

Taft

BULLETIN



SUMMER 2019

INSIDE

44

Alumni Weekend 2019

Photography by Robert Falcetti,
Anne Kowalski, and James Shannon



52

The Ongoing Work of Inclusion

A Conversation with Andrew Prince,
Dean of Multicultural Education



58

129th Commencement

Remarks by Mayor Neil O'Leary P'19



DEPARTMENTS

- 3 On Main Hall
- 5 Social Scene
- 6 Alumni Spotlight
- 16 In Print
- 18 Around the Pond
- 34 Sports
- 42 Annual Fund Report
- 66 Class Notes
- 108 Milestones
- 112 Looking Back



Liz Barre '19
competing in
the hurdles
against Deerfield
and Andover
in mid-April.
ROBERT FALCETTI

SUMMER 2019
Volume 89, Number 3

EDITOR
Linda Hedman Beyus

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Kaitlin Thomas Orfitelli

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
Debra Meyers

PHOTOGRAPHY
Robert Falcetti

CLASS NOTES EDITOR
Hillary Dooley

DESIGN
Good Design, LLC | www.gooddesignusa.com

SEND ALUMNI NEWS TO
Taft Bulletin
Alumni Office
The Taft School
110 Woodbury Road
Watertown, CT 06795-2100
taftbulletin@taftschool.org

DEADLINES FOR CLASS NOTES
Fall–August 30
Winter–November 15
Spring–February 15
Summer–May 15

860-945-7777
WWW.TAFTALUMNI.COM

The *Taft Bulletin* (ISSN 0148-0855) is published quarterly, in February, May, August, and November, by The Taft School, 110 Woodbury Road, Watertown, CT 06795-2100, and is distributed free of charge to alumni, parents, grandparents, and friends of the school. All rights reserved.




ON THE COVER
One very happy graduate
Dennis Franklin '19
(school monitor and varsity
athlete) with a crowd
of excited classmates!
ROBERT FALCETTI

TAFT ONLINE

-  Find a friend or past *Bulletin*: taftalumni.com
-  Visit us on your phone: taftschool.org
-  What happened at today's game? taftsports.com
-  Shop online: taftstore.com
-  facebook.com/thetaftschool
-  twitter.com/taftschool
-  instagram.com/taftschool
-  bit.ly/taftlinkedin
-  vimeo.com/taftschool



 Please recycle this *Bulletin*
or share with a friend.

On MAIN HALL

A WORD FROM
HEADMASTER WILLY
MACMULLEN '78

“You have been
at Taft in the
most complex
and demanding
years, and I
believe here you
have learned a
kind of resilience,
courage, and
strength that the
times demanded
and which our
world needs.”



An excerpt from Taft's 2019 Commencement Remarks

To this class not long ago I said that to become a Taft graduate is to join a family of men and women, of all ages, and around the globe.

A dinner three weeks ago reminded me of this.

When the Class of 1969 returned to campus on Alumni Weekend for their 50th Reunion, I joined them for dinner. Some were regular visitors to campus, but others had not set foot here for half a century. I was the guest, privileged to see them greeting each other, the years and distance melting in hugs and handshakes, blessed to hear stories of their days here, interested to hear them remark on how Taft in many ways was the same and in others so utterly different. They had the full range of memories and experiences. For some, their adolescence was difficult and even painful; for others, their Taft days were among their happiest. It was a gathering of remarkable men.

When I addressed them after dinner, their experience as students in the late 1960s was very much on my mind. Think of the boy who arrived in the fall of 1965 as a lower mid and who graduated in 1969. The cultural and political landscape was shifting and fracturing in such extreme ways, one wonders how this nation could stand—and it very nearly did not. The Vietnam War was drawing us deeper and deeper, the 1968 Tet offensive launched their senior year. Our struggles and advances in civil rights continued: President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act the week before their lower mid year began; Tommy Smith and John Carlos, African-American track medalists, raised their fists in protest on the medal stand. The long hot summer of their upper mid year saw confrontations with police and race riots in Newark and Detroit. There were powerful movements elsewhere. Environmental consciousness was expanding dramatically, and the National Organization of Women (NOW) was founded when they were mids. And before they would become seniors, they witnessed the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy. I marvel at how these Taft boys could study algebra and Shakespeare and wake up for classes and clean their rooms and attend sit-down dinner as the landscape under their feet was grinding, shaking, and upheaving along the fractures of cultural and political tectonic plates.

And so, as I concluded my remarks, I said, “I posit this. No class in this school's 128-year history experienced so much change in so few years. None.”

There was a second of reflection and then the to-be-expected murmurs of agreement, nods.

And then, in some brief and unexpected silence, I heard someone say, almost as an aside, “Unless it's your senior class this year.”

And with that, you in the Class of 2019, without even knowing it, were *connected to the Class of 1969*—without knowing you, they had declared a kinship, extended you a hand to grasp, tossed you a line to knot.

Whoever made that comment was wise. You seniors have seen incredible change, and you well might feel like those graduates—as if the world was shifting under your feet. In your years, the cultural and political landscape has again buckled in the tremors, some familiar, some new, along the fault lines of race, class, gender, environment, class, equity, party. Consider what you have witnessed: the Women's March and the #MeToo movement, Black Lives Matter, NFL athletes kneeling in protest, environmental demonstrations on climate change and at Standing Rock, eroding of faith in all three branches of government, a change in presidency. There's a reason future history texts will probably have these years under a special chapter title, much as the texts today reference “The Late Sixties.”

It would be a disservice to history and both Taft classes to say that these were *identical* times, but whoever made that aside at the 1969 dinner was on to something. I am very comfortable arguing that the landscape feels similarly unstable. We all know that history does not repeat itself, but as they say, it surely rhymes. Whatever one's views, surely we would agree that these seniors have lived in a time of extraordinary change.



“Thousands of alumni...will welcome you and say, ‘We need you. We need what you have learned at Taft. We need your leadership. We need your service.’”

“You seniors have seen incredible change—as if the world was shifting under your feet. In your years, the cultural and political landscape has again buckled in the tremors, some familiar, some new, along the fault lines of race, class, gender, environment, class, equity, party.”

And so to you, seniors, I posit this: you have been at Taft in the most complex and demanding years, and I believe here you have learned a kind of resilience, courage, and strength that the times demanded and which our world needs. And I am very confident in saying that the need for leaders of strength, kindness, and principle is as great now as it was then.

Here’s what I have seen in you: a deep awareness of and interest in the issues of this day; a love for the school we are and also for the one we aspire to become; a passion for justice and a commitment to change; an ability to build bridges across difference of all kinds; a resilience and toughness in the face of setback; a willingness to listen empathically to those with whom you disagree; and a commitment to caring for—dare I say loving—each other.

You did not know it when the Class of 1969 reached out, if accidentally and unexpectedly, but they did. They seemed to empathize, maybe even know you. They are just a few of the thousands of alumni who will welcome you and say, “We need you. We need what you have learned at Taft. We need your leadership. We need your service.”

So here’s a dream: that 50 years from now you will come back for your reunion, just as those men from 1969 did. The head of school will watch you in the Faculty Room as you greet each other. Hugs and handshakes. Smiles. Tears. There will be photographs of faculty on the walls, some of teachers you love. You will joke about how different the school is, but smile at how the Main Hall feels the same. Someone may say, “I don’t remember much of what he said at graduation, but didn’t Mr. Mac say something about us coming back to our 50th?”

“Here’s what he said: ‘I am so grateful to you for the ways you have grown, for the resilience you have shown, for the love you have shared, for the service you have given, for the hope you have kindled.’

“He said, ‘Thank you. I will miss you. I hope you come back.’

“He said, ‘*Non ut sibi.*’” ■

Willy MacMullen

Willy MacMullen ’78

SOCIAL SCENE

Follow @thetaftschool on Facebook and @taftschool on Instagram for daily glimpses of Taft life.



Instagram

An inside look at Honors Chem. #taftlife #mytaft #whytaft



facebook

Living the #nonutsibi life. #nottobeserved #taftlife #mytaft #whytaft Connecticut Food Bank



facebook

From Little Farm on Main. Bethlehem, CT, and Cows Around the Corner to the White Memorial Foundation, Bantam Civic Association, Brass City Harvest Urban Garden, the Watertown Greenway, and so many more special sites, our seniors fanned out across the region today for one last day of service as Taft students. Senior Community Service Day is a meaningful tradition and a fitting culmination of life at Taft. #taftlife #mytaft #whytaft #seniorweek



Decoding Cancer

Dr. Ranjit Bindra '94, physician-scientist and biotechnology entrepreneur at the Yale School of Medicine. PETER BAKER

UNLOCKING THE DARK SECRETS of why brain tumors respond better to some treatments than others is more than just science and medicine for Dr. Ranjit Bindra '94.

It's personal for the co-director of Yale University's Brain Tumor Center, who lost his father to a different type of cancer after a five-year battle. "I think that galvanized an interest pursuing this type of career," Bindra says.

Bindra is a physician-scientist and biotechnology entrepreneur, specializing in the study of pediatric glioma.

Fewer than one in four children survive the aggressive form of brain

cancer five years after being diagnosed. To understand such a terrible disease, clinicians such as Bindra frequently try to harvest tumor cells from terminally ill toddlers and young children.

It's a tough ask—and it's an even more heart-wrenching proposition for parents.

"That's probably one of the hardest parts of treating pediatric brain tumors," says Bindra, an associate professor of therapeutic radiology and experimental pathology at Yale. "They actually realize that in the bigger picture they can contribute to prevent heartache to another set of parents. People have been remarkably open to doing that."

The approach to treating cancer is ever-changing, Bindra says.

"There's going to be a large sea change or shift," he says. "We're going away from organ cancers. Over the last five to 10 years, we are now understanding that all of the tumors out there are more importantly driven by specific tumor mutations. We may actually target the mutation across five or six tumor types."

Bindra received his undergraduate degree, M.D., and Ph.D. from Yale. He did his residency and internship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan, and overlapped at MSKCC with Will Polkinghorn '95, a radiation oncologist.

"Will and I were residents at Memorial Sloan-Kettering for five years," Bindra says. "We actually did not realize that we had both gone to Taft until after we finished."

He teamed up with his thesis advisor while in medical school to found his own company, Helix Therapeutics. But then the biotech bubble burst in 2008–09.

Bindra wasn't discouraged, however. Taking the lessons from his first setback, he started Cybrexa Therapeutics two years ago at Science Park, a biotech incubator established by Yale, the city of New Haven, the state of Connecticut, and the Olin Corp. in the former Winchester Firearms factory.

Cybrexa employs 20 people and has raised more than \$27 million in capital to bring its best tumor targeting technology to patients. Bindra compares it to a "heat-seeking missile."

"We can unleash the immune system to actually target the tumor," Bindra says.

He travels extensively, between supervising clinical trials and going to conferences, attending three or four a month.

"Science is a lot like rock and roll—you play songs and to make them popular, you have to get out and promote them," Bindra says.

Social media is also playing a significant role raising awareness about clinical trials. "People are now on Facebook talking about support groups and trials," he says.

But cancer isn't the only obstacle facing medical pioneers. So is government funding, which he laments has flatlined.

"It's a major problem," he says. "It is actually a growing crisis. The National Institutes of Health is really the critical lifeblood."

Bindra fears the funding glut could diminish the talent pool in oncology. "Many people are rethinking, from the middle of graduate school, whether they want to go into academia," he says. "That's really not the problem you should be thinking about."

Visit Bindra's cancer lab website, and the camaraderie is evident between Bindra and his Yale colleagues. Each lists his or her favorite "gene" next to their favorite New Haven restaurant and television show or movie. Bindra's is DNA PKcs, which stands for protein kinase, catalytic subunit. It's a

metabolic gene that Bindra likens to the furnace of a cell. He and his colleagues play laser tag and do group dinners. "We have a vibrant atmosphere, where we make the hard work of science fun," he says.

Bindra traces his love of science to Taft chemistry classes with longtime faculty member David Hostage—he even dedicated his thesis to him. He recalls

spending Saturdays doing questions in the back of his chemistry book for fun.

"Will Polkinghorn and I continue to communicate and joke that we need to start a company together," he says.

"There's a weird thing that all roads seem to lead back to Taft." ■

—Neil Vigdor '95



Bindra reviews experiments and data at the bench with medical student Chris Jackson in Bindra's Lab.

Madame President Aspirations



Liz Osterhus Fleurette '84 with her daughter, Maggie, 11. Maggie wants to be the first female president of the U.S., and has since she was 5!

LIZ OSTERHUS FLEUETTE '84 was already busy enough. She wasn't looking to get involved in anything more than her demanding career and raising her family, keeping up with friends and generally enjoying life, she says. But that all changed the morning of November 9, 2016. She awoke to the news that the ultimate glass ceiling, the presidency of the United States, had not yet been shattered.

"We've had 45 male presidents, many of whom have been excellent. But how can it be that we haven't had a woman president yet?" she wondered at the time.

She looked at her daughter, Maggie, who at age 5 had announced that she wanted to be the first female president when she stood at a podium embellished with the presidential seal at the National Constitution Center. Something needed to be done to change the trajectory, Fleurette thought.

"If change isn't taking place on itself," she says now, "then I need to do my part." And so Ms President US was born. That very morning, Fleurette bought a "Ms President US" website and email, rented a PO box, and called a contractor to build an office in her home so she could begin the work of turning the tide.

The mission of Ms President US is to inspire and prepare girls for the highest civic leadership positions and to know they can achieve them. The program teaches girls the importance of female involvement in public service, the responsibility it entails, and the opportunity it provides.

As a nonpartisan, nonprofit, community-based initiative, Ms President US focuses on civic engagement and leadership skills for girls entering fourth through eighth grades. Through the program, girls learn about public speaking, diplomacy and listening skills,



Girls from Ms President US, aspiring to a future political office, at the podium at the Connecticut General Assembly; 36 girls were on this trip to the Capitol.

local/state/federal government, and women's history, while having an opportunity to meet and greet exemplary female leaders.

There are comparable programs for adult women, such as the Women's Campaign School at Yale University, and the director of that program, Patti Russo, serves on the Ms President US advisory board.

Fleurette's background in child and adolescent psychology meant she knew that girls' self-esteem peaks at age 9 and then plummets throughout adolescence.

"This is a nonpartisan program. It's about girls and their aspirations for leadership," she says. "We wanted to catch girls before their self-esteem starts to decline during puberty."

Ms President US also aspires to impart exemplary values in future leaders—values that unite, uplift, and inspire regardless of gender, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, or disability.

The program takes place during the school year, and girls come to eight monthly sessions after school. "In the fall we teach them about government," Fleurette says. In the spring, they begin learning about public speaking, and the girls prepare a campaign for Ms President of their town. They build a campaign focusing on an issue they care about (such as school bullying), and then face "voters" at a mock election. The winner then goes on to work with the

mayor of her town, with public speaking opportunities and a more in-depth look at local government. High school girls serve as mentor to the younger girls.

"All our invited speakers are women leaders," Fleurette says. "We balance Republicans and Democrats." The non-partisan aspect is crucial, she adds.

"We don't allow any critique of current or past leaders," she says. "We keep it positive and focused on the mission. It's kind of remarkable—there's not been a single incident of any girl speaking in any derogative way. It's not a political program. It's a girls' civic leadership program."

The program started in Fleurette's hometown of Ridgefield, Connecticut, with 68 girls involved this year, and five other Connecticut towns are interested in participating.

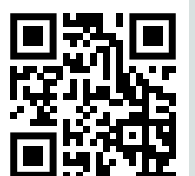
"I would love it if every single girl in every single town throughout the U.S. had the opportunity to participate. Every girl counts," she says. The program is available to replicate; it's grown to the point that Ms President US has hired a program manager to help identify funding so that it can expand to underserved communities as well.

"If girls can't see [female leaders] in their own community and state, we have to show them what it looks like," Fleurette says. ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84



To learn more about Ms President US and how to get involved visit www.mspresidentus.org.



What Is Blockchain?

A Q&A with Wesley Jamieson '13, a lead blockchain technical resource at the accounting firm RSM US LLP



To get started, can you explain what a blockchain is and how one works?

A blockchain is a distributed ledger—a record of events that is shared and updated in real time between many parties, where transactions are recorded and where trust in the confirmation of a transaction is the responsibility of computers distributed around the globe. Blockchain technology is often called immutable; however, it is really “append only”—meaning you cannot directly delete information once entered into a blockchain, instead you can send an update to the system, creating a fully verifiable log of changes. A blockchain, therefore, ensures that any piece of information or value maintained on it is provably, digitally unique.

To explain what all that means through an example, here at RSM we have developed

a blockchain solution for the food and beverage industry called ClearThru. ClearThru effectively translates data into a blockchain-readable format. Take, for example, oranges. Using ClearThru, the information coming from growers, producers, packers, shippers, distributors, and retailers can all be bundled and cryptographically stored on a blockchain platform to allow for more accessible and accurate information about the orange in various states throughout the supply chain. Through the utilization of blockchain technology, ClearThru also allows clients to generate a QR code on the oranges that provides a verifiable and trustworthy source of provenance for the oranges directly to the consumer. This moves our clients away from a fragmented system to a more transparent, secure, and efficient system that captures the entire value chain, and it creates a fully auditable

trail of transactions and information.

Over time, we may see the ability for value transfers, authorizations, supporting documentation in digital form, and the related journal entries on both sides of a transaction to be recorded on a blockchain. This could result in a shift away from retrospective auditing to a more real-time review of clients’ books by external auditors and regulators.

Tell us a bit about your position and how you became interested in this line of work.

I am a lead blockchain technical resource in RSM’s Blockchain and Digital Asset Management Consulting practice. I act as a subject matter expert on client engagements

and internal projects related to the use of blockchain or digital assets across our three lines of business—audit, tax, and consulting. I am involved with the education of the firm on blockchain technology and its impact to our clients, and I have developed and delivered presentations, workshops, and educational courses on blockchain both internally and externally. My primary focus today is on helping our clients implement enterprise blockchain systems and navigate the lack of tax and regulatory guidance from the IRS and other governmental bodies.

I’ve always had an interest in finance and the stock market, which was definitely cemented during my time at Taft, where I participated in the Economics and Investment Club. While I was studying accounting and financial management at Bucknell University, I had a summer internship at an asset management firm. Looking back at what seems like a stroke of luck, I was tasked with giving a presentation to the firm on Bitcoin. This ultimately led me to blockchain technology.

After the internship, I continued to spend numerous hours each day researching the space. Ultimately, I began my professional career at RSM as a tax associate. I knew blockchain has the capability to drastically alter finance and particularly the accounting profession, so I asked our senior leadership how the firm was preparing for blockchain. In another instance of luck, they were just beginning to assemble an internal task force to explore what blockchain meant for the firm, and I became involved through that.

You mentioned Bitcoin. Can you clear up the confusion over the relationship between blockchain, Bitcoin, and other cryptocurrencies?

Blockchain is the technology that underpins Bitcoin. Blockchain, as we now know it, and Bitcoin were essentially invented simultaneously. Today, blockchain also

underpins almost all other cryptocurrencies. One can think of cryptocurrencies as a mechanism to transfer value, information, or ownership of property securely across a blockchain network. Additionally, a blockchain can be used without cryptocurrencies.

Where do you see blockchain technology going in the future?

In the future, blockchain could act as the new digital infrastructure that will connect and allow other technological innovations. Similar to the internet in the early 1990s, no one could have predicted Facebook, Google, etc., and no one will quite predict what blockchain will provide in future decades.

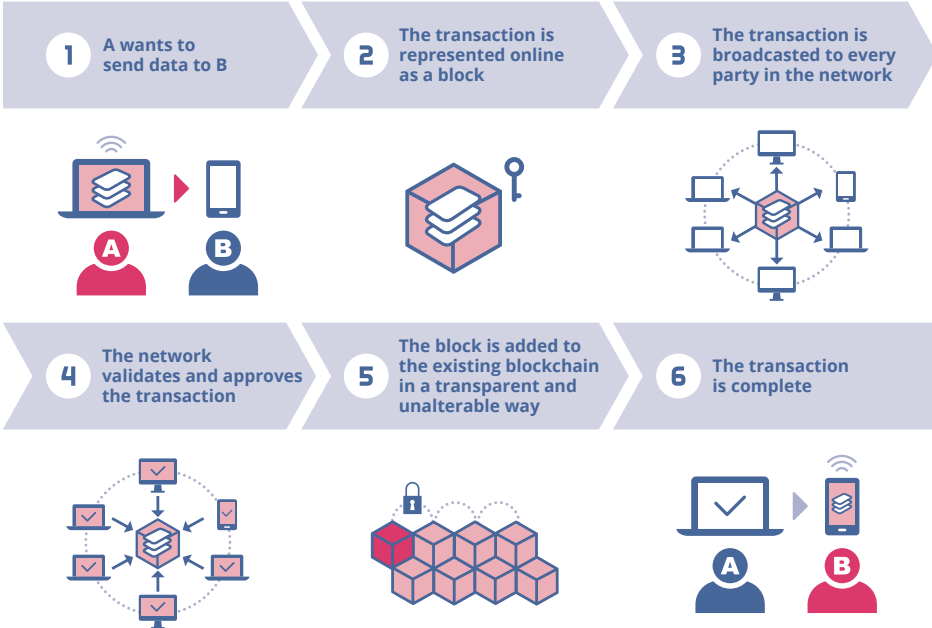
We’re already seeing blockchain permeate every industry and facet of life. There are two use cases of blockchain that I think help speak to its potential—decentralized identity and nonprofit.

Decentralized identity is the idea of individuals directly owning and maintaining their own data, including certifications like college degrees or a CPA license; government-issued documents, such as driver’s licenses and Social Security numbers; and even health records in a

digitized format secured through a blockchain that is immune to ransomware attacks. With decentralized identity, an individual can allow a doctor, prospective employer, or government agency to access only pertinent information and revoke that access when it is no longer required. This could reduce the amount of customer information exposed through cyberattacks, as well as cut down on time spent verifying information.

A United Nations World Food Programme blockchain pilot is another interesting example. Today, one million Syrian refugees have their irises scanned into a decentralized identity tied to a virtual wallet loaded with a digital certificate representing a Jordanian dollar. Refugees purchase daily essentials at certain local stores using iris scanners. The cost is then deducted from their account and transmitted to the merchant’s virtual wallet. The merchant then exchanges the digital certificate with the UN for local currency. The UN no longer needs to organize expensive shipments of supplies that may be susceptible to theft or interception, so the UN can now focus on building the local economy to boost economic growth and work to stabilize regions. ■

—Hillary Dooley





Actor and improviser
Alexandra Dickson '99
EVAN HOYT THOMPSON

FOR ACTOR AND IMPROVISER ALEXANDRA DICKSON '99, who performs and teaches at New York's famed Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre, it all began in an introductory acting class during her mid year at Taft. "A lot of what we learned was improv-based," she remembers. "It was all really fun, and it never made me nervous or felt scary or hard."

She continued to study acting over the next three years and even joined the school's improv group. Then, after graduating in 1999, Dickson found herself at Emory University, where, despite not studying theater, she made sure to follow an important piece of advice from one of her favorite Taft teachers. "Mrs. Fifer was always really supportive," Dickson says, "and when I was looking at colleges, she told me that she didn't care what I studied—I just had to keep improvising." As a member of Emory's improv team, she traveled around the country, performing and taking workshops, including at Chicago's The Second City.

"At Second City, I realized that I could actually be doing improv as a career," she recalls. "Up until that point, I had thought that it was just something that was fun but that I would eventually stop doing. Then I saw that there was a place where I could actually do this professionally."

Dickson ultimately moved to Chicago and was soon cast as part of Second City's touring company. After a few years with the ensemble, she relocated to New York, studying traditional acting at the Circle in the Square Theatre School. "I really missed improv, though," she admits.

So a year after graduating, she started doing shows at Upright Citizens Brigade and quickly flourished there. "Acting school had made me a much better improviser, and since I already had experience with improv from my time at Second City, I came in with a good level of confidence," she says. Dickson also has a pretty strong work ethic.

Now, Dickson appears every Friday night as a member of The Stepfathers, a five-person ensemble of improvisers that has been performing for nearly 15

years. "I joined the group in 2015, and I really believe that it is one of the best teams in the country," Dickson says. "Over the years, a lot of really talented people have been in the Stepfathers, like Bobby Moynihan from *Saturday Night Live* and Zach Woods, who was on *The Office*."

She's also been part of another show called *Improvized Seinfeld*. The show has four improvisers who play Elaine, Jerry, George, and Kramer every time. "I play whatever support characters come up—George's girlfriend, Elaine's boss, Kramer's pizza delivery guy, etc.," Dickson says.

Dickson points out that, unlike the short-form variety of improv found on most college campuses, "with long-form improv, there are no games. The scary thing, and the hard thing and the great thing, is that we don't have a gimmick. It's just unscripted theater, and that could mean 30 minutes of a bunch of small scenes, or it could mean 30 minutes of one long scene, like a one-act play," she says. "It really can be so many things."

The second half of every Stepfathers

show always begins with an audience interview. Dickson and fellow performers conduct an impromptu interview with an audience member, building an entire set around that conversation. "They don't have to be funny, they just have to tell the truth," she explains. "Sometimes they tell us a funny story, and sometimes the responses are very truthful but maybe dicey. No matter what, we're always trying to pull the comedic idea from it." Whether interacting with a packed theater or a single scene partner, this quality of improv—its ability to connect people—is what brings Dickson the greatest satisfaction.

"Truly, my favorite thing is that it only works when you're honestly connecting with someone," she says. "You have to hear them. You have to see them. You have to be affected by them and take them in. And when it's really good improv, it feels so great because you've put yourself out there, and somebody across from you genuinely connects with you." ■

—Christopher Browner '12



Dickson improvising with
The Stepfathers at Upright
Citizens Brigade Theatre in
New York City. ARIN SANG-URAI

Helping Uprooted Families



Donna Eldridge '76, working in the Donations Room, helps newcomers from Afghanistan set up their households.

FOR BAY AREA-BASED DONNA ELDRIDGE '76, delivering furniture to a family of Afghan refugees in her truck is just another day. But for these uprooted families who have landed in the U.S. with nothing, her services are invaluable and ultimately, life-altering.

Eldridge's refugee outreach work began

in 2016, during a period when her youngest daughter was applying to colleges and the reality of becoming an empty nester loomed. Then Donald Trump won the presidential election, and, as for many others, Eldridge's world was flipped on its head.

"After the election I was left with this strong desire to take action," she says.

"I wanted to do something that would help people."

Eldridge, who has valued the *Non ut sibi* mission since before her Taft days, had previously been involved in a holiday giving drive through her daughters' school. When she discovered that the woman who organized the drive needed help resettling refugees

through her work with Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay (JFCS East Bay), Eldridge felt called to the task.

"JFCS works under an umbrella organization, HIAS [originally founded as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society], which helps refugees resettle in safety and freedom," Eldridge explains. "They needed local volunteers to help resettle refugees, most of

whom are Afghan or Iraqi translators here on special immigrant visas." Afghans who worked with U.S. personnel in Afghanistan are eligible for a special immigrant visa to bring their families to the States.

Her work started out with furniture delivery—getting refugees items such as beds, couches, and bath and kitchen essentials—but quickly grew more personal as

she helped families cope with the often overwhelming reality of their new lives in America. These days, Eldridge does everything from driving refugees to doctors' appointments to helping parents navigate the unfamiliar school systems.

"There's a big Afghan community in the East Bay, and within that there's a huge range of education and cultural experiences among the refugees," explains Eldridge. "Some, mostly the men, speak fluent English and have major careers; others have come straight from Afghan villages and can't even say hello in English."

Though she has always valued service work, her day-to-day used to look quite different. Originally from Darien, Connecticut, Eldridge graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 1981 with a degree in plant science, and then went on to get her M.A. in landscape design from the Conway School. From there she launched a successful career, cofounding Bay Area landscape architecture firm Cleaver Design Associates (CDA) with her husband, Bob Cleaver, in 1996. When they started a family, she scaled back on her full-time hours at CDA to focus on raising her two daughters. And while she still helps run the business side of things at CDA, Eldridge's heart is in her work with JFCS.

"I've always been the kind of person who gets pleasure from helping others," she shares. "My mom was the same way. I learned it from her."

That said, the work of resettling refugees is far from easy, and some days it's impossible for Eldridge to feel fulfilled in the presence of so much hardship.

"It's incredibly difficult to see families here, knowing that they have left so many loved ones behind in war-torn places," she says.

As for the future, Eldridge hopes to continue making a difference for refugees resettling in the East Bay.

"Seeing a family settle into their new home, feeling safe and reassured that they made the right decision to come to the U.S. and try for a new life—that's the most rewarding part of this work," she says. ■

—Carola Lovering '07



Afghan women watch a video as part of an introduction to American culture.

In PRINT

Lucifer's Gold iUNIVERSE Robert W. Barker '63

Peter Binder, geologist, gold explorer, and former SEAL, and his lover, Maria Davidoff, are recovering from their violent confrontation with nuclear terrorists in the Arctic of Canada, and the enemies they made still pursue them.

Binder takes an assignment to examine a new gold discovery in Indonesia, potentially the richest gold mine in the history of the world. He and Davidoff plunge into converging and violent plots that focus on a mysterious and massive hoard of gold. Conspirators aim to use the gold to subvert the Constitution and install a fascist dictator to rule the United States. A Russian spy and a Japanese gangster have their own designs on the gold.

In deadly encounters across the globe, Binder and Davidoff repeatedly confront the hurricane of evil that is drawn to the gold. Is the United States government so fragile that it can be so easily destroyed? They must fight through layers of deception and betrayal around them and deliver the truth to Washington and the president.

Barker is no stranger to the danger and exhilaration of exploration in exotic locales as an international gold explorer and geologist. He is the author of several books, including *Nuclear Rogue*, the first in the series of Peter Binder and Maria Davidoff thrillers.

El Ombú: A British Family Saga in Argentina WWII AMAZON DIGITAL SERVICES LLC Beldon Butterfield '53

The Redfield family are owners of El Ombú, a 60,000-acre *estancia* (cattle and sheep ranch) on the plains of the Argentine pampa. Seen through the eyes of Lieutenant David Redfield, an RAF photo-reconnaissance pilot in World War II, readers follow his unlikely wartime romance in Great Britain as an Anglo-Argentine volunteer. Butterfield's narrative relates Redfield's experiences in Great Britain, North Africa, Italy (as a prisoner of war), and his escape to Malta, a secret trip to the British Mandate of Palestine, and a visit to a kibbutz, where he learns of Nazi atrocities carried out in Argentina against Jews.

His Italo-Argentine boyhood friend and half-brother, "Vico" Mancini joins the OVRA (Italian SS) in Mussolini's army, rising to the rank of *tenento colonnello*. When Redfield becomes a POW in Italy, Vico facilitates David's escape by submarine to Malta. The relationship with Vico with his knowledge of escape "ratlines" to get Nazis and their gold bullion to Argentina

becomes the reason MI6 recruits David and Vico, despite the latter being branded a war criminal. As the Third Reich crumbles, the leaders make plans to create the Fourth Reich in Nazi-friendly Argentina.

Redfield returns to Argentina as it spins out of control under the dictatorship of Juan Domingo Perón and his wife, Eva, as the country proceeds to destroy the British economic hegemony and Anglo-Argentine presence.

The book ends with the capture of Adolph Eichmann by a team of Mossad agents and his being sent to Israel to stand trial for his crimes against humanity.

The author of several previous books, Butterfield went to Mexico in 1962 with Time/Life International. He is a dual national and lives in San Miguel de Allende.

Thomas Paine and the Clarion Call for American Independence

DA CAPO
Harlow Giles Unger '49

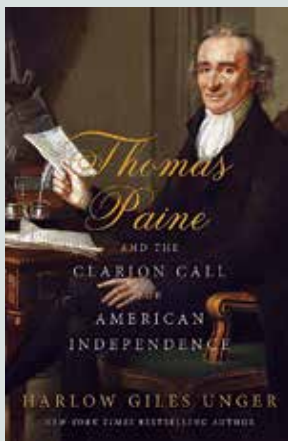
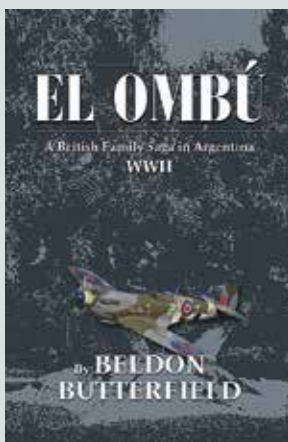
The biography of the man whose pen set America ablaze, inspiring its revolution, and whose ideas about reason and religion continue to reverberate today.

Thomas Paine's striking words were like no others in history: they inspired readers to change their lives, governments, kings, and even their gods. An Englishman who emigrated to the American colonies, he formed close friendships with Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, and his ideas helped shape the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights.

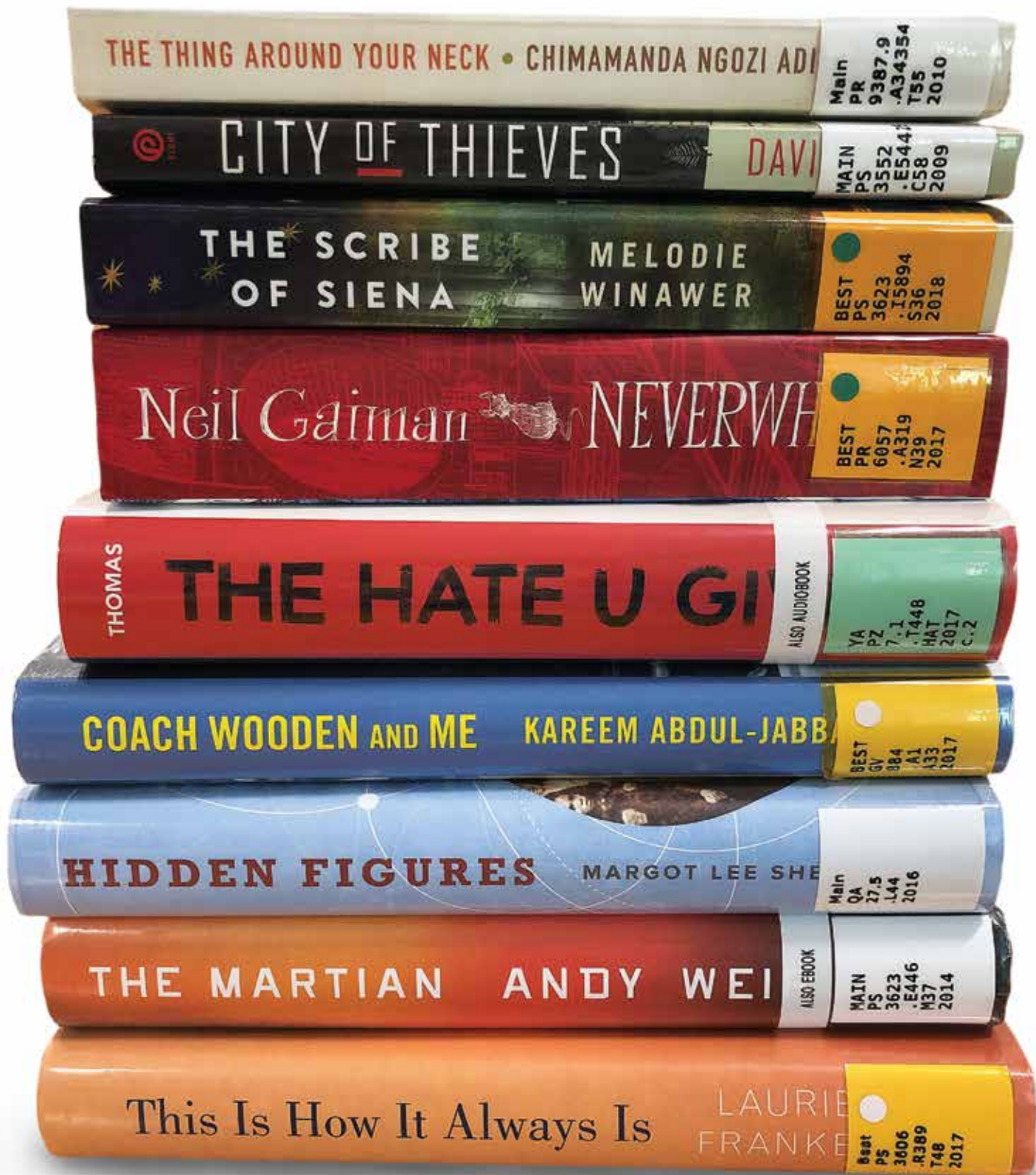
The most widely read political writer of his generation, he proved to be more than a century ahead of his time, conceiving and demanding unheard-of social reforms that are now integral elements of modern republican societies. Among them were government subsidies for the poor, universal housing and education, pre- and postnatal care for women, and universal social security. These were incredibly radical (and modern) ideas for the 18th century, and are still hotly debated in 2019.

Despite this influence on our country's early days, the world turned against Paine in his later years. While his earlier works *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man* attacked the political and social status quo on earth, *The Age of Reason* attacked the status quo of the hereafter. Former friends shunned him, and the man hailed as the muse of the American Revolution died alone and forgotten.

Unger is the author of 26 previous books, including 12 biographies of America's Founding Fathers and three histories of the early Republic. ■



Ed. note: In our spring column, we published an incorrect class year for the author of Katrina. Rob Florence is Class of '83.



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@taftschoo.org) and mail a copy to:

Taft Bulletin | The Taft School | 110 Woodbury Road | Watertown, CT 06795-2100

Taft's 2019 all-school summer reading selections were based on the theme of grit and perseverance. For more, see page 32.

Scientific Ethics: Joining the Global Conversation

student
SPOTLIGHT



FOUR TIMES EACH WEEK throughout the spring semester, eight seniors gathered around a conference table in Wu to lend their voices to some of the most pressing ethical conversations of our time: stem cells and cloning; advances in genetics and genetic engineering (including genetic testing, CRISPR, and gene modification in plants and humans); physician-assisted death; human experimentation; vaccines. Designed for upper-class students and held every spring for the past 11 years,

Scientific Ethics is Science Department Head Shannon Guidotti's brainchild and passion. "One of the things I found really exciting when I first arrived at Taft was that teachers are empowered to create classes we think students might like or want to take," says Guidotti. "I took a class in general ethics when I was a student at Ethel Walker and a medical ethics class when I was in college. They were the kind of courses that just stuck with me—courses that taught me a lot about being a good person and about how to think

about important questions, like should we do things just because we can because science and technology allow us to? I wanted to bring that kind of experience to Taft."

The semester begins with objective lessons about general ethics, values, and major philosophical theories—from deontology and utilitarianism to virtue-, care-, and principle-based ethics. Those theories become the scaffolding—the common intellectual and academic foundations and tenets—on which students build their more subjective

and sometimes divergent analyses of current ethical issues in the field of science.

"We start the class talking about values and what's important to us so that students understand that their own personal values are going to shape how they approach each topic," Guidotti explains. "The philosophical approaches offer established schools of thought and methods of reasoning to help them defend those values and positions. This understanding allows us to explore topics through good ethical debates, as opposed to just heated discussions."

And while personal beliefs and values may ultimately shape each conversation, learning in this class is rooted in scientific fact.

"There is a lot of student research involved," she says. "It is critical to the conversation that they all understand the science before we jump into the ethics."

Guidotti introduces each topic through a variety of traditional classroom methods—presentations, videos, fact sheets—then asks students to develop and share additional science-based content using more contemporary teaching strategies, including the jigsaw method and four corners exercises. Both advance learning by marrying



Senior Taline Almasian shares her presentation on the measles vaccine with Shannon Guidotti.

independent research and thinking with peer-to-peer interdependence and cooperation. She also spends time talking about bias, context, and misconduct in scientific research and reporting, a concept that plays an important role in their unit on vaccines and in their overall approach to learning and scientific literacy.

"It is both interesting and important

to think how different sources frame the same topic," notes class member Caroline Erbstein '19, "and how that impacts not only how information is delivered, but how you receive it. I've learned to bring a more analytical mindset to everything I read."

"We've become skilled at analyzing the author's lens as we read articles and do our research," adds Lauren Hoey '19. "Understanding that an author's personal perspective and beliefs may influence their ideas and reporting forces us to think more critically about what we read and where we get our information. This is especially important in an age of where people get so much of their information online, especially as it relates to current events."

This year's measles outbreak put current events in the forefront of the vaccine unit, which begins with numbers—lots of them—collected by the World Health Organization. They offer a snapshot of vaccination coverage worldwide. The news *seems* good: about 85 percent of infants worldwide received the three recommended doses of the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP3) vaccine; by 2017, 123 countries had reached at least 90 percent DTP3 coverage. But that still leaves more than 19.9 million children under the age of one unvaccinated. To explore the



Charlie Werner '19 presents information about the chicken pox vaccine to the class.

—continued on next page

continued from previous page—

reasons why that number remains so high, students presented research on vaccine-preventable diseases and watched clips from news programs like PBS's *Frontline*, various TED Talks, and interviews with celebrities, authors, and scientists. They also revisited their scientific misconduct conversation, recalling British physician Andrew Wakefield's 1998 paper linking vaccinations with autism and bowel disease, which was not only debunked but proven to be falsified; it was ultimately retracted.

"We talked about where all this comes from in America," says Guidotti. "They actually read primary sources, firsthand journal articles, and blogs representing both sides of the debate. But when we considered the vaccination question globally and learned more about countries with lower vaccination rates, students came to understand that what is a choice in our country may be something completely different in another. They read journal articles that talk about the challenges for vaccinations globally and saw that not getting vaccinated often has to do with factors like infrastructure and economics, challenges to access, or lack of

understanding of the science. Having students understand that the reasons someone might not get the flu vaccine at Taft are very different than why someone might not get a lifesaving vaccine in a developing country is awesome to see, and incredibly important."

At nearly every juncture, and with nearly every point made on nearly every topic, Guidotti is quick to ask students, "What is the counterpoint to that?" She requires them to think critically—to understand the basis of their own beliefs while considering the science, and often the emotion, on the other side—an approach and skill-set that is especially important during

their unit on physician-assisted death. In a culminating, formal debate, students presented assertions representing legal, medical, and patient perspectives. They defended those assertions using the tenets of the philosophical theories of ethics.

"The movie we watched first, *How to Die in Oregon*, was very emotional, and a bit biased toward the 'pro' position of physician-assisted suicide, which was also my position," says Taline Almasian '19. "I chose the anti-side in the debate to gain a better sense of the other perspective. I learned so much, and went from essentially zero to feeling that I am really well-versed

in both sides of the issue and able to hold my own in discussion or debate."

Annie Gilland '19 agrees. "Although physician-assisted death was difficult to learn about, it was also really satisfying. For me, it was a complete journey from not knowing much about it at all to having a fully formed and informed opinion that allows me to argue about it intellectually with my peers," she says.

For most, developing informed opinions that allow them to argue intellectually with their peers is just the tip of the learning iceberg. They have developed critical thinking skills—and a dose of

empathy—that they will carry well beyond the bounds of the science classroom.

"This class taught me to think more deeply about all of the different sides and different ethical arguments that surround a whole range of issues, not just those rooted in scientific study," says Taline. "In doing so, I've come to more fully understand different sides of an argument I wasn't really aware of before, or didn't necessarily agree with. This has given me a better perspective on how and why ideas differ, how different backgrounds shape our thinking, and how all of those differences shape the global conversation in really meaningful ways." ■

Coffee for Charity



TAFTIES THINK ABOUT THE SCHOOL motto—Not to be served but to serve—a lot. They think about it when they plan their afternoon "ex," when they sign up for a service trip, when they plan charity events, and when their sports teams hold youth clinics or toy drives. Shealyn Kennedy '19 was even thinking about it last summer on vacation, while relaxing on the sofa.

"I was thinking about how important service is in our community," says Shealyn, "and wanted to come up with a way of giving something back once the school year started up again."

As day students, Shealyn and friend Olivia Wivestad '19 have something a lot of other students don't: wheels.

"We were doing Starbucks runs all the time, offering to pick things up for our friends when we went," Shealyn says. "I thought we could make something good out of something we already do and that people really appreciate and enjoy."

And they have. Taft Coffee for Charity is an Instagram-based initiative that has allowed Shealyn and Olivia to donate HOPE kits for cancer patients to

a local hospital, and to purchase equipment for the Watertown-Rhino Youth Disabled Hockey Team, a program established nearly two years ago by Caeley Smith '19.

A few times each week, Shealyn and Olivia post an Instagram story in the Taft Coffee for Charity account letting people know they're about to make a Starbucks run; subscribers get notifications from Instagram when they do.

"People then place their order using the Starbucks app," Olivia explains, "and we run and pick it up. We ask that people make a minimum donation of \$1 when we deliver their coffee to them. We definitely have our loyal customers, and some people have been quite generous, making donations as large as \$20."

Shealyn and Olivia launched Taft Coffee for Charity in October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

"We thought it made sense to start with the National Breast Cancer Foundation as our first charity," says Shealyn. "Our goal was to raise \$150 to purchase HOPE kits for cancer patients—we were very happy to not just meet our goal, but to exceed it."

According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, patients undergo breast cancer treatment consistently

look for common comfort items—things like lip balm, unscented lotions, fuzzy socks, educational resources, and journals. The foundation ships the kits to donors, who often assemble them during HOPE parties, then deliver them to local hospitals, which Shealyn and Olivia did in February. Around the same time, they made their second crowdfunded gift.

"Our great friend Caeley Smith '19 created a nonprofit hockey program for disabled children, giving them the unique opportunity to play the sport free of charge," Shealyn explains. "One of the players, 8-year-old Owen, has cerebral palsy, meaning he doesn't have full mobility in his legs. Caeley received a grant from the Connecticut Hockey Conference to buy him a sled, allowing him to experience hockey more independently. We purchased specialized sticks with picks on the end that allow him to move the sled on his own."

"It was such an amazing surprise when Shealyn and Olivia let me know that they had chosen to support my program through Taft Coffee for Charity," says Caeley. "I am unbelievably grateful that other students in our school—as well as members of the greater Watertown community—see what I see in these kids and



in this program. Growing this program as really been incredible for me and for the players. I couldn't have done it without all the support I've received." ■

Sci Oly

THIRTY TAFT STUDENTS TRAVELED to the University of Connecticut in Storrs to compete in the Connecticut Science Olympiad last spring. They came home with eight medals, including a first-place win for Marcus Valenta '19 and Ernest

Protas '20 in the Chemistry Lab event, which required them to solve problems using scientific process skills in physical properties, and acids and bases. "Ernest Protas did a fantastic job as team captain," notes science teacher



Ernest Protas '20

Jim Mooney, "and also gets a shout-out for winning three medals." The weekend event brought 48 teams from across the state to the UConn campus. Each team was allowed a maximum of 15 members who competed in 23 different events. The events challenged competitors to apply their knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Some events required students to construct projects in advance, while others involved on-the-spot problem-solving. Students competed in pairs for most events; most entered three events during the competition. Congratulations to all of Taft's Science Olympiad team members and to the following 2019 medal winners:

TEAM A

- > **First Place, Chemistry Lab:**
Ernest Protas '20 and Marcus Valenta '19
- > **Second Place, Circuit Lab:**
First Yinyord '19 and Carolyn Yow '19
- > **Third Place, Astronomy:**
Stefan Kim '20 and Ernest Protas '20
- > **Third Place, Fermi Questions:**
Peter Yu '20 and Bill Lu '19
- > **Third Place, Sounds of Music:**
Ernest Protas '20 and Coco Zhang '21

TEAM B

- > **Third Place, Mission Possible:**
Chris Pellegrini '20
- > **Fourth Place, Chemistry Lab:**
Anna Serbina '21 and Ben Le '21
- > **Fourth Place, Write it, Do it:**
Theo Norledge '21 and Eli Juwan '22

Special thanks to team coaches David Hostage, Brian Norledge, and Jim Lehner, and to mentors Shannon Guidotti, Parker Washburn, Mike McAloon, and Dan Calore. ■

The Science Olympiad is a nationwide organization dedicated to promoting science education through competitive science tournaments. About 15,000 schools participate each year. The Science Olympiad is specifically cited in the National Science Standards as a model science activity.

Independent Study Program

FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS, TAFT'S Independent Study Program (ISP) has allowed students to pursue their passions through high-level, inquiry-based, self-directed courses of study. Taft's program was the first of its kind in the nation and continues to offer students a unique opportunity for advanced learning outside the traditional classroom. In May, students undertaking ISP projects during the 2018–19 academic year presented their work. In all, 16 students worked on projects ranging from the highly academic and analytical to the highly artistic. Projects included Human Rights Law in the U.S.; Primary Determinants of Refugees' Economic Success in the USA and Canada; Lionfish in Tropical Marine Ecosystems; Computer Security; The Opioid Epidemic; Educational Policy Around the World; The Lexical Similarity Among the English, French, and German Languages; and an original musical album.



End of Year Program

LAST SPRING, TAFT STUDENTS TOOK PART IN A NEW "End of Year Program" that included community service activities for lower mids, leadership training for mids, and college counseling workshops for upper mids. The End of Year Program also included a day of "Crash Courses" for the Rhinos, who spent time with Taft faculty members engaging in two-hour courses on a wide range of topics including a "Building a Boat" class with Dan Calore in which students designed and built wooden boats in Taft's STEM lab (see photo) and then raced them across Potter's Pond.

Hitting the Open Highway

English Teacher Chris Brown '64 Retires

"RETIREMENT IS NOT THE END OF THE ROAD. IT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE OPEN HIGHWAY."

—Author Unknown

FOR ENGLISH TEACHER Chris Brown '64, it is all open highway ahead—he retired at the end of the academic year, after a lengthy career and extraordinary dedication to Taft.

Brown first joined the Taft community as a student in the early 1960s. He was, he says, lucky enough to have spectacularly good English teachers. "I remember sitting in [Bill Sullivan's] class and thinking, I want to do what he does." And for more than 40 years, he has. After graduating at Yale and completing graduate work at New York University, Brown earned a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania. As

both a lawyer and a law professor, Brown found his greatest joys in the latter; he made a permanent switch to the classroom, teaching Latin and English at a few peer schools before landing back at Taft, a place that still feels like home.

"Chris's love of literature and passion for students make him truly special," says Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78. "And the joy he brings to every class is inspiring, intoxicating."

Brown is the kind of teacher students love. He recites incredible amounts of poetry, drops lines from any number of

scholarly works at will, tells fascinating personal stories of a life well lived, and injects energy, enthusiasm, and just a touch of drama into every lesson. He keeps in touch with hundreds of former students, representing every decade of his long and storied teaching career. They write to let him know that his work mattered: they say he taught them not just to write, but to *think*, and that his belief in them taught them to believe in themselves. After a 2011 retirement that didn't quite take, Brown is ready to hit the open road, after a "phenomenally rewarding career." ■



A Career of Devotion, Energy, and Passion

Director of Development Chris Latham Retires



Chris Latham with, from left, Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78, trustee Hank Torbert '90, and former faculty member Scott Serafine.



Chris Latham with his wife, Cindy.

CHRIS LATHAM CAME TO TAFT in 2007, after serving as director of alumni and development at Tabor Academy for 17 years, and holding similar posts at both Holderness School and Dartmouth College. Before moving into development, Latham worked as a credit analyst in the corporate banking division of Princeton Bank & Trust.

During his 12-year tenure as director of development at Taft, Latham's adroit financial insights and intellect, coupled with his genuine warmth, charisma, and professionalism, enabled him to effectively take development initiatives to new heights, benefiting every aspect of school life. Latham recently led Taft through "Ever Taft, Even Stronger," a multiyear

campaign designed to sustain and advance Taft's excellence as a school by growing its endowment to support faculty, financial aid, program growth and development, and campus maintenance and improvements. Under Latham's leadership, campaign giving exceeded the original goal of \$175 million.

Latham led a talented, seasoned development team, which includes alumni relations, major gifts, annual giving, planned giving, parent relations, stewardship, publications, and database management and research professionals. His fundraising teams consistently set and achieve meaningful goals, both in terms of dollars raised and donor participation. One example: the Parents' Fund has consistently achieved a

participation rate above 90 percent, and this year raised more than \$2 million, the highest among Taft's peer schools.

"With Chris Latham's retirement we say goodbye to a singularly classy and successful leader," Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 says. "Chris has served Taft—and Tabor Academy for nearly two decades before us—with incredible devotion, energy, and passion. Taft was changed and made better by him, as he has led a terrific office through a major capital campaign, a dozen alumni weekends, hundreds of events, thousands of communications—and more miles on planes, trains, and automobiles than anyone can count. We will miss him deeply. He has been an inspiring partner for me—and many others." ■

Living History

ESTABLISHED IN 1961 TO HONOR TRADITIONAL NEW ORLEANS JAZZ, PRESERVATION HALL HOSTS intimate, acoustic concerts almost every night of the year. Performers include ensembles from a collective of more than 100 local master practitioners, and, in March of this year, talented Tafties. Jazz Band teacher T.J. Thompson led students in a Sunday evening performance at the storied and historic music venue.



**GREEN
RHINO**
initiatives

A Growing Concern

TAFTIES CELEBRATED ARBOR DAY BY planting a tricolor beech tree in Headmaster's Circle and a Fuji apple tree on the grounds of a faculty residence.



Whose Woods

TAFT PHOTOGRAPHY TEACHER YEE-FUN YIN spent the 2017–18 academic year on sabbatical; he spent this past May sharing the fruits of his sabbatical labor through *Whose Woods*, an exhibit in Potter Gallery. The work explores private land ownership through both the written word and images, inviting the audience to reflect on their own relationship with land. The exhibit was made possible by the Andrew R. Heminway '47 Endowment Fund. ■



Right: Yin with Will O'Meara '12.



Spring Dance Showcase



Spring Play



TAFT ACTORS SOARED TO NEW HEIGHTS WITH A SPRING PRODUCTION OF *BOEING-BOEING*, a 1960s, international romp featuring one lothario, three fiancées, a best friend, and a maid who sees it all. Seniors Brady Grustas, Cami Long, and Piper Forstl wowed in their Taft swan songs.



And the Halo Goes to...

TAFT ACTORS AND CREW EARNED 11 nominations and two wins in the Seven Angels Theatre 16th Annual Halo Awards last spring. More than 60 schools from across Connecticut participated in this year's awards, which honor high school students' achievements in all aspects of theater. Taft won the Halo for Best Dancing for *Chicago* and Best Specialty Ensemble (Fiona Connolly '21, Erin Farrell '20, Rati Matome '19, Michelle Tetro '20, and Lily Thompson '20 as The Merry Murderesses in *Chicago*).

Community Partners

GIRLS INC. OF WESTERN CONNECTICUT recently named the Taft School as its 2019 Community Partner of the Year. The award recognizes Taft's "instrumental" role in working with Girls Inc. in support of its mission to "inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold." Community Service Director Baba Frew travels to Girls Inc. in Waterbury throughout the school year with a dedicated group of student volunteers, who were on hand to receive the award in May.



Senior Service Day

FROM LITTLE FARM ON MAIN and Cows Around the Corner to the White Memorial Foundation, Bantam Civic Association, Brass City Harvest Urban Garden, the Watertown Greenway, and so many more sites in and around Watertown, Taft's Class of 2019 spent one last day of service as Taft students in May. Senior Community Service Day is a meaningful tradition and a fitting culmination of life at Taft.

Dr. Nikki Mayhew Greene '93

Elected to Trustee Post



This past spring, Taft alumni elected Dr. Nikki Mayhew Greene '93 to serve her alma mater as the newest member of Taft's board of trustees. Greene is assistant professor of art history at Wellesley College and the visual arts editor of *Transition: The Magazine of Africa and the Diaspora*, published by Harvard University (Indiana University Press). She received her B.A. with honors in art history from Wesleyan University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from the University of Delaware. Teaching art history at Wellesley College is Greene's dream job! She finds teaching particularly rewarding in a predominantly women's environment. She views the professoriate as a vocation that entails amplifying students' voices, advocating for access and equity within higher education, and preparing our country's future leaders to think critically, write eloquently, and speak boldly, be it within museum galleries, on corporate boards, or on the floor of Congress. Greene has traveled throughout the

United States and abroad, including to Chile, England, Ethiopia, Italy, and South Africa, to deliver lectures on the arts of the African diaspora. She has held numerous fellowships, including the Barra Foundation Fellowship at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, and the Richard D. Cohen Fellowship at the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University. She is currently completing her forthcoming book, *Grime, Glass, and Glitter: The Body and the Sonic in Contemporary Black Art* (Duke University Press). A proud native of Newark, New Jersey, Greene was awarded a scholarship to attend Taft through the Wight Foundation, an organization that supports bright students from the greater Newark region in attending independent schools. She credits Taft as being a springboard to pursue her interests in language, art, culture, and leadership. She was an active volunteer in the Watertown and Waterbury areas before she spent a transformational upper mid year in Barcelona, through the School Year Abroad program. In Spain, Greene studied art history for the first time—entirely in Spanish. She returned to Taft her senior year with a broader global perspective on her education and better prepared to take on leadership roles as a school monitor, corridor monitor in Mac House, head of the Black Student Union, and member of United Cultures at Taft. Greene now lives in Wellesley, Massachusetts, with her husband, Simeon, and two children, Mia (12) and Xavier (9), who fell in love with Taft at her 25th Reunion last year! Greene writes about art, education, the life-work balance, and racial discrimination on her blog, nikkigphd.com. ■



Diving into Summer Reads

IN A TWIST ON TAFT'S TRADITIONAL SUMMER READING selection, the Summer Reading Committee selected not one but nine texts for students to choose from for their summer reading. The books were selected based on the theme of grit and perseverance. The wider selection of texts is designed to allow students to select the book they are most interested in. The summer reading books are:

- > *City of Thieves* by David Benioff
- > *Coach Wooden and Me* by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
- > *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly
- > *Neverwhere* by Neil Gaiman
- > *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- > *The Martian* by Andy Weir
- > *The Scribe of Siena* by Melodie Winawer
- > *The Thing Around Your Neck* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- > *This Is How It Always Is* by Laurie Frankel

This fall the Summer Reading Committee will bring author Sarah McBride to campus to continue the conversation around grit and perseverance with the Taft community.

College Bound



THE CLASS OF 2019 begins the next step in their education at exceptional colleges and universities across the country and around the world. More Rhinos have enrolled at University of Pennsylvania this year than any other school. The number of students from this year's graduating class attending a given university is reflected in parentheses following the school name. Those with no parenthetical reference will welcome one Taft student this fall.

American University	Georgetown University (4)	Saint Anselm College	University of Maine (2)
Babson College	George Washington University (2)	Santa Clara University	University of Miami (3)
Bard College (2)	Georgia Institute of Technology	Scripps College	University of Michigan (2)
Barnard College	Harvard University	Soka University of America	University of Notre Dame (2)
Berklee College of Music	Haverford College	St. Lawrence University (2)	University of Oregon
Boston College (3)	Hobart and William Smith Colleges (2)	Stanford University	University of Pennsylvania (8)
Boston University	Howard University	SUNY College of Technology at Canton	University of Richmond (4)
Bowdoin College (2)	IE University - Segovia	Swarthmore College	University of Southern California
Bucknell University (5)	Lafayette College (2)	Syracuse University	University of St. Andrews (3)
Carnegie Mellon University (2)	Lake Forest College	Trinity College	University of Texas, Austin (2)
Champlain College	Lehigh University	Tufts University (5)	University of Toronto
Chapman University	McGill University	Tulane University (4)	University of Vermont (3)
Colby College	Miami University, Oxford	Union College (New York) (3)	University of Virginia
Colgate University (5)	Middlebury College (5)	University of Bridgeport	University of Wisconsin, Madison (2)
College of the Holy Cross (2)	New York University (5)	University of California, Berkeley	Vanderbilt University
Columbia University (4)	Northeastern University (4)	University of California, Los Angeles (2)	Vassar College
Connecticut College	Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences	University of California, San Diego	Villanova University
Cornell University (3)	Occidental	University of Chicago	Wake Forest University (5)
Duke University (2)	Ohio State University	University of Colorado Boulder (2)	Washington and Lee University
Durham University (UK)	Oxford College of Emory University	University of Connecticut	Wellesley College
Elon University	Princeton University (2)	University of Delaware	Wesleyan University (2)
Fordham University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Williams College (2)
Franklin & Marshall College (4)	Rice University		Yale University (4)

Spring SPORTS wrap-up

BY STEVE PALMER
Photography by Robert Falcetti



Varsity baseball player
Nolan Grooms '19
throws a pitch against
Loomis Chaffee in May.



Taft's Jenna Guglielmi '22 slides
into third base during a game
against Westminster in mid-April.

Baseball 16-1 FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

In winning 16 of its 17 games, Taft took home the 2019 Founders League title. The team was led offensively by PG Carson Greene '19, who had an average of .511, with 28 RBIs, 3 homeruns, and 16 walks in 63 plate appearances. Co-captain Beau Root '19 hit .488 in an injury-shortened campaign, while Nolan Grooms '19 hit .351 and had 14 stolen bases. Grooms also pitched 40 innings while accumulating an ERA of 1.40 and leading the team with 46 strikeouts. Justin Humenay '20 had an ERA of 2.42, Root had three saves on the year, and Walker Wonham '20 threw five perfect innings against Westminster. Co-captain Dylan Kim '19 led the defense as catcher and defensive captain with a fielding percentage of .993, while starting all 17 games for the Rhinos. There were more than a few dominant wins this season—including



The varsity baseball team won the
Founders League Championship
after defeating Loomis Chaffee
and finishing the season 16-1.

Spring SPORTS

a 7-0 win over Kingswood Oxford pitched by Ryan Higgins '21—but the “Cardiac Rhinos” were best known for their perseverance and late-game heroics. The team had five late-game wins, including a come-from-behind 7-5 win against Choate courtesy of Greene's 3 RBI triple, a 4-3 win over Loomis on a Cole Torino '20 2 RBI single, and a 6-4 win over Avon pitched by Humenay and Grooms. The epitome of this never-say-die attitude came in the final game of the year when the Rhinos played Loomis into extra innings and were down 4-3 going into the top of the ninth. In the bottom of the ninth, Grooms drove in Higgins on an RBI triple to tie the game, and Humenay hit a single to walk the Rhinos off and secure the Founders League title. The Rhinos' indomitable will to win was the hallmark of the year and is the reason that this group can call themselves champions.

Softball 9-4 WESTERN NEW ENGLAND FINALISTS

The Rhinos enjoyed another strong campaign, which ended with a loss in a rematch of last year's championship game



Pole vaulter Alex Preziotti '21 clears the bar in a meet against Deerfield and Andover.

against Westminster School. Despite the rainy weather, the team earned a post-season berth with a 7–3 record. Captains Ally Trimper '19 and Morgan Trimper '19, Founders League and Western New England All-Stars, led the team defensively and offensively and shared the team Softball Award. Ally led the team in runs,

hits, and batting average, while Morgan led the team in runs batted in, slugging percentage, and on-base percentage. Returners Sam Fers '20 and Piper Descorcie '20 and newcomer Jenna Guglielmi '22 added to the offense punch. Isabelle Johnson '22 stepped in as a lower mid and assumed the pitching duties, holding opponents to

four runs per game. In the final week of the season, the team made a strong push for a title repeat. After trailing 6–0, Taft rallied and defeated Choate on the last day of the season to earn the last spot in the tournament. Two days later, Taft traveled to Choate for a rematch and defeated Choate 7–4, setting up a game with #1-seed Kent School. Taft defeated Kent 4–3 in extra innings with contributions from Claire Vithoontien '19, who played great defense. Unfortunately, Taft ran out of steam against Westminster and lost in the championship game. Fers and Desorcie will join Olivia King '20 as next year's captains.

Girls' Track 15–0

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

The 2019 girls' track team ranks as one of the very best teams in Taft track history. Behind the leadership of their senior captains Kayla Robinson '19 and Eleanor Streit '19, the team finished the regular season undefeated (15–0), a feat last accomplished in 1990. The win over Hotchkiss in the season's final meet was not decided until the final event of the day, when the 4x400m relay of Kaitlyn Macdonald '19, Streit, Stella Oldakowski '22, and Liz Barre '19 raced to victory. The Rhinos won their third consecutive Founders League Championship, this time in convincing fashion. Robinson (TJ, SP), Alex Preziotti '21 (800m), and Ella Losee '20 (PV) were individual event winners, with Losee setting a new school record height of 9 feet 3 inches in the pole vault. Of the 13 other athletes who participated, 12 earned places in the top six. The team scored points in 14 of the 17 events contested. Taft placed 4th out of 12 teams at the New England Division I track meet. Barre (HJ) and Robinson (TJ), Beardsley Track Award winners, were individual event winners and named to the All New England track team. Robinson set a new Loomis track facility record in the triple jump. Of the other nine athletes who competed, six earned places in the top six.



Justin McLeod '21 competes in the triple jump versus Deerfield and Andover.

Boys' Track 9–5–1

The 2019 boys' track team had an unusual number of new faces, but this young group was talented and blended very effectively with the returners. Taft pieced together a very successful regular season, finishing with a 9–5–1 record, including an unusual tie in the race for the Berkshire-Taft Track Trophy and an early win against eventual New England champions Choate. The Rhinos finished 5th out of eight teams at the Founders League track meet, with Jordan Miller '20 (400m) and the 4x100m relay team of Jacob Rooks '21, Gavin Pintro '20, Miller, and Sky Bell '21 as individual event winners. Of the other 13 athletes who competed, seven earned places in the top six, and the team scored points in 10 of the



Rex Riefler '19 tees off from the fourth hole in a match against Kingswood Oxford and Kent.

17 events contested. At the New England Division I track meet, the team tied for 9th, and of the 10 athletes who participated, four earned places in the top six. Miller and Ian Staines '20 were selected as Founders League All-Stars and will serve as captains along with Spencer Dawe '20 next year.

Boys' Golf 11–2

The 2019 Rhinos continued the tradition of strong Taft golf teams. This spring's highlights included tournament performances in four events in which the team never finished outside the top five, including a 2nd-place finish at the Andover Invitational, where Taft had four golfers in the 70s and lost only to Exeter. With quality opponents participating in these tournaments, the team's tournament stroke average was 77.91, a clear indication of the quality of Taft's golfers. Excellent individual performances included that of co-captain Rex Riefler '19 at the New England Prep School Invitational; those of co-captain Jonny Elkins '20 and Henry Horne '20, both shooting 72 at the 46th Annual Kingswood Invitational Tournament; and Elkins' 75 at the Founders League Championship, one stroke out of



Julia Kashimura '20 tees off from the second hole during a match against Choate and Greenwich Academy.

first. Throughout this spring's wet course conditions, the team received great efforts and low scores from Gus Harper '19, James Donaldson '20, AJ Davidson '20, Enrique Yen Chiang '21, and JinYoung Min '22.

Girls' Golf 7-9-1

The Rhinos started the season with four losses in the first five matches, but rebounded with a series of victories over Westminster, Miss Porter's, and Ethel Walker to go 5-1-1 over the next seven. In the end-of-season tournaments, Taft came in 4th in the Founders League and placed 7th out of 30 participating teams in the Pippy O'Connor Independent School Girls' Golf Classic, our New England tournament. Julia Kashimura '20 was the low player, placing 5th with a 74, and won the "spirit of Taft golf" award. Team captain Olivia Wivestad '19 and Kashimura were Founders All League players, and Wivestad received the Girls' Golf Award and will be missed next year, along with senior Cho Dechen '19, for their contributions on the course and to the team in general.

Boys' Lacrosse 10-6

Taft finished with a 10-6 overall record, with five of the six losses coming at the expense of six goals total. Despite their youth and consistent injuries throughout the season, the Rhinos earned victories over Army Prep (18-15), Navy Prep (20-8), Kent (23-14), Berkshire (16-7), Loomis Chaffee (15-6), and Hotchkiss (15-5). Perhaps the biggest win of the season came against Avon Old Farms, where Taft completed an excellent whole-team effort, resulting in a 15-10 decision, handing the Winged Beavers their only league loss of the season. Individually, Jeffery Ricciardelli '21 and Pat Kavanagh '19 earned All-Founders League recognition, while MacGregor Peterson '19, Peter Kenerson '19, and Billy Dobensky '19 earned All-Western New England honors. In recognition of his relentless approach to the game and consistent leadership, Dobensky



Billy Dobensky '19 moves upfield against Avon Old Farms in May.



was awarded the Odden Lacrosse Award at season's end. At the end of year New England West I coaches banquet, Kenerson was voted by league coaches as one of five Academic All-Americans in our region.

Girls' Lacrosse 8-7

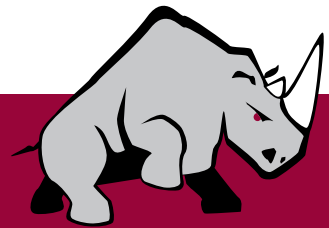
Taft finished the season 8-7 with big wins against Deerfield (8-7), The Hill School (10-9), and Choate (14-6). Taft scored 148 goals with 14 different players finding the back of the net, and goalies Lily Cook '20 and Chloe Meuse '22 combined

to make 86 saves. In the 8-7 win against Deerfield, Taft had four different players score, Cook made an amazing 14 saves, and the defense came up with critical stops, including five caused turnovers. Three of the seven Taft losses were one-goal games. Individually, co-captains Eva Baurmeister '19 and Charlotte Powell '19 received the Taft Girls' Lacrosse Award; Emilee Adami '19 and Asia Rupert '19 were Founders League All-Stars; and Taft's Western New England All-Stars were Corinna Dorr '19 and Lucy Gretsky '19. Next year's returning group will be led by tri-captains Abigail Hano '20, Eliza Travelstead '20, and Lily Cook '20.



Left: Eva Baurmeister '19 makes a move toward the Berkshire net.

Below: A group of enthusiastic fans attend a Taft track and field meet.



SPRING ATHLETIC AWARDS

Girls' Golf Award
Olivia Wivestad '19

Galeski Golf Award
Rex Riefler '19

Softball Award
Morgan Trimper '19
Ally Trimper '19

Stone Baseball Award
Beau Root '19

George D. Gould Award
Regan Brewer '19
Kira Siebrecht '19

Alrick H. Man Jr. Award
Henry Molson '20

Wandelt Lacrosse Award
Eva Baurmeister '19
Charlotte Powell '19

Odden Lacrosse Award
Billy Dobensky '19

Crew Award (Girls)
Hayley Jubitz '19

Crew Award (Boys)
Otto Piasecki '19

Seymour Willis Beardsley Track Award
Liz Barre '19
Kayla Robinson '19



Girls' varsity crew during a practice preparing for New England Crew Tournament.

Girls' Crew 36-23

(REGULAR SEASON RECORD)

In their dual-meet races, Taft's four varsity boats compiled an overall record of 27 victories versus 17 losses. The first varsity lineup of co-captain Hayley Jubitz '19, Zoe Kemper '20, Liz Carlson '20, Elly MacKay '20, and co-captain Maggie O'Leary '19 (cox), placed 5th at the annual Founders Day regatta on Lake Waramaug. The second varsity boat, featuring Mason Delafield '21, Logan Clew-Bachrach '20, Sarah Sawyer '20, Eugenia Torbar '21, and coxswain Erin Farrell '20, placed 5th at the Founders Day regatta and bested powerhouse programs Winsor and Deerfield several times this season. The third and fourth varsity boats placed 4th and 5th in their respective events at Founders Day. All four varsity boats qualified for the New England

Championships regatta, with three of four qualifying for the afternoon finals. The first boat won the Petite Final (for an overall 7th-place finish), the second placed 8th overall, and the third won a bronze medal. It was a wonderful season with contributions coming from all members of the team.

Boys' Crew 37-48

(REGULAR SEASON RECORD)

In their dual-meet races and regattas, Taft's four varsity boats compiled an overall record of 37 wins versus 48 losses. It was a season full of challenges on a daily basis—rain, snow, sleet, key injuries, AP exams, and unforeseen absences meant new lineups every week. Highlights included the second varsity boat of Otto Piasecki '19, Chuck

Warren '20, Liam Shannon '20, Beckett Fine '20, and Avery Hamilton '21 winning a bronze medal at the Founders Day regatta midway through the season. At the New England Championships regatta, a revamped second varsity lineup consisting of Sean Dunbar '20, Stone Fenton '20, Scott Williams '21, Alex Robertson '20, and Veronica Baum '21 led from start to finish to win the afternoon Petite Finals.

Girls' Tennis 7-6

This young Rhinos' team, a mix of seven returners and three newcomers, finished with a 7-6 record and just missing an invitation to the Class A New England tournament. In Founders League play, the team defeated Loomis (6-3), Miss Porter's

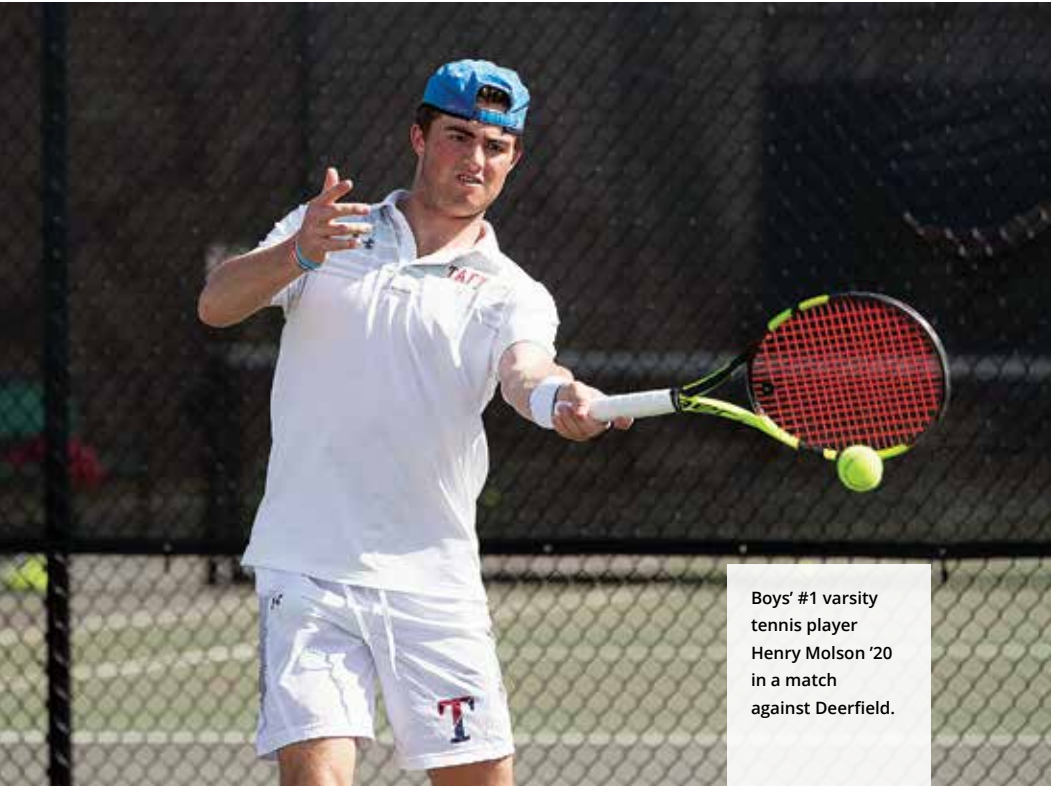


Leigh Root '21 in a match with Westminster in late April.

(7-2), and Choate (9-0), but had two tight losses to Westminster (4-5) and Hotchkiss (4-5). Kate Zhang '20 continued to lead the singles lineup playing in the #1 spot for the third year in a row and achieving a 9-3 record. Co-captains Regan Brewer '19 and Kira Siebrecht '19 led the team this year playing the #2 and #3 singles positions and achieving an impressive 6-3 record as the #2 doubles pairing. Maddie Meister '21 earned a 7-5 record at the #4 singles spot and for the second year in a row played #1 doubles, this year pairing with Zhang. Leigh Root '21 had an impressive 10-3 record at the #5 spot, and Janse Schoonmaker '21 also earned a winning record of 6-3 in the #6 spot. Rounding out the doubles pairings this year were Abby Hawkins '21 with Janse Schoonmaker '21, Nico Gusac '19 with Lulu Bradley '21, and Lila duPont '21 with Leigh Root. Next year, the team will return many members and will be captained by Zhang and Maddie Meister '21.

Boys' Tennis 5-9

With half the team composed of freshmen and two seniors making the leap from JV, everyone knew this would be a challenging season. Losing co-captain Peter Denious '20 and Lucas Escallon '20 for most of the season due to spring break injuries compounded the woes visited upon the team by the rainiest spring in decades. The team lost by the ridiculously close margin of two shots (reminder that this is not golf, where that is normal) three times—to Avon, Kingswood, and Hopkins—to finish the season 5-9. Despite the worst win/loss record in over 30 years, it was a really fun season. Highlights included the 4-3 victory over Berkshire, which featured six tiebreakers, and lower mid “dynamic duo” Jack Kreisberg '22 and Scott Noh '22 winning the League Championship at #3 doubles. Our #2, co-captain Will Wang '19, saved the best of his Taft career for the last match, trouncing his Hopkins opponent 6-2, 6-2. With returning #1 and co-captain-elect Henry Molson '20 joined by Denious, Escallon, and the “dynamic duo,” the team has a strong foundation for next spring. ■



Boys' #1 varsity tennis player Henry Molson '20 in a match against Deerfield.

Thank you!

Together we made it happen.



Dylan Simonds '89, Annual Fund Chair, with sons Andrew (left) and Will (right)

Please, join me in celebrating another terrific year for the Annual Fund and expressing sincere gratitude to our many generous donors for their commitment to sustaining Taft’s educational excellence. In addition to the philanthropy of our wonderful donors, the 2018-19 Annual Fund was driven by an incredibly devoted team of volunteers, including Sara and Bob Savage P’18, ’20, Chairs of the Current Parents’ Fund; Jean and Stuart Serenbetz P’03, ’06, ’09, Chairs of the Former Parents’ Fund; Joanie Dayton GP’14, ’16, ’21, Chair of the Grandparents’ Fund; and hundreds of Class Agents across more than a half-century of class years.

I also want to offer special thanks to the staff of the Alumni and Development Office who work tirelessly to keep the Taft community connected and strong. I am truly grateful and humbled to work with such a wonderful group of dedicated people, and I look forward to working with many of you to reach higher and achieve even more in the year and years to come.

—Dylan Simonds '89, Annual Fund Chair

Annual Fund Class Awards 2018-19

Snyder Award

Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a reunion class 50 or fewer years out
CLASS OF 1979: \$140,158
Head Class Agents:
Patty Buttenheim and Pamela Cole

Chairman of the Board Award

Highest percent participation from a class 50 or fewer years out
CLASS OF 1969: 67%
Head Class Agent: Bob Leary

McCabe Award

Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a non-reunion class
CLASS OF 1990: \$141,860
Head Class Agent: Ben Levin

Class of 1920 Award

Greatest increase in Annual Fund dollars from a non-reunion class
CLASS OF 1997: Increase of \$61,854
Head Class Agent: Charlie Wardell

Romano Award

Greatest increase in participation from a non-reunion class 50 or fewer years out
CLASS OF 1991: 65% from 41%
Head Class Agent: Peter Bowden

Young Alumni Dollars Award

Largest Annual Fund amount contributed from a class 10 or fewer years out
CLASS OF 2010: \$16,105
Head Class Agent: Leigh Anne O’Mealia

Young Alumni Participation Award

Highest participation from a class 10 or fewer years out
CLASS OF 2018: 63%
Head Class Agents: Joe Hardison and Maddie Savage

Spencer Award

Highest percent of gifts from classmates who have not given in the last five years
CLASS OF 1994: 18%
Head Class Agents: Andy Bernard, Carter McJunkin, and Chauncey Upson

Awards determined by gifts and pledges raised as of June 30, 2019.

Parents’ Committee 2018-19



Robert and Sara Savage, Parents’ Fund Chairs

Kathryn and Chris Adams
Hilary and David Allen
Allison and Luke Babcock
Anne and Eric Baurmeister
Ashley and Tom Bradley
Melissa and Michael Bradley
Victoria and Tim Brewer
Lisa and Timothy Broadbent
Amanda Shepard Brooks ’91 and Rhys Brooks
Jason Chan and Tracy Tsai
Reiko and Milton Cheng
Kim and John Church
Leslie and Kevin Coleman
Marie and James Crouch
Licia and Christopher Dawe ’81
Carrie and Beau Delafield ’87
Dixie and David De Luca

Eleanor Waud Dorr and Glenn Dorr
Liz and Dean Durling
Bonita and Howard Erbstein
Kristine and Joshua Fenton
Margot and Dan Good
Thomas Gura ’83 and Veronica Bravo
Alissa and Ron Henderson
Jane and Chris Hentemann
Andrea and Christopher Ip
Joanna and Jose Jimenez
Aris Kekedjian and Patricia Trompeter
Diane and Joseph Koziol
Andrew Li and Jie Zhang
John Lian and Cindy Nie
Mary Beth and David Lohuis
Denise Shea Malcolm
Gloria and Michael Masterson
Neile and Chad Messer ’90

Ronald Milardo
Karen and Jake Odden ’86
Lindsay and John Purcell
Tracey and Michael Riccardi
David Rupert and Sarah Ondaatje
Sara and Robert Savage
Marni and Bill Schwartz
Lisa and Harry Segalas
Karen and Rick Shea
Hyun Young Shin and Wonsun Lee
Catherine and Compton Spain
Brooke ’84 and Ryder Stahl
Theresa and Peppie Wagner ’81
Karen and Ray Winicki
Jenn and Joe Yamin ’85
Long Zhong Yang and Xue Mei Tang
Joanne and Wayne Yow
Kevin Zheng and Lili Xie



\$4.8 million raised



record dollars
\$2.3 million alumni
\$2.1 million current parents



3,867 donors



46 countries
47 states represented



535 Class Agents
51 Parents’ Committee members volunteered



43% alumni
91% current parents participated



Day of Giving with 764 donors



Taft-Hotchkiss Young Alumni Challenge
24% T vs 16% H



3
days of festivities

15
reunion classes

26
events on- and off-campus

72
hours of sunny weather

More than
700
happy faces of alumni,
family, and guests
(including a 100-year-old alum!)

From
9
countries &
32
states



This was Alumni Weekend 2019!

Here's a look back.

Photography by Robert Falcetti, Anne Kowalski, and James Shannon

1.

(Previous page) Dyllan McGee '89 and Claudia Friedman Hoffman '89 march with classmates in the Alumni Parade.

2.

(Previous page) A well-attended Alumni Parade makes its way around campus.

3.

Reminiscing over yearbook photos from 1974: from left, a classmate's guest, Marian Reiff Cheevers '74, and Sherrard Upham Cote '73 (wife of Dan '74).

4.

Head Monitor Eva Baurmeister '19 and a young friend hang out with Taft's Rhino before joining the Parade.

5.

Mark Conklin '79, Greg Coles '79, and Carrie Francis Cabot at the Headmaster's Dinner.

6.

Guy Hatfield '65 and George Boggs '65 before the Old Guard Dinner.

7.

Richard Mattson '49 and Sophia Devine, wife of the late Dick '49, enjoy the Old Guard Luncheon.

8.

Steve Blakeslee '54, Tad Lincoln '54, Doug Fusonie '54, and Sted Sweet '54 at the Alumni Golf Outing

9.

Selfie time under the tent at the Headmaster's Dinner.

10.

A special moment as the headmaster greets the oldest attending alumnus, Griff Bedworth '38, a proud 100 years old, who was accompanied by son Nick '69 (not pictured). JONATHAN SELKOWITZ '84



Alumni Weekend 2019!

11.

Reunion year signs ready for the Parade.

12.

The well-attended dedication of Cobb Court to honor the late Faculty Emeritus Dick Cobb. JONATHAN SELKOWITZ '84

13.

Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden pays special tribute to his former colleague, the late Dick Cobb.

14.

1984 alums, from left, Reid Curley, Hank Jenkins, Joseph Dillard, and Felicia Washington Pontoo, and at far right, Bruce Ewing '84.

JONATHAN SELKOWITZ '84

15.

A perfect morning on Alumni Day.

16.

Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal honoree Larry Morris '65 with his wife, Tina, and daughter Alix before the Old Guard Dinner.

17.

Multigenerational alums under the tent at the Headmaster's Dinner.

18.

1999 classmates at the 20th Reunion Gathering.

12



14



17

13



15



16



18



19.
Making friends.



20.
The Class of '69 are welcomed into Mac Quad as the newest members of the Old Guard.



21.
2009 and 2010 friends reunite at the Headmaster's Dinner.



22.
Taft staff member Chris Snow '97, with his daughter, Haylee '19, and Faculty Emerita Linda Saarnijoki.



23.
50th Reunion classmates V. Manuel Rocha '69, Grant Porter '69, and Dennis Vitrella '69 reunite in the Woodworth Faculty Room before their class dinner.



24.
Reading the latest school news, Francois Berube '04, with wife Krista Bulow and faculty member Tyler Whitley '04.



25.
Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 welcomes all alumni, families, and guests in Mac Quad.

26.
All smiles from young alums on Saturday evening at the Headmaster's Dinner.



Alumni Weekend
2019!





The Ongoing Work of **inclusion**

A Conversation with Andrew Prince, Dean of Multicultural Education

As dean of multicultural education, Andrew Prince is tasked with providing support and programming for the school community on areas related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and class. In this role, he has taken up the work of others before him at Taft, working to make the school an inclusive and welcoming community. The *Bulletin* recently sat down with Prince to ask about his work and how it connects to the broader mission of the school.

Where did you grow up and go to school?

I was born in Alameda, California, though I spent my formative years in Alexandria and Arlington, Virginia, before my family settled in Oakland, California, which is still “home base.” I graduated from Bishop O’Dowd High School in Oakland before attending Harvard, where I earned my A.B. in political theory and minored in moral and political philosophy. Before coming to Taft, I attended Columbia’s Teachers College, where I completed the Private School Leadership program in the Klingenstein Center and earned my M.A.

“I wanted to be a part of the movement to both make independent schools more accessible and to make them a place where folks of traditionally marginalized groups could thrive socially and emotionally.”

Above: Dean of
Multicultural Education
Andrew Prince

What drew you to education and to Taft? What attracted you to diversity education in particular?

One of the major reasons that I became an educator is because I love learning and had a number of great educators in the course of my time as a student. They taught me essential truths that impact the way I live my daily life and fostered my curiosities in ways that have made me a “lifelong learner,” for which I am forever thankful. Second, I believe that a quality education ought to be a fundamental right of all Americans, as it is part of what we need for a relatively equal opportunity at success in life. Not all schools do the things I described above and not all learning happens in schools, but when I discovered places like Taft—where I could educate in the ways I was educated—I felt like it’s the work I had to be doing.

“What I have come to learn is that everyone being at home and their full selves advantages everyone, including community members of traditionally privileged groups. That is, we learn from difference in ways that improve us and our productivity, but only when difference is fully present.”

I was drawn to diversity, equity, and inclusion work in particular because historically, students of traditionally marginalized groups haven’t had access to independent schools, and when access was earned, their experiences were transactional. Students of traditionally marginalized groups went to independent schools despite their experiences, knowing that the hardships they would undergo would be worth the opportunities they would have access to. I wanted to be a part of the movement both to make independent schools more accessible and to make them a place where folks of traditionally marginalized groups could thrive socially and emotionally.

What I have come to learn is that everyone being at home and their full selves advantages everyone, including community members of traditionally privileged groups. That is, we learn from difference in ways that improve us and our productivity, but only when difference is fully present. If people do not feel at home and consequently are not fully themselves, then their experience will be compromised and the broader community will not benefit from the experiences and perspectives they have to share. So, this work is both a moral imperative and practically valuable, which makes it very rewarding.



Left: Several faculty workshops have focused on deep listening skills and antibias training. Prince has led workshops on several topics, including stereotype threat and productive interventions.

Right: Prince, who advises the Ballroom Dance Club, leads the boys’ varsity basketball team in a ballroom dancing class.



Last year, two committees worked on developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement and on revising the Portrait of a Graduate. What prompted that work, and how have the DEI statement and revised POG been incorporated into the work of academic departments and other offices?

The instances of hate speech that occurred on campus last year and our broader societal conversations made it clear to us that we needed to define and clarify our positions on diversity, equity, and inclusion work. We wanted all current and future community members to very clearly understand the principles that undergird all of the work that we do at Taft. While I think most people likely could have stated the principles contained in both documents, the clear and public statement of those principles was and is a statement in and of itself. And members of the community continually infuse these principles into the fabric of the work we do.

For example, we have put the DEI statement into practice by physically posting the statement and the revised Portrait of a Graduate in hallways and classrooms. French classes have translated the document while discussing the language contained within. Science classes have considered “who is a scientist,” with the idea of breaking down preconceptions of who can and cannot take up scientific inquiry.

What do you see as the biggest challenges in your role as dean of multicultural education?

One of the biggest challenges in my role is that there is so much shame involved in making mistakes around DEI work. We never want to make mistakes—particularly those that have to do with important parts of people’s identities and “core identifiers,” including age, race, religion, ability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status—and, of course, we should always strive to avoid such errors and offenses. But making mistakes, having them pointed out to us, and making the necessary corrections is the way we learn and grow. That is, those mistakes provide opportunities for people to improve, and part of my challenge is helping people let go of their shame and instead commit to doing better.



Left: Prince with Morning Meeting speaker Robin DiAngelo, who spoke to the Taft community about critical racial and social justice education. Additional DEI speakers have included Christopher Petrella, director of Advocacy & Strategic Partnerships at the Antiracist Research & Policy Center.

You have worked with other faculty members and students to develop a number of affinity groups for students. What types of groups currently exist, and how do they help further diversity, equity, and inclusion work at Taft?

We currently have affinity groups based on race, gender, and sexual orientation, and I am hoping we will expand those offerings to include class, family structures, and ability. These groups offer a space for folks of a similar identity to come together and have frank and honest discussions while also enjoying each other's company. For groups that focus on a traditionally marginalized identities, it allows members of these groups to talk with each other openly and without fear of skepticism or misunderstanding by people who are not of that identity. And for community members who are a numerical minority in the Taft community, it offers an opportunity to see each other more than they might otherwise. For community members of traditionally privileged groups, it provides an opportunity to talk through some of the privileges we have, how we feel about those privileges, and to work to help traditionally marginalized people. As a man, for example, I need to work to understand the privileges of my gender and help more men do the same in order to work effectively to support women in the work that they do to overcome the systemic oppression they face.

Below: This past year, six Taft students attended the NAIS Student Diversity Leadership Conference, which brings 1,600 students from all over the world together each year to learn about social justice practices and cross-cultural communication as well as ally building and networking. In addition, a number of Taft faculty attended the NAIS People of Color Conference.



Above: Prince working with seniors in his American Government class.

What special speakers or programming has Taft taken on in the past couple of years to address issues of inclusion and multicultural education? How is the faculty supported in this work?

We've increased the number of affinity groups and the frequency with which they meet, increased the number of conferences that all community members have access to and attend, connected students to alumni of similar identities with more frequency, and ensured that students of traditionally marginalized groups are supported in all ways that we can imagine—anything from celebrating relevant holidays to ensuring access to familiar foods. One of the things that we have done specifically for faculty is the creation of a DEI book club where faculty are invited to read a book and discuss it in groups with the hopes of raising our awareness and competencies. So far, we have read Debby Irving's *Waking Up White*, Kevin Jennings' *One Teacher in Ten – LGBT Educators Share Their Stories*, and Anne Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. All of this is with the hopes of both supporting community members of traditionally marginalized groups and educating all community members around DEI.



Left: Prince coached Taft's varsity baseball team which won the league championship last spring, ending with a 16–1 record. Prince was also named Prep School Coach of the Year by *New England Baseball Journal*.

What do you enjoy most at Taft?

I'm going to give you two answers. First, I love that Taft allows and requires me to educate students in a number of different ways and places in school life. While teaching in the classroom is important, I believe that is just one of the many places that we can educate students. We are teaching in the hallways, the weight room, the athletic fields, common rooms, the dorms, and beyond, and there are any number of different lessons that we can teach. Whether it's how to negotiate a conflict with a peer in a class, how to understand across difference in the dorm, or how to deal with failure in an athletic setting, at Taft we get to teach all the time, and I thoroughly enjoy it.

Regarding DEI work, I really appreciate the opportunities I have to collaborate with thoughtful and engaged community members. When I arrived on campus to interview, it was clear to me that Taft was serious about the school's commitment to ensure that all people, no matter their background, feel at home. I was taken with the idea that I would be able to collaborate with any number of different folks—students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees—and that is certainly the way that things have turned out. I have had the privilege of both working with colleagues on long-standing projects like our work on MLK Day, and collaborating with others on new undertakings like our students who took up various projects after attending the national Student Diversity Leadership Conference this past year. All of this to say, I get to fit into a tradition of working to ensure that everyone feels at home at Taft with a number of caring and capable community members. ■

Taft's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Taft is an intentionally diverse institution whose members work to acknowledge, respect, and empathize with people of all different identifiers, such as race, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, education, age, ability, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, language, nationality, and religion. We foster these habits and dispositions in accordance with Taft's mission to educate the whole student, thus preparing individuals morally and pragmatically for global citizenship. As such, community members commit to participate in and support ongoing equity and inclusion programming through curricular and co-curricular offerings, professional development, residential life, and local and global partnerships. Moreover, members of the Taft community strive to understand and combat the symptoms and causes of systematic oppression—ranging from implicit biases to microaggressions to discriminatory policies, practices, and traditions—that benefit privileged groups and disadvantage marginalized groups. While at Taft and beyond, community members commit to affirm and honor the lived experiences of others, to willingly challenge inherited beliefs and ideologies, and consequently learn, grow, and serve.



Read more about Taft's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at:
www.taftschoool.org/about/commitment-to-diversity-equity-and-inclusion





129th Commencement

Photography by Robert Falcetti

Speaker Mayor Neil O'Leary

Parent of Maggie '19 and Mayor of Waterbury, Connecticut

Taft parent Neil O'Leary was invited to give the school's Commencement address. Here, we share excerpts from his talk.

I wasn't much older than those of you graduating when I joined the Waterbury Police Department in 1980. The city of Waterbury is one of the most diverse cities in New England. In the 1800s, people immigrated to Waterbury from all over the world to work in the brass factories which operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week for decades.

Working the streets of Waterbury, I learned more than the geography of the city's neighborhoods. I learned about the families who lived in those neighborhoods and the people who worked in those neighborhoods. I saw the unique character of those neighborhoods, many of them enriched with a strong, hard-working, blue-collar culture; others unfortunately stained with crime and generational poverty. I witnessed firsthand the disparity of resources

which led to the lack of opportunities and, in some cases, prompted poor choices that resulted in lifetime consequences.

I spent the first 20 years of my career working major crimes. In carrying out my job and investigating those crimes, I focused on making sure that the victims and their families would be afforded justice. It was small consolation in some cases.

After we would carry out investigations and gather enough evidence, we would make an arrest. Although we always tried to arrest outside the presence of children, sometimes that wasn't possible. I can still vividly remember the looks on kids' faces watching me or other officers put their father or their grandfather or their neighbor in handcuffs as we took them away in police custody. Those kids were scared and they were confused and most of all, they were sad. Some of those who were taken away in handcuffs would not see their children or family members for years.

For some of those kids, there were

Commencement speaker
Mayor Neil O'Leary
with Headmaster
Willy MacMullen '78.

4 Head Monitors Eva Baurmeister '19 and Rex Riefler '19 place the 2019 class stone in a wall on Centennial Quadrangle. Eva and Rex were also awarded the 1908 Medal as seniors "whose influence has done most for the school."

2 Annie Gilland '19 received the Aurelian Award, the David Kenyon Webster Prize for Excellence in Writing, and was named Salutatorian.

3 Francesca Nyakora '19 next to her brother, Austin Omala '21, and their family; she also received a Global Studies and Service diploma.

Eva Baurmeister '19

head monitor

"This May, as we watched the groups of alumni stroll down the path from the athletic center to main campus, my friend turned to me and said something which summed up my feelings exactly: Alumni Day feels like a reminder that 'we are just a blip in Taft's history.' Although I agree with her—and this perspective certainly changes how you think about things that were seemingly world-ending in your time at Taft—I think we are more than just a blip. Never again will Taft have a grade exactly like us. Our collection of people is special and unique, impossible to replicate."



Rex Riefler '19

head monitor

"I have another representation of what our class truly is: that of great determination and grit....For those familiar with sports, we fight like the Memphis Grizzlies....And because of this grit, we have a sense of perspective unlike any other group. Give us any deficit, any disadvantage and adversity, we can handle it. That's our identity. I promise we did not all come like that. This determination and sense of perspective is what Taft's structure has given us."



4 The Panama hat row.

5 Jamal Ahmad '19, center left, and Raunak Advani '19 after diplomas were awarded.

6 Mathematics Department Head Al Reiff '80 was honored with the William and Lee Abramowitz Award for Teaching Excellence.

generations of their family in prison, and it was a cycle that could easily repeat itself. There were many years that I struggled with that, often thinking about how the Waterbury Police Department could help those kids in a meaningful, life changing way.

When I became chief of police in 2002, I began researching Police Activity Leagues (PALs) across the country.... [Waterbury's program] fell by the wayside in the '60s due to fiscal constraints. The goal of PAL organizations is to bring together at-risk youth and local police departments through various community programs and activities, in order to foster relationships between the two by providing educational, athletic, and life skill opportunities to local kids.

I learned as much as I could about the PAL organizations that existed at that time, and after doing so, I knew with certainty that Waterbury needed to start its own Police Activity League. The community needed it and the Waterbury police officers who served the community needed it.

Later that year, Waterbury PAL became a reality. Although it started small, serving just about 100 kids, Waterbury PAL now provides educational, athletic, and community programs and initiatives to more than 4,000 kids in Waterbury each year. Waterbury PAL is amongst the largest in the country now and has been recognized as a national model.

Our community partners helped to build out a dedicated PAL facility, including a school, sports fieldhouse, five-acre park that was once a brownfield, greenhouses, and community gardens. All of this has advanced the PAL mission by offering more opportunities to local at-risk kids, by forging relationships between the Waterbury Police Officers and the community. Over the past 16 years, I have watched Waterbury kids thrive in PAL's programs and within our community as a direct result of the opportunities PAL has been able to provide them.

The Taft School has come to be one of PAL's most important community partners.

Margot Odden '19

class speaker

"What has defined the past three years for me has been growing alongside each of you....Even the smallest of interactions with many of you have irreversibly influenced me in my time here. Thank you for sharing your talents. Thank you for sharing your hearts with the people that comprise our class and wider community. Thank you for inspiring awe and laughter often. Thank you for giving me an unforgettable and deeply changing three years."



1



2



3

1 Class speaker Margot Odden '19

2 Margot Odden '19 with her family: grandparents Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden and Faculty Emerita Patsy Odden; parents Karen and Jake Odden '86; brother Jack '23; her uncle and aunt, Michael and Laurie Odden Brown '89; and cousins Sophie and Rue.

3 Kayla Robinson '19 and Beau Root '19



5



4

4 Mia Porter '19 with her family, who brought a fun sign to honor her achievement. Mia was also recipient of the P.T. Young Music Prize and Cunningham Award.

5 New grads proudly show their diplomas.

In 2006, as chief of police, I went to visit Mr. MacMullen to talk about The Taft School and the city working together. What has happened since has been amazing.

Working together in close collaboration, here are examples of some of the programs: Starting in 2009, The Taft School six-week overnight summer school program, which includes two Waterbury PAL rising eighth-grade students each year. In 2011, The Taft School/Waterbury Police Activity League summer enrichment academy for rising eighth-graders. This is an annual six-week day program which mentors, tutors, and prepares up to 85 city students for high school. In 2013, after-school programs began in which Taft students go to city schools to teach and mentor third-grade students in reading and writing. Also in 2013, The Taft School started the Global Leadership Institute. This is an amazing two-year program in which 12 sophomore Taft students partner up with 12 sophomore city high school students who then work together on

national and global topics, followed by presentations in their second year as juniors.

Of course, the success of the PAL programs also hinges on finding philanthropic donors as well. One of our most significant supporters is Mr. Burt Albert and the Albert family. In addition to being loyal supporters of Waterbury PAL, the Albert family has an intimate connection with The Taft School: Burt and Sylvia's three children, Eric, Debbie, and Jonathan, as well as their five grandchildren, are Taft School alumni. In fact, Jonathan has been a Taft School trustee for the past 20 years and is also a member of the PAL board of directors.

During a visit with Mr. Albert 10 years ago, Burt explained that he wanted to provide opportunities to enrich the educational experiences of PAL kids and to afford those kids the privilege of a Taft education. I am proud to tell you that as of this year, 11 PAL kids to date have attended The Taft School, changing their lives forever.

Burt Albert and his family embody the



Malcolm Bellairs '19

class speaker

"At Taft we lose many of the traditional support structures that once comforted us, and therefore, we turn to our roommates for joy, we turn to faculty in times of need, we turn to each other for everything. The people who walk the halls with us are our lives. The byproduct of this codependence is the creation of the 'Taft Community.' When I say 'Taft Community' I'm describing the wonderful tendency for Tafties to be distinctly present. To give their entirety to the 'here and now' and invest within the Taft community."



1 Class speaker and Valedictorian Malcolm Bellairs '19.

2 Graduate Will Wang '19, who won the Physics Prize, with his parents from China, and his sister Portia Wang '18.

3 Bagpipers lead the Class of 2019 on their way to the ceremonies.



4 Cho Dechen '19, who received the Global Studies and Service Prize, with her parents, His Eminence Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche and Tenzin Choeden, and other family members.

5 Shannon Buccì '19 after receiving her diploma.

6 The tradition of chalk drawings to celebrate graduation.

7 Nicholas Winciki '19 after the ceremonies; he also received the P.T. Young Music Prize.



values that define the Taft experience and the school's motto, Not to be served but to serve. As a very proud Taft parent for the past four years, I have had the honor of meeting and observing a team of the most talented and dedicated faculty imaginable.

[And so,] graduating Class of 2019, I can tell you that my involvement with the Waterbury Police Activity League remains one of the most important and meaningful experiences of my life. There is no greater personal satisfaction or reward than to provide a child an opportunity for a better life.

In that regard, The Taft School has prepared you well, and I encourage each of you to take this exciting next step in your life committed to the principles instilled in you here.

Be good citizens and remain devoted to serving your local communities. They need your innovation, your compassion and your energy. Regardless of the path you pave, pursue it with purpose and integrity. Don't be afraid to stumble...to fall...and even to fail—from those experiences

you will learn humility and perseverance, and those are invaluable qualities.

Thirty years from now, you may not remember what score you got on your SATs or what your graduating GPA was at the end of high school. You will, however, remember the experiences that helped shape your values and the people who left indelible imprints on your character, many of whom are here with you today. ■

Neil O'Leary has served as mayor of Waterbury, Connecticut, since 2011. In 1980, he joined the Waterbury Police Department and rose through the ranks, becoming chief of police in 2002. He retired from that position in 2009 and was later hired by the town of Wolcott to modernize its department. Admired by many for his optimistic and resilient can-do attitude, he has written an extraordinary record in community collaboration and growth.

Sadly, Burton Albert, mentioned in these remarks, passed away on May 31.

The Music of TAFT

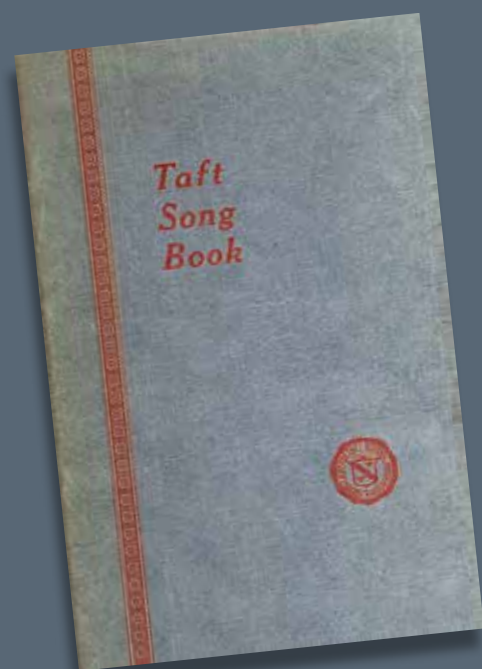


Left: Sheet music for three songs
in the Archives' collection:

"Taft School Alma Mater"
—By A.F. Bernon 1993

"The Taft Motto Song"
—Music by Gerry LeTendre and words
by Eric Drake and Gerry LeTendre

"Alma Mater"
—Music by Richard F. Donovan and
words by John Knox Jessup '24



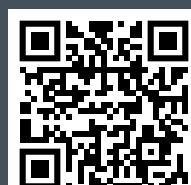
Left: A very old
(date uncertain)
copy of the
Taft Song Book.

Music about Taft runs the gamut from sideline chants to choir music. You may have heard Collegium Musicum perform "*Non Ut Sibi*" this spring and at Commencement. Did you know there were also two pieces named "Alma Mater"? (Actually, three versions of the song, if you consider they changed one word when we became coed.) Or that two faculty members Eric Drake and Gerry LeTendre wrote "The Taft Motto Song"? (It was dedicated to Taft Oriocos and Faculty Emeritus John Noyes.)

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



Listen to Collegium
Musicum's Spring
2019 Concert at
Grace Church in New
York City at [https://
vimeo.com/340451828](https://vimeo.com/340451828)



Join the other 235 members of the Taft Legacy Society

...who will provide estate gifts that support
scholarships, theater and music programs,
science, sports, environmental initiatives,
and other multifaceted endeavors at the
school.

By simply including The Taft School in your will or
other plans that include beneficiary provisions,
you can make an impactful difference.

Our beloved Dick Cobb, an official member
of the Horace Dutton Taft Legacy Society,
remembered the school by establishing a
generous and inspired philanthropic example
for all to follow!

—Holcombe T. Green III '87
Taft Trustee

For more information,

please contact Paul Parvis, Director of Planned Giving, at 860-945-7751
or paulparvis@taftschooll.org | taftschooll.giftplans.org

Taft BULLETIN

The Taft School
110 Woodbury Road
Watertown, CT 06795-2100
860-945-7777
www.taftschool.org/bulletin

Change Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BURLINGTON VT
PERMIT # 101