Parents' Fund Chairs; Stuart and Jean Serenbetz

A highlight of the Annual Fund year was the May 1 **Day of Giving**, which generated both enthusiasm within each class and a healthy competition between classes from each decade. I would like to congratulate the **Classes of '11, '04, '99, '84, '75, '67, '57, and '46** for achieving the highest level of Annual Fund participation for their respective decades during that successful one-day campaign. Each winning class was recognized with a seat plaque in Bingham Auditorium. The Class of '99 deserves special mention for having the highest participation (over 21%!) on the day.

Our alumni raised over \$191,851 from 501 alumni in 24 hours—more than double the goal of 240 donors—so my hat's off to the hundreds of donors and Class Agents who made it all possible.

The **Parents' Fund** also successfully participated in the May 1 **Day of Giving**, which resulted in an outstanding \$130,661 raised from 88 donors—far surpassing the goal of 50 donors! Congratulations to the parents of the Class of 2019 for having the highest participation—also recognized with a seat plaque in Bingham Auditorium.

2017 Annual Fund Class Agent Awards

SNYDER AWARD

Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a reunion class 50 years out or less
Class of 1987: \$67,470
Head Class Agent: Cinda Goulard Lord

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AWARD

Highest percent participation from a class 50 years out or less
Class of 1967: 51%
Head Class Agent: George (Bill) McCarter

MCCABE AWARD

Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a non-reunion class
Class of 1990: \$112,505
Head Class Agent: Ben Levin

CLASS OF 1920 AWARD

Greatest increase in Annual Fund dollars from a non-reunion class
Class of 1990: Increase of \$61,860
Head Class Agent: Ben Levin

ROMANO AWARD

Greatest increase in participation from a non-reunion class less than 50 years out
Class of 1990: 42% from 34%
Head Class Agent: Ben Levin

YOUNG ALUMNI DOLLARS AWARD

Largest Annual Fund amount contributed from a class 10 years out or less
Class of 2009: \$7,563
Head Class Agent: Ben Brauer

YOUNG ALUMNI PARTICIPATION AWARD

Highest participation from a class 10 years out or less
Class of 2011: 39%
Head Class Agents: Nick Auer and Sara Guernsey

SPENCER AWARD

Largest number of gifts from classmates who have not given in the last five years
Class of 1977: 16 new donors
Head Class Agents: Margot Huber Heckler and Wendy Wurtzburger Schmid

Awards determined by gifts and pledges raised as of June 30, 2017.

Parents' Committee 2016-17

Marietta Lee and Jeff Keeler, *Chairs*
Hilary and David Allen
Michelle Andrews
Bridget Baratta
Lisa and David Barr
Sônia and John Batten
Pam and Scott Bowman
Melissa and Michael Bradley
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Leslie and Kevin Coleman
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Licia and Christopher Dawe '81
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Clare Evert-Shane and Steven Shane
Stefanie and Paul Feidelson '85

Sue and Bill Groner
Debbie and Paul Guiney
Abby and Brian Hail
Shelly and Bill Himmelrich '82
Stephen '85 and Laura Black Holt '85
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Winnie and Barry Ma
Gigi and Averell Mortimer
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Lydia and Ted Verheggen
David Wang and Nana Chiu
Karen and Ray Winicki
William '79 and Lisa Zonino
Woodworth '79
Jenn and Joe Yamin '85
Kimber and Harry Yerkes '82
Lisa and John Zinno
Alison and Scott Zoellner '83



Jeff Keeler and Marietta Lee, Parents' Fund Chairs



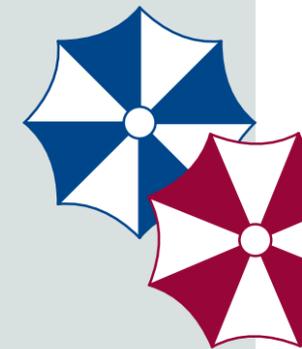
Alumni Weekend 2017

Six hundred alumni, with family and friends, returned to campus this past May and didn't let spring showers prevent them from celebrating. From the 70th Reunion for the Class of '47 to the 5th Reunion for the Class of '12, three days of gatherings helped renew friendships and foster new ones, and give alums a glimpse into the life of an exciting and ever-changing school that also honors tradition and its long history.

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, we hope you enjoy a look at some of the gatherings and familiar faces.

Photography by

**ROBERT FALCETTI,
ANNE KOWALSKI,
AND JIM SHANNON**



1. The Rhino mascot's spirit isn't dampened by the weather during the Alumni Parade.

2. 1967 alums John Plume, Anthony Dupee, and Rob Jennings enjoy the 50th Reunion's cocktails in the Woolworth Faculty Room.

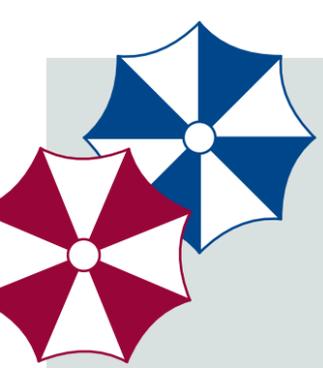
3. Joyce Poole '74, the 2017 Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal honoree, with her daughter, Selengei, and her sister, Ginny '80.

4. Rod Moorhead '62 and wife Alice and son Rodman '97 join former headmaster Lance Odden at the Alumni Golf Outing.

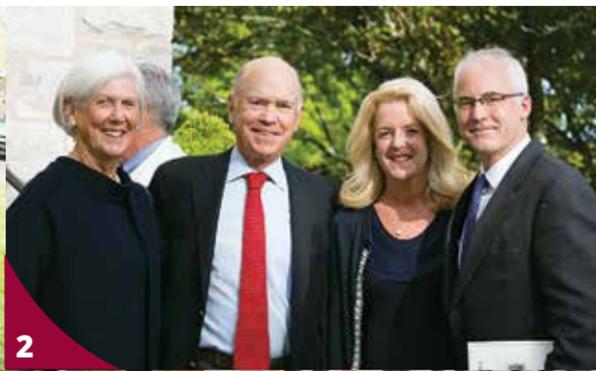
5. 35th Reunion alums Abby Donahoe Harle '82 and BJ Richardson '82 (formerly known as BJ Dingee) at a gathering at the home of classmate and Taft faculty member Jon Willson '82.

6. Faculty member Jack Kenerson '82, celebrating his 35th Reunion, with former faculty member Linda Saarnijoki; his wife and faculty member Jen; and former faculty member Ted Heavenrich.

7. Gathered for their 30th Reunion, a group of 1987 classmates enjoy the hospitality of Taft faculty member Alison Almasian '87.



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1.

A little fun with Taft's mascot in the Registration Tent.

2.

Faculty Emerita Patsy Odden and Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden with Pam and Willy MacMullen '78 outside Woodward Chapel, after the Service of Remembrance.

3.

Several alumni learn about Taft's admissions process during a Back to Class session led by Taft's director of admissions, Mike Hoffman '97.

4.

Three generations of Tafties of the Offutt/Hodges family, with friend Emmett Berg '19 (at far left): Nalty Hodges '19, Bill Offutt '57, and Jane Scott Offutt Hodges '87.

5.

Limbo time at the 5th, 10th, and 15th Reunion Bash!

6.

Faculty members Greg Hawes '85 and Rachael Ryan reunite with Ashley Barronette '07 during the Headmaster's Dinner.

7.

Emily Moore '07, Carra Herron Fraker '07 and husband Jonny Fraker '06, and Kara Iacoviello '07 enjoy Dinner at the Headmaster's.

8.

Dedicated marchers at the Alumni Parade were undaunted by the spring rain.





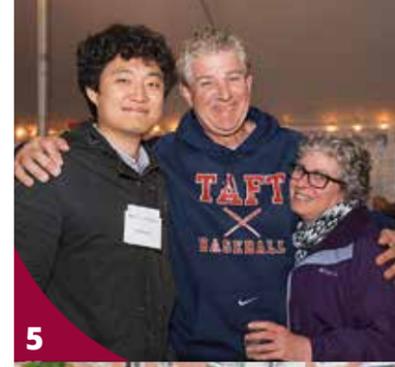
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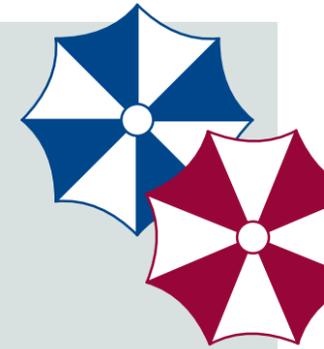
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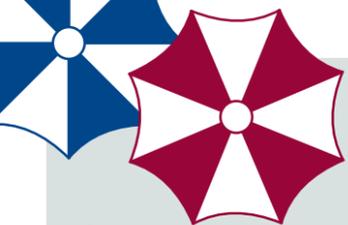
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9



1. Alumni Weekend's poignant Service of Remembrance at Woodward Chapel.
2. 2007 fun at the Reunion Bash for the 5th, 10th, and 15th Reunions at the Heritage.
3. Former faculty and staff members Andi and Will Orben '92, back at Taft for his 25th Reunion, with daughter Beatrice.
4. Class of '72 45th Reunion alums Steve Pond, Jim Farley, Ed Gordon, and Thomas Ruppel, with Pam and Willy MacMullen '78, who hosted the Headmaster's Dinner.
5. H.K. Seo '07 visits with faculty member John Piacenza and former faculty member Jean Strumolo Piacenza '75.
6. Wick Shreve '97 with his husband, Craig.
7. 1962 classmates, celebrating their 55th Reunion, proudly march in the Alumni Parade.
8. Jim Sylvan '67, Towt Dunn '67, and John Weld '67 with their wives at the 50th Reunion Cocktails.
9. Noel Pena '97 and his family enjoy the Headmaster's Dinner.



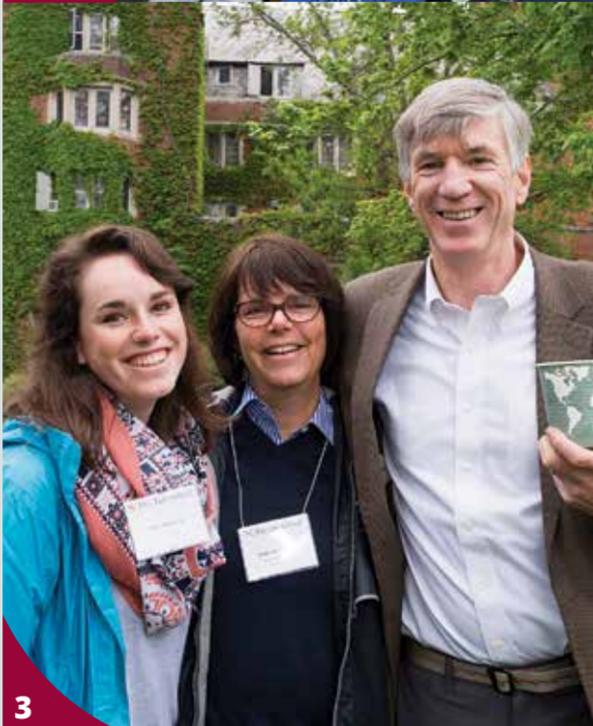
1.

1974 classmates return to Taft to celebrate classmate Joyce Poole receiving the Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal; from left, Paul Klingenstein, Brian Lincoln, Jim Mooney, Marian Reiff Cheevers, and Hank Brauer.



2.

Enjoying the Class of '82 get-together at classmate Jon Willson's home, Harry Yerkes, Shawn Brazo, and Chris Hunter.

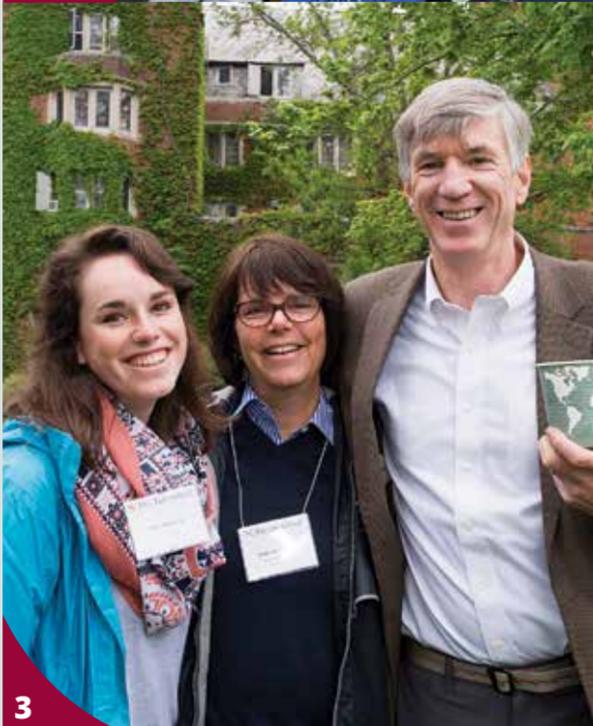


3.

Eliza Davis '12, with her mom, former faculty member Linda Saarnijoki, and former faculty member Jim Mooney '74.

4.

Art Johnson '57 and Ellie Rittman with former Taft staff/faculty members Ledlie and Ben Pastor '97 at the Headmaster's Dinner.



5.

Bob Gries '47, at left, celebrating his 70th Reunion, and Jim Morrison '43, visiting his alma mater from Colorado, share a moment with Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 at the Old Guard Luncheon.



6.

2012 classmates Jordan Stone, Kevin Trotman, and Taylor Persechini catch up at the 5th, 10th, and 15th Reunion Bash.



7.

Head monitors Eliza Denious '17 and Nick Cutler '17 lead the way for the Alumni Parade.

8.

Jack Crombie '92 and his family enjoy the Headmaster's Dinner under the tent.



9.

Silvia Bonachea-Cabrer '97 and her family with Taft's friendly rhino.



For more photographs

from the weekend, including reunion class photos, visit www.taftphotos.com/Alumni-Weekend-2017.



■ Devoted to service and a natural athlete, Mary combines her passions as student head of Taft's Service Through Sports programs.



All In — MARY COLLETTE '17

The best part of Mary Collette's day, she says, is the time she spends with her large circle of friends—on the sofa in Lauren's room, soaking up the sun on Jig patio, rowdy meals in the Dining Hall. But spend a little time with her, and you'll find it hard to call any one part of her day better than the next. She is "all in" with everything she does, bringing heart, soul, and a pure joie de vivre that is nothing short of contagious.



▲ Mary will pursue a career in the sciences, following in the footsteps of her mentor and AP Biology teacher, Laura Monti '89.

G BLOCK, 8:15–9:15 AM

AP Biology

It is late April and Advanced Placement (AP) exams are just around the corner. A senior who was accepted early decision to Bates, Mary is carrying six courses, three of them APs. Science teacher Laura Monti '89 is thoroughly and methodically working through reams of material to make sure her AP Biology students are ready for the exams. This week: body systems—the immune system, the nervous system, and the endocrine system.

"This is my thing," Mary says excitedly. "This is why I'm going to be a neuroscience major. I love the nervous system. How do we think? How do our muscles move? How do our bodies send signals that cause chemical changes? It's all amazing to me."

Tuesday
APRIL
18



C BLOCK, 12:30–1:15 PM

Lunch

This won't be one of those treasured lunch blocks with her friends, it will be a working lunch for Mary. Another look at the material for an upcoming AP Statistics quiz, an email to the Taft community reminding them to come to Wednesday night drum circle, and then a quick look at her training schedule: Mary is running a half marathon at the end of the month, and has just started to taper her training.

"I've run some 10ks," says Mary, "but never a half marathon. I think it's going to be fun. I like to challenge myself and do new things. I like setting new goals, then working hard to achieve them."

And on race day, like most of her Sundays, Mary is already double-booked: "I just signed up to perform at Taft's Coffee House the night of the half marathon," she says. "I hope I'll have the energy!"

A BLOCK, 1:50–2:35 PM

Jazz Workshop

Tomorrow is Grandparents' Day, a standing gig for Taft's Jazz Ensemble. Mary plays bass guitar with the group, and has traveled with them across the U.S. and around the world. While class typically meets in the Band Room, today they are on stage in Bingham, running the Grandparents' Day set and blocking their positions on stage. Mary is front and center, and in her element.

After a quick sound check, warm up, and a few runs through Santana's "Oye Como Va," the group is on to Count Basie's "Jumpin' at the Woodside," a clear favorite for Mary, and one in which she performs a solo. They practice their bows, and Mary is off.

"I need to run home and get my things for softball practice," she says.

Run...literally: Mary is a day student who grew up on North Street, just on the edge of campus.

"Growing up, I thought of Taft as my backyard. It wasn't until I was older that I realized that the place I played ball with my dad at night was one of the top boarding schools in the nation."



Scan this page to join the drum circle!

AFTERNOON EX

Softball Practice

A natural leader, Mary is one of the captains of the softball team. She and her teammates are still pumped from Saturday's 16–0 win over Canterbury, and hoping to take some of the energy into tomorrow's game against Westminster.

"We definitely have a strong drive to beat Westy this year," notes Mary. "They always seem to be a tough tournament opponent for us. I'm excited to give them our best effort tomorrow."

It's a good practice, with everyone on their game. Mary shares some positive and motivating words with her teammates, but has other business to conduct. She needs to talk with Coach Tom Antonucci about trying to schedule a softball clinic with students from Waterbury's Police Activities League (PAL) program. Mary is the student head of Taft's Service Through Sports program, and hopes to fit in both the clinic and a stuffed animal drive for young patients at area hospitals in the next few weeks.



▲ The depth and breadth of her friendships is one of the things that defined Mary's time at Taft.

Evening

Team dinner in the Dining Hall is one of the best parts of Mary's day. But after a long day, she is also looking forward to getting home to play a little guitar, do some homework, and spend time catching up with her parents. Like most nights, Mary hopes to be asleep by midnight. She will sleep well after a full but rewarding day.



◀ Mary has traveled the world playing bass guitar with Taft's Jazz Ensemble.



Scan this page to watch Mary play bass!

■ For many families visiting Taft, L.J. is a friendly and welcoming ambassador.



A Study in Balance

—L.J. FOLEY '17

In many ways, L.J. Foley is the quintessential Taftie. He is bright, articulate, and involved. He is an academic, an artist, and an athlete. He is a leader and a role model. L.J.'s days are long; his commitment to the Taft community is deep and unwavering. For L.J., each day is a study in balance.

9:30-10:25 AM

Admitted Student Events

It is Admitted Student Day at Taft, when the school welcomes newly accepted, prospective students to campus for a full day of events and programming. L.J. has been tapped to greet families and escort parents to class, but first he will perform for them in Lincoln Lobby: L.J. is a member of Oriocos, Taft's nearly century-old, student-led, a cappella singing group. L.J. joined Oriocos as an upper mid, one year after he successfully auditioned for Collegium Musicum, Taft's showcase choir. He will perform with Collegium later today, giving prospective families another look at the depth of the arts program at Taft.

"Collegium has been great because it gives me the opportunity to explore my love of music while allowing me to get to know a lot of kids

I might not have met otherwise," says L.J.

The Oriocos performance leaves L.J. with only a few minutes to drop into his Monday morning Mons meeting with Director of Student Activities Sarah Koshi. The School Mons meet with Koshi every Monday morning to plan activities for the coming weekend.

"Next weekend is an open weekend, so we want to do something smaller scale that's relatively easy to plan and execute," says L.J., "since there may be fewer people on campus than usual."

The group votes to show movies in the common rooms, and L.J., heads off to take visiting families to his AP Human Geography class. He will answer questions from prospective parents along the way, sharing details about his time at Taft and of the depth of his Rhino pride.



Scan this page to watch L.J. perform with Collegium.



▲ L.J. lends his vocal talent to both Oriocos and Collegium at Taft.



E BLOCK, 1:00–1:40 PM

AP American Government

It may be “senior spring,” but L.J. is still carrying a full course load—three of his six classes are APs. With political science on his radar as a potential college major, AP American Government is one of L.J.’s favorite classes. Teacher Rachael Ryan is preparing students for an upcoming in-class essay exploring civil rights and civil liberties. The preparation includes a student presentation on North Carolina’s repeal of portions of the so-called “bathroom bill.” L.J. offers details of the economic implications of the bill, noting that both the NBA and the NCAA balked at holding events in that state when the bill that limits LGBTQ protections was enacted. The events, L.J. notes, are big revenue generators for the state; their loss was akin to non-governmental economic sanctions.

“I think repealing portions of the bill should help North Carolina,” L.J. adds, “because it shows an effort to resolve some of the issues that originally concerned both organizations.”

AFTERNOON EX

Lacrosse Practice

L.J. is a talented athlete and a serious competitor. He played soccer, hockey, and lacrosse in each of his four years at Taft.

“I like being competitive, and I like the camaraderie,” says L.J. “I consider myself pretty close to all of the kids on each of my teams. I appreciate that I was able to play all three sports at Taft, and to play them successfully.”

Mondays start in the locker room, debriefing Saturday’s game. This week’s 16–7 win over Canterbury means spirits and energy are high as the players make their way out of the locker room for “Madden Madness,” Coach Robert Madden’s eponymous, 12-minute plyometric workout, built to increase individual speed, strength, and agility in his players. It is a Monday tradition, and an important part of the team’s conditioning routine.



▲ L.J. loves competitive sports, and the camaraderie that comes with being part of a team.

▼ Dorm duty gives L.J. a chance to catch up with his friends and dorm mates at the end of a long day.



Evening

When his practice schedule and workload allow, L.J. heads back to the Athletics Center after dinner.

“If it’s soccer season I might play an hour of wall ball to practice lacrosse skills, or during lacrosse season I may just go back and lift,” L.J. says. “After dinner is usually a good time to work out.”

Today’s schedule was exceptionally full, so L.J. skips the gym and heads straight to the library. He has an hour or so to study before reporting for duty in CPT.

“As a Mon, I am on duty every Monday night in my dorm,” explains L.J. “I get there by 7:50 or so to check kids in for study hall.”

L.J. also sees dorm duty as an opportunity to catch up with his peers and spend time with the teacher on duty. He visits with a few friends and checks in with his dorm mates before finishing his homework. He is soon back on the job, signing juniors in for the night at 10:15, and doing the same for seniors at 10:45.

“As a Mon it’s my job to sign kids in for study hall or nightly check-in,” says L.J., “but it also my job to just be here, always setting the right example.”





Giving Voice to Passion

—KAEDI DALLEY '18

There is a quiet rhythm to Kaedi Dalley's day. She is not a cog in a wheel, but the wheel itself—a driving force, moving everything around her forward with subtle, yet unwavering intent. She is a passionate voice in the Taft community, with a gift and spirit that inspire and resonate.



▲ Kaedi is the alto section leader and frequent soloist with Collegium.

F BLOCK, 8:15–9:15 AM

Collegium Musicum

There is a good deal of work to be done today: Collegium will perform twice in the next three days—on campus Friday evening and in New York City on Sunday. There isn't time to run the full set list for the concerts, but Director Bruce Fifer leads the group through at least a part of each song, including Kaedi's solo, "Sound Over All Waters." It is a stunning piece, and one that Kaedi has performed with Collegium many times, most recently in San Francisco during Spring Break with its creator, Paul Halley, in the audience. And while her peers have heard Kaedi perform the number many times over the last year, they are still visibly moved in class on this day, and applaud her breathtaking performance.



Scan this page to watch Kaedi perform her signature piece, "Sound Over All Waters," with Collegium.

G BLOCK, 9:30–10:15 AM

Upper Mid English

Derek Palmore's class taps into Kaedi's strengths: She is a natural leader and a deep thinker. She is passionate in her convictions, and eager to give voice to that passion.

"English is the course I like the most," says Kaedi. "Mr. Palmore allows everyone to articulate themselves in whatever way they feel is most appropriate; for me, that's speaking more so than writing. His acknowledgment of my eloquence is encouraging—it inspires me to be very active in class discussions and analyses."

And today is no exception. The class has been reading Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*. Kaedi quickly joins the conversation, and quite naturally slips into the role of leader during the small group breakout sessions. Palmore's easy, open style invites full participation and thoughtful dialogue, and Kaedi responds in kind.





▲ Kaedi hits her academic stride in Derek Palmore's English class.

D/DH BLOCK, 12:45–2:00 PM

Lunch

It's Thursday, which means Kaedi is one day away from the next SHOUT: Taft Gender and Sexuality Alliance gathering. Kaedi and Kimberly, SHOUT co-heads, will use this lunch block to make plans for the upcoming session.

"We try to meet every Friday," explains Kaedi, "and that remains pretty consistent. We often have 20 or 30 people come to talk about a pretty wide range of issues. We might talk about current events—we have talked about Trump and his policies and how they might affect the LGBTQ+ community—or we'll have general discussions about topics that feel relevant. We have evolved SHOUT to encompass everything from really chill conversations in a hang-out spot, to educational lectures with research and slideshows."

This year Kaedi also cofounded a new club on campus, Taft Stands in Solidarity.

"We have about 30 active participants," says Kaedi. "Our intent is to be aware and responsive to what is going on in the world. We held a sit-in in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement in the fall. It was very exciting; I was both a little nervous and a little bit thrilled to conduct and take part in something so important."



◀ Kaedi wears many leadership hats in the Taft community, including that of student head of the Gospel Choir.

MEETINGS BLOCK, 2:55–3:30 PM

Gospel Choir

"Music is a very, very, very big part of my life," says Kaedi, "one that I take very seriously. I try to do whatever I can, despite my pretty busy schedule, to be engaged with music at Taft."

And she is: Kaedi sings with Hydrox, the all-female a cappella group on campus, performs at Taft coffee houses, helped plan and performed at the MLK Day celebration, quite memorably (and truly) became Motormouth Maybelle in Taft's production of *Hairspray*, and showed both her vocal and comic chops as Donkey in *Shrek, The Musical*. She is also the student leader of Taft's Gospel Choir. Before rehearsal begins today, Kaedi needs to get a headcount for Gospelfest 2017, a multi-school event at Hotchkiss in May. It is her job to coordinate travel when the group is on the road, and to communicate rehearsal and performance schedules. It is when she begins to sing, however, that she fully comes into her own.



Evening

JV Golf team practice ("It's very calming—just you and the ball..."), dinner, study hall, and, of course, music.

"I practice in the piano rooms in the evenings," says Kaedi. "Going to the camp that I went to last summer made me realize that this is the career I want to pursue. I would like to be a professional singer—a performer in the music industry."

With support from Taft's Kilbourne Summer Enrichment Fund, Kaedi traveled to Los Angeles last summer to attend the A Cappella Academy. Only 13 percent of the high school-aged students who auditioned for a spot at the academy were accepted. She will return this summer, having been accepted through an even more competitive audition process.

"I am always working to mature my voice and grow as a performer," says Kaedi. "Taft's resources and opportunities have helped me do that—I take advantage of every opportunity here that I can." ■



127TH COMMENCEMENT

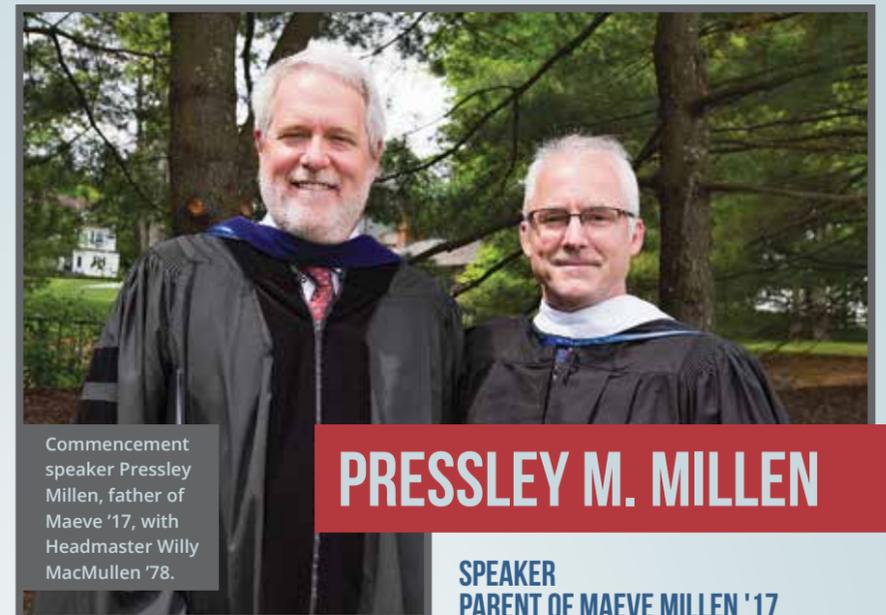
“The 21st century is going to provide you with no shortage of opportunities to **BE BRAVE**, to **STAND UP** to bullies, to **NEGOTIATE** with and **OCCASIONALLY DEFY** authority, and to **HELP** those in extreme circumstances.”

—PRESSLEY M. MILLEN

Photography by
ROBERT FALCETTI



Trevor Esilu '17, from Gabarone, Botswana, with his mother.



Commencement speaker Pressley Millen, father of Maeve '17, with Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78.

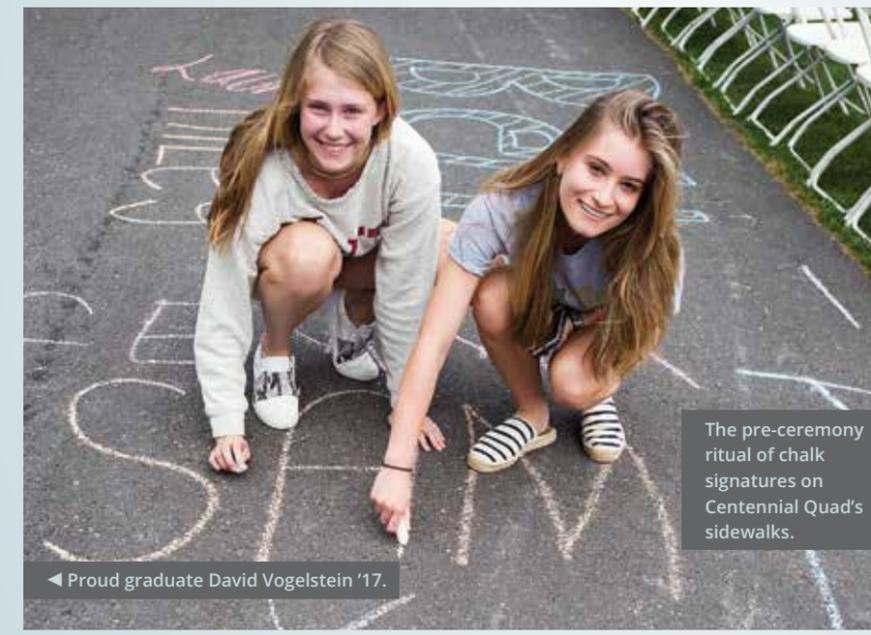
PRESSLEY M. MILLEN

SPEAKER PARENT OF MAEVE MILLEN '17

Mr. MacMullen, faculty and staff, family and friends, and above all, members of the graduating Class of 2017: greetings and congratulations! I am very happy to be part of this Commencement and want to thank you all for having me. Even though we live in North Carolina, 597 miles from the Taft campus, we have been—and been treated as—members of the Taft family for the past four years. Through our own daughter and other friends here, we've gotten to see how this school takes promising kids and turns them into young women and men who fulfill their promise....

I want to tell you a little bit about a boy who went to Taft over 90 years ago. Some of you may know his story, but I suspect that most of you don't. It's one worth hearing, and if you want to learn more about him you can read the *Taft Bulletin* from Summer 1998....

As a young man after Taft and college, Varian Fry '26 had had a fairly undistinguished career as a journalist, but, more importantly, he had a great moral compass. As a journalist, he traveled to Germany in the mid-1930s and he did not like what he saw. Then, in August 1940, about 14 years after he left Taft, he was offered a job with the Emergency Rescue Committee....



◀ Proud graduate David Vogelstein '17.

The pre-ceremony ritual of chalk signatures on Centennial Quad's sidewalks.





Tise Ben-Eka '17 receives the Class of 1981 Award, along with two other seniors, from Susan McCabe.



Faculty member Shannon Lenz Guidotti receives the William and Lee Abramowitz Award for Teaching Excellence from Dean of Faculty Edie Traina.



Jalissa Rodriguez '17 with her parents.



ELIZA DENIOUS '17

HEAD MONITOR

"People are what make Taft a special place.... High school is a time for learning how to be comfortable with yourself, for figuring out who you are, and we have spent the last two, three, four years growing up together. Like any team that needs to discover how to work as a unit, we stumbled at first, but now we have merged the two pieces, togetherness and independence, and have come to be a true family."



Head Monitors Eliza Denious '17 and Nick Cutler '17 carry the class stone to its new home in the wall of Centennial Dorm.

NICK CUTLER '17

HEAD MONITOR

"Graduations are a celebration of moving on to a new life milestone, but maybe more importantly, to celebrate the memories we have made together at Taft. Together, the key word, is one that we as a class use quite frequently. We do everything as a group. We eat meals together, do afternoon activities together, hang out together, and are curious and creative...together. Mr. Mac has said throughout the year that our community is a table, and for the community to function properly everyone must have a seat and a voice at the table."



Gabby Gonzalez Carpio '17 and her big fan on a special day.

He was dispatched to Marseille in the south of France. This was just three months after the Nazis had defeated France at the beginning of the Second World War. The Germans occupied Paris and the northern part of France while the southern part was ruled by a puppet government in the town of Vichy. This was well before the U.S. entered the war and this country was still technically neutral.

Marseille is a tough seaport city in the best of times, and in the summer of 1940 it was packed with refugees from all over Europe. And they were all desperately looking for a way out. The refugees were all seeking to go west—going east meant imprisonment and quite possibly death. And Fry...showed up in Marseille with nothing but a typewriter and a suitcase with \$3,000 cash, and the job of trying to get out as many refugees as he could.

In those dark days, the most valued document was something called an "exit and transit visa" that would get a refugee out of France and through Spain, on to Portugal, which was a neutral country. From there, a traveler could get to Cuba or South America, or occasionally, the United States. If you're at all familiar with the plot of the movie *Casablanca*, these visas were the documents for which refugees would beg, steal, and even kill, as in that film.

Fry was operating in a foreign country and right under the nose of the Nazi secret police, the Gestapo. Under the law in Vichy, France, refugees were required to surrender on demand to the Gestapo for deportation to the east.

Upon arrival in Marseille, Fry got right to work. He found people who could forge travel documents or bribe Vichy officials to look the other way. He chartered leaky boats that could slip out of the harbor on dark nights. He located places to hide refugees while they waited for their papers to come through. In his work, he was aided by a U.S. State Department official



Sophie Kamhi '17 steps forward to receive her award as Valedictorian.



Matteo Mangiardi '17, left, and AJ Barre '17



Class speaker Lauren Fadiman '17, who received the revered Aurelian Award for "sterling character, high scholarship, and forceful leadership," along with five other awards.

LAUREN FADIMAN '17

CLASS SPEAKER

"As you leave...stand in wonder at this place and all the world. For this brief moment you occupy a profound liminal space: you own both this campus and the future; you will not long be in this position, as soon you will inevitably be consigned to the history of this place, thrust ever forwards. Perch on a stone and gaze at the world around you. How big the pond is when you stand at its edge, how widely the fields seem to run when you sit in their caress. Take a final deep breath, and release it slowly. Your words will linger in the atmosphere of this place."



The Baird family with several Taft generations: from left, Nolan '86, Nick '20, graduate Karalyn '17, Noah '16, and Lanny '54.

PRESSLEY M. MILLEN *cont.*

named Hiram Bingham, whose father was a U.S. senator from Connecticut. And Hiram was more than happy—against direct orders from Washington, by the way—to issue as many visas as he could, even ones with fake names.

It's reasonable to think that the things Fry learned here were the same qualities that made him successful in Marseille. What kind of person can just show up in a place where he knows absolutely no one and immediately get the lay of the land and begin to act effectively? Maybe someone who's done that same thing when she's come to a school like this.

"FRY HAD LEARNED HOW TO WORK WITH OTHERS—NOT JUST AS AN INDIVIDUAL—TOWARD A GREATER SHARED GOAL, WHICH IS SOMETHING ELSE YOU ALL HAVE LEARNED HERE."

Fry had learned how to work with others—not just as an individual—toward a greater shared goal, which is something else you all have learned here.

Fry, when you think about it, was someone who had learned to engage with *the world*, not just a campus in Connecticut, or New York, or even Paris. He was willing to go to...one of the toughest places on earth, because that's where he could best be of use.

Maybe, like a lot of you, Fry also learned to inculcate that particular prep school relationship with authority that can best be described as "negotiable." He knew when it was time to obey authority, but also knew when and how to circumnavigate it. He also



Cauviya Selva '17 and her family celebrate her achievement.



Family members cheer on their graduates.



Bagpipers lead seniors and Taft's faculty members into Centennial Quad filled with family and friends.



Senior Dean Pope's sunglasses reflect Taft's buildings.

PRESSLEY M. MILLEN cont.

had a knack for knowing when to safely ignore authority. And—not lightly—he knew when to defy authority....

His bravery was impressive, but, as Mr. Mac puts it, there's always the important question of whether you are effective. And was Fry ever effective! In 13 months in Marseille, with the Gestapo and Vichy authorities breathing down his neck and with Fry breaking the law every day, he was credited with saving over 2,200 refugees from what would almost always have been certain death.

Among those were the artist Marc Chagall, who later designed the famous Peace Window at the United Nations in New York. He also helped save Hannah Arendt, who became the world's foremost philosopher on the subject of totalitarianism. And Claude Levi-Strauss, acknowledged as one of the 20th century's greatest anthropologists. All of these were people whose nationalities or politics or heritages had them on the run....

In 1994, 28 years after his death, Fry became the first American citizen to be honored among the Righteous of Nations at Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust memorial. This honor is given only to those who voluntarily risked their own lives to help the victims of the Holocaust. Only four other Americans have been so honored.

Varian Fry's heritage is now your heritage as Taft graduates. The 21st century—as we've all learned—is going to provide you with no shortage of opportunities to be brave, to stand up to bullies, to negotiate with and occasionally defy authority, and to help those in extreme circumstances. In short, opportunities to put into practice the things you've learned here. ■

Pressley Millen P'17 is a senior fellow at the Duke School of Law and has led a distinguished life as a lawyer, educator, and public servant.

MICHAEL WASSERSTEIN '17

CLASS SPEAKER

"About a month ago, I was hiking with my dad, and he asked me the one thing that I learned the most at Taft. He was fascinated when I told him that I learned to interact and engage with people, rather than any academic concept. [As part of] a community, we have learned this incredibly important skill of interacting with others. And the unique togetherness that our class exemplifies will also help us engage with others in the future. With such a global population at Taft, I encourage you all to reach out and maintain these powerful connections that we have made."



Class speaker Michael Wasserstein '17, who won several prizes, enjoys the ceremony with classmates.



Sonny An '17 is awarded the honor of Salutatorian.



Raya Petrova '17 with her teacher Laura Monti '89.



Tise Ben-Eka '16 with her family and Taft teaching fellow Idara Foster '11, far left.

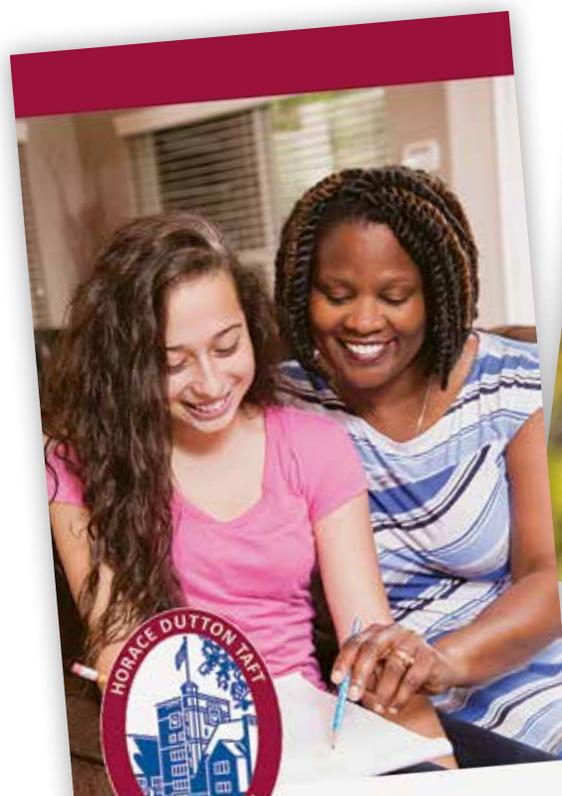
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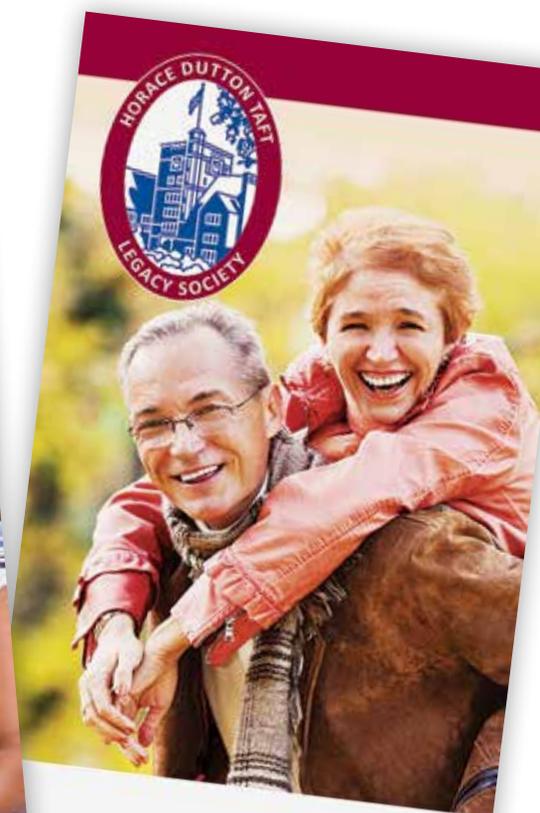
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For a brochure, or if you have questions about planned giving, please contact Paul Parvis, Director of Planned Giving, at 860-945-7751 or paulparvis@taftschool.org.



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