

Taft

BULLETIN

A HALF-CENTURY
OF COEDUCATION:
LESSONS FROM
LEADERS

WHY
PHILANTHROPY
MATTERS

DESTINATION:
TRAINS

WINTER 2022



From Taft's fall production, *The Addams Family School Edition*—the performers were extraordinary, and the sets and costumes were outstanding!

ROBERT FALCETTI

WINTER 2022

INSIDE

50

A Half-Century of Coeducation: Lessons from Leaders

By Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84



60

Why Philanthropy Matters

A Conversation with Lawrence Crimmins, director of development, and Jake Odden '86, chief financial officer



OTHER DEPARTMENTS

- 3** On Main Hall
- 5** 50th Anniversary of Coeducation at Taft
- 6** Community Corner
- 8** Alumni Spotlight
- 26** Around the Pond
- 44** Sports
- 68** Class Notes
- 86** In Print
- 107** Milestones
- 112** Looking Back



44

WINTER 2022

Volume 92, Number 1

EDITOR

Linda Hedman Beyus

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Kaitlin Thomas Orfitelli

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Debra Meyers

PHOTOGRAPHY

Robert Falcetti

COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE/CLASS NOTES

Seamus F. Conway

DESIGN

Good Design, LLC | gooddesignusa.com

SEND ALUMNI NEWS TO

Taft Bulletin
Alumni Office
The Taft School
110 Woodbury Road
Watertown, CT 06795-2100
taftbulletin@taftschoo.org

DEADLINES FOR CLASS NOTES

Winter–November 15
Spring–February 15
Summer–May 15
Fall–August 30

COMMENTS? TELL US!

We'd love to hear what you think about the stories in this *Bulletin*. We may edit your letters for length, clarity, and content, but please write.

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

SEND ADDRESS CORRECTIONS TO

Alumni Records
The Taft School
110 Woodbury Road
Watertown, CT 06795-2100
taftrhino@taftschoo.org

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

A locomotive of the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad, a shortline that runs for 154 miles in southern Colorado near the New Mexico border. Photo was taken by Taft alumnus David Hanke '12, the line's superintendent. DAVID HANKE '12

TAFT ONLINE



Find a friend or past *Bulletin*: taftalumni.com



Visit us on your phone: taftschoo.org



What happened at today's game? taftsports.com



Shop online: taftstore.com



facebook.com/thetaftschoo



twitter.com/taftschoo



instagram.com/taftschoo



linkedin.com/school/the-taft-school



vimeo.com/taftschoo

On MAIN HALL

A WORD FROM HEAD
OF SCHOOL WILLY
MACMULLEN '78



Three Scenes: Access & Affordability

My guess is most readers are familiar with the idea of “opportunity cost.” It’s the concept that gets at what we give up when we choose one option over another, the “forgone benefit that would have been derived from the option not chosen.” I’ve been thinking about opportunity cost and what Taft would be if we did not have the financial aid commitment we have today and some of the students on our campus never came. Three scenes got me thinking about this.

Here’s the first scene: an October evening, Bingham Auditorium, a deafening standing ovation as the curtain drops on the cast of the musical production of *The Addams Family*.

There were 60 students involved, from all four classes. About half were experienced thespians, the remainder rookies. They acted, sang and danced, built and moved sets, applied makeup and did hair, played instruments in the pit, did quick changes into scores of costumes, ran lights and sound. They came from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Virginia, North Dakota, and Colorado—and also Canada, China, Bermuda, Moldova, and Japan. They rehearsed for two hours a day, five days a week, for two months. They wrung their hands anxiously through Tech Week, and then for three nights, they *rocked* Bingham and left audiences cheering. Sixty students and a score of adults pulled off the impossible, gave us a show that brought a COVID-weary community together, and experienced something they will never forget.

Here’s the second scene: sitting in the STEM classroom on a Wednesday morning to hear three presentations by student groups in faculty member Dan Calore’s Introduction to Engineering class.

The assignment was an authentic and challenging one: students were asked to identify an area of campus that had functional deficits that they wanted to upgrade. That meant interviewing stakeholders who used the space; next, undergoing a build-design process; then completing the “testing” of spatial and engineering assumptions; and finally, creating a polished multimedia proposal.

The nine students—from Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, Serbia, Canada, and Bermuda—chose three different spaces: a team film room, the weight room, and a spare training room. They had to ask hard questions: How is the room used? What are its shortcomings? How can we improve aesthetic and function? They used sophisticated technology: 3D printing using Thingiverse, Tinkercad drawings, a laser cutter. One group had a three-dimensional scale mock-up, with seating created by the printer; another had rotational CAD images projected on a screen allowing for virtual navigation of the room.

They had to collaborate to solve engineering problems, employ multiple tech platforms, and with the head of school, classmates, and teacher in the audience, present a compelling vision of how the space could be improved and transformed. I remember thinking, I’ve had presentations from professional firms that were not as good.

Here’s the final scene: the boys’ varsity soccer, finishing their 19–0 season with a heart-aching overtime loss on penalty kicks in the New England Prep School Athletic Conference championship.

“I’ve been thinking about opportunity cost and what Taft would be if we did not have the financial aid commitment we have today and some of the students on our campus never came.”

That this was a season for the ages is clear: They scored 101 goals and only gave up 10; they were Founders League and WNEPSSA Champions; and they were awarded the Western Connecticut Soccer Officials Association Sportsmanship Award. They had five players from Connecticut, and one each from Idaho and New York, as well as from Ghana, England, Dominican Republic, Germany, Bermuda, Canada, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Costa Rica, and Malawi. They had come together, shared a love of the game and each other, performed at a level we have never seen, saw a hillside of fans cheer them on. They had shared an experience they would carry with them forever, like a charm in a pocket, a pebble in a shoe.


Now, here's what I know. Every year, over a third of Taft students receive financial aid, with average grants of about \$50,000, and with an annual budget of nearly \$10 million. That means we should ask this question: *What would the opportunity cost be if we were unable to enroll those students, if you pulled a third of them from those three scenes?*

Here's what would happen. First, we would be a lesser school—still a good school, but a decidedly *diminished* one. Audiences would not have seen the same musical, a teacher would not have watched the same presentations, and fans would not have cheered on an undefeated team. Sure, good and maybe even great things would have happened instead—we put on a play, teach classes, and play games every year—but they would not have been the same. Those scenes *would never have happened*. We would not be the school we were, and that's almost impossibly painful to consider.

Second, those students I saw, doing such extraordinary things, having such memorable moments, knowing the intellectual and personal growth, experiencing such profound swings of emotion, feeling their destinies deflected—they would have lost the opportunity and missed out on an experience that certainly was life-changing. Who knows what their fall term would have been, perhaps at another private school, perhaps in their neighborhood public school. But I know this: they would not have experienced what they did here.

If we want to think about opportunity cost, perhaps we should ask those three groups of students what it feels like to contemplate *not having that scene in their lives*.

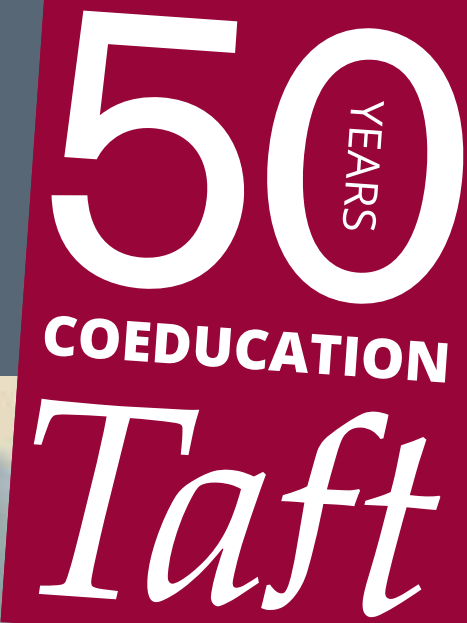
Opportunity cost is a strange concept: it's about what you did not have, never knew. It's about loss and the contemplation of negation. When I think of those three scenes, and when I think of the Board of Trustees and its commitment to making Taft affordable and accessible to students, when I think of the generous Tafties who have contributed the dollars to set up scholarships, I think of these students: what they gave Taft, what they gained themselves. A semester without those three scenes and the opportunity cost? Incalculable.


William R. MacMullen '78

“When I think of those three scenes, and when I think of the Board of Trustees and its commitment to making Taft affordable and accessible to students, when I think of the generous Tafties who have contributed the dollars to set up scholarships, I think of these students: what they gave Taft, what they gained themselves.”

WOMEN OF TAFT

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of coeducation virtually and in person. Visit our website for stories about women of Taft—alumnae, students, faculty—and learn about special events. Join the women of Taft affinity group through the alumni network. Read about these Taft women below and more on our website: www.taftschool.org/coeducation.



www.taftschool.org/coeducation | www.taftconnect.org

From left to right, starting with top row: Margot Kahler '22, Baba Frew, Blake DiMarco Herrera '00; Liz Barratt-Brown '77, Margaret Wilkerson Sexton '00, Julissa Mota '22, Liz Temkin '83; Eliza Geddes '97, Margeaux Walter '01, Dyllan McGee '89, Sadie Kargman '22.

The Importance of Affinity Groups

Recently we had a school meeting to discuss the importance of affinity and alliance spaces in our community. Spending time with others who share the same identifier(s) is a critical component in navigating the Taft community. Affinity groups serve not only as support networks for students and faculty, but also a safe place to explore and discuss various aspects of the Taft student life experience.

In this issue, we are highlighting some of these affinity groups that we have on campus for students. These groups are student-led and -run. There is a faculty advisor who oversees each group, but the students organize and structure the meeting and conversation. Each group views their roles differently, based on the needs of the members. I hope you will read on to get to know a few of our affinity groups on campus!

—Thomas Allen, *Dean of Community, Justice, and Belonging*



◀ MOSAIC AFFINITY GROUP

What is your group's mission statement?

Mosaic is an affinity group that provides a safe space for women of color to feel comfortable, loved, and empowered.

What is the overarching goal of the group?

Our overarching goal is to uplift our members by ensuring that they feel heard and seen by all members of the Taft community.

Student perspective: How has this group helped you during your time at Taft?

"This group made me feel so relieved at first because I found girls who felt what I felt during my first days here at Taft. This group helped me learn people's different perspectives and know how I

can contribute to making people feel more included. Everybody in Mosaic is so amazing and so welcoming!"

"Mosaic helped me feel like I belong in the Taft community through listening to girls who look like me and share similar experiences to mine. The group has also helped me form closer relationships with the girls and faculty advisors, which has made my overall transition into Taft easier."

PAN ASIAN AFFINITY GROUP ▶

What is your group's mission statement?

The Pan Asian Affinity Group's mission is to create a safe space for all people who identify as Asian or Asian American at Taft. This is an affinity group where they can feel comfortable sharing any positive or negative experience that they may encounter on the Taft campus or anywhere in the world. We celebrate diversity within us.

What is the overarching goal of the group?

Our goal is to provide a haven for Asian-identifying students to share and learn about each other. The group meets once every two weeks through feeds, discussions, or field trips in order to cultivate relationships and celebrate Asian pride.



Student perspective: How has this group helped you during your time at Taft?

"The Pan Asian Affinity Group served as a place for me to feel closer to home during a time where I felt lost at Taft. Talking to the leaders when I was a mid and listening to their advice on how to make Taft a more enjoyable environment was something that helped smooth my transition to this place. Now, I am more focused on improving the community and making sure every member feels like they rightfully belong at Taft."

"To me, the Pan Asian Affinity Group

has been a place that has not only given me comfort, but confidence to express my identity. The welcoming atmosphere that is created in our meetings, feeds, or hangouts encourages me to embrace exactly who I am. An unspoken feeling of acceptance and encouragement of culture, background, or any identifier abounds, and we are truly able to celebrate our shared cultures, and simultaneously, the diversity each one of us brings to the community. As a current leader, I hope to influence others with the same positivity I have felt supported with throughout my three years at Taft." ■

SHADES: Taft's Black and Latinx male affinity group



SOMOS: Taft's Latinx affinity group

ILLUSTRATION BY FRANZI/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



“When we got the call [to go to Kabul], I was actually on assignment in Italy. I took the next plane home, got a couple hours of sleep, and was ready to deploy in less than 24 hours.”

Opposite page: 1st Lt. Samantha Lamy '14, 82nd Airborne Division, standing on the roof of the Brigade Tactical Operations Center (TOC) at Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA).

Below: Lamy and her team (Sgt. Hemp, SSG Valente, and Sgt. Bostic) gathered around their vehicle on the flight line at the Kabul Airport.

Right: Lamy standing in the international terminal at HKIA with a woman who waits for her flight out of Afghanistan.

Lower right: Two sisters wait in the international terminal for their flight out of Afghanistan.



At Your Service

SAMANTHA LAMY '14 has been passionate about helping others for pretty much as long as she can remember—including while at Taft, when she spent multiple spring breaks volunteering at an orphanage in the Dominican Republic—but she never imagined that this commitment to service would lead her to commission in the United States military. Fast forward a few years, and Lamy found herself on the front lines assisting with the evacuation of American troops and citizens, as well as Afghan

Special Immigrant Visa holders, during the U.S. withdrawal from Kabul in August 2021.

A first lieutenant in the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, Lamy was on hand at the tail end of the withdrawal to help ensure that as many people as possible were able to leave the country safely. “I was only there for the last 11 days, but it felt like much longer,” she recalls. “It was a very unstable environment, and I had to adapt to it very quickly. There wasn't really time to be afraid—we couldn't afford to

let our guard down. As a female, I felt as though all eyes were on me at all times.”

Although she grew up in a military family—her father and both grandfathers are veterans—Lamy did not aspire to follow in their footsteps. But after she encountered a Reserve Officers' Training Corps recruiter during freshman orientation at Rhodes College, her interest was piqued. “I've played sports all my life, so I figured that the ROTC would at least be a good way to stay in shape, and at the same time, I could see what my



Alumni SPOTLIGHT

dad did when he was in the Army,” she says.

It wasn’t long before Lamy realized that she had found more than another extracurricular activity. She spent the rest of her time at Rhodes not only juggling a demanding course load—pursuing a major in neuroscience and a minor in English, along with joining a sorority and singing in an a cappella group—but also preparing for military service. During the summers, she attended training camps at Fort Knox and Airborne School at Fort Benning, and after graduation, she continued her education, learning to become a signal officer and later attending Jumpmaster School.

For the past three years, she has been stationed at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, where, most recently, she was selected to be the command group operations officer for Colonel Theodore W. Kleisner, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) in the 82nd. “Basically, I keep his life on track,” Lamy says. “I manage his calendar and coordinate with all of the people that he needs

Below: Lamy volunteered her time with some of the children of Afghanistan who were patiently awaiting their flight out of Kabul.

Right: A mother and her baby waiting in a shelter at a hospital in HKIA, hoping that their flight arrives soon to evacuate the country.

“I know that there are other countries and other people who need that kind of support, and I want to be able to offer it, so I know I need to continue to serve.”

to meet with. The job is challenging, but it’s also incredibly rewarding since I get to sit in on meetings with experienced leaders and learn from them.” It was in this role that she arrived in Kabul last summer. “When we got the call, I was actually on assignment in Italy,” she says. “I took the next plane home, got a couple hours of sleep, and was ready to deploy in less than 24 hours.”

In addition to assisting Colonel Kleisner during the deployment, Lamy worked closely with Afghan families, including at an orphanage similar to the one she visited while a Taftie. “We were interacting with people whose languages we didn’t know and could only communicate using hand and body gestures,” she says. “Between body armor, helmet, and weapon, we can appear threatening, so I just tried to offer them

as much care as I could—to smile and let them know that we were there to help.”

But for one family, Lamy provided more than just comfort and reassurance; she was instrumental in helping them flee the country. It started when her father had lunch with a childhood friend who mentioned he knew a family in Kabul that had assisted the U.S. military but was unable to get out. He called Lamy, who got in touch with the family and learned that they were afraid to leave their house for fear of the Taliban.

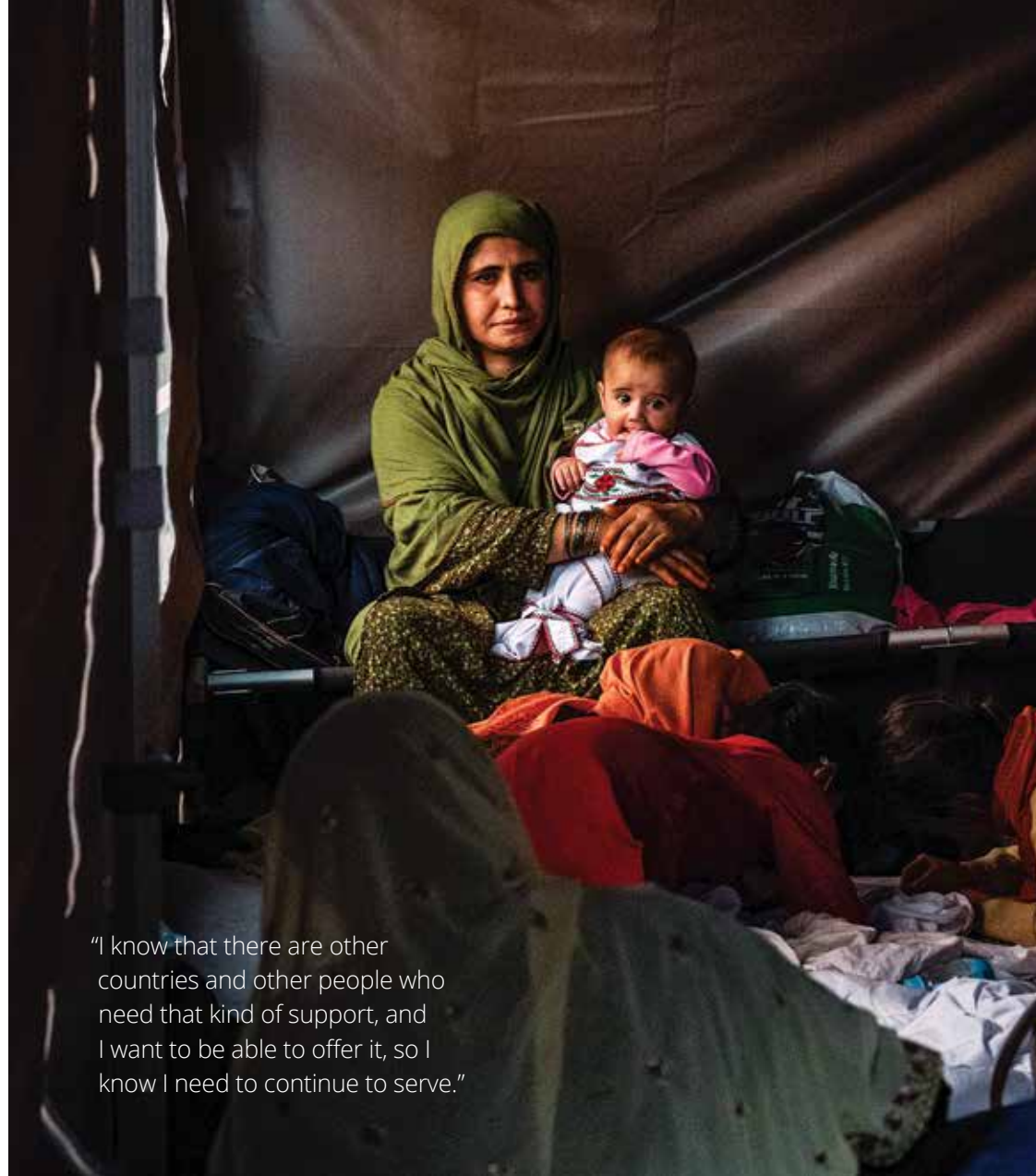
“They had all their documents, but they needed a person who had contacts. In a situation like this, it made a huge difference to have someone who could vouch for them,” she points out. “I was messaging back and forth with them as we tried to coordinate for transportation from their home, but eventually, they couldn’t wait any longer and showed up at Abbey Gate, one of our controlled access points at the airport. I got a call from a Marine on guard who said that, if I could get there, I could bring them through to the international terminal.” She jumped into action, picking them up in a government vehicle, shuttling them through security, and getting them on a plane within hours.

For Lamy, these are the experiences that make her most proud to be a soldier. “It’s hard to imagine what it feels like to fear for your life like they did, and it was incredible to experience their relief when they saw me for the first time,” she explains. “I know that there are other countries and other people who need that kind of support, and I want to be able to offer it, so I know I need to continue to serve.” ■

—Christopher Browner ‘12

Above: A paratrooper from 1st Brigade Combat Team keeps watch over the wall by Abbey Gate.

Left: Paratroopers from 1st Brigade Combat Team post up in an abandoned tower on the outskirts of HKIA, watching for anyone who might try to breach the perimeter. Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Calvin Overway discusses potential threats with the paratroopers on guard.





and later owned by their grandfather, Dr. Matthew Griswold, Taft Class of 1914.

In 1998, the brothers shifted their focus from retail Christmas tree sales to wholesale plant distribution—a decision based on economics.

“Literally on the back of a napkin, we figured out how many one-gallon perennials we could grow in the space that one Christmas tree took up (6 feet by 6 feet) over eight years,” Matt says. “I think we came up with 400, and that was all it took. We didn’t have to do any more math. It was 400 to 1. We could sell 400 one-gallon perennials at that time for \$4 each versus one tree for \$50. That was a fun little exercise.”

The business took off from there, doubling in size each year for several years—an especially impressive feat considering that some of the brothers’ competitors are 50 times larger than Judges Farm. Matt oversees production, and Martin handles operations for the business, which now has 30 employees who work together to grow, package, and transport more than 750,000 one- and two-gallon perennials, more than half a million 3.5-inch herbs and vegetables, and nearly half a million one-quart summer and fall annuals to the farm’s customers, independent garden centers

across southern New England, Cape Cod, the North Shore of Boston, the Berkshires, and Westchester County, New York.

“COVID spurred us on to vegetables,” says Martin, who, like Matt, lives with his family in a historic house adjacent to the farm and rides his bike to work. “We wondered whether people would still want black-eyed Susans and echinacea for their gardens, but we figured that if we planted



Right and below: A few of Judges Farm’s many greenhouses with thousands of plants in containers, indoors and outdoors.

Building a Farm for the Future

IN 2020, MORE THAN 20 MILLION Americans reportedly picked up a trowel and tried gardening for the first time. The pandemic inspired unprecedented interest in the outdoor activity, which resulted in a surge in demand for the wholesale plants produced by Judges Farm in Old

Lyme, Connecticut—a business owned and managed by Matt Griswold XI ’85 and Martin Griswold ’91 since 1990.

In 1640, Matthew Griswold I established his property in Old Lyme on what became known as Griswold Point—a beautiful peninsula that projects into Long Island

Sound where it meets the Connecticut River. Matt and Martin planted Christmas trees in 1990 on a 10-acre parcel of Griswold Point first farmed in the 1790s by their fourth great-grandfather, a former Connecticut governor and Supreme Court justice (hence the name Judges Farm),

Above: Judges Farm owners Matt Griswold XI ’85 (left) and Martin Griswold ’91 (right) next to solar arrays that help make their operation more environmentally sustainable.

“We have an opportunity here to serve as a model for others in accelerating the world’s rapid transition to sustainable energy.”





semi trucks, which the electric vehicle company has told them to expect in 2023 or 2024. Each heavy-duty truck will have a 500-mile range, which is just enough to cover the longest round-trip route.

“With the goal of cleaning up our act and setting an example for cleaner commercial transportation, we’ve embarked on a plan to transition our delivery system to a fully sustainable electric model,” Matt says. Phase one of the plan involved installing a 120-kilowatt, grid-connected array of solar panels, which the brothers built themselves and installed last winter with the help of an electrician and

Left: One of the farm’s battery-operated utility vehicles.

Below: Judges Farm plants ready for wholesale distribution.



their four sons—Matt’s sons Matthew XII and Eli, and Martin’s sons Ali ’24 and Huck ’25, who are Taft students.

The Tesla trucks are phase two of the plan, and the existing solar array will provide enough electricity to power two of the trucks for an entire year. “Those two trucks will emit zero generation

emissions thanks to the farm-grown solar power, and zero localized emissions for the region as they ghost around delivering our wares,” Matt says.

Finally, phase three of the plan will add an agrivoltaic solar array to provide additional clean power for the remaining two trucks. This array will

double as a growing area shade structure, enabling a dual use for the footprint. “Our small operation alone will eliminate not only 20,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year, but also all of the upstream generation and distribution pollution and waste associated with that fuel,” Matt says.

The brothers have high hopes for the implications of their approach. “If two small farmers and their kids can build their own solar power plant over a holiday break, and then funnel that zero-generation-emissions electricity into a fleet of electric trucks, there is no reason why bigger businesses, municipalities, and agencies can’t do the same,” Matt says. “We have an opportunity here to serve as a model for others in accelerating the world’s rapid transition to sustainable energy.” ■

—Sam Dangremond ’05

Photos by Robert Falcetti

Left: The Griswold brothers tending one greenhouse.

Below: Matt ’85 and Martin Griswold ’91 clean up some late-season annuals.



vegetables, maybe customers would want tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers.”

“And they did,” Matt says. “In fact, they wanted them in spades. The residual COVID effect is upon us now, and we are inundated with business.”

While the brothers are happy that demand is higher than ever, getting their products to all of their garden center

customers is quite an undertaking.

Judges Farm owns and maintains a fleet of five diesel trucks, which leave Old Lyme by 5:30 a.m. every weekday during the growing season of April to October with between five and eight orders. After they return to the farm by 5 p.m., employees load them up with the following day’s deliveries, “and then it’s Groundhog Day all over again when the trucks leave full in the morning,” Martin says.

“These trucks are old, likely to break down and spend time in the repair shop,” Martin says. “They burn an average of 20,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year and require \$50,000 in annual repairs and maintenance. As they weave their way down regional roads, they spew tons of nitrous oxide, carbon dioxide, and other nasty airborne pollutants. Not very green, especially for a ‘green business.’”

That’s why the brothers are planning to replace them with four Tesla



"If we don't have a healthy community, we don't have a healthy business."



Above: Molly Kellogg '83, chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Hubbard-Hall, a six-generation family-run company, at its headquarters in Waterbury, Connecticut. THE WORX GROUP®

Leading a Six-Generation Family Business

AS CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT, AND CHIEF executive officer of Waterbury, Connecticut-based Hubbard-Hall, Molly Kellogg '83 is making her ancestors proud. She is the sixth generation to operate the family-run company, which was founded in 1849 as Apothecaries Hall, a small drugstore.

Through the years, Hubbard-Hall has grown to what it is today: a \$60 million business selling surface finishing chemistries to manufacturers of durable

goods—everything from forks to faucets, and from automotive to aerospace—offering over 2,000 products that help 100 industries or so thrive. And now Kellogg is at the helm with plenty of innovative ideas for the company's future.

When asked how she ended up in her role, she laughs. "Nepotism," she says, with a refreshing humility and sense of humor. Kellogg explains how she tried multiple courses of study at Princeton and ultimately

majored in comparative literature.

"I've never taken a chemistry class in my life, but I can write a great email," she jokes. Like many college seniors, Kellogg wasn't sure what she wanted to do upon graduating. Her roommate happened to be the daughter of Michael Dukakis, and Kellogg ended up moving to San Francisco to work on his 1988 presidential campaign. She spent a few years in politics, and also worked on Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign.

Unsold on pursuing a full-fledged political career, Kellogg decided to try something different: she applied to business school. She went on to attend the Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires in Fontainebleau, France, where she earned an M.B.A.

"I wanted to stay in Europe," Kellogg says. "I loved the lifestyle. But in 1994, Hubbard-Hall acquired a new company outside of Boston, and it seemed like an interesting opportunity. That was the first time I considered joining the family business. Once I did, I never looked back."

Even though Kellogg humbly shares that she feels "fortunate to have started life on second base," it's clear that she worked hard to climb the ladder to CEO.

She held several ground-level positions in the company before spending the next two decades working tirelessly to earn her leading role. She's now based outside of Boston, where she lives with her family, but spends much of the week at the company headquarters in Waterbury.

Despite employing just 95 people, Hubbard-Hall has an enormous impact nationally, and now globally, too. From Levi's blue jean clasps to military equipment and medical applications like 3D printers, their reach extends far and wide.

Thanks to Kellogg's leadership, Hubbard-Hall goes above and beyond when it comes to giving back. With a philanthropic mission as part of its core, it is heavily involved with local organizations

like United Way of Greater Waterbury and Children's Community School. Employees get paid for time spent volunteering.

"If we don't have a healthy community, we don't have a healthy business," Kellogg says. "I'm glad I've been able to implement this company-wide commitment to charitable work. That's something that's surprised me about being CEO—how you get to be creative. If you have an idea and it's feasible, you can make something out of it."

For Kellogg, much of her creativity is channeled toward imagining the future. Ultimately, she hopes Hubbard-Hall will be "the chemical company that helps customers use less chemistry."

"I'm so proud to be the sixth generation in my family to lead Hubbard-Hall, and if I'm thinking of passing it on to the seventh—which is my goal—I have an obligation to run the business as sustainably as possible. I'd love to be carbon neutral one day."

It takes a great deal of emotional energy to run a company, Kellogg says.

"I didn't realize that would be the case. But you're in front of everybody every day, staying present and upbeat for your people, worrying about their well-being and personal safety. It's a lot of pressure."

To decompress, Kellogg plays hockey twice a week and on Tuesdays at Taft with a group called the "Senile Six" when she can. She was captain of the women's team at Princeton. She loves the sport and also coached her twin daughters.

"It's a weekly pickup skate with alumni, faculty, and townies," she says. "It's fun. I feel lucky to get to be back on the ice at Taft." ■

—Carola Lovering Crane '07



THE WORX GROUP®
AS SEEN ON THE WATERBURY.COM.

Destination: Trains

DAVID HANKE '12 was like a lot of kids who grew up obsessed with train sets and toy locomotives. He just never grew out of it.

He tried other things—majored in history at Lafayette College, rowed crew, started a fraternity, and was involved with a campus chapter of the TED speaking circuit. But for a kid from Manhattan, there seemed little that could match

the exoticism of a life on the lines.

"I wanted nothing but to work for a railroad," says Hanke.

Five years out of school, Hanke is now the superintendent of the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad, a so-called shortline that runs for 154 miles on a remote spit of southern Colorado near the New Mexico border. The line traffics freight for only a

handful of companies, hauling products like fertilizer, grain, potatoes, and perlite—the tiny white minerals commonly seen in bags of potting soil—back and forth between industrial plants and an interchange point with the mighty Union Pacific, the largest railroad in the country.

That would seem to make the SLRG a rather small cog in a vast logistics apparatus

keeping the nation's economy humming. But rarely had we stopped to consider the preciousness of the supply chain until the pandemic upended it.

Factory outbreaks, labor shortages, transportation backlogs, and almost every other hurdle imaginable made getting things from automobiles to electronics to furniture a serious struggle in 2021.



Above: David Hanke '12 (right), superintendent of the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad, with his chief mechanic colleague.

Left: Mount Blanca from the valley floor.

Right: A big mudslide on a line with Hanke, far right, "walking up the creek without a paddle," he says.





Above: Tank cars of fertilizer and hopper cars of barley.

Left: A small mudslide on tracks.

But don't look at us, Hanke says. His line miraculously navigated through the pandemic and its aftermath without disruption.

Fortunately, Hanke says, his customers tend to be consistent and stable, "the kind of operation that railroads like." His second-biggest client, for instance, is Molson Coors, the brewing giant, which ships about 20 cars of barley off his line per week from a giant grain elevator to its brewery in Golden, Colorado. An entire year's worth of barley is harvested in the fall only to be shipped out, bit by bit, week by week, until the supply runs out or the demand wavers. And beer demand rarely wavers.

Hanke was seeking such stability after starting his career operating a more hectic line outside Pittsburgh for Norfolk Southern.

"We used to refer to the month of December as 'UPS season,'" Hanke says. "If you caused a delay to a train that had UPS trailers on it, you'd never hear the end of it. That's the side of railroading that is more sensitive to time delays and backlogs. I'm very much on the calmer side of it now."

Hanke says he started working for

Norfolk Southern largely because of the promise of being transferred to other parts of the country. "They said, 'You could be moved at any minute across any of 23 states,'" Hanke says. "I said, Cool!"

In 2018, that meant picking up and moving to Alamosa, Colorado, a small college town four hours south of Denver featuring majestic views of the Rockies. It's a quiet place but the locals are friendly. "When I tell people I'm from Manhattan, they're like, 'What are you doing here?'" Hanke says.

He's confined to a desk most days, sorting out logistics problems for customers who don't even know they have problems. He found out recently that one local customer was shipping rail cars of product to Winnipeg, Canada,

Rarely had we stopped to consider the preciousness of the supply chain until the pandemic upended it.



where a client routinely bought a few truckloads—destined for Colorado.

"If you don't realize where your products come from and where your supply chains go, they'll go across the country and even across borders and you don't even realize it sometimes," Hanke says. "In a crazy world, you might go full circle."

Every so often Hanke does have to surprise his workers in the field to make sure they are following regulations. It's during those visits, when he rides in the locomotive cab, that he most feels like a kid again.

"It's rough and difficult and some days are hell," Hanke says. "But you do get to do something that affects a lot of people. And if you do it right, you are the backbone of the local economy." ■

—Zach Schonbrun '05

Above: Graffiti from a Taftie hobo.

Left: Train line vista with Colorado's Mount Blanca in the distance.

Unearthing Geotech



IN EARLY 2020, Lyssa Lincoln Reed '07 relocated to Boston to begin a new role as project manager at Haley & Aldrich, one the of the country's top environmental and geotechnical engineering consultants. As an experienced geotechnical engineer, Reed evaluates soil, rock, groundwater, and man-made materials, particularly their interaction with earth retention systems and structure foundations.

"We are essentially the first step in building a bridge, a skyscraper, a highway, or any major structure," Reed explains. "We determine how to approach the project from its foundation underground, and we're typically contracted by an architect or developer."

Reed, who was drawn to math and science as a student, knew from a relatively young age that a career in engineering was something she wanted to pursue. Originally, however, she thought she wanted to be an architect or work in building design. It was her Taft science teacher Jim Lehner who encouraged Reed to check out civil engineering.

"Mr. Lehner thought engineering would be more my strong suit than design," Reed shares. "He really pushed

Left: Lyssa Reed '07, environmental and geotechnical engineering consultant, at a job site.

Above: Reed at the Second Avenue Subway project in New York City.

me to explore new things and was such an out-of-the-box teacher. He made me feel confident taking a leap to pursue an industry I knew nothing about. I talked to him a lot my first year of college."

During undergrad at Cornell, Reed initially thought she'd focus on structural engineering, but then she took an introductory course in geotechnical engineering, and that felt more her style.

"Geoengineering just seemed more fun to me," Reed says. "With structural engineering it's a lot of crunching



numbers, whereas with geotech, you're always tackling something different."

Reed graduated from Cornell in 2011 with a B.S. in civil engineering, then stayed at the university an extra year to get her Master of Engineering. Subsequently, she joined Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers in New York, where she worked for eight years before moving to Boston.

"I was able to work on some pretty remarkable structures during my time in



Above: Reed, then lab manager at Mueser Rutledge, when they were featured on an episode of *Unearthed*, testing rock core.

Left: Reed, a geotechnical engineer, with her husband, Dave, at the Colosseum in Rome, an example of an engineering wonder of the world.

World Trade Center, among many others.

As a project manager, Reed now spends less time in the field than she used to.

"When I first started at Mueser Rutledge, I was spending 70 or 80 percent of my time in the field. But now I'm overseeing those inspectors. I'm doing more on the business and management side and working with the design teams. Still, there are constantly new challenges. And even though on one hand that makes my job difficult, I also love that no project is ever the same."

Haley & Aldrich has more than 800 employees across the U.S., with Boston being the largest of its dozens of offices across 20 states. The company tackles projects all over the globe.

Reed loves her work; she hopes to stay at the firm and grow into more of a leadership role down the road.

"One reason I was eager to join Haley & Aldrich is because they have so many women in leadership positions," Reed says. "I want to get there one day. I want to inspire young female engineers and show them that exciting opportunities are out there." ■

—Carola Lovering Crane '07

"Kindness is like snow—It beautifies everything it covers."

—Kahlil Gibran



BY DEBRA MEYERS
For more information, visit www.taftschool.org/news



student
SPOTLIGHT

Every Mind Matters

DURING HER MID YEAR, Valeria D'Virgilio '22 started the Every Mind Matters club at Taft.

"My goal was to give students the time and space to prioritize themselves in the midst of a loaded schedule," says Valeria. "I wanted to create a safe space to share our burdens. I want to share the message that no one should feel alone in this community."

The club meets every other week, primarily for discussions covering a range of issues. In the fall, the group planned

a community-wide event to coordinate with World Mental Health Day. Sponsored by the World Health Organization, World Mental Health Day is designed to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world while mobilizing efforts in support of mental health.

"I wanted to set up an event that was easy, fun, and that would reach as many students as possible," says Valeria.

Students were invited to create DIY stress balls, paint Rhino figurines, enjoy

snacks, and engage in "puppy play" with faculty dogs. Fostering community and building connections were the threads weaving all of the activities together.

In addition to ongoing issued-driven discussions, Every Mind Matters will continue to sponsor activities that can bring members of the Taft community together, including movie nights and group meditation sessions.

"The most important thing," Valeria says, "is that everyone will always be welcome." ■

Below left: Valeria D'Virgilio with Nitro O'Shea during World Mental Health Day puppy play.

Below right: Students created DIY stress balls during Taft's World Mental Health Day activities.



Honoring Achievement

Cum Laude Society Inductions

"TO BE A TAFT STUDENT IS TO CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF EACH OTHER," HEAD OF SCHOOL WILLY MACMULLEN '78 TOLD TAFTIES DURING THE ANNUAL FALL CUM LAUDE SOCIETY INDUCTION CEREMONY. "THAT'S HOW WE REMIND OURSELVES THAT TO BE HERE—TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS COMMUNITY—IS TO BE PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL."

THE EVENT IS A TIME TO CELEBRATE SCHOLARSHIP AND, NOTES MACMULLEN, "THE LIFE OF THE MIND." IT IS ALSO A TIME TO RECOGNIZE TAFT'S RANKING SCHOLARS AND NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HONOREES.



National Merit Scholarship Program

The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. Six Taft seniors earned commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Program. With a selection index of 207 or above, these high-performers have shown outstanding academic potential. Congratulations to Samuel Blair, John Gavin Feller, Katherine Gilland, Srikan Nandigama, Michael Roberts, and Gaden Romer.

The program also honored two semifinalists from Taft—William Roberts and Mercury Titterton—based on their outstanding performance last year on the PSAT, finishing in the top 1 percent of all test-takers.

Taft's Ranking Scholars

Ranking Scholars are those students in each class who earned the highest unweighted grade point averages for the 2020–21 academic year. They are:

- > Class of 2024: James (Beau) Sansing, 97.8 unweighted average
- > Class of 2023: Kendra Papanek, 96.2 unweighted average
- > Class of 2022: William Roberts, 97.25 unweighted average

Cum Laude Society

Founded in 1908, the Cum Laude Society is the national scholarship society in secondary schools, corresponding to Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi in colleges and scientific schools. A maximum of 20 percent of the senior class may be elected into membership in the Cum Laude Society. Taft inducted 17 seniors, who represent the top 10 percent of the senior class: Whitney Bartol, Aidan Chan, Ayden Cinel, Grace Denious, Carolina Gura, Elias Juvan, Grace Kenney, Kevin Lian, Edward Liu, Gabriela Marques Jones, Stephen Mayer, Jin Young Min, Shuyao Pan, Catherine Peng, Michael Roberts, William Roberts, and Binxu (Catherine) Zhao. ■



Vital Spaces

Affinity Groups, Alliances, and Allyship at Taft



Dean of Community, Justice, and Belonging Thomas Allen

TAFT'S STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY and Inclusivity states that we are an "intentionally diverse" community.

"Every single one of us in this room makes that true—you and every single identifier that you have," noted Thomas Allen, dean of Community, Justice, and Belonging, during a Morning Meeting talk. "In this community—in this space—there is a place for you with others who share your identifier or identifiers. Find your space in either an alliance or affinity."

It is those spaces—Taft's affinity groups and alliances—that were at the core of Allen's talk.

"Our affinity spaces are critical to the Taft experience," said Allen. "They are vital to the feeling of acceptance, community, and belonging that we strive for."

During his talk, Allen defined affinity groups and alliances, while addressing common questions and debunking myths about each. Affinity groups, he explained, bring together individuals with common identifiers. Those identifiers include things like race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, first language, religion or spiritual affiliation, national origin, and immigrant status.

"Why are these spaces important? They provide a safe space for group members, reduce feelings of isolation, help you embrace who you are, and help group members feel more visible in the community," Allen said. "Affinity groups allow a designated space where students or faculty can explore, celebrate a shared identity, and debrief common challenges and experiences

group members of that identity face."

Alliances, on the other hand, gather individuals who may or may not share identifiers, but who have a genuine, sincere interest in the issues facing a particular identity group and who want to support that group and serve as allies for its members. Allen noted that "to be an ally is to take on the struggle as your own; stand up, even when you feel scared; transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who lack it; and acknowledge that while you, too, feel pain, the conversation is not about you."

"Come see me," Allen concluded. "Let's talk about where you fit. There is a space for you here at Taft."

Read more about affinity groups in the Community Corner column, page 6.

Above: During his talk, Allen invited everyone to write notes explaining how they connect as an ally. Those notes are part of a Main Hall community support installation.

Sustainability Week



AS TAFTIES ENTERED BINGHAM

Auditorium for a Morning Meeting last fall, Marvin Gaye's 1971 classic song *Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)* was playing.

"*Mercy Mercy Me* was written 50 years ago to raise awareness about the urgency of environmental issues and conservation," explained Taft EcoMon Mina Xiao'23. "This song's message embodies the goals we work toward as a community and as your EcoMons."

The Morning Meeting talk was a kick-off event for Sustainability Week at Taft, an initiative designed to both raise awareness about environmental issues and actively engage in sustainability-driven activities. Sustainability Week came to

Taft in 2016 and was modeled after a statewide program at colleges and universities coordinated by the Connecticut Alliance for Campus Sustainability.

EcoMons continue to lead the Sustainability Week charge, sharing information about environmental initiatives designed to support and improve sustainability on "our campus and the earth it sits on." 2021 Sustainability Week programming included a range of activities, from trash cleanup, No-Waste Game Day, and apple picking, to an educational discussion night, trivia game, and opportunities to decorate reusable tote bags and succulent pots. The community was also invited to sign a sustainability pledge.





Not to Be Served

Veterans Day with Ensign James Putko '15

U.S. NAVY ENSIGN JIMMY PUTKO '15 delivered a prerecorded Morning Meeting talk on Veterans Day from his post aboard the USS *Port Royal*, a warship currently based in Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii. The *Port Royal* was Putko's home during a nine-month deployment to the Persian Gulf.

"I really feel it is very similar to a community like Taft," said Putko. "There are 400 people aboard the ship—everyone has to do their job, and everyone fulfills their role. If everyone is nice to each other and does their job, you'll complete your mission."

Putko shared video highlights from his time in the Persian Gulf, where he and his shipmates served as part of a multinational coalition working to secure the high seas. Utilizing Visit, Board, Search,

and Seizure (VBSS) teams, the *Port Royal* crew was able to interdict illegal narcotics valued at more than \$22 million, escort dozens of military and civilian vessels to ensure safe travels, and serve as a barrier against potential enemy forces.

"It was very fulfilling to have completed that mission and maintain a presence in the Persian Gulf," Putko noted. "What I learned about the Surface Navy is that its main mission is presence. In wartime or peacetime, the Surface Navy is on constant patrol—Christmas Day, Thanksgiving Day. People are deployed all over the world. Even when we're in port there is a constant presence on board the ship in the event that we need to get underway on short notice."

Putko graduated from Cornell

University, where he studied at the Cornell Dyson School of Applied Economics & Management, played soccer, and was part of the ROTC program. He was commissioned in May 2019. Aboard the *Port Royal*, he serves as officer of the deck.

"I am driving the ship—not on the wheel, but in the pilot house managing casualty controls, managing personnel, and navigating where we need to go next."

The *Port Royal* and its dedicated crew continue to work in support of military missions across the globe.

"The most beautiful thing about being in the military is that it is the most diverse institution in America," said Putko. "It is an honor and a privilege to serve on board this ship with this crew." ■



Fostering a Love of Learning: Karen May Retires

KAREN MAY HAS SPENT THE PAST 23 years working with Taft students and faculty to effectively maximize classroom experiences while empowering students to harness their full potential as learners. Her work is the foundation on which Taft's Moorhead Academic Center (MAC) was built.

"Karen created the legacy and the model that we still have today," said Head of School Willy MacMullen '78 during a December gathering honoring May. "She changed the school and created something that did not exist before her and which we are still using, even as

we expand it in creative and innovative ways."

Before Taft, May's career included time as an inner-city special education teacher, an independent learning specialist, and an academic guide for gifted students with learning differences at a public high school. Since then, she has touched the lives of countless Taft students.

"I think the role I play it is one of empowerment," May said in an earlier interview. "I tell every student I see, 'I want you to feel competent, I want you to understand who you are as a learner, and I want

you to be able to communicate that—to advocate for yourself in any situation."

Through her work—and by fostering learning and a love of learning—May feels she created and fulfilled her purpose in life.

"I've gotten used to the fact that at the end of the year, I'd get a letter or a phone call or an email from a parent who says some version of, 'My son or daughter wouldn't have made it through Taft if it weren't for Karen May,'" noted MacMullen. "We've been really grateful to have [her] creation, caring, and courage." ■





Wear a Mask and Reveal What's Behind It

Intermediate Painting and AP/Advanced Art students considered some of the words and concepts that defined the Taft experience in 2020 and early 2021—virtual, remote, synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid, masked, and socially distant, to name a few. They created paintings representing the places and faces that connect us to real and imagined worlds. “While we lacked control over where we could go and who we could be with, we always possessed the ability to create what we wanted to see in the future,” the artists noted.

Similarly, Advanced Photography students explored emotional responses to the pandemic through words and images—desolate off spaces, masked people, distant locales.

Reimagining Opportunity, Rediscovering Play, Connecting to Joy

Performing arts students—actors, singers, dancers, musicians—were celebrated in the Gallery for their creativity in



mounting three productions during the 2020–21 academic year featuring masked and socially distanced actors, and with most of the audience tuning in via Zoom. A challenge and departure for disciplines reliant on “moving, interacting, and harmonizing with others in close proximity.”

While Elspeth Michaels '05 and art teacher John O'Reilly helped students explore the creative process in the pandemic classroom, their personal explorations continued outside of the classroom. A sculptor and surfer (perhaps the quintessential socially distanced activity), O'Reilly marries his passions by creating custom surfboards, including the one displayed in Potter Gallery. After moving back to Connecticut during the pandemic, Michaels built a plywood wall in her backyard to teach herself how to spray paint. *Bloom Wall* was the result of “falling in love with the process of experimenting with a new medium and letting go of the idea of a perfect final product,” she said.

Connecting with the Community

Despite pandemic protocols, Tafties found ways to continue connecting with and serving local business and organizations. Design Intensive students worked with local café Cara Bean to enhance its brand identity. Over the course of the semester, students created new logos and marketing assets. When the café's second location launches this fall, expect to see the logo designed by Muffin Prakittiphoom '21 featured prominently. ■

Art in the Time of COVID



IN MANY WAYS, the global pandemic changed how we make our way through the world. And while it may have canceled many things completely, art was not one of them. In fact, creativity flourished. The year's opening show in Potter Gallery, *How Did We Create?* (*Ugh, during these unprecedented times?*), explored the creative lives of Taft students and faculty during the pandemic.

The show featured collective works curated around essential pandemic questions: How did we respond? How did we reimagine? How did we play and connect to joy? How did we build community? How did we reflect on our progress? And how did we reveal ourselves?





1



1



2



3



4

Catching the Non ut Sibi Spirit

TAFTIES ENGAGE IN SERVICE ACTIVITIES ACROSS CAMPUS AND ACROSS THE GREATER COMMUNITY WITH JUST ONE GOAL: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST. HERE'S JUST A SAMPLING OF SOME OF THE SERVICE WORK COMPLETED BY TAFTIES DURING THE FALL TERM.

1

On one spirited weekend in the fall, *Non ut sibi*-driven initiatives connected our community through activities designed to benefit communities outside our campus. The Black Alliance Club hosted a bake sale to raise funds for an umbrella community service project called Blue Barrels, which sends blue barrels filled with donations to local nonprofit organizations based on their unique needs. The Upper Mid Class Committee hosted a 5K run to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer research. And Taft Coffee for Charity, which supports different causes throughout the year, raised money through a different kind of run—a Sunday Starbucks run. But the biggest events of the weekend were hosted by Taft's Asian Alliance and the Red Rhino Fund. More than 300 students packed the gym for a well-attended, highly spirited volleyball tournament sponsored by the Taft's Asian Alliance. Eighteen

teams competed to support programs in developing Asian countries. To round out the weekend, Red Rhino Fund hosted its third annual Fall Festival. Tafties enjoyed pumpkin carving, lawn games, doughnuts, and more, all to help fund the grants RRF awards to local nonprofits each year.

2

The Taft community honored National Philanthropy Day on November 15 with a fundraising event hosted by the Alumni and Development Office. For a \$5 donation, Tafties were invited to wear denim for a day and to choose which of three longtime service partners would receive their donation. Waterbury's Children's Community School, the St. Vincent de Paul Mission of Waterbury, and the White Memorial Conservation Center each received a share of the funds raised on National Philanthropy/Taft Denim Day.

3

Girls Inc. of Greater Waterbury offers evidence-based programming that focuses on the development of the whole girl—supporting, mentoring, and guiding girls in an affirming, pro-girl environment. Members of Taft's girls' cross-country team offer action-based financial support to help keep those programs running. Seven of Taft's runners logged half marathons (13.1 miles) on the trails at White Memorial, raising a dollar per mile for Girls Inc.

4

Taft's Community Service Board held a series of doughnut sales to benefit the St. Vincent de Paul Mission in Waterbury. Established in 1978, the Mission's network of services includes an emergency homeless shelter, thrift store, food pantry, soup kitchen, supportive mental health housing and services, and more.

5

Students participating in Community Service as their afternoon ex traveled to Judea Garden to help prepare the space for winter. Since 2009, Judea Garden has offered an opportunity for the community to grow together and provide fresh produce for friends and neighbors with limited financial resources. Former Taft parent Denise Arturi is Judea's master gardener and manager.

6

Taft Giving Tree was back this year in the Harley Roberts Room. In the spirit of the season—and of our school motto—Taft collected hats, mittens, socks, and scarves for donation to those in need in the greater community.

7

Tafties brought the *Non ut Sibi* spirit with a holiday twist when they created greeting cards for senior citizens in the greater Waterbury area. Last year, Tafties crafted and sent 1,200 holiday cards to local health-care workers. This year, they targeted 1,200 cards for local seniors. Working with the United Way of Greater Waterbury, Taft sent cards to the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging, the Cheshire Senior Center, and other agencies. ■



5



6



7



Taft Theater

MADE A GLORIOUS RETURN TO LIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC AUDIENCES WITH A PHENOMENAL FALL PRODUCTION OF *THE ADDAMS FAMILY SCHOOL EDITION*. THE PERFORMERS WERE EXTRAORDINARY, THE SETS EXCEPTIONAL—BASED ON A NAPKIN DRAWING DONE FOR DIRECTOR HELENA FIFER BY CHARLES ADDAMS HIMSELF—THE DANCING, MUSIC, COSTUMES, AND OVERALL EXPERIENCE SOARED TO NEW HEIGHTS.



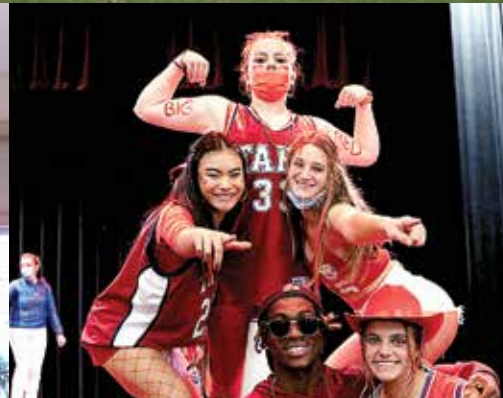
Fall Dance Showcase

RETURNED TO THE BINGHAM STAGE IN DECEMBER WITH STUDENTS IN SARAH SURBER'S DANCE CLASSES EXPLORING MOVEMENT THROUGH A RANGE OF DANCE GENRES, STYLES, AND CHOREOGRAPHY.



Big Red Spirit

TAFTIES WERE THRILLED TO BE ABLE TO CELEBRATE THE FUN TRADITIONS THAT ACCOMPANY SPIRIT WEEK AND HOTCHKISS DAY ONCE AGAIN. THOUGH THE GAMES WERE PLAYED UNDER CLOUDY SKIES AND ON SOGGY FIELDS, THE BIG RED SPIRIT WAS AS STRONG AS EVER.



Growing Global Leaders

The seventh cohort of Global Leadership Institute (GLI) scholars toured the Anamet and Anaconda American Brass brownfields sites in Waterbury with officials from the Waterbury Development Corp. and the Office of the Mayor. The sites are part of the EPA's Brownfields Program, which provides grants and technical assistance to assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse contaminated properties. The GLI brings students from Taft and Waterbury public schools together for 18 months of shared learning and leadership experiences, which includes hands-on work on global issues.



The Interconnectedness of Life

Advanced Ecology and Honors Seminar in Biology students traveled to the Institute for American Indian Studies in Washington, Connecticut. In addition to exploring the museum's exhibits and docent lectures, students participated in a small-group activity tracing objects from source material to product to end user, hiked the woodland property, and engaged in a string activity demonstrating the interconnected nature of animals, plants, and life itself.

The Power of Journalism

Steven Erlanger '70 is the chief diplomatic correspondent in Europe for *The New York Times*, and the current holder of the Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal, the school's highest alumni honor. Fifty years ago, he was the editor-in-chief of the *Taft Papyrus*. He shared his reflections on both experiences and the power of journalism during a Morning Meeting talk in October.





Hanukkah Sameach

Jewish students and friends were invited to a Hanukkah celebration in December at Taft with Rabbi Eric Polokoff. The founding rabbi of B'nai Israel Synagogue in Southbury, Rabbi Polokoff is a pastor, speaker, and community leader who has partnered with Taft for many years. He led students through traditional Hanukkah prayers and education during the celebration.



Fall Family Weekend

Welcoming parents and families back to Taft for Fall Family Weekend and Taft Today made for an incredibly special few days on campus. Taft Today's "look under the hood" at life at Taft brought formal programming during the day on Friday, while an evening barbecue, theater and music performances, athletic competitions, and pop-up s'mores party lent a fun and festive feel to the weekend. Class luncheons, the show in Potter Gallery, a family reception, and a gathering for families of students of color helped round out the reopening of our campus for family events.



TAFT STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE NAIS ONLINE STUDENT DIVERSITY Leadership Conference (SDLC) in November and December, a component of the annual People of Color Conference (PoCC). SDLC is a multiracial, multicultural gathering of upper school student leaders (grades 9–12) from across the U.S. and abroad. SDLC focuses on self-reflecting, forming allies, and building community. Led by a diverse team of trained adult and peer facilitators, students develop crosscultural communication skills, design effective strategies for social justice practice through dialogue and the arts, and learn the foundations of allyship and networking principles. This year's SDLC workshops explored topics around the theme "Believing and Belonging in Our Schools: Reckoning with Injustice Reconciling with Love." The Taft students who participated were Ronald Ceesay '23, Ashanti Legare '23, Rena Shao '23, Emily Gonzalez '23, Ethan Maina '23, and Ana Coyanda-Parkzes '23.

Art Is Everywhere

Taft's Library and Arts departments have come together to celebrate the talented student artists in our community with a new gallery-style space in the Belcher Reading Room. The inaugural display featured two classroom projects: Architectural Letters, created by students in Ms. Douglas and Ms. Balliett's Beginning Sculpture classes, and Endangered Birds, by Ms. Douglas's Ceramics 1 class. The 3D papier-mâché letters represent student initials and are decorated with descriptive words or images that are personally meaningful and unique to the student's identity. The birds reflect student research into endangered species native to their home countries or towns. Students used pinch pot, coil, and slab building as well as textured painting to make the birds (displayed in student-created tableaux) look as real as possible.



Pick Up the Brush!

The second fall show in Potter Gallery featured the work of Barnaby Conrad '70, who spent time with Taft students exploring his work featured for the show *Pick Up the Brush*.



Tour Guides Rock!

In December, the Admissions Office hosted an end-of-term thank you party for tour guides in the Harley Roberts Room, the spot where all tours begin and end. Tour guides play a critical role in the admissions process, giving prospective students and families one of their first experiences with the Taft community. ■



Nick Liebich '22 makes a play on the ball versus Loomis in the NEPSAC Class A Soccer Championship Semifinal.

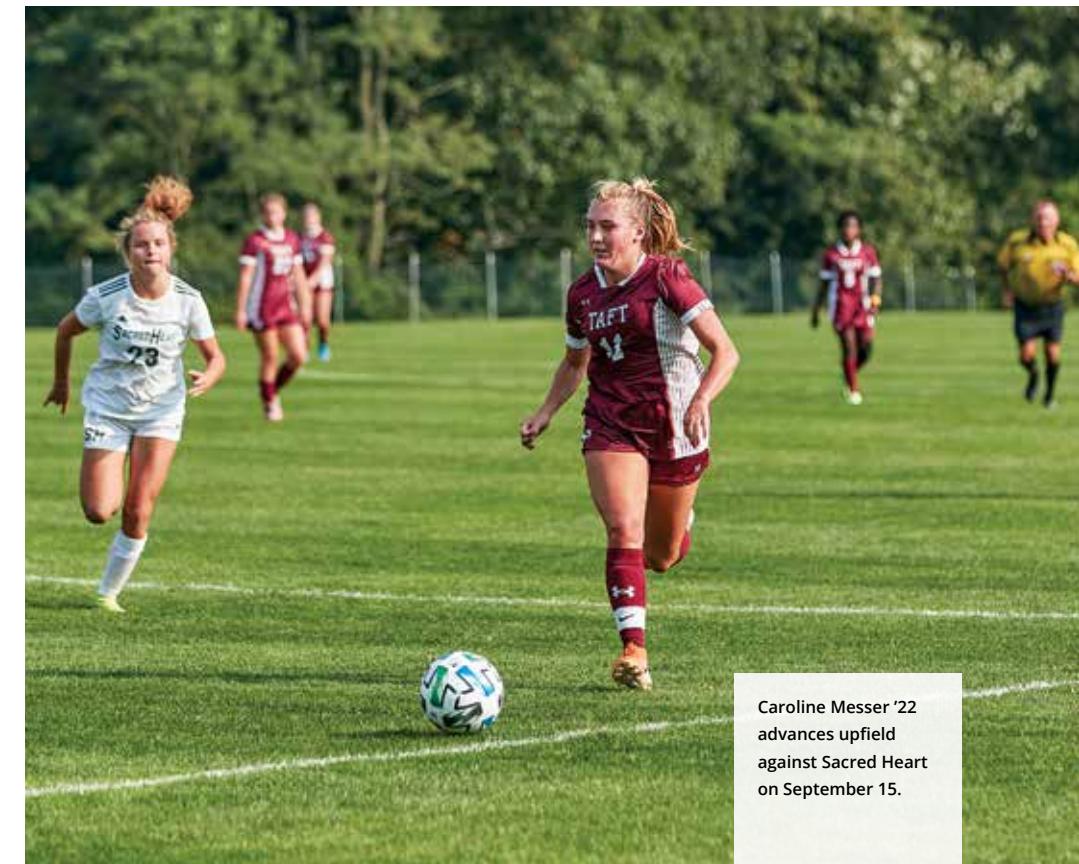
Fall SPORTS wrap-up

BY STEVE PALMER
Photography by Robert Falcetti

Boys' Soccer 19-1-0

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS,
WNEPSSA CHAMPIONS, NEW
ENGLAND CLASS A FINALIST,
WCSOA SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

It was an extraordinary season, perhaps the best in program history, for the boys' varsity soccer team. The Rhinos went undefeated (17-0) in the regular season and emerged as Western New England Champions. The team was also crowned undefeated Founders League Champions for the second straight season and third time in the last five campaigns. The Rhinos dominated perennial powerhouse teams in New England, defeating Brunswick 5-0, Avon 3-1, Berkshire 5-1, Choate 6-1, Loomis 3-1, and Hotchkiss 6-2 over the course of the regular season. Taft then defeated Avon and Loomis again in the Class A New England Tournament before ultimately falling to Northfield Mount Hermon in the finals on penalty kicks. The team continues to be ranked as one of the top prep school soccer teams in the country, and with a talented and dedicated core of returning athletes, the future looks bright! This past season Taft scored an astounding 101 goals, led by senior midfielder Kelvin "KK" Baffour '22 who tallied 29 goals, which tied a single-season program record, and added 19 assists. Also contributing to this outstanding offensive output were Alejandro Gharzouzi '24 (12 goals, 2 assists), Ben Osset '23 (8 goals, 2 assists), Nolan Jacobi '24 (7 goals, 3 assists), Enoch Duodu '24 (7 goals, 2 assists), Jordan Grivekov '23 (4 goals, 4 assists), and Zobran Elias '22 (4 goals, 2 assists). The Rhinos were bolstered by an exceptionally talented and hard-working



Caroline Messer '22 advances upfield against Sacred Heart on September 15.

midfield consisting of Matthew Quiros-Newton '22, Alex Henderson '24, Ben Zirener '22, Luca Zirener '22, and Patrick Gallagher '24. Throughout the season, Taft conceded, on average, only 0.5 goals per game, due to excellent goalkeeping from Nathan Harlow '23 and superb defending from captain Sebastián Mañón '22, Nick Liebich '22, Conrad Coyanda-Parkzes '22, Jack Cacioppo '22, and La Zai Outerbridge '23. In closing, it was not only the championships and wins that will mark this season as unique, but also the spirit and camaraderie that this team displayed following a year when competitive matches were not played.

Girls' Soccer 8-10

The girls' varsity soccer team rostered 20 players for the fall '21 season. The squad, consisting of seven seniors, six upper mids, two mids, and seven lower mids, were led by senior cocaptains Caroline Messer '22 and Taylor Adduci '22. The Rhinos' season,

which was the first since the start of the global pandemic, was defined by individual and collective growth. Two comprehensive wins early in the season against Sacred Heart Greenwich (7-2) and Greenwich Country Day School (6-0) were then followed by four consecutive tight losses. Victories over Greenwich Academy (2-1) and Hopkins School (1-0) got the Rhinos back on track before another tightly contested string of four matches did not fall in favor of the squad. Despite losing two starting players to season-ending injuries, the feeling within the group remained positive. That positivity saw the Rhinos begin to gel as a group and helped the team see off Northfield Mount Hermon (2-1) at home in an absolutely thrilling match, with the winning goal scored with less than three minutes remaining on the clock. The team continued their momentum into Fall Family Weekend, which saw a victory over Kent School (1-0); the winning goal came with 19 seconds left on the clock, sending the crowd of students and parents



Maisy Ricciardelli '24 in game action versus Ethel Walker on October 28.

into a frenzy! The team's final win of the season came on the second to last match day against Kingswood Oxford (3–1). The resilience of the group became a characteristic of the team as the season progressed. Faith Graziano '24 led the Rhinos in scoring with 12 goals, while Susanna Adams '22 helped round out the offense with 10 goals of her own. Caroline Messer and Susanna Adams were named All-Founders League. Susanna Adams was named to the All-NEPSAC Honorable Mention Team and Taylor Adduci was named as the Class of 1976 Girls' Soccer Award Winner.

Field Hockey 13-5

NEW ENGLAND CLASS A
QUARTERFINALISTS

This year's team was led by cocaptains Jenna Guglielmi '22 and Cal Ferraris '22, and seniors Tatum Eades '22, Brooke Marx '22,

Gwen Thompson '22, and Eva Witkowski '22. Taft field hockey was excited to resume interscholastic competition and reestablish Taft's presence in the Founders League and NEPSAC. The Rhinos began the season primarily on the road, playing seven of the first nine games on away fields. Despite the travel and two losses to top-ranked Sacred Heart and Greenwich, the Rhinos gained momentum with a series of impressive wins. The team made a name for itself in the league with a 7–0 win over Loomis in the home opener under the lights, and concluding with a historic 2–0 win against Hotchkiss—the first time in 15 years. This win also placed Taft field hockey tied for second in the Founders League. Finishing the regular season with a record of 13–4, the Rhinos landed the seventh seed in the NEPSAC Class A tournament. An undefeated Andover (#2) team knocked Taft out in the quarterfinals and ended their postseason run. Jenna Guglielmi and

Emma Cook '23 were named Western New England All-Stars. Brooke Marx and Emma Cook were named Founders All-League. Cal Ferraris and Ashley Wright '23 were named NEPSAC All-League, and Chloe Agopian '23 and Maisy Ricciardelli '24 were awarded honorable mentions. The captains-elect for the 2022 season are Chloe Agopian, Amelia Lancaster '23, and Ashley Wright.

Boys' Cross Country 3-4

It was wonderful to return to normal competition this season, and the boys of the 2021 squad took full advantage. The team started with very few runners who had ever competed for Taft, and most of the team had never even run a true 5K before. The Rhinos were led all season by Oliver Dreyfuss '24, who was the top runner in every race. Taft enjoyed victories over Trinity-Pawling (23–36), Williston Northampton (22–38),

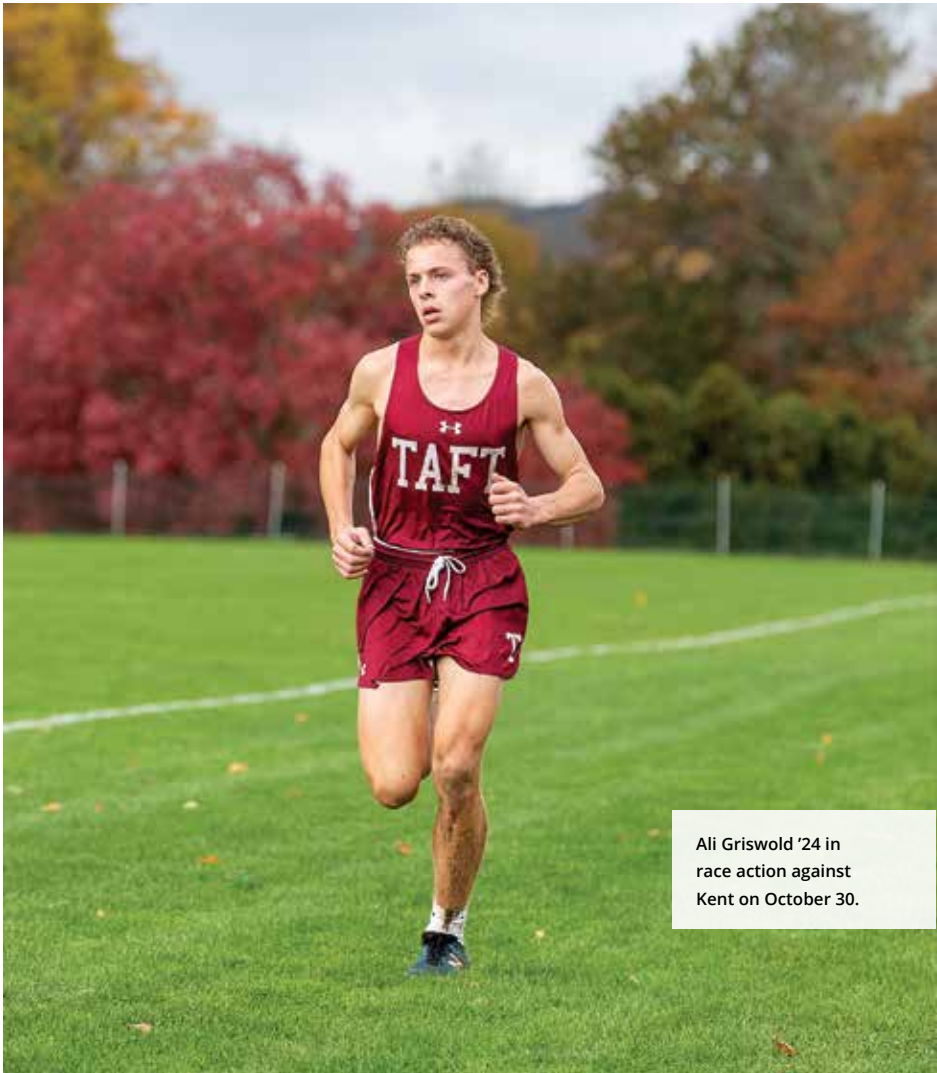
and Kent on Family Weekend (17–44), and went on to finish fourth out of nine teams at the Founders League Championships, behind only teams that had beaten the Rhinos in the regular season. In that race, Taft had the least spread for the top five top runners among any of the teams, a peak for the pack-running approach of the team. Individual accomplishments for the season included five harriers breaking into the top 30 performances by Taft runners on the home course, including Oliver Dreyfuss, Rory McNamara '25, Yura Stasiuk '22, Jude Celebi '23, and Ali Griswold '24. All-Founders League recipients were cocaptains Will Roberts '22 and Jude Celebi for their great leadership. For his incredible sportsmanship, Will Roberts was the recipient of the John B. Small Award. Of the nine varsity letter winners, only two are seniors and just one was an upper mid, so the future looks promising. Next year, Celebi will continue on as captain and lead this young team.

Girls' Cross Country 7-1

This was a special season for many reasons, but this team's performance on the courses around New England and their incredible spirit stood out. The theme for the season was strong body, strong mind, strong heart, and the team carried that theme from the first day of preseason to the New England championship race at Andover. The Rhinos opened the season at home with convincing victories over Porters and Suffield Academy, with lower mid Charlotte Murphy '25 missing the school record by mere seconds with her winning time of 19:06. Taft followed up with wins over Choate, Hotchkiss, Northfield Mount Hermon, and Williston, and a close loss to Loomis, before closing with a wild Family Weekend win over Kent on a very wet, “double rainbow” race on the home course. The Rhinos saved their best team races for the final two, running a very strong second place at the Founders League Championship



Hailey Sharpe '23 in an October meet against Kent.



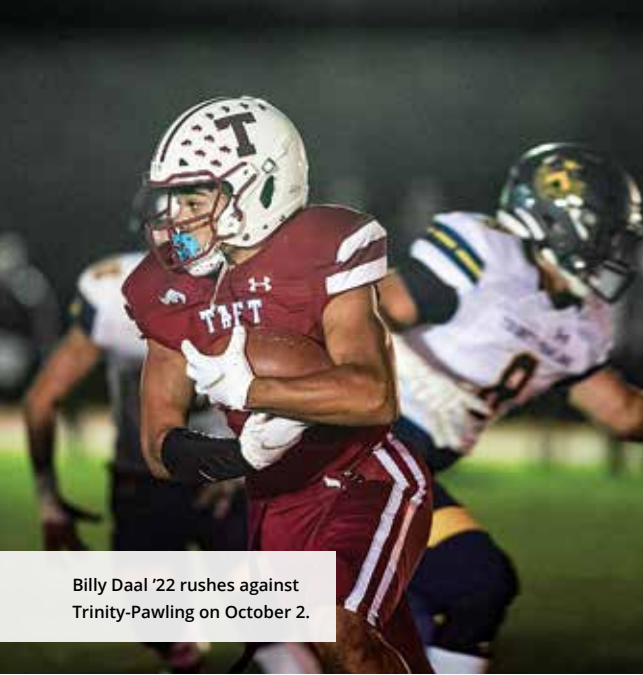
Ali Griswold '24 in race action against Kent on October 30.

just behind hosts Loomis, and bettering that performance with a fourth place at the Division 1 New England Championship, five points behind host Andover. At that championship, the top four teams and top 20 individuals were honored, and it was fitting that Taft's captains Annabel Pick '22, Stella Oldakowski '22, and Lilly Izmirlian '22 (all four-year runners) stood at the front of a packed gym along with the captains from Exeter, Loomis, and Andover to receive the awards. Murphy was Taft's top finisher all season and in both championship races (second in the league race, sixth at NE), but Taft had two other All-League and All-New England runners in Kate Cicchetti '24 (7th league, 10th NE) and Rina Kurihara '24 (9th league, 20th NE). In addition, tri-captain Pick won the JV Founders League race, leading the JV Rhinos to the team title among the nine schools. The varsity finished the season at 7–1, and the JV went undefeated at 8–0. Top varsity runners Charlie Brodhead '23, Sydney Grogean '24, and Annabell Sorensen '23 return alongside Murphy, Cicchetti, and Kurihara for a very strong outlook for the 2022 season. Brodhead and Julia Pellegrini '23 will be 2022 cocaptains.

Football 5-3

The 130th Taft football team took to the field after a challenging 2020 season without a contest. The squad rebuilt team culture and relearned much of the offense and defense. In fact, Taft had only one returning starter from our 2019 team. While falling a bit short of the goal to be selected for a NEPSAC bowl game, by all accounts this was a successful season. The year was highlighted by a 3-0 start with wins over Phillips Exeter (27-19), a big win at home in a night game attended by most of the

community against Trinity-Pawling (37-6), and a gritty performance to pull out a win against Phillips Andover (30-23) while without several starters. Taft hit a tough stretch versus three of the eventual NEPSAC Bowl champions (Avon, Choate, Loomis), but battled back to beat Kent (36-6) on Family Weekend. Taft finished the season by defeating rival Hotchkiss (18-12) in the final minutes of the game with a sack and fumble recovery in a driving rainstorm. The victory really showed the team's character and special camaraderie that was built throughout the year. Taft was led by two



Billy Daal '22 rushes against Trinity-Pawling on October 2.

NATIONAL SIGNING DAYS



Sixteen student-athletes participated in the first of three National Signing Days in Bingham Auditorium in November. Coaches, families, teammates, and the full Taft School community were invited to the event. "Tonight is undoubtedly a dream come true for all 16 of our student-athletes," said Andy Dunn, Director of Athletics and Afternoon Program. "It marks the culmination of years of hard work and dedication. This is a true representation of Taft's mission to educate the whole student."

Boys' Soccer

Kelvin (KK) Baffour, *University of Notre Dame*
Nick Liebich, *Lafayette College*

Baseball

Ryan Egan, *Fordham University*
Michael Lorenzetti, *Iona College*
Beck Milner, *Yale University*

Girls' Crew

Annabelle Williams, *University of Notre Dame*

Girls' Lacrosse

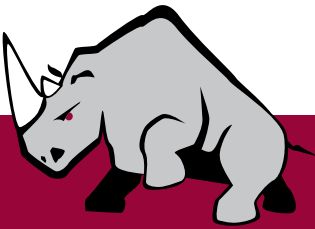
Taylor Adduci, *Assumption University*
Chase Melchionni, *University of Virginia*

Boys' Lacrosse

Ethan Costanzo, *University of Pennsylvania*
Sam Erickson, *United States Military Academy at West Point*
Isaac Korus, *University of Pennsylvania*
Jamison Moore, *Princeton University*
Thomas Ricciardelli, *University of Notre Dame*
Ben Spinelli, *Penn State University*
Trey Taylor, *Brown University*
Mason Whitney, *University of Michigan*

Volleyball 4-13

The girls' varsity volleyball team showed resilience, toughness, and continued growth throughout the season. With only one returning varsity player, the team consistently competed at a high level and the players proved to opponents that Taft will be a tough team to beat in the years to come. Opposing coaches regularly commented on the team's tenacity, and this mindset led the Rhinos to big wins against Berkshire, Ethel Walker, Miss Porter's, and Kent. Next year, the team will look to build upon the strong foundation created this season and will be returning 10 of the 14 players; among those who will return is one of the kill leaders, Marianne Williams '23, setter Omi Oliver '23 who averaged 14 assists per match, along with defensive specialist Saylor Waddell '24, whose tenacious defense resulted in an average of 12 digs per match. Senior captain Mason Delafield '22 received the Volleyball Award and was also recognized as our All-NEPSAC Honorable Mention. The All-Founder's awards were given to Elle Piercey '22 (cocaptain) and Kia Kellenberger '22. The team will be led next year by Marianne Williams and Scarlett Castillo '23. ■



FALL 2021 ATHLETIC AWARDS

Boys' Cross Country

John B. Small Award—Will Roberts '22
Founders League All-League—Yura Stasiuk '22, Will Roberts '22

Girls' Cross Country

Girls' Cross Country Award—Lilly Izmirlian '22, Stella Oldakowski '22, Annabel Pick '22
Founders League All-League—Annabell Sorensen '23, Leyla Zhaksybek '23

Field Hockey

Field Hockey Award—Jenna Guglielmi '22, Callia Ferraris '22
Founders League All-League—Emma Cook '23, Brooke Marx '22
Western New England All-Stars—Jenna Guglielmi '22, Emma Cook '23
All NEPSAC—Callia Ferraris '22, Ashley Wright '23
NEPSAC Honorable Mentions: Maisy Ricciardelli '24, Chloe Agopian '23

Football

Black Cup Award—Nicholas Schwikal '22
Harry K. Cross Football Award—Dominic Rulli '22
Founders League All-League—Sisi Collins '22, Marshall Sinkler '22

Girls' Soccer

1976 Girls' Soccer Award—Taylor Adduci '22
Founders League All-League—Susanna Adams '22, Caroline Messer '22

Boys' Soccer

Livingston Carroll—Kelvin "KK" Baffour '22, Sebastián Mañón '22
Founders League All-League—Matthew Quiros-Newton '22, Zobran Elias '22, Nicholas Liebich '22

Volleyball

Volleyball Award—Mason Delafield '22
Founders League All-League—Elle Piercey '22, Kia Kellenberger '22
NEPSGVA All-League Player Honorable Mention: Mason Delafield '22

of the finest players and captains in recent memory. Dominic Rulli '22 was the anchor for the offensive and defensive lines, while Nico Schwikal '22 proved to be the best two-way player in New England. Schwikal led the team in tackles, sacks, and tackles for loss, and added five touchdowns on offense from his tight end position. The Rhinos were led offensively, by three-year starting QB Nick Brown '23. Postgraduate Billy Daal '22 added 685 yards and 8 TDs on the ground. Brown's favorite target proved to be Jaylen Carter '23, who hauled in 42 catches for 640 yards and 4 TDs. James Maloney '22 was dominant at his offensive tackle and defensive end position, and Sisi Collins '22, Joseph Nash '22, and Charlie Symonds '23 joined forces with Rulli and Maloney to make one of the best fronts in the league.

GO BIG RED!



Katherine Erbstein '24 makes a play during a match versus Hopkins on November 3.



A Half-Century of Coeducation Lessons from

Leaders

In 1972, Taft enrolled its first female students. In the intervening 50 years, female students have captained teams, directed plays, led discussions, and championed causes. Some have been elected to various positions of leadership in student government. And some have become head monitors, the student elected to lead the student body for the year. In honor of this milestone, we reached out to several women who have served as head monitors and asked them to reflect on the ways early leadership influenced their lives and careers.

by Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

Story G.R. Viebranz '12

How did being a head monitor at Taft shape your career?

Taft prioritized bringing together the entire student body, so there were quite a few public speaking opportunities for the head monitor. That chance to write speeches, put down ideas, and share them with large audiences of students and adults was a huge building block of my career. Those moments helped me think critically about how my words will resonate with the people around me, exercise persuasion, be concise, and capture the attention of a room. I saw this play out incredibly in my first job when an early manager shared that he was impressed with my ability to present to large, senior audiences, and subsequently offered me the chance to work with some of our most exciting and influential customers.

What advice would you offer young women as they define their leadership style in their work and avocations?

A phrase I hear repeated among many of my female friends is “imposter syndrome,” meaning that they doubt their skills or abilities even after achieving great things. This makes it hard for leaders to be objective about what they’ve accomplished, and I encourage young women to really take a good look at their strengths, and then don’t be afraid to own them.

Story Viebranz works for a venture capital fund in San Francisco, where she started right out of college. She manages the company’s corporate executive network to help create business opportunities for its portfolio companies. She spends a lot of time with founders to better understand who they want to do business with and then helps connect them with the right teams or leaders within those industries.



Betsy Sednaoui '13

What advice would you offer young women as they define their leadership style in their work and avocations?

A few key things come to mind: Listen. Keep learning from those more experienced than you. Take in what you do and do not like about their leadership style. Have appreciation for people trying their best, but also don’t hesitate to ask more from them. I have plenty to learn myself about my leadership style because it evolves as I move through my career. I am not always the leader, but I recognize the leadership I wish to emulate.



After graduating from the University of Virginia, **Betsy Sednaoui** started working in website analytics at National Geographic Expeditions in Washington, D.C. After the pandemic hit, she and her boyfriend moved to Denver, where she now works as a web analytics specialist at a performance marketing agency. She said the couple skis every weekend in the winter and bikes in the summer and couldn’t love Denver more.

“

I have continued to seek ways to serve my community through volunteerism, professional work, as well as with my family and friends.

”



Lorni Fenton Sharrow '86

What advice would you offer young women as they define their leadership style in their work and avocations?

If I could give myself some advice, it would be to be confident in myself and my intuition! I would encourage that 17-year-old to really dig into her authentic strengths, understand her shortcomings, and the strengths and shortcomings of the monitors, so together they would be one dynamic leadership group to serve all of the students. I would give her and the monitors the words to articulate that this leadership style is really powerful.

Being elected head monitor was a profound honor. I hope I served my community well. I have continued to seek ways to serve my community through volunteerism, professional work, as well as with my family and friends. Having this purpose has led me through a really interesting professional career, first by working with nonprofits, then working with students as assistant dean for the Women's College at the University of Denver, and now as a trust and estate attorney working with people and their families and loved ones to create lasting legacies. I am honored to serve people in these ways.

Lorni Sharrow is a trust and estate attorney for a Colorado-based law firm, Moye White LLP. She's married to Chris Sharrow, and they have two daughters who are in college (both of whom recently won their respective conference titles in field hockey!). She is also on the board of directors for the Community Resources Center, which helps nonprofits across Colorado serve their communities responsibly. CRC provides training, coaching, and VISTA volunteers, as well as creating regional networks and connections with funders.

Vienna Kaylan '15

What was it like to be named head monitor at Taft?

I arrived at Taft in 2011, a year that marked the school's 40th anniversary of coeducation. But as a centuries-old boarding school in New England, there were times when the school could still feel like a boys' club. I vividly remember our Alumni Day parades, when visiting Tafties lined up according to their graduating year, and you could see the number of women peter out as we stretched back in time. Being named head monitor was emotional for me, because it felt so important to keep integrating young women into the school's history of leadership. I was honored to be even a small part of that. In practice, occupying the role was such a rewarding and complicated experience. I discovered almost immediately that as a young woman in this position of leadership, there was an expectation for me to be more agreeable and conciliatory than my male peers. I had to be that much more confident, organized, and well-spoken to be taken just as seriously as they were. This was frustrating, but I knew that I was also being given a platform. Many people at Taft wanted women to have a voice in helping the school evolve, and we were certainly up to the task. The role was a great responsibility, and an even greater privilege.

What advice would you offer young women as they define their leadership style in their work and avocations?

My role in leadership at Taft taught me the importance of knowing your own strengths and preparation. My job essentially requires me to pitch myself several times a day. When I have an audition or a meeting, I always focus on knowing exactly what I bring to the table before I even step into the room. And whenever I feel nervous about holding my own, I always just prepare, prepare, prepare. I figure I can't count on being the smartest, or the loudest, or the most talented person in any room, but I can always try to be the most prepared.



Vienna Kaylan is an actor and content creator living in Los Angeles.

“

In practice, occupying the role was such a rewarding and complicated experience. I discovered almost immediately that as a young woman in this position of leadership, there was an expectation for me to be more agreeable and conciliatory than my male peers. I had to be that much more confident, organized, and well-spoken to be taken just as seriously as they were.

”



Elizabeth “Lily” Lake Lanahan ’08

What was it like to be named head monitor at Taft?

It was such an honor to be named head monitor, and it meant a lot to my family after my grandpa (Edward Herrlinger II ’46) served as a co-head monitor just after World War II. There were several years of male head monitors before me, and I was so proud to take on the role as a young woman. I remember I almost missed the Morning Meeting when the announcement was made, and I actually ran into Bingham to a warm applause from the school! It’s a moment I’ll never forget.

What advice would you offer young women as they define their leadership style in their work and avocations?

Believe in yourself and know what you have to offer, even if that means you’re curious and eager to learn. Don’t apologize unless you truly need to, and don’t be afraid to advocate for yourself as you pursue new roles. As you find yourself in a leadership position, it’s equally important to advocate for other women.

Lily Lanahan knew she would pursue art and design after taking an AP art history course at Taft. She went on to get her master’s in art and design and spent her first years out of graduate school in the art auction world in New York. After working as a buyer for a luxury interiors showroom in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, she moved to Australia with her then-fiancé, now husband John DePeters ’09, and launched her own business designing table linens. At Elizabeth Lake she specializes in hand-stitched embroidery and appliqué, and she has had the pleasure of working with a team of Portuguese artisans to bring her collections to life. www.elizabethlake.com.



“

Don’t apologize unless you truly need to, and don’t be afraid to advocate for yourself as you pursue new roles. As you find yourself in a leadership position, it’s equally important to advocate for other women.

”

Eliza Denious ’17

What was it like to be named to that key role at Taft?

When Head of School Willy MacMullen ’78 announced my name as the female head monitor my junior spring, I remember feeling a rush of pride. I was truly honored to be selected to serve as Taft’s leader. I also remember feeling a sense of tremendous responsibility, knowing that I had the opportunity to be a role model for younger Taft students, especially younger female students. I thought back to the head monitors that had come before me and about the impact they had on my Taft experience. It would now be me speaking to nervous new students and their parents on their first day. It would be me standing up in front of the entire student body every Wednesday and Saturday at Assembly. As daunting as it might have seemed, I was incredibly proud to be up there, and in the moment, I never felt the pressure that I anticipated feeling. Instead, I felt trusted and supported and never felt like I was leading alone. Every action and decision I made as head monitor was a reflection of my wanting to share with the Taft community what they fostered and created naturally—I just had the privilege of helping people recognize it.

What advice would you offer young women as they define their leadership style in their work and avocations?

In my experience, you cannot be a successful leader without empathy. Empathy is what allows you to establish meaningful connections and gain the trust of those around you. When people trust and respect you, there is so much more room to grow and develop as a team. Growth is another key element of leadership. No one masters their leadership style overnight. Your definition of what it means to be a good leader will change as you continue to have experiences. Some people will inspire you more than others. If you can remember what it is about the people who have a positive impact on you and then mold those qualities into your own unique leadership style, you will be developing the skills to become a powerful leader. Most importantly, be confident and lift each other up. Be confident that you can command a room or lead a team or set a good example for your peers. And when you do, share your wins. Recognize those who supported you and those who contributed to achieving your goal. Sharing your victories as a leader is much more rewarding than celebrating alone.

Eliza Denious is currently participating in the development program at Morningstar, an investment research company, in Chicago. She moved to the Windy City in July 2021 and is experiencing her first Chicago winter.



“

I felt trusted and supported and never felt like I was leading alone. Every action and decision I made as head monitor was a reflection of my wanting to share with the Taft community what they fostered and created naturally—I just had the privilege of helping people recognize it.

”



Tarik Asmerom '01

How did being a head monitor at Taft influence your career?

I'm so profoundly grateful for my entire Taft experience. I appreciate the level of trust we were given at Taft. As a student, your vote counts as much as the administration's and faculty's. I was a young African American woman at Taft and trying to find my voice. [I learned to] believe in myself as a leader, a changemaker. Someone who has impact. Honestly, I was very shy, and as I look back, I was very grateful for that space and that level of trust I was given.

Tarik Asmerom is an emergency room physician at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston and is an academic doctor with Baylor College of Medicine.



Elizabeth "Lizy" Lewis Matthews '81

What was it like to be named to that key role at Taft?

As the school was fewer than 10 years beyond being an all-male student body, there was a lot of focus on being the first female head monitor. I remember the announcement in the *Bulletin* with the headline "Making It in a Mon's World." People were very supportive and I enjoyed my time as head monitor, yet it still felt at times as if I was a curiosity rather than just an ordinary senior serving in a leadership role.

“

People were very supportive and I enjoyed my time as head monitor, yet it still felt at times as if I was a curiosity rather than just an ordinary senior serving in a leadership role.

”



NATALIE DERYN JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY

Kate Schutt '93

What advice would you offer young women as they define their leadership style in their work and avocations?

My advice is to continue to lead—don't stop growing yourself as a leader. When possible, put yourself in positions of leadership even if they feel uncomfortable or a stretch. Start exploring other styles of leadership. There are so many more ways to lead than just "from the neck up," so to speak. In the West, we tend to intellectualize everything, including leadership, but our bodies can be a tremendous source of wisdom. I've learned so much from my leader peers who come from different traditions and backgrounds, from the field of somatic leadership or from indigenous cultures. Keep learning and looking for different ways to lead. ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84 is a writer living in Fort Wayne, Indiana, with her husband, two teenagers, and various animals.

Kate Schutt is an award-winning singer-songwriter, guitarist, and producer whose voice NPR calls "glassily clear and glossily sweet." *American Songwriter* says of her newest album, *Bright Nowhere*, "Similar in stance to Joni Mitchell, Norah Jones, and Dianna Krall, Schutt's languid vocals ply mood and melody in equal measure, resulting in a work that ought to bring her the wider recognition she so decidedly deserves." Schutt's songs have won top honors from the John Lennon Songwriting Contest and ASCAP, and she's shared stages with such jazz luminaries as Terri Lyne Carrington, Bill Frisell, Julian Lage, Scott Colley, and Bernard Berdrie, to name a few.



Why Philanthropy Matters

A Conversation with

Lawrence Crimmins,
Director of Development

&

Jake Odden '86,
Chief Financial Officer





Bulletin: What does philanthropy look like at Taft? How does it make a difference in the day-to-day life of Taft students? Why is it important?

Above: Lawrence Crimmins

LC:

It's incredibly important. Frankly, mission critical. Philanthropy impacts every corner of the Taft campus—from the actual buildings that students learn and live in, to the smartboards and paintbrushes in classrooms, to the maintenance of the playing fields and the school's ability to attract and retain teachers and students. Taft simply would not be Taft without the generosity of generations of alumni, parents, and friends.

JO:

That is completely accurate—*Taft would literally not be Taft without philanthropy*, which covers approximately 30 percent of the school's annual budget. Our student

body would not be as socioeconomically or globally diverse, our faculty and staff as robustly qualified, and our buildings and programs as well funded.

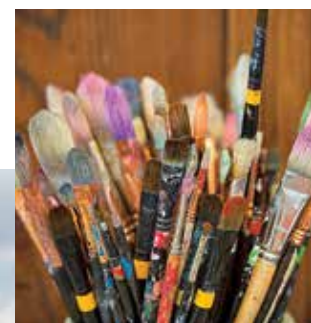
Financially, having multiple streams of revenue is important for any business. In the nonprofit school world, those revenue streams are typically program tuition, annual or current use funds, and endowment income or draw. The latter two prongs are obviously directly associated with philanthropic support for the school. Put simply, more philanthropy enables the school to be less dependent on tuition. Whether it be in more challenging economic times where full pay demand could dissipate, or simply in offering greater financial flexibility in minimizing ever-escalating tuition fees, a larger endowment is critically important to sustaining our competitive position and making Taft more affordable.

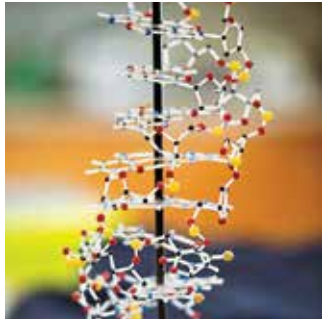
Bulletin: Taft has a significant endowment and tuition is \$66,300 per year for boarding students. Isn't that enough to support the school?

Below: Jake Odden '86

JO:

No, and that's because a Taft education costs more than what we charge. Tuition revenue provides approximately 70 percent of the school's gross revenue, with endowment income or draw (20 percent) and Annual Fund (10 percent) providing the difference. This places us in a relatively enviable position of being less tuition-dependent than most. Among the schools we compete with most directly for boarding students, we are more tuition-dependent. Due to their larger endowments, tuition can comprise as little as 60 percent or less of gross revenue for these peer schools compared to 70 percent for Taft. Our smaller relative endowment contribution requires us to operate more efficiently while delivering the comparable high-end product of our peer schools. Growing our endowment offers us greater flexibility to sustain the broad programmatic excellence we deliver today.





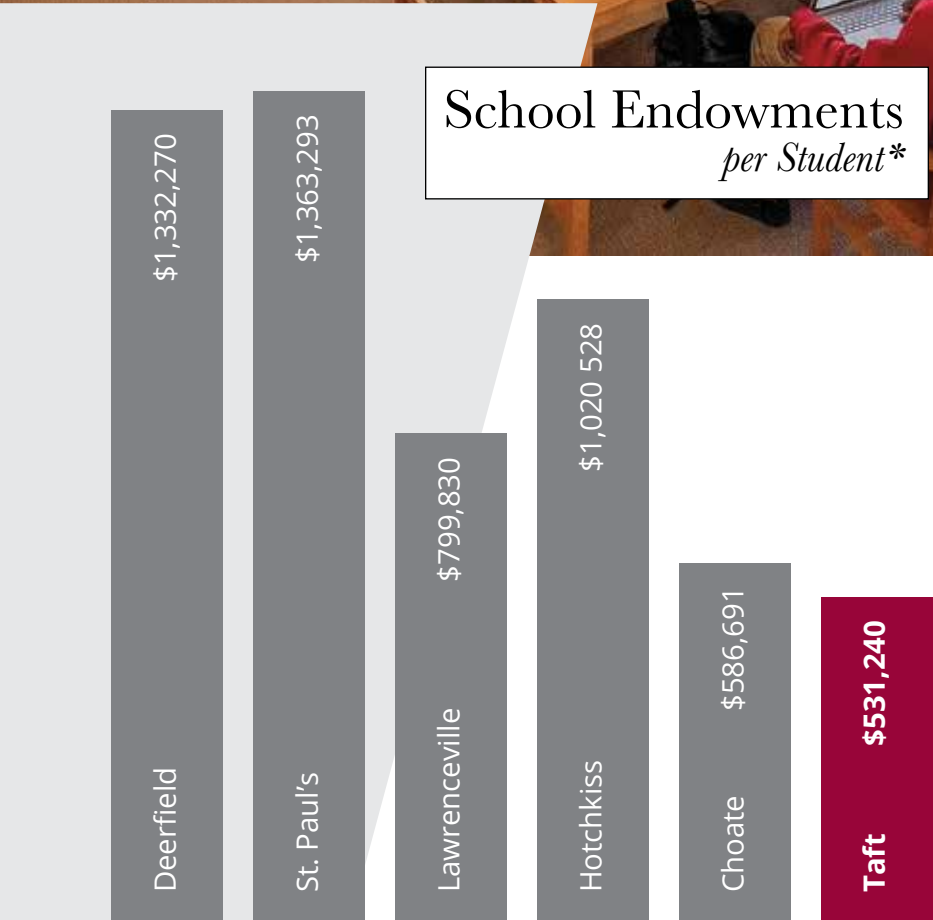
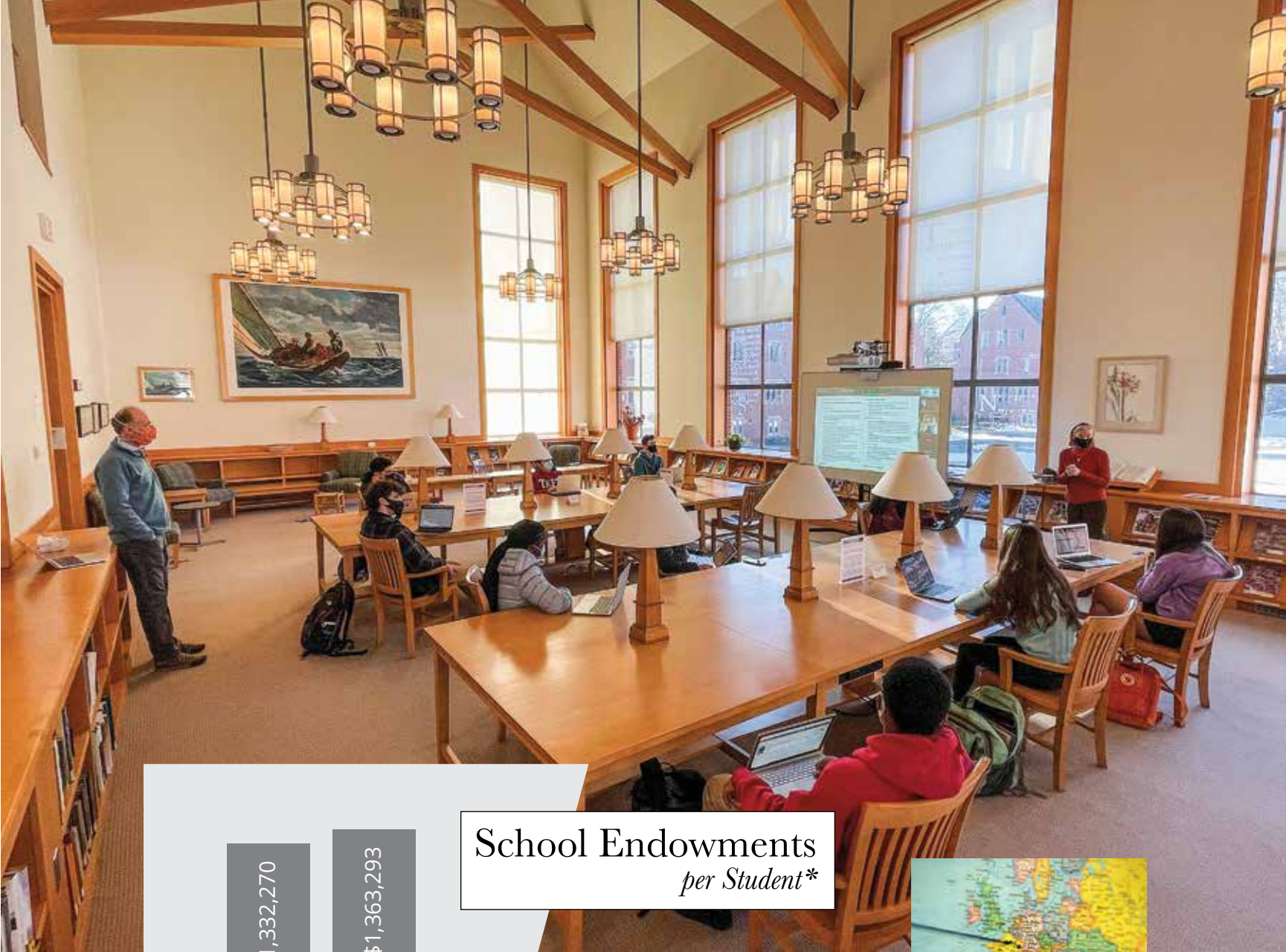
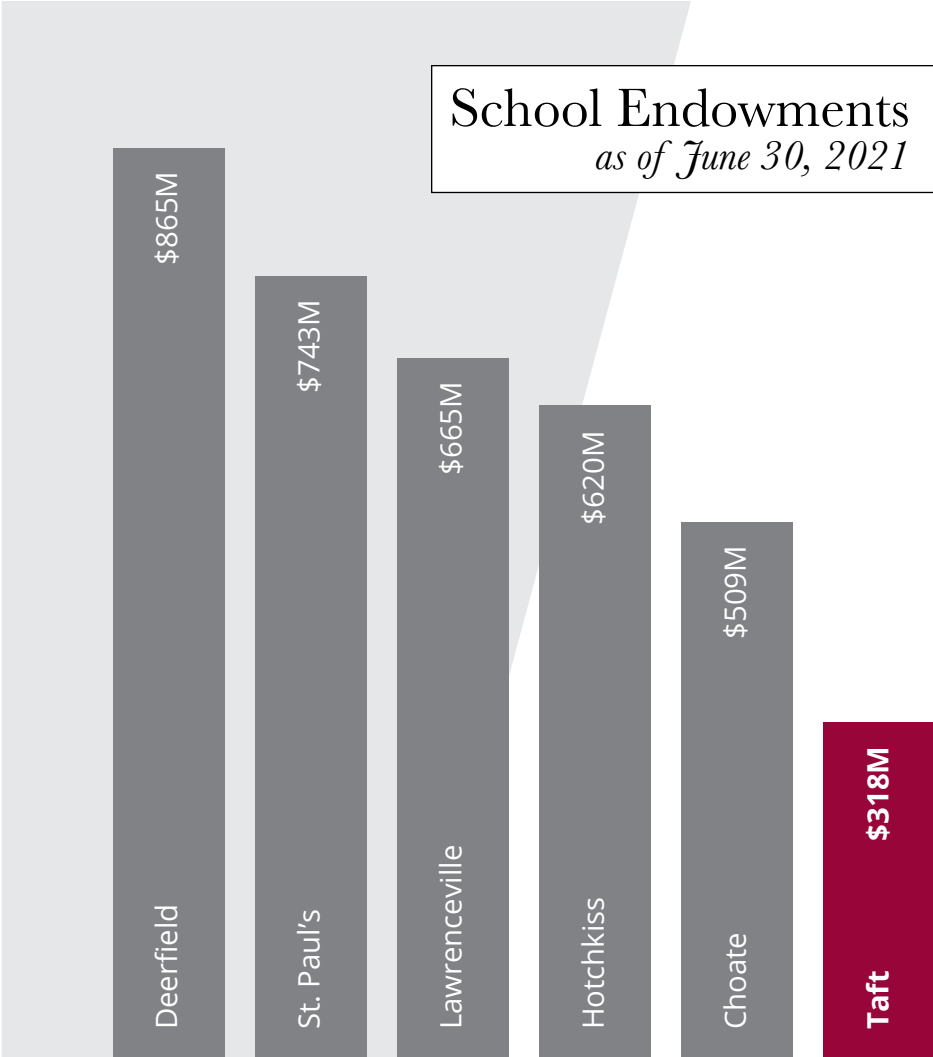
Bulletin: Where do we stand, endowment-wise, with respect to our peer schools?

JO:

As [Head of School] Willy [MacMullen] sometimes says, “We’re punching above our weight.” This is no doubt true, as we have one of the smaller endowments among our peer schools. And as our peers grow their already larger endowments, Taft clearly needs to do the same.

LC:

For many years, Horace Taft refused to ask for money because Taft was not incorporated and it was technically a “for-profit” school. When Horace Taft retired, the school was \$600,000 in debt with no endowment. This reluctance to raise money continued for the next 50 or so years and, in the long run, has put Taft at a disadvantage to some of our peers that raised funds early in their existence and have benefited from more than 100 years of compound interest. We would be in a different position if we had an endowment in the 1920s!



*Endowment divided by number of students per school



Bulletin: What are Taft’s most significant needs right now? In the long term?

JO: That’s a big question with a clear answer: endowment. It is our job—that of school leadership and the Board—to set the course for the school going forward, and with it, specific opportunities for financial support. The onus is on the school to continuously refine, prioritize, and articulate areas of need across campus and program, to enable donors to identify and support our school in ways that carry meaning to the donor.

Endowment is a school’s greatest asset in ensuring it can operate with its ideal student and faculty population while delivering the highest-quality program. A larger endowment allows a school greater flexibility in achieving its strategic objectives with people and programs. It ensures that future generations of students will receive the same or even better caliber experience as current and past students. Willy [MacMullen] often says, “Endowment equals destiny.” Ultimately, endowment supports the pursuit of excellence across all facets of a school campus: academic and cocurricular programs, quality faculty, financial aid, campus life, student services, and facilities.

With a larger endowment, the Admissions Office has greater financial aid resources and can select students purely on the student’s qualifications and ability to thrive at Taft without factoring in the family’s ability to pay. At the moment, about one-third of Taft students receive nearly \$10 million in financial aid, but less than 50 percent of this aid is funded from the endowment. So there is a tremendous opportunity to increase access and affordability for all applicants across the socioeconomic spectrum through philanthropy.

Over the past dozen years, we’ve had really old buildings we’ve had to maintain and improve. Think about it: CPT, for example, had seen no major work in more than 80 years. From a campus plant perspective, there has been a concerted effort to invest in residential life. From the transformation that occurred with the renovation of the dining hall more than a decade ago, through the investment in the oldest residential halls on campus—Mac, Congdon, HDT, and CPT—that was finished this past summer, the school campus is as attractive as ever and offers highly competitive facilities. All of that has come at a cost of more than \$30 million over the last 15 years. With that said, maintaining and keeping current approximately 225 acres and 850,000 square feet of buildings is work that never ends and requires continual reinvestment and upgrading.

Our school motto, *Non ut sibi sed ut ministret*, and approach of educating the whole student existed long before lip service to such an approach became commonplace, and indeed all the school strives for in its Portrait of a Graduate has never been more relevant in preparing the next generation of leaders. The support of our donor base today and going forward is essential to fulfill the school’s mission.



Bulletin: How does the Annual Fund help the school? Where do dollars raised go? And what if a donor wants to support a specific part of the school, such as giving specifically to academics or the arts?

This is really important for people to understand: every Annual Fund dollar is used to support the day-to-day operations of the school. As a nonprofit organization, Taft operates without financial support from the local or federal government. We rely on tuition and donations to support the daily functioning of the school—an annual price tag of \$51 million. As Jake alluded to, our tuition covers only about 70 percent of what it costs to educate a Taft student. The Annual Fund makes up the difference between tuition and true cost. In that way, all Taft students are receiving financial aid.

JO: As I mentioned earlier, the Annual Fund contributes 10 percent of gross revenue, which, importantly, makes us less dependent on both tuition and endowment draw. So, in the big-picture sense, Annual Fund gifts, particularly when unrestricted, are critical to giving us flexibility in balancing the annual budget.

LC: Yes, the most helpful type of donation to the Annual Fund/Parents’ Fund is a donation that is unrestricted. Over time, donors to nonprofits have been increasingly interested in restricting their annual support, channeling it to support a specific program or part of the nonprofit that is important to them. That’s a trend that we have seen here as well. Taft is very thankful for *any* size donation and for any restricted and/or unrestricted contributions to the Annual Fund. But what is the ideal Annual Fund gift? An unrestricted one. And that’s what 86 percent of our gifts are. As Jake said, unrestricted gifts allow for more flexibility—and, as evidenced by pandemic expenses, flexibility is often needed. ■



Glossary

The Annual Fund provides unrestricted fiscal support necessary to fund annual budgets and provide ongoing services. **The Annual Fund supports the gap between the cost of tuition and the actual expense of educating each student—roughly \$30,000 for each Taft student.**

The Parents’ Fund is part of Taft’s Annual Fund. It is a fundraising initiative driven and supported by the parents of current Taft students. **Over the last 29 years, Taft has maintained a level of 90% participation by our families.**

Endowment funds are like savings accounts that grow and generate income from the investment of the principal. For example, a gift to a named scholarship is put in an endowment so that the fund grows and spins off more and more income as the years pass. The principal is not touched. A gift to the endowment is not a gift to the Annual Fund. The Annual Fund helps us live; capital funds help us grow. That is, the Annual Fund is used for annual expenses, while capital and endowed gifts are for building and special projects.

Capital giving (also known as major and principal giving) is defined as the top 10% to 20% of gifts received by a nonprofit organization that produces 70% to 80% or more of its gift income. At Taft a major gift range is \$50,000 to \$999,000. A principal gift is \$1 million or more. From time to time, our Board of Trustees identifies projects that require large sums of money to complete; capital funding may support those projects. Thanks to capital giving, Bingham Auditorium, HDT dormitory, the Martin Health Center, Snyder Field, Camp Field, and Odden Arena were recently renovated. Capital gifts may also bolster our endowment, supporting academic programs, students, faculty, and staff.

Planned giving is the process of making a significant charitable gift during a donor’s life or at death that is part of their financial or estate plan. Planned gifts take many forms: an outright gift of assets, such as appreciated securities or an asset such as artwork; other gifts provide a financial benefit plus tax deductions for donors. A charitable remainder trust provides an income stream for individuals throughout their lifetime. Some planned gifts are payable upon the donor’s death, such as a life insurance policy, where the beneficiary is a charitable organization.

On the Stage



1



2



3



4



5

The Taft Drama Association started doing performances in 1900, often casting up to four plays a year. For over 100 years, Taft cast and produced numerous plays, musicals, and one-acts without producing a single Shakespearean title. But in 2014, as the Arts Department was retooling its production schedule, they took a leap of faith and put on *Twelfth Night*, or *What You Will* during the winter season. Since then, they have also produced *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest* all in the Black Box theater space. Offering a Shakespearean play every other year has given students the opportunity to tackle the works of one of the greatest writers of all times, and offers an entertaining show to the Taft Community. And 122 years later, Taft performed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Black Box in February.

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

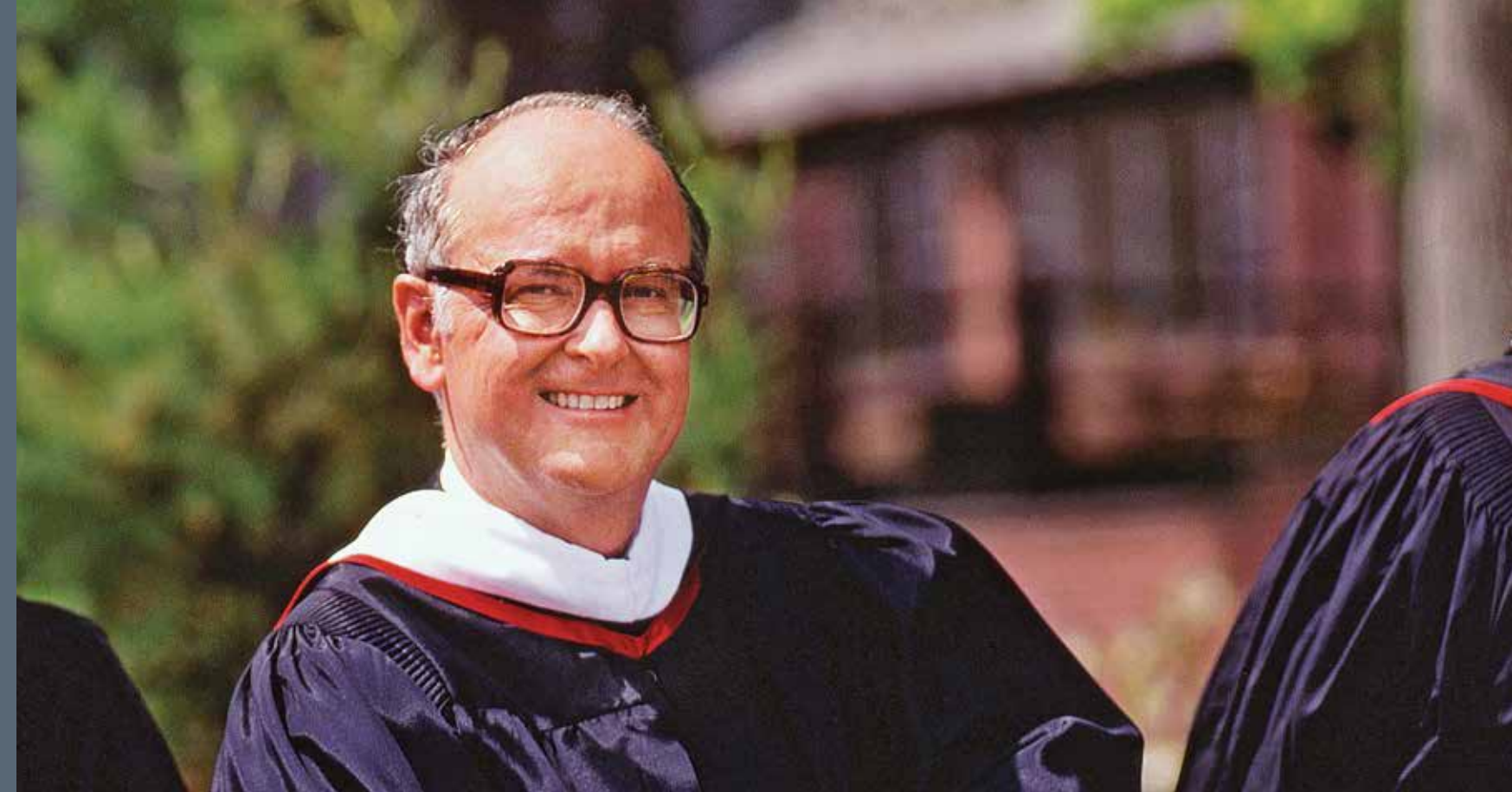
1. *Twelfth Night*,
or *What You Will*,
February 2014

2. *Romeo and Juliet*,
February 2016

3. *The Tragedy of Hamlet*,
Prince of Denmark,
February 2018

4. *The Tempest*,
February 2020

5. The poster from
the February 2022
performance of *A
Midsummer Night's
Dream*. DAVID KIEVIT



Teachers Pay It Forward, Too—

Dick Cobb's Enduring Legacy

Taft teachers have an impact long after their students leave school. Dick Cobb, whose career at Taft spanned 40 years, taught Latin, coached, and served as an advisor and dorm parent for thousands of Taft students. Cobb believed in Taft and the value of a Taft education. Beyond dedicating his life's work to Taft and its students, he made Taft the beneficiary of his retirement account upon his death. Head of School Willy MacMullen '78 said of Cobb, **"He was Taft, as good as Taft ever gets, Taft's motto writ large and with humility and compassion."**

The gift left to the school now provides financial assistance to deserving students. Cobb's influence and commitment to Taft students continue today—and will from here on—thanks to his generous bequest to Taft.

A number of current and former faculty and staff have provided for Taft in their estate planning. Remember your benefactors and provide for Taft through a Legacy Society gift.

For more information about including Taft in your will, please contact Stephen Starnes '76 in Taft's Planned Giving Office at (860) 945-7747 or plannedgiving@taftschool.org. Sample bequest language, as well as other planned gift ideas, may be found on our website. www.taftschool.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