

# BLAIR

## BULLETIN

### HEADMASTERS'

SOCIETIES GAMES TURN 15

P. 04

BREED

HOWARD

SHARPE

KELLEY

### LITERATURE, TWITTER & COMMUNICATION

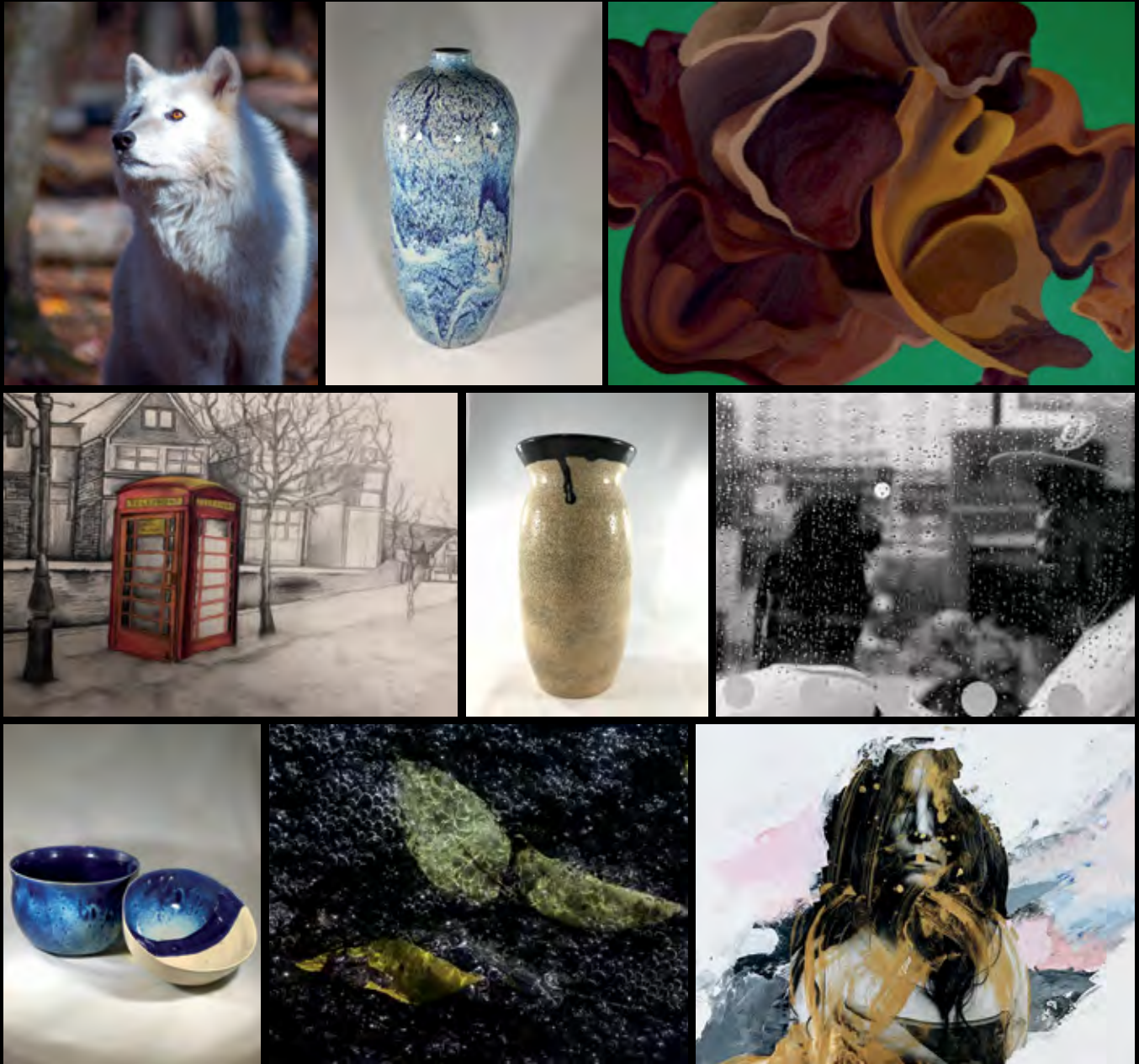
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### FACULTY CHILDREN ON THE MAGIC OF CAMPUS LIFE

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# On Exhibit



## The Annual Student Art Exhibition

April 26-May 22, 2018, in The Romano Gallery

Displaying student work in all different mediums, this show celebrates the accomplishments, hard work and dedication of Blair's talented fine artists.

### On the Cover:

From February 18 to 23, students and faculty celebrated the 15th-annual Headmasters' Societies Games, a beloved tradition that rivals Peddie Week in terms of student enthusiasm and anticipation. With so many alumni citing Headmasters' Week as among their favorite Blair memories, this issue's cover story takes readers back to the beginning and delves into how the Games became a treasured part of the Blair experience—and how they continue to evolve with the times.

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04



## Headmasters' Societies Games Turn 15

Blair marked the 15th anniversary of its Headmasters' Societies Games with another week of competition, camaraderie and community-building. The always fun and sometimes silly contests, which divide students and faculty into teams named after former Blair headmasters, have become a beloved annual highlight.



## 18 Hamlet, Jane Austen & Twitter: Let Me Be Brief?

Veteran Blair English teacher Tom Parada thoughtfully considers great literature, Twitter and the effects of our modern "mediums of choice" on actual, meaningful communication.



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Four former faculty children recall their idyllic childhood and adolescent years at Blair and talk about the one-of-a-kind and close-knit community that shaped who they are today.



## 26 New Home for Society of Skeptics

The venerable Society of Skeptics has found a new

home in the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration. The building's top-notch technology, flexible seating, and bright and airy aesthetic have enhanced the experience of discussing and debating important global issues for presenters and participants.



## 48 Attorney Inaugurates Alumni Roundtable Series

Blair's new Alumni Roundtable series connects today's students with prominent alumni across industries during school-day presentations. In January, **William Cramer '64** kicked things off in the Chiang Center with a discussion about the legal profession.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



## Caroline Wolfe '18

On August 21, **Caroline Wolfe '18** joined millions of Americans who viewed the first total solar eclipse visible in the contiguous U.S. since 1979. Eager to capture the historic celestial event from Blair's campus, the photography student set her camera on a tripod directly facing the sun. Just as the moon eclipsed the sun, some clouds rolled across the sky, setting up the perfect exposure and "adding texture and dimension" to the image. Having shot the photo using the standard lens on her Nikon D3100 camera, Caroline noted that if you're dedicated and passionate, "you can take good photos no matter what technology you have to work with!"

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### SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

What do you think about the stories in this issue of the *Blair Bulletin*? Let us know—your letter may be published in the next issue. Please send your comments to [bulletin@blair.edu](mailto:bulletin@blair.edu).

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**As I write this note,** my 7-year-old daughter, Katie, and I are preparing for our journey to London where we will join the 80 members of Blair's Orchestra and Singers during their spring-break musical tour. Traveling across the world with Blair students has become a deeply enriching tradition for my family, and, during each trip, we all have forged indelible memories and grown closer as members of the Blair family. From applauding our student musicians as they performed in concert halls across Europe to witnessing Brexit in the United Kingdom as it unfolded to exploring the ruins of Pompeii and artwork in the Uffizi in Florence, Erin, Matty, Katie and I have had the privilege of experiencing places, cultures, art, music, politics, service and more together with our students and building relationships that will last a lifetime.

Participating in, celebrating and even creating new Blair traditions has afforded my family a unique and energizing platform upon which to build meaningful connections through shared experiences. Matty and Katie—along with faculty children across campus and through the years—have taken the stage or cheered from the sidelines as Teams Breed, Howard, Kelley and Sharpe fought for victory during Headmasters' Societies Games. They have showcased

clothing from dozens of our students' home countries during the International Weekend fashion show. They have lost their voices screaming "Go BUCS!" on Peddie Day, shared meals, laughter and conversation across formal dinner tables, given our Blair Academy Players well-deserved standing ovations and, more recently (at least for Matty), accompanied me to a few Society of Skeptics lectures in the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration. In all that they experience growing up on this campus, faculty children, like the many Blair-student big brothers and sisters in their lives, enjoy a wealth of opportunities to converse with and express their thoughts to caring adults and a diverse community of exceptional young people. For all our students, these experiences and opportunities cement familial bonds on our campus that help them more fully become the authentic, inquisitive, kind and generous people they are meant to become.

In this issue of the *Bulletin*, four faculty "kids"—each from a different Blair era—share memories of growing up on campus, surrounded by friends of all ages and backgrounds, and watched over by a host of surrogate parents. While faculty children experience Blair from a unique vantage point, they are the fortunate beneficiaries of a Blair education that lasts far longer than four years, one that, as for all our students, is filled with the richness of living, learning and growing up amid the inclusive and diverse Blair community and under the watchful eyes of adults who truly know them and care about their well-being.

We consistently affirm that the strong relationships that develop among teachers and students make the Blair experience so impactful, and it is often the outside-of-class moments that give those relationships depth, dimension and staying power. Certainly,

getting to know your classroom teachers as coaches, advisors, dorm parents and activity leaders are all meaningful experiences for students, but additionally having the opportunity to bear witness to your teachers' navigation of their roles as fathers, mothers, siblings, sons, daughters and friends offers a powerful and instructive model for living a purposeful life focused on people and relationships. And being welcomed to a faculty member's family dinner table, having a chance to play with the dog, or serving as a willing and able babysitter for young faculty children are all experiences that make Blair feel like a second home for our students, a place where they can put down roots and grow into their very best selves.

Erin and I are happy to be raising our children and watching over our other 460 children at Blair, among this wonderful community of warm, kind, engaging, and accomplished students and adults. We are proud to be members of a community whose greatest tradition is a commitment to knowing students for who they are and who they are becoming. We are proud to be among a collection of faculty members who are dedicated to helping our students become authentic learners and relationship builders, brave enough to allow themselves to be vulnerable and take smart risks, fierce in their determination to grow and excel, and, yet, generous with their time, spirit, knowledge and love. We are delighted that our extended Blair family includes alumni, parents and friends who care deeply for this great School—and we thank you for being a part of that family.

**Christopher Fortunato**  
Head of School





HOWARD

BREED

SHARPE

KELLEY

# Celebrating 15 Years of

# HEADMASTERS' SOCIETIES GAMES

WHEN FORMER BLAIR HISTORY TEACHER AND INSLEY HOUSEMASTER DAVE VACHRIS STOOD BEFORE HIS COLLEAGUES IN COWAN AUDITORIUM in 2003, having just pitched his idea for the Headmasters' Societies Games, he was met by stony silence—shortly followed by a barrage of questions about how he would get such a huge undertaking off the ground and then maintain it for years to come. It is safe to say that no one—including Dave himself—felt certain that, 15 years after the inaugural games took place, the competition would be one of Blair's most beloved community-building traditions, so much so that most seniors cite memories of the Games and Peddie Week as among the most treasured moments of their Blair careers.

Ironically, Dave and his wife, Amy, credit self-preservation with the genesis for the weeklong annual competition, which sorts students

and faculty into four teams named for former Blair headmasters Breed, Howard, Kelley and Sharpe and pits them against each other in a variety of serious and silly contests. "Amy and I had been living in Insley Hall for a number of years with 42 freshman and sophomore boys," explained Dave, better known to Blair alumni and former colleagues as "Vac." "While we loved being houseparents, we knew that late February—particularly the week following the conclusion of the winter athletic season and musical—could be a tough time for students (and, therefore, for us). Simply put, there wasn't a lot for kids to do beyond study for exams in the lead-up to spring break."

Having wondered for several years how other schools addressed this concern, Vac and former Assistant Headmaster Dave Low hit the road in February 2003 to attend a meeting of



the Six Mid-Atlantic Boarding Schools group, which annually gathers deans in person to focus on these and other types of issues. That year, the get-together took place at Mercersburg Academy, which has a yearlong school-wide competition called the Irving and Marshall Society (which splits the school into two teams and includes a flurry of activities at the end of the winter months).

"Immediately, I liked the idea of competitions that promoted school history and spirit," said Vac, who left Blair in 2005 for The Green Vale School

“The most

# GRATIFYING

part is watching how much fun the kids have with it.”

—ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STUDENTS ANDEE RYERSON,  
HEADMASTERS' SOCIETIES GAMES COMMISSIONER

in Old Brookville, New York, where he served as upper-school director for five years before moving to his current position as Dean of Students at St. Mark's School in Southborough, Massachusetts. “Always with an eye on cool things we could borrow to enhance student and faculty experiences at Blair, we started planning how we could build such a tradition and make it a foundational part of the Blair experience.”

## A Community Builder Like No Other

Fifteen years later, there is no doubt that Vac and a handful of colleagues, without whom he says the Games would have never gotten off the ground (see Q & A on pages 13-14), were successful in their efforts. The late-February competition has been universally embraced by students and faculty and has grown to include 60-plus different competitions over the course of five days during the third week in February. The contest ends

with a spirited talent show during which team members often share surprising and quirky talents with the entire Blair community.

Students and teachers agree that the experience of being randomly sorted into teams gives everyone the opportunity to get to know people they might not have spent time with otherwise, as well as the chance to learn about their teammates' practiced and random abilities in athletic and non-athletic contests.

“The most gratifying part is watching how much fun the kids have with it,” said the reigning commissioner, Associate Dean of Students Andee Ryerson, who has overseen the week's festivities with her science-teacher husband, Mike, for the last three years. “The talent show is among my favorite events



because we always have at least one standout performance that wins the trophy, and it usually involves a student showcasing either a seriously impressive talent or a completely ridiculous performance that gets the crowd excited and laughing.”

Dean of Academics and math teacher Nathan Molteni, who led the Games from 2009 to 2015, agrees. “Their exuberance for the silliness of the competition is always fun to embrace,” he said. With the introduction of freeform and sometimes





ridiculous events ranging from speed tic-tac-toe to human Hungry, Hungry Hippos, Commissioners Ryerson and Molteni have watched the Games become less athletically focused and more eclectic in nature. On the itinerary in recent years have been mural painting, a spelling bee, cup stacking, Quiz Bowl and Twister. "What makes the Games quintessentially Blair is that everyone puts themselves out there and competes in events they know they aren't good at or don't know anything about," former Commissioner Molteni said. "Those are my favorite moments, and they echo what we try to do at Blair across the board—push kids to get out of their comfort zones and experience new things."

### Taking Risks & Embracing the Silliness

The fact that the competition is only a week long means the stakes aren't high and the outcome isn't really that important, which makes students more willing to take risks and get into the spirit of the competition. "That spring break immediately follows the Games is a good thing," Commissioner Ryerson continued. "Even the kids who put their hearts and souls into the competition still don't care that much that they lost. In fact, I think the faculty might be more into the outcome than the students!"

And enthusiasm for the competition isn't limited to current Blair faculty and staff. Even former Blair Headmaster Jim Kelley—the only living namesake

of the Games' four teams—follows the results closely from his home in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, with his wife, Elaine. Over the years, the Kelleys have visited campus numerous times during Headmasters' Week and come away most impressed by the energy and positive spirit on campus. And, of course, they were mighty proud of Team Kelley reclaiming the trophy in 2017.

Silliness aside, students credit the Games with bringing them out of their shells and deepening ties across the community. "During my freshman year, I was on the shyer side, and I remember Headmasters' Week as a time when I formed new friendships, played sports I had never tried and cheered for people whose names I didn't know—it was so fun," said **Clara McGrath '18**,



## Celebrating 15 Years of HEADMASTERS' SOCIETIES GAMES



a member of Team Sharpe, whose last win took place during her freshman year in 2015. "You are spending so much time with your teammates, who, nine times out of ten, are people you don't ordinarily hang out with. I have gotten to know so many great people who I wouldn't be close with if it weren't for the Games."

Part of the fun, of course, is dressing up in the team colors—red and white for Breed, green and silver for Howard, yellow and purple for Sharpe, and blue and orange for Kelley—as well as watching "underdog" teams prevail. In 2017, Team Kelley shocked the crowd at the talent show after a decade of consecutive losses, a memory that **Tiara Myrie '18**, will always cherish. "We hadn't won since 2008, so no one expected us to, but I held my head high and dressed from head to toe in my team colors anyway," she said. "As competitive as it is, the week is a chance for the community to take a collective break and de-stress. Everyone's team spirit gives the campus a new energy, as students run up and down the halls chanting and cheering."

### Common Goals & Relationship Building

In fact, that camaraderie among teammates is what most students cite as their favorite part of the tradition. "Headmasters' is unlike Peddie Week because you are competing against your friends instead of one rival, which gives it a different feel," said Team Kelley captain **Ronan Smarth '18**. "As competitive as it can get and as much hard work and effort as it entails, the whole School comes together, sets aside their differences, and puts their all into the contests. It is incredibly fun and by far my favorite week of the year because the bonds you develop





with students and teachers are just unmatched by anything else.”

That sense of community building is evident, even to prospective students. As an eighth-grader, **Emia Musabegovic '20** knew she wanted to attend a school with community spirit and unique traditions, and Blair events like Headmasters' Societies Games, Peddie Day, Soccerfest and Christmas Vespers all fit the bill. “I wear my Howard green with pride and, even now, as I see my banner hanging up in my room, I am reminded that something other than my grade and social group connects me with others here at Blair—both teachers and students,” she said. “Last year, I remember distinctly cheering on [my ski coach] Mr. Padden at the faculty volleyball game with so much joy. It made us all feel like a family.”

Although she didn't know much about the Games when she chose

Blair, **Helen Mercedes '18** has no doubt that such traditions as the Headmasters' Societies Games are integral to the warmth and friendliness that characterize Blair's campus. “There is something truly special about all grades coming together and working toward a common goal,” said Helen, a member of Team Breed. “I've made new friends every year with people I probably wouldn't have ever spoken to other than getting to know them through the Games. It's even more exciting to see faculty members in different lights and just as involved in the festivities as the students.”

### Getting into the Spirit & Delving into the Lore

For Helen's teammate **Aidan Riano '20**, witnessing the enthusiasm of his classmates and teachers is among the best parts of the experience. “By far, my

favorite part of Headmasters' was the ping-pong tournament last year,” he said. “We had no one skilled to play in it, so we put in a random person who had never played ping-pong before, assuming we would lose and come in dead last—but how wrong we were. We somehow made it all the way to the semifinals, and it was insane. The tournament took place in the Can, and we filled the upper balcony with Breed team members. We were going crazy, and it was such a surreal moment of team support that I'll never forget it.”

Perhaps the most iconic event for alums across the Games' 15-year history has been the tug-of-war competition, which takes place in Hardwick Hall and is always a nail-biter, as one team takes the lead over another multiple times in the course of each contest. **Jon Carlsson '18**, a devoted member of Team Howard, will fondly look back at this event as



the classic Headmasters' experience—one that his team has won two years in a row. "Everyone in the field house is cheering on their teammates and, while the event is tiring, they are the most exhilarating moments of the day because when your team doesn't give up and pulls that rope out the door with the other team still holding on, it is the most satisfying feeling," he said. "We put in 110 percent and fought until the end. Thanks to Headmasters' Societies Games, I've made friends to last a lifetime."

Given the Games' similarities to *Harry Potter*, it is not surprising that there is also a fair amount of Headmasters' Societies Games lore, both on campus and off. Many students and alumni don't buy the fact that Commissioner Ryerson and her husband use an online randomizer to

split new students and teachers into teams and instead believe that each team has a distinct personality and possesses specific characteristics and values that its team members share.

"Last year, I was able to guess which team each new junior girl would be on and was right about all of them except one," Helen said. Although *Harry Potter* fever has lessened over the years since the last book was published, Commissioner Ryerson notes that students still liken each team to a Hogwarts house—except no one can agree on which comparisons are correct.

### Life Lessons Beyond the Hilltop

Blair graduates a few years removed from participating in the Games reflect on the experience fondly and credit it

with teaching them a lot about how to navigate life after Blair. "By bringing students and faculty from all walks of Blair life together in a common, spirited goal, the Games challenged us to try new things in a safe environment with new people and truly broadened my Blair experience," said **Graham Merrifield '14**, now in his senior year at Cornell University. "It also spotlighted individuals with talents that aren't always seen on the field or stage, which gave us the chance to celebrate our unique skills while creating a team whose sum was greater than its parts."

For Graham, one of Kelley's most enthusiastic captains who could often be seen biking from event to event with a team flag streaming behind him, supporting his teammates was his favorite part of the experience—despite the fact that the team never



won during his years at Blair. "The joy was in being together as a team and having some friendly competition with my classmates," he said.

English teacher **Becca Litvin '10**, the only Blair graduate and faculty member to date who has participated in the Games as a student (2007-2010) and as a teacher (2016-2018), says the competition represents an excellent opportunity for community excitement and bonding. "Although changes have been made to the program since my student days, the essence and purpose of the Games remain the same," she said. "I connected with other students with whom I never would have interacted, and, to this day, classmates of mine still talk about how Sharpe, Breed, Kelley or Howard are somehow inherently superior. One of the first things I did when I was hired as a teacher was to demand my rightful place on Sharpe back. Now, I am a faculty captain who is loving the chance to spread enthusiasm and connect with my fellow Sharpe teammates in unique ways."

Like Becca, **Kathryn (Hood) Nelson '05** finds the connections among teachers and students to be the most powerful takeaway of the competition. "The faculty at Blair know each student so well, and they support you every single day of your Blair career," said Kat, who was one of Team Breed's captains during the Games' second year and who now works as leadership director at Camp Dudley at Kiniya in Colchester, Vermont. "Headmasters' Societies Games helped facilitate those relationships outside the classroom. Because students and teachers were on an even playing field, it was an excellent way for the community to see you as a whole person rather than just a student. Plus, a little friendly competition between

you and your houseparent, advisor and prefect is always fun!"

The novelty of "feeling like you are in a *Harry Potter* movie" aside, **Chris Morales '11** remembers the Games as a thread that connects him to other alumni across classes. "Headmasters' is Blair in a nutshell: working together for a common cause," said the cup-stacking champion, whose Team Breed won during his sophomore and senior years and who counts the spelling bee and Super Smash Bros. as his favorite events. "Anyone can participate—and there is really no reason not to—and who doesn't love to hold a trophy when it is all said and done?" For Chris, who is the sports director at a radio broadcasting station in Oklahoma, seeing former Headmaster Chan Hardwick in his infamous multi-colored sweater was also a highlight. "I can't recall a more heartwarming sight during a cold Blair winter. It is Blair personified," he laughed.

## Predictions & Advice for 2018

Of course, looking forward, each student and teacher favored their own team in the 2018 competition. For Clara, the new year was a chance for Sharpe to win for a second time before her class graduates; now that Kelley is "out of its funk" and is no longer known as the "losing team," Tiara felt confident about its chance for back-to-back victories. Fellow Kelley teammate Ronan agreed and declared that "no other team has more spirit, drive and energy." Helen and Aidan said that Breed had an advantage because of how excited its senior leaders were for another win and because the team as a whole was "just about ready for anything." Given that Kelley, Breed and Sharpe have all secured wins in the past three years,





Jon felt certain that the “extremely talented” Team Howard was due in 2018 and “would not go out 0-4.” Although Emia hoped for a Howard win, she vowed to wear her green face paint and glitter proudly, whether they took the trophy or not.

Regardless of this year’s outcome, alumni who have embraced the Games during its first 15 years offer today’s students some advice: make the most of it and realize that it might just teach you a thing or two about succeeding in your life after Blair.

“Try as many activities as you can and don’t be afraid of failing,” Graham said. “The Games taught me that I will never be a varsity water-polo player or

Super Smash Bros. gamer, among many other things, but I had a remarkable amount of fun being supported and supporting others, even if I was in a new and uncomfortable setting. It doesn’t matter if you come in last place—it just matters that you took a risk and tried. Who knows, you might just find a new talent!”

Kat also encourages current students to be open to outcomes. “Every year, traditions look a little different and include a different group of people,” she offered. “Try to embrace each year

with renewed energy and enthusiasm, and find a way to be a leader.”

Chris urges students to learn to love their colors and embrace their teammates because the moments they experience during Headmasters’ Week will literally remain with them for the rest of their lives. “The Blair experience is made in those little moments,” he said. “Take some risks, within reason, be loud and stand out, and don’t do things to just be average. Do them to be legendary!”

On February 23, Team Howard claimed victory in the 2018 Headmasters’ Societies Games. Read more on Blair’s website.

@ [www.blair.edu/hms-2018](http://www.blair.edu/hms-2018)





## Q & A with HMS founder



# DAVE VACHRIS

**LONGTIME BLAIR HISTORY TEACHER DAVE VACHRIS—AKA “VAC”**—was the driving force behind the first Headmasters’ Societies Games in 2004. In what follows, he talks about the challenges associated with getting the Games off the ground and why the weeklong contest has become such a beloved Blair tradition in the years since he and his wife, Amy, left Blirstown.

**Q** Implementing something like the Games, which had never been done before at Blair, must have been no small feat. How did you pull it off?

**A** With lots and lots of help. Dave Low, in particular, had always been very supportive of my crazy ideas and plans over the years, and this was no exception. Colleagues across departments also jumped on board

with the idea of starting a community-building event in late February—I don’t think the Games would have gotten off the ground without the work of Carm Mazza, Mike Schloat, Carolyn Conforti-Browse and Latta Browse, Craig and Kaye Evans, Ryan Pagotto, Quint Clarke, Andrew and Kate Sykes, Mike and Heather Eckert, Marty Miller, and Ryan and Stacey Spring (just to name a few!).

Having gotten the “green light” from then-Headmaster Chan Hardwick, we pushed ahead, quietly organizing, sorting students and faculty onto four teams and putting the various events for that inaugural year on the master calendar. The more difficult part was presenting the idea to the entire faculty—that’s when it became real. I remember going through my PowerPoint slides about rationale and how it all was going to work. It didn’t take long to realize that the presentation was not going as smoothly as I had wanted; there were a lot of silences, skeptical faces and questions. But thank goodness there was that core of support and Mr. Hardwick’s ultimate willingness to let us give it a try. We had our one shot to make this work. The students took it from there!



**Q** Is there one memory from the Games that stands out most in your mind?

**A** Two things: first, I had truly believed that only freshmen and some sophomores would embrace this new tradition and be the engine that made it work. I was wrong. It was the support, energy and enthusiasm of the original team captains and their senior classmates who set the tone for the Games. They demonstrated what real school spirit looked like, and, even after a couple of days, we were all impressed with the crowds and cheering. We knew that something special was happening.

The second memory is of the first talent show. No one knew for sure how this culminating event was going to go. It was a lot of fun, but one act I remember most was **James Hinton '06**, then a new sophomore day student. Not many people knew who James

was on campus, and he volunteered to perform a drum solo. He was unbelievable! The entire crowd went nuts at the conclusion, and he went from an unknown to a star in a matter of minutes. This continues to be one of the great things about the Games—they give people opportunities to shine and contribute in a variety of ways.

**Q** Your Blair legacy continues in the Games that have become an important annual event. What do you hope alumni remember most about the tradition you started?

**A** The fun. The cheering for and the support of classmates. Students and faculty working together. The four-paneled shirt that Margaret Connor (wife of former history teacher Jim Connor) made with all four team colors.

**Q** Having founded and directed the Games, what piece of advice would you offer the faculty members who picked up where you left off in organizing and growing it?

**A** They have already taken the Games to the next level. Yes, it was a good idea, but, over the course of more than a decade, faculty and students have run with it and turned it into a great experience and tradition. Adding new contests, using social media, staying involved, and dedicating time and energy to this week have been essential to its continued success. The Games are better than I ever could have imagined!

School spirit and community building don't happen on their own—they are areas that need to be fostered and worked on intentionally by both faculty and students. When it does all come together, something very cool can be created! Go Bucs! ■



Team that has won the most times

# Breed



# 173

Balloons used in last year's Hungry, Hungry Hippos



## Winning teams by year:

- 2004:** Breed
- 2005:** Sharpe
- 2006:** Howard
- 2007:** Howard
- 2008:** Kelley
- 2009:** Breed
- 2010:** Sharpe
- 2011:** Breed
- 2012:** Howard
- 2013:** Sharpe
- 2014:** Breed
- 2015:** Sharpe
- 2016:** Breed
- 2017:** Kelley
- 2018:** Howard

# 2,700

Student participants since Games' inception

The only team with back-to-back wins

# Howard

BREED	SHARPE	HOWARD	KELLEY
5	4	4	2
Breed wins	Sharpe wins	Howard wins	Kelley wins

# 15

Headmasters' Holidays since 2004



62	16	
Contests each year	Kids on each tug-of-war team	
5	4	8
Games Commissioners	Teams	Acts in Talent Show

# *Peddie Day 2017*

## SCHOOL *spirit* & camaraderie



### *Falcons Keep the Kelley-Potter Cup*

**D**espite valiant efforts from Blair athletes on 12 fall sports teams, the Buccaneers were unable to wrench the Kelley-Potter Cup from the Peddie Falcons. As the sun set on Hightstown, Blair fell short of victory by a score of 5-8-0.

During the traditional Cup ceremony on the football field's 50-yard line, Head of School Chris Fortunato graciously congratulated Peddie Headmaster Peter Quinn, thanked Peddie for hosting the festivities, and commended all the athletes for their dedication and commitment.

"Even though we didn't walk away with the Cup, I am extremely proud of all our athletes for giving their all on

Peddie Day," noted Director of Athletics **Paul Clavel '88**. "As always, they represented Blair with great sportsmanship and in a positive spirit."

Highlights from the day included the boys' varsity soccer team fighting its way back from a 4-1 deficit to defeat Peddie 5-4 and win the Mid-Atlantic Prep League (MAPL) championship—the first-ever MAPL title for Blair soccer—and the girls' cross country team bouncing back from an earlier Peddie defeat to outperform the Falcons.

Mr. Clavel added that the Bucs transitioned to their winter sports with an eye toward next year's competition. The athletes look forward to a rematch on their home turf in 2018 and the chance to bring the Cup back to Blairstown. ■







# ~~Hamlet, Jane Austen & Twitter:~~ ~~Let Me Be Brief?~~ By Tom Parauda



*An English teacher at Blair since 1988, Tom Parauda has taught the finer points of reading, writing and public speaking to a multitude of Bucs over the course of his career. As this issue's guest essayist, he thoughtfully considers great literature, Twitter and the effects of our modern "mediums of choice" on actual, meaningful communication.*

**Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief.**

**—Polonius from Shakespeare's *Hamlet***

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I thought of my odd title as a rather clumsy mandate—excuse, really—to reread some of *Pride and Prejudice*—specifically, William Darcy's wonderful letter to Elizabeth Bennet, which he writes in the days after his catastrophically unsuccessful proposal to her. What strikes me most about the letter is its length: including spaces, 14,867 characters. Darcy, apparently, is no Twitter Critter. He'd have to be a serial tweeter to get it all down—106 tweets would do it (or only 53 if he had access to the expanded character limit... more on this in a bit). This also assumes that Elizabeth could temporarily suppress both her own social media needs as well as an anger that might push her—heaven forbid—to retweet them before their contents could work a wonderfully slow, sensible transformation in both characters.

Perhaps such an appreciation for the slow burn of a letter led the folks at Twitter recently to expand the character

maximum on a tweet from 140 to 280. A bonanza? Or a temptation to write more effusive postings? The arguments presented *against* the word-count expansion seem to boil down to an insistence that we say as little as always in as little space as possible, a sort of practical wisdom that celebrates minimizing non-wisdom. Thoreau's cranky warning on technology comes to mind:

**We are in great haste to construct a magnetic  
telegraph from Maine to Texas;  
but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing  
important to communicate.**

**—Henry David Thoreau**

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Admittedly, though, Thoreau is precisely the type of crotchety old-schooler who might conflate the misplaced excitement of the telegraph with the true miracle that is modern communication. Go figure.

Yet there is a more optimistic take on the less-is-more argument against the Great Twitter Expansion. It revisits Queen Gertrude's desperate, though unheeded, plea to



"A good portion of the Bard's prose and verse reminds us that real wisdom can take many forms: short or long, direct or indirect, plainspoken or lyrical."

—English teacher Tom Parauda

Polonius—"More matter with less art"—which we, of course, can update by insisting on "More beef with less characters (including spaces)!"

Come to overthink of it, all of *Hamlet* (and Hamlet himself) is a bit of an artsy ramble. Shakespeare's favored son—given fictional life after the Bard's real son, Hamnet, died—has as many lines by himself as *The Tragedy of Macbeth* does in its entirety! If I were employed by Twitter and were asked my opinion—neither prerequisite having much chance of being met—I would point out that both *Macbeth* and the twice-as-long *Hamlet* have their merits. "140 characters or 280—it's all the same to us," to quote what my students might say, "so long as we avoid those dreadful 30-page reading assignments, Mr. P!" Sorry for the noncommittal non sequitur, but it's important to imagine how my tech-savvy charges might weigh in on this nearly weightless issue. In fact, my eminently practical students have a point: Maybe size doesn't matter.

Which brings us back to Polonius, who, brief or otherwise (otherwise being the better bet in his case), says little to nothing in the very scene that gives us his famous line about the soul of wit. His less-remembered but more-telling conclusions about young Hamlet?

**...to define true madness,  
What is't but to be nothing  
else but mad?**

**That he is mad, 'tis true:  
'tis true 'tis pity;  
And pity 'tis 'tis true.**

—Polonius

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And a personal favorite:

**...now remains**

**That we find out the cause of this effect,  
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
For this effect defective comes by cause:  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.**

—Polonius

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To be fair, to call them "conclusions" evokes the wrong idea here, as this reductive nonsense apparently only introduces the "real" cause of the prince's defect. Polonius is just getting started.

This humorous scene, as well as a good portion of the Bard's prose and verse, reminds us that real wisdom can take many forms: short or long, direct or indirect, plainspoken or lyrical. What do we do with the reality that one of the great fictional windbags in literary history stumbles upon lines too memorable to ignore, or the greater paradox that his insistence on the merits of brevity belies his complete lack of it?

But perhaps my example of a buffoon employing the means of brevity to trumpet his own lack of moderation, wit and wisdom is far afield. Modern America, after all, has moved on from such forced academic comparisons. Still, it makes me wonder...

I am aware of, and very much appreciative of, the real advantages of texting and social media. Yet those advantages do not negate the most worrisome trend in a sound-bite culture: the increasing pressure to read less while also shouting more loudly to get each other's unsought attention. If we were to strip Darcy's letter down to half its size, let alone 1/100 of its size, we would sacrifice the same things too often sacrificed in our current mediums of choice and our polarizing self-assurance: balance, decency, civility, self-awareness, self-reflection, open-mindedness and—most especially—tone. Yup, the things that Darcy and Elizabeth, as well as Shakespeare, Toni Morrison and a host of others, can teach all of us—one character at a time. ■



## Making It: Student Projects in the Chiang Center

Last fall's opening of the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration, with its state-of-the-art technology classrooms and fully equipped art studios and maker space, opened up a host of opportunities for Blair's student makers. Fine arts and technology teachers have encouraged students to explore the technology and tools at hand, become proficient in their use and incorporate these elements into their projects—in short, they have challenged students to embrace the “maker mentality.”

Two enterprising juniors did just that with their first-semester ceramics projects. **Niall Sheridan '19** and **Hunter Hall '19** created several uniquely embellished pieces that combine traditional clay work with of-the-moment maker space technology. Working in the Chiang Center, where the ceramics studio and maker space are separated only by a glass wall, made for a dynamic and fluid process, and both Niall and Hunter learned or sharpened skills that may prove useful for future artwork or other projects.

### 3D Printed Rollers

When fine arts department chair Kate Sykes encouraged her ceramics 2 students to broaden their horizons beyond the time-honored potter's and sculptor's tools, Niall took the advice and “rolled with it”—literally. Using the maker space's Adobe Illustrator software and 3D printer, he crafted relief rolling pins that he has used to emboss several sculptural works in new and exciting ways.



**Niall Sheridan '19** and fine arts department chair Kate Sykes discuss Niall's “printed” clay work in the Chiang Center ceramics studio.

“The roller impresses a continuous design on a flat piece of clay, which can then be sculpted into any shape,” Niall explained. “When Mrs. Sykes suggested making a roller, neither one

of us knew how to do it—but we knew it was possible.”

Niall ended up making three rollers, each with a different pattern or motif. He created and manipulated the



Niall used maker-space technology in the creation of the ceramic trivet he is glazing and the vase (to his left and pictured on page 21).





Ceramic works by **Niall Sheridan '19**.

designs using Adobe Illustrator—software he had never used before—then uploaded his design files to a lithophane software application and then to the 3D printer, which “printed” the cylindrical rollers out of plastic.

Niall took the time in class and in the evening to familiarize himself with the maker space’s materials and programs, and navigated the challenges of clay thickness and how hard to press the roller during the embossing process. He enjoyed the “very hands-on” sculpting techniques he used to create a vase, a dish and a trivet (*see photo above*).

As he considered how he would glaze his artworks, Niall reflected that working in the Chiang Center ceramics studio, with its close proximity to the maker space, made him want to “do more” with his projects this year. “I’ve always loved clay, but I realized I could work with some really cool things in the maker space, too,” he said. He’s looking forward to more ceramics creativity this spring.

### Vinyl-Cut Stencils

Hunter is taking ceramics portfolio this year, a course that is giving him the opportunity to prepare for Advanced Placement (AP) ceramics by crafting a variety of thrown and sculptural works. “This is a year for trial and error,” he said. “The point is to take a well-made piece and make it interesting.”

One of the ways he has amped up the “interesting” factor of his work is by using the maker space’s vinyl cutter to create stencils for the application of colored glaze. He gained vinyl-cutter experience earlier last fall on a T-shirt project, but using the tool in conjunction with pottery was a new experience.

“I’m pretty solid with the Adobe Creative Suite, but my classmate, **Wils Acker '19**, drew the designs I used for my first stencils,” Hunter said, displaying a gray-and-red vase decorated with heart and clover motifs (*pictured below*). “This project was a great way to bring together skills I already had in a new and different way. I knew exactly what to do and how to do it.”

Hunter was a bit nostalgic about the old ceramics studio in Weber Hall, since that’s where he was introduced to the art form he has grown to love, but he acknowledged the spacious Chiang Center maker space/ceramics studio setup is a big improvement and a “much more functional place.” Having taken ceramics at Blair nearly every semester since his freshman year—and looking to continue as a senior—Hunter will



**Hunter Hall '19** embellished this ceramic vase using stencils he created on the maker space’s vinyl cutter.

use its resources to the fullest. The tools at his disposal may be especially useful for his next project, as he envisions a waist-high ceramic work. Undoubtedly, he will make it interesting. ■

## Writers-in-Residence Connect Students to the Writing Life

The English department renewed its focus on sustaining and nurturing Blair's literary community in 2017-2018 by instituting a writer-in-residence program that will bring three authors to campus this year. Weike Wang, author of the acclaimed all-school summer reading book *Chemistry*, launched the program in November with a two-day visit, and poet **Dan Kraines '06** and novelist **Kelly Sokol '96** are booked for second-semester sessions (see sidebar on opposite page).

"Our goal is to increase student interest in literary pursuits," said English department chair James Moore, orchestrator of the writer-in-residence program. "Affording students the opportunity to meet and connect with working authors opens their eyes to a writer's life and craft. Some may be inspired to start writing here at Blair—or go deeper into a writing practice they've already developed—while others may gain greater appreciation for what they're reading, both for class and for pleasure."

### Q & A in Chapel & Classes

Dr. Wang's campus residency on November 9 and 10 was the culmination of Blair's 2017 all-school summer reading experience, and a full schedule of events, including shared meals and seven class visits, enabled hundreds of students to meet and converse with the author. "Such direct connection to Dr. Wang made *Chemistry* much more relevant to our students," Mr. Moore observed. "Her engagement with them really brought the writing process into focus."

The entire School community had the opportunity to learn more about Dr. Wang's life and her debut novel during Thursday morning Chapel. Seniors **Dan Sysler '18** and **Brandy Zhang '18** conducted an onstage question-and-answer session that covered everything from book-cover design (she had little to do with it) to how she found the motivation to write *Chemistry* at the same time she was writing her dissertation (it was a creative outlet) to whether her life changed after the book was published (it didn't—she still gets up, exercises and writes six hours a day).



Author Weike Wang (left) worked with English students in seven classes during her November residency.

Dr. Wang offered sage advice that was not lost on Blair students: Give yourself plenty of time to figure out what you want to do in life, and establish strong bonds and relationships with teachers. She described how some of her teachers helped introduce her to the field and have become friends and mentors in the writing world.

### Writer's Workshop

A highlight of Dr. Wang's visit for several students was participation in an evening writer's workshop. **Montana Carson '20**, who is relatively new to fiction writing, said meeting with a young, published author was an opportunity she didn't want to miss. "Having Dr. Wang read my work was much less intimidating than I expected," she said. "All criticism was constructive, and I felt as though my story and opinions were valued and respected. Most of all, I learned the importance of writing what you love, not what you think will sell."

**Lydia Richardson '20** and **Ari Cobb '20** also jumped at the chance to attend the workshop. "My writing style is very different from Dr. Wang's, but I learned so much from her about story elements, including point of view, use of tenses and character development," said Lydia, who brought a fairy tale-style short story to the workshop. "The exposure to other writers' ideas, thought processes and strategies, and the effect the workshop has had on my own writing made it an incredible learning experience."

Ari found Dr. Wang's suggestions on a short story that she had not previously shared "really refreshing and helpful," and she appreciated how the workshop fostered the kind of honest





praise and criticism that a classroom setting doesn't always provide. "Overall, Dr. Wang's visit gave me a more professional outlook on my work and taught me ways to develop characters that I otherwise wouldn't have known," she reflected. "I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity to work with Dr. Wang and the other writers in this workshop, and I'd love to attend another one in the future."

### Alumni Residencies

Looking ahead to Mr. Kraines' and Ms. Sokol's spring-semester visits, Mr. Moore plans to tailor the activities to the authors' wishes and strengths. "Like Dr. Wang, they are both teachers who are dedicated to working with other writers, so I am anticipating great connections for our students—especially since Dan and Kelly are Blair alums," he said.

No matter what form future residencies take, however, Mr. Moore is confident they will inspire a deeper appreciation for literature among Blair students. "Even if they don't become writers themselves, students will gain greater awareness of the writing process, and, hopefully, appreciate that the next time they pick up a book." ■

## 2017-2018 Blair Writers-in-Residence

### Weike Wang

Dr. Wang earned her undergraduate degree in chemistry and doctorate in public health at Harvard University and her MFA at Boston University. She teaches at Barnard College and Gotham Writers Workshop in New York City, and her fiction has been widely published in literary journals. She was selected by The National Book Foundation as one of 2017's 5 Under 35 honorees for her publication of *Chemistry*. She is currently working on her second novel.

### Dan Kraines '06

A PhD candidate in poetry at the University of Rochester, Mr. Kraines holds a BA in English language and literature from Skidmore College, an MFA in poetry from Boston University, and an MA in modernism and social criticism from New York University. His poems have appeared in publications such as *The Adroit Journal*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *Phantom Limb* and *Salmagundi*, among others. Mr. Kraines teaches at two New York public colleges: the Fashion Institute of Technology and City Tech. He lives in Brooklyn.

### Kelly Sokol '96

Ms. Sokol published her debut novel, *The Unprotected*, in April 2017, and her Pushcart Prize-nominated work has appeared in print and online publications. A graduate of Wake Forest University with a bachelor's degree in English and political science, she holds an MFA in creative writing from Goddard College. Ms. Sokol serves on the board of directors and teaches creative nonfiction and fiction writing at The Muse Writers Center in Norfolk, Virginia. She is also a ForKids, Inc. board member and advises the board of the Seven Cities Writers Project.

## A Glimpse into the Military Lives of Blair Alumni

by Timken Library Director Ann Williams

This year, I am excited to see **Gareth Patterson '18** and **Chris Liu '18** learning about U.S. history through the Blair archives as part of history department chair Jason Beck's research and writing seminar. The students are creating a digital record of the archives' collection of letters from Blair alumni about their service during World War II, as well as developing a physical and electronic installation to share them with the broader Blair community.

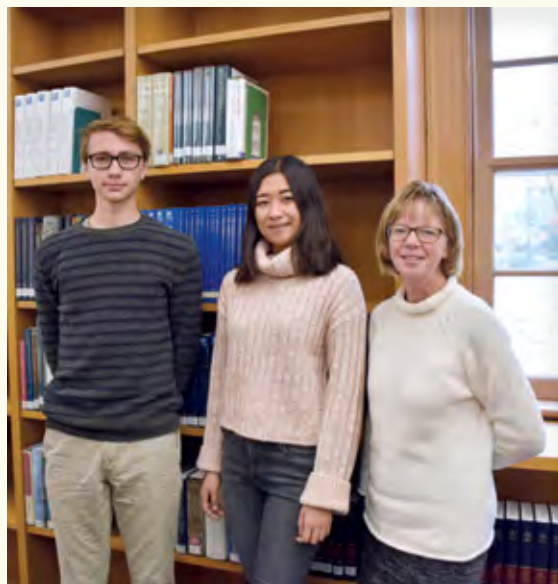
In a recent issue of *The Blair Review*, I wrote about a small piece of this larger collection of letters. The work of uncovering those letters, researching their family connections and sharing them with readers was an emotional experience for me. Blair alums accomplished some amazing feats during and after the war, and there was much more to the story than Dr. Martin Miller and I could fit in one issue of the *Review*.

With the opening of the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration this fall, the Blair archives will occupy more space in Timken Library, making it a perfect opportunity to progress toward our vision of a more open and accessible archives that best utilizes our new space. This long-term project, which has been in the works for years, includes digitizing our collection and making use of some museum software, and I can't think of any better student researchers to work with than Gareth and Chris.

Mr. Beck sums up the project's main takeaways nicely: "Putting the letters in the hands of students underscores the importance of preserving records and allows them to experience some of the work that historians do every day around the world," he said. "It also forces them to consider the importance of local history and the fact that big moments in the global historical narrative have personal implications, even for small communities like Blair."



[www.blair.edu/blair-review-letters](http://www.blair.edu/blair-review-letters)





## A World of Difference



“Dear *Blair Bulletin* editor,  
I write partly because of all of  
the changes, nay, advances I see  
occurring at Blair. Something that  
caught my eye in the *Blair Bulletin*  
was the section titled ‘A World of  
Difference’ (specifically the trip  
to Kenya) and Head of School  
Chris Fortunato explaining that

‘international travel is invaluable’ in  
understanding our place in society.  
While at Blair, I was fortunate to  
have traveled to then Czechoslovakia  
with [veteran history teacher]  
Martin Miller. It was indeed an  
incredible experience and lent  
valuable perspective.

During the past 17 years, I have  
lived, worked and studied in East  
Africa, and specifically done much  
work in Kisumu, a town referenced  
in the article. My time spent on  
that incredible continent has been  
focused on the African Great Lakes,  
some of the largest freshwater  
resources on earth. I fell in love with  
the resources, the society, culture  
and people. I am glad to see that the  
participants of the Kenya trip did,  
too, and trust that many more trips  
will go to Africa and expand the  
horizons of Blair’s students.

I echo the sentiments of Mr.  
Fortunato and the international  
program: the hope that Blair  
students continue to have  
opportunities to travel the world  
and, specifically for those interested  
in Africa, to visit the vast and  
varying cultures, climates and  
ecosystems. The African Great  
Lakes are treasures to behold.  
Thank you, Blair, for introducing  
me to the world through travel,  
and continually exposing our next  
leaders in society to experiences that  
will put in perspective who we are,  
what we can do and what needs to  
be done.”

–**Ted Lawrence ’92**, founder of the  
African Center for Aquatic Research  
and Education

@ [www.agl-acare.org](http://www.agl-acare.org)

## Test your KNOWLEDGE



### Can you identify the students in this picture from the 1990s?

Email your answers to Suzy Logan  
at [bulletin@blair.edu](mailto:bulletin@blair.edu).

The first three people to correctly  
identify who is pictured will win a  
prize from the Blair School Store.

# SOCIETY *of* SKEPTICS

**[FINDS NEW HOME IN CHIANG CENTER FOR INNOVATION & COLLABORATION]**



The Society of Skeptics, one of Blair's most venerable traditions, found a new home this fall in the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration's Collaboration Forum. With top-notch technology and flexible seating, this bright and airy space has enhanced the experience of

discussing and debating important global issues for presenters and participants.

Read on to learn about this year's eclectic group of Skeptics lecturers, who shared wide-ranging perspectives and experiences with the Blair community in the School's newest academic space.

## **[Dr. Bonnie St. John]**

**1984 Winter Paralympics medal winner**

The author and leadership expert, who has achieved success in "impossible" ways her entire life, spoke about the essential quality of resilience and offered practical tips on "how to make the impossible possible."

## **[Gina Trish & Kate Matteson]**

**Democratic candidates for New Jersey's 24th District Assembly**

Blair Leadership Stories Project coordinator Mrs. Trish was joined by her New Jersey State Assembly running mate Mrs. Matteson and New Jersey State Assemblyman Dr. **Timothy J. Eustace DC '74** to share their experiences of civic engagement and running for political office.

## **[Dan Chamberlin]**

**Kittatinny Regional High School environmental studies teacher**

The veteran science teacher addressed Costa Rica's unique history and its success in protecting biodiversity, as well as touched on the challenges associated with such preservation, including climatic, energy and economic uncertainties.

## **[Ted Dowey]**

**Design manager for the New York Department of Environmental Protection**

Mr. Dowey took an in-depth look at the metropolis's water system, which delivers 1 billion gallons of water to city

residents each day. In his remarks, he detailed his nearly 30 years of experience in water tunnel construction management and associated environmental and political issues.

## **[Mariela Shaker]**

**Syrian refugee & musician**

The accomplished violinist and Syrian refugee brought a message of peace and love, speaking about life in Aleppo and playing music in her effort to share the plight of the Syrian people.

## **[Arno Michaelis]**

**Author & speaker**

Mr. Michaelis shared his journey from life as a white power activist to working today as a character educator who embraces the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of beloved community.

## **[Dr. Doug Simon]**

**Drew University professor emeritus**

The political science and international relations professor discussed the American intelligence community and whether its size and intrusiveness are at odds with basic American values.

## **[Quint Clarke '87 & Kelvin Serem '13]**

**Blair in Kenya founder & Lafayette College senior**

Mr. Serem joined the veteran Blair history teacher to discuss the independent nonprofit "Blair in Kenya," which has provided vital educational, medical and economic opportunities to hundreds of Kenyans over the last 12 years.



## [Rob Montz]

### Video producer & writer

Mr. Montz, who directs the online political comedy and news channel We the Internet TV, shared what motivated him to create a documentary on how the American education system has kids emerging from college with no idea what to do and therefore experiencing “quarter-life crises.”

## [Dr. Vikram Mansharamani '92]

### Lecturer at Harvard University

The academic, investor and bestselling author—who appeared among *Worth* magazine's 2017 “Power 100” alongside presidents, prime ministers, Supreme Court justices, and CEOs of the world's leading commercial and investment banks—connected “seeming irrelevant dots” to help students understand and navigate the world's uncertainty.

## [Jenna Samra]

### PhD student studying high-energy astrophysics at Harvard's John Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

Ms. Samra shared her unique view of the August 2017 total solar eclipse: She was onboard a scientifically outfitted aircraft flying in its path as part of a Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics research team studying the sun's outer atmosphere.

## [Major (Ret.) Jason Howk]

### Author & lecturer

The accomplished author shared what he learned by interpreting the Qur'an for his latest book and discussed his approach to writing. Mr. Howk touched on his 23 years of Army service, during which he spent several years in Afghanistan and worked extensively with the State Department, intelligence agencies, academia and international diplomats on Afghan issues.

## [Glenn LeBoeuf]

### Historian

Mr. LeBoeuf shared his passion for the past during a presentation on “10 Moral Moments in the Life of Abraham Lincoln.” He focused on Lincoln's sense of compassion, dedication to saving the Union and ability to harness the talents of people who didn't get along.

Do you know someone who would be a great Skeptics speaker? Society of Skeptics director Dr. Martin Miller would love to hear from you. Send him your suggestions at [millem@blair.edu](mailto:millem@blair.edu).

## [Sam Tarantino]

### Entrepreneur

Businessman, musician and founder of two music-sharing ventures Sam Tarantino is well versed in entrepreneurship, the topic of his Skeptics lecture. The 2016 *Forbes* “30 Under 30” innovator discussed challenges facing entrepreneurs and how to overcome them.

## [Emily Boak '13]

### Heritage analyst, Afghan Heritage Mapping Partnership

The recent University of Chicago graduate talked about her love of research and contributions to the State Department-funded Afghan Heritage Mapping Partnership. Ms. Boak credited Blair with helping her to discover her passions and ultimately connect with the college professors moving the project forward.

## [Blair Shark Tank]

### The 2018 Herman Hollerith Lecture on Entrepreneurship & Innovation

This Society of Skeptics presentation mimicked the reality show *Shark Tank*. “Sharks” Liz Sigety P'16 '18 '20 '21, John Moore P'19 and Ron Insana P'16 '20 '21 were joined by David Wagstaff, CEO of Alfreia, Inc., an organization that cultivates healthier workplaces and communities through the power of fresh food. Mr. Wagstaff pitched his business to Mr. Moore and Mr. Insana as they posed questions and offered feedback, while Ms. Sigety moderated the panel discussion and audience Q & A.

## [Young Alumni Panel]

**Joanna Weber '03, Hudson Collins '07, Filip Gzella '08** and **Yale Kim '09** discussed their career success, reflected on their time on the hilltop and offered advice to current students about life beyond Blair (see story on pages 46-47).

## [Carlos Garcia Hernandez]

### International educator & cultural program facilitator

In the 2018 **James Youngelson '53** Lecture on Ethics & Responsibility, Mr. Garcia will take the Blair community on a journey around the world, discussing his 105-day voyage aboard the *Peace Boat* that brought him and fellow travelers to 15 countries, where they explored human rights, environmental, sustainability and other issues.

## [George Kolber]

### Former COO of American Eagle Outfitters, Inc., & current CEO of Retail Ventures, Inc.

The final Skeptics lecture of the year will feature Mr. Kolber, whose talk will focus on his family's survival in Shanghai during the Holocaust. ■

# Growing Up ON CAMPUS

BY SUZY LOGAN '99



**WE** all fondly remember the faculty children who lived on campus during our own student years, and, after talking with alumni spanning four decades about their experiences while growing up at Blair, it is safe to say that the feeling is mutual.

Although they graduated from Blair over a period of 24 years, former faculty children **Bob Van Stone '69**, **Eleanor Howard '74**, **Lesley Underwood '89** and **Derek Peachey '93** recall their childhood and adolescent years at Blair

as idyllic, and they embraced the one-of-a-kind and close-knit community that influenced and shaped who they became well beyond graduation.

In this feature, these four alumni talk about favorite memories and the perks and challenges of having parents who doubled as Blair institutions. They also offer today's faculty children advice on taking advantage of every part of the sanctuary and playground that served as a launching pad for the rest of their lives.





Bob Van Stone at his office in Philadelphia.

# BOB VAN STONE '69

**Occupation & location:** Vice president & portfolio manager at Morgan Stanley, living in Society Hill in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**About Mrs. Virginia Van Stone:** My mother worked at Blair as school secretary and registrar from 1947 until 1986, when she retired and moved to Florida. Later, she returned to New Jersey to be closer to family; she passed away at the age of 90 in 2012.

**Journey to Blair:** My mom lived in Brooklyn, worked at 20th Century Fox Films in Manhattan and came to Blairstown to visit a cousin one weekend after World War II ended. Like everyone in the 1940s, she went to the dance hall down by the old Blairstown High School, where I think basically 90 percent of people in Blairstown met their spouses at that time, and she was no exception. My dad, Howard, was a dairy farmer, and they fell in love and got married. My mom moved to the farm and got a job at Blair, where she worked until she became pregnant and decided to stay at home, so she hired her replacement and left Blair. Sadly, when I was 2 years old, my father became ill and died, leaving her deeply depressed and living at the farm. Blair basically saved my mother's life, generously stepping in and offering her old job back and a place to live on campus on Park Street. It was a fantastic place to grow up.

**Best parts of growing up on campus:** At that time, there weren't many staff kids like me, but the whole campus embraced me. Blair was my hometown and my playground, and the students and teachers adopted me. I feel strongly about the

School because it encompassed me and made me feel safe. It was pretty amazing to find the letter from Headmaster James Howard in my mother's things in which he tells her I'd be a great addition to the student body.

I've always known that there is an aura about Blair, but I think I see it even more clearly today as Board of Governors (BOG) president. So many of us on the BOG feel the same way: When we pass that sign that says "Welcome to the village of Blairstown," we can't help but feel really good because we had wonderful experiences in the "Blair bubble." As much as Blair has changed and grown over the years, it still feels like the same place. And I've realized as I've gotten older just how much of an impact Blair has had on my life.

**Most vivid memory of campus:** When I came to Sharpe House a few years back for a wrestling reception, Erin Fortunato [wife of Blair Head of School Chris Fortunato] welcomed me into her home, and I suddenly had a flashback to the fact that her basement was our fallout shelter where we practiced air-raid drills when I was a kid during the Cold War era. When the whistle blew, we would trek up to Sharpe House and spend hours playing games with the Howard and Marcial kids in Sharpe House's basement.

**How Blair shaped him:** Blair made me who I am. I got a fantastic education and became more worldly because I met so many people who hailed from all over the globe. I was a good student who took advantage of every opportunity and minded my p's and q's so as not to embarrass my mother. My high school experience was the best education I could have asked for.

**What he remembers most fondly:** I could walk to school, of course, and the teachers respected my mom—and, to be honest, I think they were a little afraid of her because she was Henry Cowan's "hit man" when it came to getting them to submit grades and comments on time, back in the dark ages before computers. The teachers were pretty nice to me as a result, not that I ever took advantage of that, but I do remember that they treated my mom with deference.

**Advice for today's faculty children:** Just enjoy every moment you have on campus. Once you leave Blair, it is a different world, and you are fortunate to grow up in such a wonderful place where there are so many teenagers to look up to. Campus has always been a playground for faculty and staff kids, and it becomes more spectacular every year. Don't get in trouble, and thank your parents for making this type of childhood and education possible for you.

# ELEANOR HOWARD '74

**Occupation & location:** Clinical social worker in private practice, living in Portsmouth, Rhode Island

**About James & Selena Howard:** My parents met in the summer of 1949 when my mom was hired to be a nanny to my half-brother while my father was working on his master's degree at Harvard. On weekends, he commuted from Cambridge to Chatham, Massachusetts, where my mother tended to my brother and his cousin at my father's former in-laws' summer home (my father's first wife died when my brother was just a baby). It was a brief and sweet courtship, and they were married the following November. He started his teaching career at The Lawrenceville School and was appointed as Blair's 13th Headmaster in 1954.

During their long tenure at the School (1954-1976), my parents partnered to support students and host large- and small-scale events for alumni, parents and Trustees. After 22 years in Blairtown, they turned leadership of Blair over to the Rev. James R. Kelley and made Westport, Massachusetts, their permanent residence.

After Blair, my father became editor of publications for The Council for Basic Education and, as a lifelong lover of trees, started The Little Tree Farm at their home in Westport, where he grew and sold Christmas trees. He died in 2002. My mother became deeply involved in Habitat for Humanity, co-owned and ran a very popular country store, and maintained phenomenal gardens on their beloved property in Westport. She is 88 now and lives near me in Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

**Campus life perks & challenges:** I spent my whole childhood and adolescence at Blair, and I was in the first class of Blair's second iteration of coeducation, one of 13 girls in a student body of well over 300. That ratio had its advantages and disadvantages, but it was a privilege to be a part of that transition. As a student, I never felt marginalized or resented, so if students had reservations about me because of who my father was, I did not see it, and I'm grateful for that.

For the first many years of coming back to campus, I walked in my parents' very long shadow. People were glad to see me,



Eleanor with her first grandchild, Elias Isaiah Hernandez, in August 2017.

and that reaction was quickly followed by: "How are your *parents*?!" There is a certain cachet in being connected to such an illustrious pair! I had and have tremendous pride in how they shaped the School during difficult years. It is heartening to see the deep affection so many former faculty, alumni and Trustees hold for my parents even after all these years.

**Best parts of growing up on campus:** I loved having an enormous playground that encompassed the entire campus, as well as the Paulinskill River and trail across Route 94. There were endless places to play, to get lost, to hide. I remember skating on the pond until I was so cold, I was certain my feet were disconnected from my body. Racing out onto the golf course at night, rolling down hills, sledding down the hill in front of Insley. Some of my most special memories of my father are of long walks we took along the Paulinskill with our dogs, identifying trees and collecting leaves to tuck into the *Peterson's Guide* when we got back to Sharpe House.

**How Blair shaped her:** I remember being very conscious of the town-gown dichotomy from an early age, in the sense that I was aware of having so much at my disposal—privilege, really, although I could not articulate that then—while many of my classmates at Blairtown Elementary School did not. It was a different kind of life on campus. My parents were very engaged in running the School; I had a lot of independence and was able to shape my experience at Blair as I wanted, much as if I were, in fact, a boarder. I jumped in headfirst to music and drama and established meaningful friendships that have lasted all these years.



**Most vivid campus memories:** My years as a student at Blair were wonderful. I had the best of both worlds, it seemed to me: I was a day student, and my home was on campus. My mom was a wonderful host to all students, perhaps especially to my closest friends. They all seemed to feel very comfortable at Sharpe House, to the extent that some of them on occasion pushed the envelope, showing up late for check-in at night and saying: “Oh, I was at Mr. Howard’s house” (regardless of whether my parents even knew they were there). Who could blame them?

**Advice for today’s faculty children:** Enjoy that beautiful campus! Roll down hills and hide in the woods. If you become a Blair student, you will be gifted with tremendous opportunity.

Do not squander it. It’s an amazing School, getting better every year. But also be aware of the tremendous privilege and responsibility that come with it. Blair is a close-knit sanctuary—a kind of bubble—where so much is available to you. Make sure you find ways to experience life off campus as well. For students who board, coming to campus from far away, faculty members serve as *loco parentis*. As a day student and faculty member’s child, you, too, have this extra perk: the benefit of other faculty “parents,” many of whom have watched you grow up and have a unique perspective of you. Many will be quite invested in your happiness. Not a bad launching pad.



# LESLEY UNDERWOOD '89

**Occupation & location:** Having spent most of my career as a teacher, I am now researching and writing curriculum for a southern California educational technology company. Although I live in Los Angeles, I keep it interesting with weekend side jobs in San Diego, bartending and running my own pet-sitting business.

**About Charlie & Lois Underwood:** My father's career at Blair spanned nearly four decades. He was born and raised in Buffalo, New York; graduated from Amherst College in 1955; and served in the Air Force prior to coming to Blair in 1960. Over the years, my father served in many roles, including as English department chair (1973-1988), housemaster of Locke and Mason Halls, head of Insley Hall's flight deck, and head varsity soccer and baseball coach. My mother worked in the admission office, was an advisor to countless girls and spent many hours counseling kids as a dorm parent alongside my father. Even after leaving Blair in 1998 and retiring to New Hampshire, my parents made regular trips to campus until my father died in 2011. My mother now lives in Sarasota, Florida.

**Campus life perks & challenges:** I was born at Blair in 1971 and lived there until I graduated in 1989 and left for Pomona College. As a Blair freshman, I knew students and faculty already, which made me more comfortable speaking up in class and volunteering my opinion in front of teachers (like my dad) who were intimidating to other students. That said, that was also the

reason it was difficult for me to "draw lines" at times—I remember getting yelled at by Mr. Van Rooten for using the faculty copy machine once during my freshman year, which was off-limits to me as student, even though I had always used it before.

Am I allowed to say dating was a challenge? The pool of guys who felt comfortable approaching "Mr. Underwood's daughter" was very small! Only the captain of his baseball team and table foot ever felt secure enough to openly ask me for a date. At times, I definitely felt like I had the eyes of 20 parents on me instead of just two, which, in retrospect, made me make better decisions (except don't ask Mr. Low about Peddie Day my senior year).

**Best parts of growing up on campus:** The connection and camaraderie among the faculty kids hold many good memories. The freedom to roam campus together, riding bikes, playing wiffleball on Kroner Field and floor hockey in Walker Gym, or catching salamanders and frogs in the swamp off the golf course are all memories that hold a special place in my heart. Living in the dorm as a kid was also pretty memorable. Since we lived in Mason Hall, a senior boys' dorm, I had no shortage of eager-but-very-inexperienced babysitters. Later on, *Brad Clarke '90* (who lived in Freeman Hall) and I had plenty of willing lemonade-and-cookie-stand customers, as well.

**How Blair shaped her:** While life at Blair involved a fair bit of naivete, it also helped me develop self-confidence. I was fairly sheltered here, both because of Blair's location 50 miles from anywhere and the sense of academic cocooning I felt. But it also helped a nerdy tomboy feel like she could accomplish anything (although 11 years of Montessori school may have helped there!), and it created a lifelong connection to people. And, for someone with a very small nuclear family, that was very important and remains so to this day.

**Most vivid campus memories:** I remember sitting in the dining hall in the spring of my freshman year listening as they were announcing the new School election winners. Five minutes later, everyone at the table stops talking when my dad asks, "Why haven't you run for anything? It's never too soon to start thinking about college applications!" It was mortifying, but damned if I wasn't on the Rules and Discipline Committee for the next two years, Blue and White Key Society for three,



Lesley (right) with her mother and father at the 2010 dedication of Underwood Field, given in honor of Charlie by his "day boys" and the many other students he impacted during his time at Blair.



and then served as a prefect, the head of peer tutoring and a Big Brother/Big Sister! My father got his point across very effectively.

**Advice for today's faculty children:** Take advantage of every opportunity that living at Blair offers you. Try clubs, sports, groups and performances that you would never think of trying. Travel when you can, volunteer whenever possible and appreciate the safety net that naturally exists around you.

Also, never take the relationships you forge at Blair for granted. Maintain friendships and associations, keep in touch and reach out whenever you can. Many of the people you meet while growing up at Blair are as close as family, and if my dad taught me anything, that kind of family is irreplaceable.



Lesley at her Blair graduation with her dad, Charlie.

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## DEREK PEACHEY '93

**Occupation & location:** Founder of Floodlight Digital, living in Sonoma County, California

**About Dennis & Lynn Peachey:** Since my dad, *Dennis '62*, arrived at Blair at the start of his junior year in 1960, Blair has always been a big part of his life. Following his student days, he went to college in his native Canada and then returned to Blairstown as a young faculty member in 1969, where he later met my mom, Lynn, who taught English at Blair from 1971 to 1974. They married in 1971, and dad went on to hold a number of administrative positions, ranging from assistant alumni secretary to assistant headmaster for finance and development. Not only did he keep the Blair ship afloat during difficult financial times, my father really created the infrastructure for Blair's modern-day advancement operation.

**Journey to Blair:** My father worked at Blair from before I was born to 2006, when he retired as assistant headmaster for external relations, so I literally spent every childhood and adolescent moment on campus, living first in the apartment over the *J. Brooks Hoffman '36* Health Center and later in the Assistant Headmaster's Residence. I relished growing up in the "Blair bubble" before becoming a student in 1989. After I graduated



Derek and wife, Stephanie, with sons Lane, 6 (left), and Davis, 4 (right).

from Blair and earned my undergraduate degree from Dickinson College, I returned to campus as a young faculty member for the 1997-1998 school year before beginning my business career in sales, digital technology and corporate development.

**Best parts of growing up on campus:** One benefit is the large “extended family” of Blair alumni, many of whom I consider brothers and sisters. Another unique aspect for me is the tie with Blairstown, thanks to my mother’s deep roots in the community. My father also forged a strong bond with Blairstown and its residents, and I enjoyed being both a Blair and a Blairstown kid. Continuing to improve the relationship between Blair and Blairstown is a personal goal for me as a member of the School’s Board of Trustees.

**How Blair shaped him:** In all ways. The campus is, for all intents and purposes, my “hometown.” My influences were not other people “on the block” but rather faculty members, students and staff. I cherish memories of building forts in the campus woods, playing in weekend-morning football games in the Bowl with other faculty kids, going to nursery school below West Hall, attending the faculty kids’ Christmas party, and enjoying many Peddie Days and bonfires and formal Blair dinners with students. I can remember talking with [longtime Blair treasurer/business manager and Trustee] Ernest Rea after a formal dinner, marveling at [then-athletic director] Jon Frere driving the green at the golf course’s second hole and getting apples from [former cook] Vern and other staff in the kitchen. Those personal experiences, coupled with the obvious academic and athletic advantages of growing up on the hilltop, provided me with an unparalleled foundation for success in college and business.

**Most vivid campus memories:** There are too many to list just one. But I was recently reflecting on balmy summer nights during daylight saving time when my father and I would play three holes on the golf course after dinner (the first, seventh and eighth) and listen to the katydids in the “Blair swamp” as we walked home in the twilight. Every season had its highlights—Peddie Week in the fall, tubing on the golf course in the winter and the magnolia tree blooming to signal the arrival of spring.

**Advice for today’s faculty children:** You will not understand how unique your childhood was until you leave and live a “normal” life away from the hilltop. Savor the experience—hunt golf balls in the woods, ride your bikes around the campus and build bonds with the students and faculty. The experience will indelibly shape you, and Blair’s campus will always be “home.”

Also, for those who go on to become Blair students, I would also advise preparing yourself for the transition from “faculty kid” to “student.” During my idyllic childhood, I viewed Blair through a certain lens, and the reality of Blair student life was an adjustment. My first class was 50 yards from my backdoor, and separating what had been my backyard playground from the reality of a rigorous prep-school environment took some time. You prepare for life as a Blair student since elementary school, but, when it arrives, you need to adapt to sharing that backyard with hundreds of other students and the demands of the Blair experience. ■





# — Maria Bowditch



If you mention “Madame,” one person immediately comes to mind for a generation of Bucs: language teacher Maria Bowditch. Maria began teaching French at Blair when she joined the faculty in 1990, and she has since brought enthusiasm for her subject, passion for teaching, and joy in her relationships with students and colleagues to her work every day.

A New Jersey native, Maria grew up amid the dairy farms of rural East Amwell Township. While this may seem an unlikely place for a love of French to take hold, she recounted a few childhood influences that “unlocked brain waves” to foreign languages: Her parents’ appreciation for opera meant that Italian lyrics were always wafting through their home; she spoke to her grandparents in Ukrainian, the only language they knew; French words for everyday happenings were commonplace at her 6th-through-12th-grade school, Stuart Country Day School, which was founded by an order of French nuns; and her own beloved French teachers “opened a window to another world” in her language classes.

Maria majored in French studies at Bryn Mawr College and began teaching right after graduation, spending the first 15 years of her career as an English and French teacher at Purnell School in Pottersville, New Jersey, and St. Andrew’s Episcopal School in Potomac,

Maryland. During that time, she and her husband, Penn, married, and their daughters, **Courtney ‘03** and **Emily ‘05**, were born. A desire to live closer to Maria’s mother, after her father’s passing, brought the Bowditch family to Blair Academy in 1990, the same year **J.P. ‘08** was born. They have all been beloved members of the Blair family ever since.

During her 27 years at the School, Maria has been a mainstay in the language department, where she has taught all levels of French, and throughout the community, where she has advised the Blair International Awareness Club (BIAC), supervised community service projects and served as director of faculty hiring. She has been recognized for her dedication to Blair and her students with the Fernando Marcial Faculty Chair, which she has held since 2008, and the 2015 Riether Residential Life Award.

Read on to learn more about Maria Bowditch—perhaps better known as Madame—outside the classroom.



Madame's French 4 students engage in "role plays" to hone their conversational skills.

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**Q. You have long been involved in community service efforts at Blair. When did you develop this passion for serving others and what are some of the most meaningful projects you've been part of at Blair?**

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**A.** I first committed to service in high school at Stuart and worked at a local orphanage, retirement home and hospital on Wednesday afternoons. At Blair, the most meaningful projects have involved appreciation of groups on campus, such as the grounds crew or health center staff, in addition to projects of a more global nature, including the Locke Hall shoebox project, which sends holiday care packages to children around the world, or support for history teacher **Quint Clarke '87's** independent nonprofit "Blair in Kenya." Each fall, the sophomores in Locke Hall

always enjoy writing cards to former prefects away at college.

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**Q. What were some of the reasons you decided to become a teacher?**

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**A.** I had two important teacher role models during my childhood and teen years: my father's high school English teacher, who spent Christmas and Easter with us every year and was like a grandmother to me, and my father's best friend from Jersey City, who became an English and classics professor at The College of New Jersey. My mother talked me out of pursuing social work because she thought I would get too depressed by my clients. Finally, since I did not marry a Frenchman, I absolutely wanted to find a way to stay connected to my love of the French language and culture.

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**Q. What was it like to raise your children at Blair during the 1990s and early 2000s?**

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**A.** It was marvelous to see our children thrive in this community with many playmates and surrogate parents. There was always a game of Manhunt to be played with the other faculty brats from the Evans, Brandwood, Stival and Hardwick families. International Weekend—and the opportunity for our kids to stuff themselves at the French café—was an annual highlight, and the Peddie bonfire (a massive structure in its early days), the road trip to Peddie, and all the fantastic musicals helped to create salient memories for the Bowditch family. We are grateful for the many mentors, coaches and teachers who helped raise our children at Blair.



**Q. What were the joys and/or challenges of balancing your role as a faculty member with your role as a mom when your children were young and when they became Blair students?**

**A.** It was a certainly a balancing act during their preschool and elementary school years because there was no on-campus Childcare Learning Center or even off-campus extended day care options at the time. Our first sitter quit the second week of school, which was horribly stressful. Children were only welcome in the classroom on "Take Your Daughter to Work Day" (yes, that was the event's original name!). All faculty meetings took place at night; thus, there was the never-ending hunt for sitters, some of whom included current or former faculty members **Teddy Wenner '96, Karin Roethke-Kahn '93** and **Stacey (Gorski) Spring '95**. The joys were incredibly numerous. Once Courtney, Emily and J.P. became students at Blair, Penn and I loved supporting the cross country, field hockey, swim and crew teams. It is funny to look back and recall some of the "rules of conduct" Courtney requested I follow: 'Mom, don't ever again chaperone a dance, don't come find me in the dining hall and please don't talk about me in class.' Our children gained so much in emotional intelligence (EQ), as did all faculty children, due to such close interactions with other adults on the faculty and students from other cultures.

**Q. In 1999, you earned your master's degree in French language and civilization from New York University via the school's Paris campus. Describe that experience.**



The Bowditch family (left to right): **Emily '05, Courtney '03, J.P. '08, Maria and Penn.**

**A.** For two summers, our entire family lived in Paris as we swapped our house in Maine for an apartment near the Eiffel Tower. Penn played Mr. Mom while I attended classes. The first summer's theme was "Climb Paris," and the family tackled all the famous monuments. The second summer's theme was "Artists of Paris," and the visit to Monet's home in Giverny is still a significant memory. Equally important was the opportunity for everyone to experience life in a city, even if I never quite figured out how to do the home delivery of groceries. As a result, all five of us trudged, bearing many bags, from the supermarket to the apartment multiple times a week (those French refrigerators are small!). On the other hand, we could send one of the children, unaccompanied, down the block to buy the morning's baguette. In terms of the academic experience, I was thrilled to study Francophone literature and cinema, topics that had not even figured in the curriculum two decades earlier when I was an undergraduate. I highly recommend the pursuit of advanced studies at any age, but there was a certain freedom to take risks and

delve deeper into the material that I would not have felt as comfortable with as a 20-something.

**Q. As one who loves to travel, where else have you been besides Paris and what destinations are on the horizon?**

**A.** I was extremely fortunate to help former Blair language teacher Edwidge Dorelien chaperone a service trip to Haiti. In addition, I accompanied Quint Clarke and other faculty members to Kenya where we worked at the "Blair in Kenya" schools in Kisumu and Iten. We set up an entire library with 1,000 books and multiple computers that we carried over in our luggage! When our daughter, Emily, taught kindergarten overseas, Penn and I traveled to Bangkok and Singapore, plus surrounding areas. Our next destination will be Australia, where Courtney and Emily have lived and worked. Of course, there will also be a trip to Ireland because Courtney is marrying an Irishman in June!



The Bowditch family “climbed Paris” in the late ‘90s.



Penn and Maria, circa 1976.

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**Q. Why do you think it’s important for students to learn French and/or other languages?**

**A.** French is spoken on five continents and is the language of the arts, fashion and haute cuisine. Many international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Red Cross, NATO and the International Olympic Committee use French as their working language. By studying another language, students are able to adopt a different personality and perspective. Increased awareness and acceptance of differences is another reward of language acquisition.

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**Q. As Blair’s director of faculty hiring since 1994, you’ve been involved in the hiring of nearly 200 faculty members, 71 of whom are still at Blair. What do you do in that**

**role? What is the most important quality you look for in a candidate for a Blair teaching position?**

**A.** I absolutely love this facet of my role at Blair. I am involved in crafting job descriptions, reading resumes, working with department chairs, making initial phone calls to vet candidates for their affect and interest, inviting candidates to campus, interviewing candidates at hiring fairs and at Blair, and calling references for those whom the School hopes to hire. One of my favorite memories is telling now-Associate Head of School **Ryan Pagotto ‘97** that Blair planned to hire Jen Maza, at that time his significant other (and now his wife and chair of Blair’ performing arts department). I also value the opportunity to work closely with Head of School Chris Fortunato, Assistant Head of School and Dean of Faculty

Lorry Perry, Dean of Academics Nathan Molteni and Dean of Teaching & Learning Gwyneth Connell. The most essential quality in a teaching candidate remains, without a doubt, a passion for working with adolescents. A commitment to the triple-threat concept (teach, coach and live in the dorm) is also extremely important.

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**Q. In tandem with faculty hiring, you have made faculty professional development a priority over the years and have seen colleagues rise through the ranks of independent education. Is there one former colleague who has impressed you the most?**

**A.** This is an incredibly difficult question because I am proud of each and every young person who has moved on to a position of responsibility, even as Blair mourned his or her departure. I am





Maria (second from right) and students at Blair's International Weekend French café.

thrilled with all that former Associate Dean of Admission **Todd Smith '90** has accomplished at Montclair Kimberley Academy. Former history teacher and field hockey coach Rachael Ryan now serves as co-athletic director and AP government teacher and exam reader at Taft School. Former Director of Publications Laurie Lambert was recently named Head of School at The Winchendon School, while her husband, former Blair language teacher Tony Lambert, is Winchendon's director of college counseling (their romance is one of many I witnessed). And then there is Canterbury School Head of School Rachel Stone, with whom I worked the most closely over the years in her role as Blair's dean of faculty. I watched and applauded her transformation from a dedicated science teacher, fresh out of Yale, to a caring, dynamic and no-nonsense administrator who juggled an incredible array of responsibilities. I

hope it is safe to say that we learned a lot from each other.

**Q. What do you like to do during the summer and during your free time?**

**A.** The beach in Avalon, New Jersey, is my happy place; Penn and I spend the summer there with many visits from family and friends. Power walking, reading and knitting are other important activities. Serving as a deacon at the First Presbyterian Church in Blairstown keeps me involved in community service outside of Blair.

**Q. What is the luckiest thing that has ever happened to you?**

**A.** There are two things I'd like to share. The first dates back to the 1970s, when Penn and I planned to backpack through Europe the summer after my junior year in college. This was the pre-cellphone era, and I had

no idea whether he had arrived in Amsterdam or not. The only point of communication at the time was the American Express office where travelers could receive mail or leave messages. Just as I entered the office, I heard the woman behind the desk say, "I am positive that there is no one by the name of Maria Komoski here." Penn had actually arrived safely in Amsterdam, but his flight delay meant that all public transportation had stopped for the night and prevented our meeting as planned. The second-luckiest thing was undoubtedly my being hired at Blair, which happened at the best—yet most-difficult—time. My father had just passed away, and, as an only child, I needed to move closer to Hopewell, New Jersey, and my mother. It was going to be a challenge to return to full-time teaching with a three-month-old and two young children. However, the opportunity to teach AP French from the onset and to join a community of interested and interesting students made the decision a fait accompli.

**Q. If you could convince everyone in the world to do one thing at some point in their lives, what would it be?**

**A.** Volunteer in whatever capacity or location is feasible. If you are able to live abroad and combine that with a commitment to serving others, that would be even better. Looking beyond oneself and experiencing life elsewhere are the keys to a fulfilled and successful life. My life has been full indeed. ■

*(Maria announced this spring that she will retire at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. All of us at Blair wish her joy and happiness—we are grateful for her many years of service!)*



Blair's Orchestra and Singers posed for a group photo outside King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England.

## Music, History & Culture Harmonize in British Tour

Blair's musical ensembles "took the show on the road" this spring during a nine-day performance and cultural tour of England from March 7 to 15. The trip was the culmination of months of preparation that included learning and fine-tuning a specially chosen repertoire; exploration of the history behind those works; a preview Fall Concert performance; and, as the trip neared, much excited discussion and anticipation of the culture, food, history and sights the group was about to experience in London, Oxford, Ely and Cambridge.

Performing arts department chair and Director of Instrumental Music Jennifer Pagotto was pleased with the "amazing opportunities" that Blair's 80 musicians enjoyed during the trip, including performances of their British repertoire in the country where the music had been conceived and composed and the chance to share distinctly American works with British audiences. "I hope

each of our students brought home memories of at least one truly meaningful performance and that they really soaked in the culture and history of England, especially as they experienced it with their friends," she said. "They all worked so hard together in the months—and, for some students, years—leading up to this trip."

### British & American Repertoire

The excursion marked Blair's first-ever concert tour of British cities, and Mrs. Pagotto and Director of Vocal Music Ryan Manni selected the Orchestra and Singers' 2017-2018 repertoire with that in mind. Works like Peter Warlock's "Capriol Suite," performed by the Chamber Orchestra, and Ralph Vaughan Williams' "English Folk Song Suite," performed by the Symphony Orchestra, gave musicians the opportunity to study music native to the place they were preparing to visit, and they considered each piece from a historical, cultural and musical perspective beginning in September.

On the flip side, Blair's vocalists and instrumentalists also perfected several American pieces, including George Gershwin's "An American in Paris," performed by the Symphony Orchestra, and the American spiritual "The Storm Is Passing Over," performed by the Chamber Choir. As they learned some of the history behind these compositions and the musical techniques that brought them to life, students gained deeper appreciation for the music rooted in U.S. culture that they performed in several British venues.







**Willy Kaiser '18**, a member of the Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Ensemble for four and two years, respectively, enjoyed rehearsing this year's varied repertoire. "Each piece is unique in its own way, and we were able to have fun with all the music," he said. Having traveled to Europe with the Orchestra as a freshman, he was happy to take part in another meaningful musical tour. "When you play music from all around the world as we do, it is so valuable to experience the culture that ignited such music and rhythm," he reflected. "Also, traveling to a different part of the world with your classmates creates bonds that will serve us well in every regard, long after the trip is over."

### Impactful Opportunities as Performers & Audience

The musicians' itinerary featured performances at St. John the Evangelist Church in Oxford, the Church of St. Mary the Great in Cambridge (*pictured above and on bottom of opposite page*) and King's Ely School in Ely, where a lunchtime concert was a highlight of the day. On March 12, the musicians held a concert for local Blair alumni, parents and friends at The Gresham Centre at St. Anne & St. Agnes Church in London, after which Head of School Chris Fortunato, accompanied by his 7-year-old daughter, Katie, hosted a soft-drink-and-hors d'oeuvre reception for all.

Participation in a workshop and recording session with Oxford University professor Dr. James Whitbourn, an internationally renowned composer and conductor with whom Mr. Manni studied as a Westminster Choir College undergraduate, was a standout performance experience. "Any time a different conductor takes the podium, musicians realize new concepts and experience a whole new take on even the most well-rehearsed

piece," Mrs. Pagotto noted. "This was a fantastic opportunity for our students to spend several hours with a distinguished conductor, focused on making one or two key pieces more artistic and incorporating new ideas into their performance."

The travelers experienced some impactful moments as audience members during the trip, as well, especially when they attended Choral Evensong in Cambridge's King's College Chapel, an experience Mrs. Pagotto described as "a huge part of musical culture." They also enjoyed a West End show in London.

### A Shared Experience

Of course, sightseeing was a high note of the trip, and students and their faculty chaperones, including Associate Head of School **Ryan Pagotto '97** and English and theatre teachers Craig and Kaye Evans, enjoyed guided tours of Oxford and Cambridge, a visit to Oxford's medieval Warwick Castle and a chance to pay their respects at Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial, where thousands of Americans who lost their lives in World War II are interred. In addition, they spent two exciting days exploring London, where stops included Westminster Abbey, Trafalgar Square and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

Willy was especially captivated by the natural beauty of the English landscape as the group traveled through the countryside by bus. Being there with his friends was an extra bonus. "Speaking from experience, trips like this create lifelong memories," he said. "And there isn't another group with which I would want to share those memories." ■

## Worth a Thousand Words: The Arts in Photos



One of the most famous ceramicists on social media, @Tortus (also known as Copenhagen-based artist Eric Landon), visited campus on October 11 to work with fine arts department chair Kate Sykes' classes.



Twenty years after Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts was dedicated, the Blair Academy Players restaged the first-ever musical performed in DuBois Theatre: the hit Broadway romantic comedy *Crazy for You*.



Fine-art students attended Blair's first-ever photography preseason in August, during which they captured thousands of images of scenery from campus to New York City, and a few places in between.



The Blair Academy Players presented *The Government Inspector*, a play adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher from the original 19th-century satire by Nikolai Gogol, in mid-October. Director Craig Evans noted that the Players were excited to bring the "timely and timeless rollicking comedy" to Blair's stage.



Musicians in Blair's vocal and instrumental ensembles performed British-American repertoire at the Fall Concert in November as a prelude to their spring 2018 England tour. Attendees enjoyed a wide variety of music ranging from strictly classical British pieces to more contemporary American pieces.

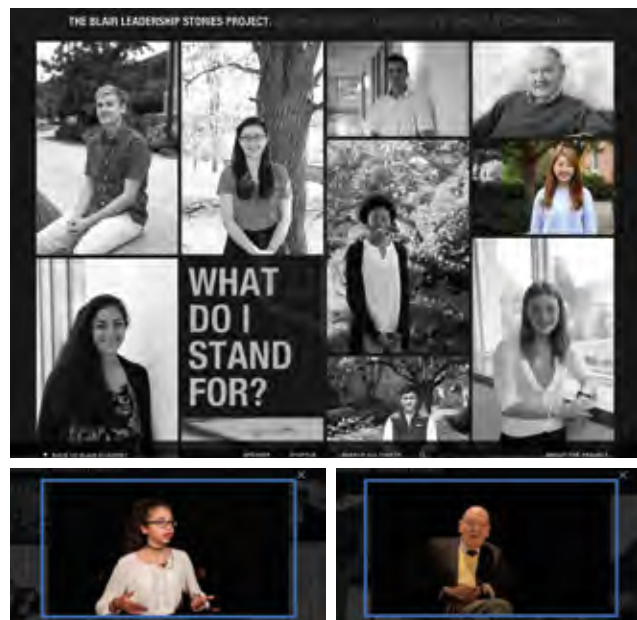
@ To view more performing arts photos, visit [www.blair.edu/performing-arts-photos](http://www.blair.edu/performing-arts-photos).



## 1,000+ LEADERSHIP STORIES FILMED AS PROJECT CONTINUES TO ASK 'WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?'

Four years ago, Blair amplified its commitment to teaching storytelling and public speaking as essential communications skills with the launch of The Blair Leadership Stories Project. Since then, more than 1,000 students, parents, alumni, Trustees and teachers have recorded video narratives in which they have shared stories reflecting on personal challenges and choices that informed or shaped their character and values.

The Project has become a core element of Blair's English curriculum: Students write and record leadership stories as freshmen and seniors so they can see how far they have come as confident and effective communicators during their time at Blair. A number of parents, alumni and Trustees, as well as faculty and staff members, have also taken part in the initiative, creating a mosaic of Blair stories that spans generations.



Visit [www.blair.edu/leadership-stories](http://www.blair.edu/leadership-stories) to view our archive of videos, which grows by a couple hundred narratives each year. ■

## COMMUNITY SHARES HERITAGE, CUISINE & TRADITIONS AT INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND

Alumni of all class years agree that one of the most important lessons Blair taught them was how to be citizens of the world. In addition to broadening students' horizons academically and culturally, belonging to an international community of people hailing from more than 25 countries teaches students to build relationships and engage with diverse peers.

The forces of Blair's global community are at work all year round, but students and faculty especially celebrate their cultural similarities and differences at



International Weekend, a two-day event led by longtime Blair language teacher Maria Bowditch, who coordinated the festivities with the Blair International Awareness Club for the 23rd time in early January. Weekend highlights included a fashion show and food bazaar showcasing the clothing and



cuisine indigenous to more than 15 different nations. A number of generous parents were on hand to join in the festivities, which continued into Sunday with other activities designed to celebrate the community's diversity. ■

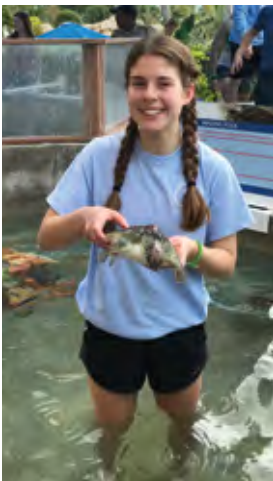
## 2018 TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES OFFER DIVERSE REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES

Whether they are passionate about science, musical performance, global cultures or service to others, Blair students have the opportunity to explore those interests far from Blairstown—yet alongside friends and Blair teachers—during five faculty-led trips this year. Several of these enriching experiences took place during winter long weekend in February and spring break in March, and more are planned for the summer months. Here, we share some travel highlights (*see pages 40-41 for a story on Blair's musical tour of England*).

### Cayman Islands

Winter long weekend is the perfect opportunity for marine science teacher W. Rod Gerdson's annual trip to the Cayman Islands, a science and community-service-focused adventure he has led for 11 years. From February 2 to 6, 16 students learned about the islands' ecosystem through stops at Stingray City and a green turtle farm, a hike through the uniquely "hellish" landscape surrounding the town of Hell and daily marine-life snorkeling along pristine beaches.

The trip also included an afternoon of service at a local elementary school, where Blair students delivered recreation and school supplies and spent time working with local youngsters. "My goal for this trip is always to give students a deeper appreciation for the ocean and all the life it contains," Mr. Gerdson said. "It's also a great opportunity to broaden their horizons by introducing them to Cayman culture and the warm and wonderful island community."



### Memphis, Tennessee

Computer science teacher Michael Garrant, his wife, Vanessa, and eight students spent winter long weekend serving critically ill children and their families at St. Jude Children's Hospital and Ronald McDonald House in Memphis. Over the four-day trip, the Blair contingent played games and worked on arts and crafts projects with children who were undergoing treatment, and they served meals to patients and their family members.

This marked Blair's fourth year of service at St. Jude; the now-annual excursion was the 2015 brainchild of **McKenzie Belton '16**, a longtime advocate and supporter of the hospital's critical-care mission. "Students learned that they have gifts to share with those who are less fortunate during the weekend," Mr. Garrant observed. "They realized that they can truly make a difference in the lives of children and families who are experiencing difficult health circumstances."







## Kenya

Service to others, cultural appreciation and a safari are all on the itinerary for the half-dozen students who will travel to Kenya in 2018 with history teacher **Quinten Clarke '87**, the founder of "Blair in Kenya," an independent nonprofit that serves the rural poor in the villages of Iten and Kisumu. During a June trip to the African nation, Mr. Clarke hopes students gain an appreciation for how people live in other parts of the world as they experience homestays and the rhythms of daily life in a Kenyan village. "I also hope they realize the satisfaction of helping to make the world a better place," he said.

The Blair group will include several medical professionals who will run the annual "Blair in Kenya" medical clinic. Students and teachers will assist with the logistics of providing medical care to hundreds of villagers, and they will also spend time bringing smiles to kids' faces as they work and play in the classrooms and on the athletic fields.



## Rome

Eleven students will immerse themselves in the history, culture and language of ancient Rome during a June exploration of the Eternal City with classics teachers Kelsie Fralick and Chris Sheppard. Visits to some of the city's most iconic destinations, such as the Forum and Colosseum, are on the group's agenda, and students will link influential texts to their places of origin as they read selections from Cicero, Pliny and others—on-site—throughout the 10-day trip. They will also have the opportunity to view stunning art, artifacts and architecture while traveling the same roads ancient Romans did thousands of years ago.

"Students should gain a deeper understanding of Latin and Roman culture as we journey through Rome, but this trip goes far beyond sightseeing," Mr. Sheppard said. "By combining modern foreign travel with dialogue about ancient culture, we hope to deepen students' awareness of themselves, the world and their role as global citizens." ■



## ALUMNI RETURN TO BLAIR & OFFER CAREER INSIGHT AT SKEPTICS

The Blair community welcomed a few familiar faces back to campus for its annual Young Alumni Skeptics panel on April 10. This year's panelists—**Joanna Weber '03**, **Hudson Collins '07**, **Filip Gzella '08** and **Yale Kim '09**—returned to their alma mater to discuss their career success, reflect on their time on the hilltop and offer advice to current students about life beyond Blair.

History teacher and longtime Society of Skeptics director Martin Miller, PhD, moderated the event in the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration's Collaboration Forum, which featured presentations by the Blair graduates, followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience. Read on to learn more about each panelist.



### JOANNA WEBER '03

**"The education I received at Blair, and the friendships I forged there gave me the confidence to take risks and pursue my passions both at university and in my career."**

Each day, Joanna blends her appreciation of art with a passion for travel as a private art collector and flight attendant. She pursued both interests at Villanova University, spending her undergraduate years studying art history and classical languages, which included a semester abroad in Rome immersed in Italian and Latin. Since 2008, Joanna has worked as a flight attendant for United Airlines, and, more recently, she has served as an Italian interpreter on international flights to Rome, Milan and Venice. Joanna pursued a master's degree in

art business from Sotheby's Institute of Art, which led to her work with museums, auction houses and art galleries to amass and catalog artwork for a private collector. At Blair, Joanna was an accomplished scholar and vibrant member of the community, as well as an outstanding athlete for the cross country, swimming and crew teams. She further distinguished herself in the classroom and across campus, earning two named prizes during her time at the School.



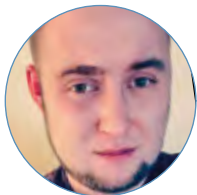
### HUDSON COLLINS '07

**"Blair is one of the most influential experiences in my life. The lessons from the classroom, wrestling and the dorms inform my adult life in so many ways. Whether I am working with colleagues to solve a problem for a**



**client or I am in a new part of the world on vacation, every interaction is influenced by my time, and the people, at Blair."**

Hudson is an associate with MVision Private Equity Advisers, one of the world's leading independent placement agents. Since joining the company in 2015, Hudson has advised several private equity firms on a range of fundraising mandates. Prior to joining MVision, Hudson worked as an investment banking analyst for Deloitte Corporate Finance (which acquired his previous company, McColl Partners), advising on mergers and acquisitions, divestitures and strategic developments across several industries. During his time at Blair, Hudson was a member of Senior Class Council and Blair's national championship wrestling team. He matriculated at Brown University, where he wrestled for the Bears and earned a bachelor's degree in history in 2011. He co-chairs Brown's Young Leadership Council, which raises money for Brown, and he enjoys playing squash.



FILIP GZELLA '08

**"My time at Blair really opened the door to out-of-the-box thinking and having a critical-thinking approach."**

**Blair's diverse opportunities—to learn something new, to go on a trip, to try a new extracurricular activity—give each and every student the chance to forge their own path, follow their passions and make the most of their experience."**

Filip spent his undergraduate years studying environmental policy, institutions and behaviors at Rutgers University, earning a bachelor of science degree in 2012. When plans to work with the Environmental Protection Agency didn't come to fruition because of budget cuts to the organization, Filip "pivoted" his focus and applied to a position with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Several odd jobs and a yearlong application process later, Filip was named a project specialist with FEMA, aiding recovery work in towns across the United States—from South Carolina to Texas and

Florida—following natural disasters. Filip works with local and state governments, departments, schools, and private nonprofits to help them file for disaster-recovery support from the federal government. Oftentimes, his work results in a 75-percent federal government cost share to fund damage repair or construction to restore pre-disaster conditions. While at Blair, Filip served as a day-student prefect, played piano onstage in DuBois Theatre, and was a dedicated athlete as a member of the swim, tennis and soccer teams.

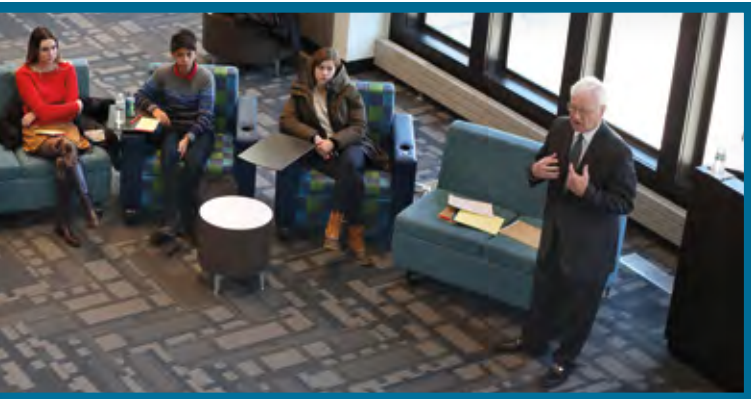


YALE KIM '09

**"Blair taught me early on that building relationships is important."**

**Whether it was on the field, at formal dinner or in the classrooms, Blair provided me opportunities to engage with everyone in the community. This has helped me maintain and nurture relationships in both my personal and professional worlds now."**

Combining his love of sports with his professional life, Yale, a standout varsity soccer captain, squash player and golfer during his time at Blair, studied sports management at New York University (NYU), graduating in 2014 with a bachelor's degree. Soon after completing his undergraduate work, Yale began working for the New York City division of City Football Group (NYCFC), a company that aims to use soccer for social good by increasing participation in the sport, engaging soccer fans around the globe, cultivating and training young players through professional athletes, and supporting local communities through charity work. As an executive for NYCFC, Yale works with the group's regional and global partners on the long-term planning and execution of marketing campaigns. By establishing relationships with various stakeholders at partner companies, Yale helps optimize their marketing strategies to maximize revenue, while maintaining branding and messaging. While at NYU, Yale also studied Mandarin, spent a semester abroad in Beijing and played club squash. ■



## Blair Launches Alumni Roundtable Series

with Visit from Business, Corporate & Real Estate Lawyer & Philanthropist

When Blair opened the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration at the start of the 2017-2018 school year, one of the ways Head of School Chris Fortunato envisioned using the space was to connect today's students with prominent alumni across industries, giving soon-to-be graduates the opportunity to learn about different fields and ask experienced professionals questions as they consider the college majors and career paths they might ultimately pursue.

On January 18, 25 students interested in law joined Mr. Fortunato in welcoming to campus business, corporate and real estate lawyer, dedicated Blair volunteer and well-known local philanthropist **William B. Cramer '64**, who spoke about his career trajectory and engaged in a Q & A with the audience about his always-evolving industry and how different it is today than when he graduated from Villanova School of Law in 1971.

Introducing Mr. Cramer as a friend of the School and his own family, Mr. Fortunato encouraged students to ask questions—and, of course, as a lawyer himself, asked a few of his own. Before launching into an overview of how he came to concentrate on business, corporate and real estate law, Mr. Cramer gave his audience of “would-be lawyers” small legal notepads and laughed that, as full-fledged attorneys, he and Mr. Fortunato had earned the right to take notes on full-sized legal pads.

### From Military Lawyer to a Small-Town Practice

Having practiced law in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, for more than 40 years, Mr. Cramer offered Blair students his thoughts on the traits, coursework and professional experience he would recommend they pursue in high school and beyond to prepare for that career path.

“My life changed in 1962, when my parents had the wherewithal to send me to Blair Academy,” said Mr. Cramer, who is president of the eight-attorney firm Cramer, Swetz, McManus & Jordan, P.C. “I have been forever indebted to what Blair provided me in terms of education and opportunities. The fact that I received the Franklin Prize for ‘most-improved student’ shows where I started when I came to Blair and how far I have come.”

Noting that one of the most important life lessons he hoped to impart to today's students was the need to pay that appreciation forward at Blair and in their own communities, Mr. Cramer talked about the scholarship he and his wife created at Blair and his commitment to remaining active on various charity boards.

“Blair taught me how to study, to be more responsible and to seize opportunities. I learned the value of hard work and competition, which the practice of law requires,” he explained. Mr. Cramer began his legal career as a military lawyer and served as a captain in the Army Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps from 1971 to January 1976, stationed at Fort Dix, New Jersey; Fort Carson, Colorado; and Fort Meade, Maryland.

In fact, Mr. Cramer was one of 23 law students accepted to a government program that allowed him to gain real-world experience trying criminal cases in special courts at Fort Dix, New Jersey, while he finished his studies and passed the Pennsylvania bar. “I got a lot of on-the-job training,” explained Mr. Cramer, who went on to become the first military lawyer assigned as the legal assistance officer at the National Security Agency (NSA), where he provided legal advice to Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine personnel assigned to the NSA. In that



To learn more about past and upcoming Alumni Roundtable series speakers, as well as how you can become involved, visit [www.blair.edu/alumni-roundtables](http://www.blair.edu/alumni-roundtables).



role, he provided legal assistance to not only service members, but also their dependents.

In January 1976, Mr. Cramer returned to Stroudsburg and was hired as an associate by a two-member law firm. He wanted to be a personal injury litigator, but his plans changed quickly when the firm's partnership dissolved within a year. In 1978, he became a sole practitioner, but immediately realized he couldn't effectively represent his clients as a personal injury litigator and business, corporate and real estate lawyer at the same time. Mr. Cramer needed to find a partner whose area of concentration was in civil and personal injury litigation.

In January 1979, he formed a partnership with another lawyer and both still practice law together today. "The beautiful part of practicing law is that you have the ability to pick what you want to do, which opens up a world of opportunities," Mr. Cramer commented. "Over the course of my career, I've been a defense counsel and prosecutor in criminal cases, a civil litigator, and an advocate providing legal representation to families and corporations." That was another important thing Blair taught him: the importance of being able to adapt and change course. Since 1979, his firm has grown from two lawyers to eight and from a staff of three to nine.

## Advocacy, Ethical Decision-Making & Communication

As a lawyer, he told the students, you are first and foremost an advocate; you must represent your clients ethically and within the bounds of law. To be an advocate, he added, you have to be an excellent communicator, both orally and in writing. Mr. Cramer encouraged students to take courses in college in creative writing, communications, debate, economics and even drama. "As a lawyer, you have the burden of coming forward with evidence and the challenge to be a persuasive and effective arguer of the facts," said Mr. Cramer as he emphasized the multifaceted skill set needed to succeed as a lawyer. "You don't need to wait until law school to start learning how."

When asked by an audience member what students can do right now to learn more about law as a possible profession, Mr. Cramer urged them to pursue courses at Blair and in college that "make you think"—such as philosophy and logic—and underscored how attractive bilingual attorneys are to firms of all sizes. Volunteering at legal-aid agencies or offering to work for free to learn the ropes



at a law firm can also pay dividends. But, at the end of the day, he said, the most critical piece of the puzzle is retaining a sense of humor, no matter where your career takes you, whether that be to a big or small law firm or as a solo practitioner.

"Find where you get your joy," he advised in fielding questions about the influences of technology, what it was like to attend Blair during a tumultuous period in history, and the growing trend of niche attorneys who also practice as doctors, CPAs or engineers. "For me, going back to a small town, being part of a community and having the opportunity to give back is where I continue to find joy. But, as in any profession, you also have to accept you are not always going to be the prevailing party and roll with it if things don't turn out the way you think they should. Be confident in yourself...but never overconfident."

Leaving students with this thought, he thanked them for listening: "You have to leave a place better than you found it. As I've gotten older, I ponder, what am I doing here? What have I accomplished? What is my purpose? I don't get up each day and say 'this is who I am going to sue'; rather, I enjoy representing clients who are buying a new home, selling their home, starting up a business or developing property. However, if your sole goal as a lawyer is to make a lot of money, choose another profession. What is key is to work hard and be an advocate for your client and money will be the byproduct of your ability and advocacy. Ask yourself, how can I be significant and help others attain their goals?"

To be fulfilled, he concluded, you have to have more than a "myopic life." That means volunteering and becoming engaged as part of the fabric of your community because, of course, there is "much more to life than just a job." ■

## Blair Dedicates *Chiang Center for Innovation & Collaboration*

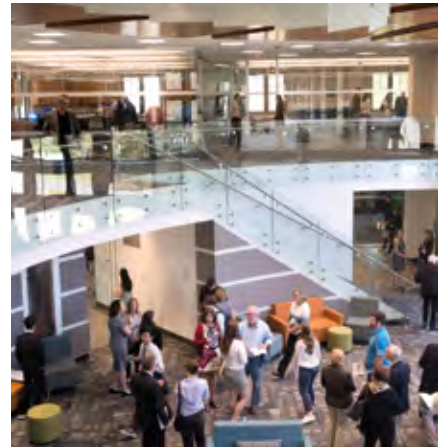
Under blue skies and bright sunshine, the Blair community gathered outside the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration on October 21 to dedicate the School's newest academic building. Throughout the ceremony, Head of School Chris Fortunato and other speakers recognized those whose vision, hard work and generous contributions helped create the state-of-the-art intellectual center, a hub of learning, connection and activity for the entire Blair family.

### Naming the Chiang Center for Innovation & Collaboration

The Chiang Center bears the name of the Chiang family, whose legacy includes seven Blair graduates: Trustee **Lai Yuen Chiang '84**, **Lai Ling Chiang '84**, **Chi-Kin Chiang '86**, **Daisy Y. Kong '92**, **Timothy M. Kui '12**, **Yu Rong Lim '14** and **Yi Jun Lim '16**. The Chiangs' generous gift in support of the project was made through their family foundation, the Chiang-Chen Industrial Charity Foundation, established by Dr. Chiang Chen, founder of one of the largest manufacturers of plastic injection moulding machines in the world.

Speaking about the Chiang family's leadership gift to Blair, Mr. Fortunato explained that Dr. Chiang rose to success from humble beginnings, and his belief in giving back to society in excess of what one has received led to his formation of the Chiang-Chen Industrial Charity Foundation. The gift to Blair to name the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration is especially noteworthy because the foundation has traditionally focused its philanthropy on universities and colleges. This is the foundation's first, and only, contribution to a secondary school, and the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration is the first building on Blair's campus to be named by an international family.

Although members of the Chiang family were unable to attend the dedication, Mr. Fortunato shared a reflection by Trustee Lai Yuen Chiang in which she expressed her entire family's support of this meaningful gift to Blair and noted, "We believe the Chiang Center for Innovation and Collaboration will inspire new generations of engineers, innovators and leaders to explore and grow." Mr. Fortunato thanked the members of the Chiang family on behalf of the School community for their faith in Blair and its bright future.



### Recognizing All Who Made the Chiang Center Possible

The dedication continued with recognition by Mr. Fortunato of several special guests who had returned to campus to celebrate the Chiang Center's opening. Blair Board of Trustees Chairman Emeritus **John C. Bogle '47** and his wife, Eve, were among the attendees, as were former Chairman **James P. Jenkins '66**, Honorary Trustee **Herb Siegel '46**, former Headmaster Chan Hardwick and his wife, Monie, former Assistant Headmaster Dave Low and his wife, Candy, and former Dean of Academics Sam Bacon and his wife, Betsy. He also acknowledged former Chairman **William R. Timken '53**, who had been unable to attend the ceremony.

Mr. Fortunato thanked those who devoted time and energy to "think outside the box" about a new academic center on campus and whose insight and collaboration made it distinctively Blair. "The Chiang Center, a facility focused on connections and relationships, is a beautiful testament to who we are and where we've been at Blair," he said. "This vision, now a reality, was only possible through the faith and leadership of all of you. It is so gratifying to be here with you today to celebrate the opening of the







Chiang Center, an academic center that is truly about and for our students.”

Chairman of the Blair Board of Trustees Doug Kimmelman P'12 '13 '15, Chair of the Education and School Life Committee **Marianne Lieberman '79, P'17 '19** and Chief Operating Officer Jim Frick each took to the podium to recognize the many people whose diligence and generosity made the Chiang Center a reality, including the members of the East and Davies Task Force, the members of the Board of Trustees' Buildings and Grounds and Forward Thinking Campaign Committees, Director of Facilities Dave Schmitt, and donors of gifts of every size. Mr. Kimmelman noted with pride that generous contributions had allowed the School to incur no debt in completing the Chiang Center, while Mr. Frick credited architects HQW Associates LLC and contractor Klæ Construction, Inc. for their exceptional work on the project.

### Programs Strengthened by 'Incredible Facility'

Finally, Director of Technology and computer science department chair Sam Adams and fine arts department chair Kate Sykes reflected on how the Chiang Center had already impacted the teaching of technology and fine arts at Blair. The Chiang Center serves as the new home for both of these academic departments, and their juxtaposition in the modern, well-equipped building has positioned technology and fine arts for infusion across Blair's curriculum.

Noting that the Chiang Center is an “incredible facility” in which to teach technology classes, Mr. Adams said that, in a larger sense, the building represents the importance of innovative thinking and the commitment among Blair community members to provide students with the kind of education they will need for success in the future. “We are very

fortunate to have people with that kind of passion and dedication at our School,” he remarked.

“We have new, fabulously equipped places to learn and work, to make and create,” Mrs. Sykes said via a message read by Mr. Fortunato, as she was off campus coaching the JV girls' tennis team. “The excitement of being in these new places is palpable, and they will help us continue to grow and offer the best opportunities to our students. I am incredibly humbled by and proud of the possibilities ahead.”

Smiling broadly, Mr. Fortunato, Mr. Kimmelman and several Chiang Center student managers cut the ribbon and declared the building officially open at the dedication's conclusion. Guests were invited to tour the Chiang Center and discover the work that had already begun in this exciting new academic venue. ■



## Basketball Court Dedication Honors Mantegnas

Blair community members packed the Hardwick Hall performance gym on January 26 to honor boys' varsity basketball head coach Joe Mantegna and his wife, Shelly, at the dedication of Mantegna Court. Since joining Blair's faculty in 1999, Coach Mantegna has built the boys' basketball program into a national prep school powerhouse, and he and Mrs. Mantegna have dedicated themselves to players, students and the entire Blair family (*see sidebar on opposite page*). The beloved and deeply respected couple was celebrated by hundreds of attendees—including Trustees, former players, students, faculty, parents and members of the Blairstown community—who turned out for the event.

"No one in this gym or on this campus loves their players, their students, this program or this School as much as Joe and Shelly," said Head of School Chris Fortunato. He noted that while championships and winning certainly matter, integrity and family matter even more to Coach and Mrs. Mantegna.

"Cause over self" is a slogan at some places, but for you, it's a way of life," Mr. Fortunato continued. "You have done so much for this community and made an indelible mark on the lives of our students, past and present. That's why I'm excited that your names will become an indelible mark on this court, to recognize and honor everything you have done—and will continue to do—for our students, players, this team and for our School."

After the Mantegna's eldest son, **Jake '19**, uncovered the Blair-blue "Mantegna Court" logo emblazoned on the gym floor, Mr. Fortunato announced that the naming of the court was part of the School's ongoing fundraising efforts on behalf of Blair's boys' basketball program. He thanked the generous donors whose gifts and commitments have helped Blair raise \$150,000 to date and noted that the funds will be used to begin a Blair basketball endowment and renovate locker rooms.

"Coach Mantegna and his wife, Shelly, have played a pivotal role in the lives of the many students and athletes they have worked with throughout their time at Blair. They are both beloved and deeply respected members of our faculty and the Blair community, and we are proud to dedicate the basketball court in their honor."

—Director of Athletics **Paul Clavel '88**



NBA star **Charlie Villanueva '03** took to the podium next, where he thanked Coach Mantegna for instilling core values and lessons that he would carry with him for life. "I'm so glad to be here; I wouldn't have missed this opportunity for the world," he said. "I've learned that life is about leaving a legacy, and, Coach, you have definitely done that in the Blair community. You've played a big role in my life, and I'm so thankful." Mr. Villanueva then declared Mrs. Mantegna "the real MVP," which drew laughter and much applause from Coach Mantegna and the audience.

Coach Mantegna's remarks—which he delivered in true coaching mode, pacing the court and in a booming voice that needed no microphone—concluded the dedication. He expressed heartfelt thanks to many, including former player **Adam Andre '02** and Blair's Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall, who spearheaded the fundraising for the basketball program; the generous donors who supported the cause; his Blair colleagues who, over the years, contributed to the "institutional success" that fueled the basketball program's success; his longtime mentor Bob Brown, who gave him the opportunity to serve as a volunteer assistant coach at Boston University at the start of his career; his long-serving Blair assistant coach, English teacher Tom Parauda; and, of course, Mrs. Mantegna, his entire family and his family of former players.

Explaining that people always want to know "the whats"—how many championships have you won? how many guys have scholarships? how many wins do you have?—Coach Mantegna affirmed that he is only interested in "the why." "The why is cause over self. The why is these human beings. The why is our relationships," he said, gesturing to his current and former players who stood behind him on the court. "I learn so much from my current players, past players and assistant coaches. That's my why—the why that jumped me out of bed in 1999 and still jumps me out of bed every single day that I work at Blair Academy. I have this network of phenomenal human beings, relationships and family. And that's an unbelievable feeling." ■



Watch the dedication of Mantegna Court at  
[www.blair.edu/mantegna-court](http://www.blair.edu/mantegna-court).

## Coach Joe & Shelly Mantegna's Blair Legacy

Since joining Blair's faculty in 1999, Coach and Mrs. Mantegna have been integral members of the School community. In addition to serving as head varsity boys' basketball coach, Coach Mantegna is Blair's associate dean of college counseling and director of testing. Mrs. Mantegna is well known on campus as an advisor and teacher of AP psychology, and former English teacher, learning specialist, assistant housemaster of Insley Hall and coach of JV girls' tennis. The Mantegnas are the proud parents of **Jake '19**, **Lula '20** and Xavier.

During Coach Mantegna's 19 seasons at the helm of Buccaneer varsity boys' basketball, Blair has won 10 Mid-Atlantic Prep League (MAPL) titles and competed 14 times in the New Jersey prep "A" state finals, earning state titles in 2009, 2011 and 2014. In 2003, Blair was the only school in the nation with two McDonald's and *Parade* magazine all-Americans, **Luol Deng '03** and **Charlie Villanueva '03**. More than 40 former Bucs have gone on to compete at Division I schools, five have played in the NCAA Final Four, eight have played professionally overseas and four—**Royal Ivey '00**, Mr. Deng, Mr. Villanueva and **Mike Tobey '12**—advanced to careers in the NBA. Currently, more than a dozen of Coach Mantegna's former players are on college rosters, three former players and coaches are head prep school coaches, one former player serves as a college assistant coach and one—Mr. Ivey—serves as an assistant coach for the NBA's Oklahoma City Thunder.

Beyond Blair, Coach Mantegna is highly regarded on the national and international basketball scene, having annually run and lectured at camps in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. In 2014 and 2016, he served as defensive coordinator for the U.S.-Select U-18 team in the U-18 World Championships at the Albert Schweitzer Games in Germany. He is the 2018 head coach of that same U.S.-Select squad. Additionally, Coach Mantegna serves as coaching consultant for the Luol Deng Foundation, and he teams with his former player to run the basketball instruction at both the Deng Top 50 Camp in London and the Luol Deng Invitational Camp for student athletes of South Sudanese descent, which is held in different venues around North America. He also hosts the annual College Coaches Roundtable on Blair's campus each June.



## Day of Giving Celebrated on April 5

Blair's Day of Giving on April 5 was a campus-wide and worldwide celebration of blue-and-white spirit! Our heartfelt thanks to all who supported the annual event by making gifts to the Blair Fund and sharing photos and memories on social media. Visit [www.blair.edu/day-of-giving](http://www.blair.edu/day-of-giving) for coverage of this exciting day. ■

## JOIN THE CREW & PULL TOGETHER FOR BLAIR!

It's a breeze to join the John C. Sharpe Society, where your gift will support longtime traditions and foster new programs. Blair's team of planned givers keeps the School on course to a winning future—hop aboard!

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Crew practice today.



# Correction

The summer-fall 2017 issue of the *Blair Bulletin* included the 2016-2017 Annual Report, and we regret that the “Honorary Gifts” table on page 93 listed donors incorrectly. The table should have appeared as it does below.

Also, Elizabeth D. Sigety, Esq., should have been listed as a donor at the Blue & White Club level. We sincerely apologize for the errors.

## Honorary Gifts

### Mr. John E. Alden, Jr. '63

Ms. Grace Lensink  
Ms. Madonna VanDeusen

### Ms. Alyssa Arana '17

Mr. R. Latta Browse and Mrs. Carolyn  
M. Conforti-Browse '79

### Ms. Catharine Q. Berry-Toon '17

Mr. R. Latta Browse and Mrs. Carolyn  
M. Conforti-Browse '79  
Mr. Joseph Mandel '16

### Mr. John C. Bogle '47

Mr. Alexander A. Adrien '04  
Mr. Robert Apgar '99 and Mrs. Megan Apgar '99  
Mr. Colin Apple and Mrs. Amanda Apple '00  
Mr. Peter Bailey and Mrs. Victoria P. Bailey '97  
Mr. Emmanuel Bello '04  
Ms. Kristen E. Bogart '01  
Mrs. Christy L. Burkart '97  
Mr. and Mrs. Chad I. Butt '00  
Mr. Darrius T. Campbell '13  
Mr. Jonathan R. Carroll '05  
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Castellani III '82  
Mr. and Mrs. James H. Conklin '98  
Ms. Singleton A. Cox '90  
Mr. Michael D'Alessandro and  
Mrs. Georgiana D'Alessandro '00  
Mr. Demetrius J. Daltirus '14  
Mr. Anthony M. D'Amato '06  
Mr. Nicholas C. D'Amato '01  
Mr. Hamilton T. Davis '04  
Mr. Daniel DeTogni '12  
Ms. Rebecca E. Dewey '11  
Mr. Lamar C. Duffy '08  
Ms. Sasha Ewan '05  
Mr. Andrew J. Floyd '03 and  
Mrs. Amanda A. Floyd '03  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey B. Graupe '02  
Dr. Chelsea N. Grefe '02  
Mr. Adam C. Hogue '09  
Mr. Austen Holderness and  
Mrs. Chloe Holderness '94  
Mr. Kyle D. Horne '02  
Mr. Brandon Kampschuur and  
Mrs. Donna Kampschuur '03  
Mr. and Mrs. Hyung Ik Kim '05  
Dr. Tamika M. Lasege '96 and  
Mr. Muhammed Lasege  
Mr. David Leonardis '91 and Mrs. Judit  
Jane-Valbuena  
Mr. Matthew Lidinsky and Mrs. Sally Lidinsky '01  
Ms. Jenna A. Lubliner '09  
Mr. Michael Ridley and Mrs. Lanisha  
Makle-Ridley '94

Dr. and Mrs. Vikram B. Mansharamani '92  
Mr. Kevin Hines and Mrs. Stephanie J. Marcial '95  
Mr. David Matyasovsky and Mrs. Kaitlin  
Maillet Matyasovsky '04  
Mr. and Mrs. Scott E. McKee '77  
Mr. and Mrs. Rodrigo A. Menendez '94  
Mr. David J. Ward and Dr. Alison  
J. Monds-Ward '80  
Ms. Kristin N. Nelson '02  
Mr. Alexander Niles III '84  
Ms. Manuela Perez '12  
Ms. Karin E. Roethke-Kahn '93 and  
Mr. Peter M. Kahn  
Mr. and Mrs. Steven M. Roethke '90  
Mr. and Mrs. W. Steven Roethke  
Mr. Adam V. Sampieri '99  
Mrs. Jacqueline Summers and  
Mr. Brian Shumaker '91  
Ms. Nicole Y. Shumaker '93  
Mr. and Mrs. Luke A. Somers '97  
Mr. Ryan Spring and Mrs. Stacey Spring '95  
Mr. Geoffrey Standfast and Captain  
Caren Standfast '95  
Mr. and Mrs. Dean G. Tanella '78  
Mr. Gabriel Vallejo '02 and  
Mrs. Victoria Vallejo '02  
Mr. Simon K. Kline and Dr. Christy C. Visaggi '98  
Ms. Lauren E. Vostal '15  
Ms. Jessie R. Wilburn '04  
Ms. Sophie W. Wiss '02  
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Yu '90

### Dr. Everardo G. Clavel

Mr. Chase Palanca '15

### Mr. Shannon S. E. Davis '14

Mr. Dong Hyuk Kim '12

### Mr. Trevor P. Draper '05

Mr. Christopher Morris

### Ms. Jane C. Fitzpatrick '17

Mr. R. Latta Browse and Mrs. Carolyn  
M. Conforti-Browse '79

### Ms. Shoshana M. Geller '16

Ms. Emily S. Cort '16

### Mr. and Mrs. Andrew L. Heister, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Woolley

### Mr. Dillon R. Hoffman '10

Mr. and Mrs. Russell L. Duryea Jr.

### Ms. Margaret B. Hoffman '11

Mr. and Mrs. Russell L. Duryea Jr.

### Ms. Fiona Ingla Vives-Fierro '17

Mr. R. Latta Browse and Mrs. Carolyn  
M. Conforti-Browse '79

### Dr. and Mrs. David M. Inkeles

Mr. and Mrs. John J. W. Inkeles '93

### Mr. Jesse Jeffries

Mr. Thomas E. McLean '73

### Ms. Daisy M. Kahn '19

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kahn

### Mr. Charles B. Kalemjian '58

Ms. Anne L. Kalemjian and Mr. Randolph E. Suhl

### Ms. Natasha Leitch-Huggins '97

Mrs. Rachel D. Clouser '97

### Mr. Garrett M. Long '20

Mr. and Mrs. William Long

### Mrs. Elizabeth N. McDowell '00

Mr. and Mrs. William G. Niles

### Mr. Robert A. Neff '49

Ms. Kelsey A. Vella '11

### Mr. Victor J. Roccki II '18

Mr. and Mrs. Victor J. Roccki

### Mr. Steven M. Roethke '90

Mr. and Mrs. W. Steven Roethke

### Ms. Karin E. Roethke-Kahn '93

Mr. and Mrs. W. Steven Roethke

### Ms. Olivia N. Scialla '20

Mr. and Mrs. Davis Cotugno  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Scialla

### Mrs. Kimberly M. Vesce Panzanaro '92

Mr. and Mrs. Vincent C. Vesce

### Mr. Vincent A. Vesce '90

Mr. and Mrs. Vincent C. Vesce

## Jayson Oweh '18 Ranked in Top 100 Football Players in U.S.

Despite having just two seasons of play under his belt, **Jayson Oweh '18** was selected to play in Under Armour's All-America Game this winter, distinguishing him as one of the top 100 football players in the United States. Jayson is the first athlete in School history to receive the accolade.

In advance of the January 4 football game, *USA Today High School Sports* profiled Jayson, describing him as a "defensive end who blends size and athleticism into an elite package." The article added that Jayson is one of 10 highly sought-after defensive backs in the country being "chased" by numerous teams to play collegiate football with them next fall. At the close of the 2017 football season, Jayson was ranked second overall among New Jersey football players and seventh in the nation among strong side defensive ends. In January 2018, he announced his commitment to Pennsylvania State University.

"It's a huge honor being the first Blair Academy player to be selected [to the Under Armour team]," the three-sport varsity athlete told *USA Today High School Sports* writer Cam Smith. "I want to make my people proud."

Under Armour representatives visited Blair in September to recognize Jayson's accomplishment and present him with an honorary jersey as part of the All-America Game Selection Tour presented by American Family Insurance. His parents, Henry Oweh and Tania Kachikwu, Athletic Director **Paul Clavel '88** and head varsity football coach Jim Saylor joined Jayson at the podium, and the Hardwick Hall performance gym resounded with the cheers of football teammates and the many fellow students, teachers and staff members who attended the mid-afternoon event. (To watch a video of the presentation, visit [www.blair.edu/all-america-football](http://www.blair.edu/all-america-football).)



Photo on bottom left courtesy of Under Armour.

Jayson's selection to the 2018 Under Armour All-America team is a result of his outstanding performance at an Under Armour regional camp last spring, as well as a strong fall 2017 season and high levels of interest from college and university coaches and scouts. When he arrives in State College, Pennsylvania, this fall, Jayson will no doubt make a big impact on the gridiron for the Nittany Lions. ■

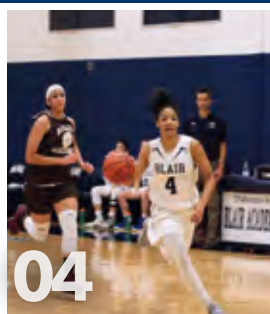
@ [www.blair.edu/jayson-owe](http://www.blair.edu/jayson-owe)



# BUCCANEERS



01



04



05



08



02

**01** Girls' varsity squash No. 2 player **Zoë Reinert '20** won matches in the team's defeat of MAPL opponents Hill and Mercersburg.

**02** **Sydney Brown '18** and her varsity basketball teammates earned Blair's eighth-consecutive MAPL title in 2018.

**03** **Avery Lehman '21's** 12th-place finish helped the girls' varsity ski team finish second overall in their January 30 slalom race.

**04** Point guard **Dominique Darius '21** scored 14 points in the Bucs' January win over Life Center Academy.

**05** Blair's winter track team participated in a full schedule of indoor meets from December to February (**Chloe Park '20** pictured).

**06** **Dirk Daniels '19** and his varsity basketball teammates competed in Blair's 14th state finals in the past 19 seasons.

**07** **Alec Lawless '18** swam personal best races at the MAPL, state and Eastern Interscholastic tournaments.

**08** The Bucs' top scorer in several games, **Jordan Dingle '19** helped boys' varsity basketball earn the 2018 MAPL championship.

**09** **Jon Carlsson '18** notched victories over Hill and Mercersburg opponents in a January MAPL tri-meet.

**10** National prep champion **Owen Trephan '19** (220 lbs.) helped propel Blair wrestling to its 38th national prep team championship in 2018.



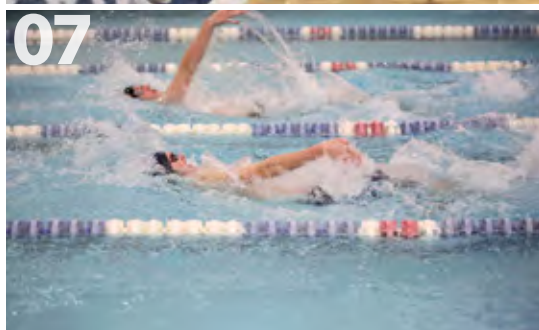
09



03



06



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10

## Winter Champions Represent **Best of Blair Athletics**

"We are proud of our student-athletes who showed great sportsmanship to earn these honors. Our vision is that our student-athletes continue to pursue the tradition of excellence for years to come."

—Director of Athletics **Paul Clavel '88**

From November to February, Blair's winter athletes competed in more than 150 contests from the ski slopes to the swimming pool, and basketball and squash courts to the wrestling mat and indoor track. The Buccaneers exhibited exceptional sportsmanship, dedication and teamwork, noted Director of Athletics **Paul Clavel '88**, marking another successful season in the Bucs' record books.

"The winter season tends to be a long, demanding one for our student-athletes, yet they rose to the challenge and concluded their seasons as champions," said Mr. Clavel. "They represented the best of Blair athletics, displaying tremendous grit and showing self-sacrifice for the betterment of their teams."

by **Rhett Moroses '13**



### Blair Wrestling Wins 38th National Prep Championship

During its final weekend of competition for the 2017-2018 season, Blair's wrestling team traveled to Lehigh University for the national prep tournament and won its 38th national prep championship. The Bucs dominated the event, crowning seven national champions: **Ryan Miller '20** (106 lbs.), **Trevor Mastrogiovanni '20** (113 lbs.), **Willy Kaiser '18** (152 lbs.), **Andrew Merola '18** (160 lbs.), **Julian Ramirez '19** (170 lbs.), **Leo Tarantino '18** (182 lbs.) and **Owen Trephan '19** (220 lbs.).

Tournament runners-up included **Michael Colaiocco '19** (120 lbs.), **Chris Cannon '19** (126 lbs.), **Travis**

**Mastrogiovanni '21** (132 lbs.) and **Malcolm Robinson '18** (138 lbs.). Notable performances were also recorded by **Michael Madara '19**, who placed fifth at 145 lbs., and **Peyton Craft '21**, who placed fourth at 195 lbs. Eleven Bucs competed in the finals, and Blair achieved an overall team score of 345, followed by Wyoming Seminary at 294.5 and Malvern Prep at 170.5.



"Our wrestlers competed hard and represented Blair well," said head wrestling coach **Brian Antonelli '93** of the national prep tournament. "The prep title is a complete team effort and a great way to send our seniors off to wrestle in college."



## Swim Team Breaks School Records

Varsity swimmers traveled to Franklin & Marshall College for the Eastern Interscholastic Swimming & Diving Championship in mid-February. During the meet, the Bucs set six new School records, and each of the 12 Blair swimmers who participated posted at least one personal best time.

Highlights from the two days of competition included: **Summer Will '19** placing sixth in the 200 individual medley event; **Anna Insana '21** breaking the School record in the



200-free event; Summer, Anna, **Camille Williams '20** and **Tiara Myrie '18**, setting two new School records in the girls' 200-medley and 200-free relay events; the boys' freestyle relay team, comprising **Alec Lawless '18**, **Justin Choi '18**, **Jacob Leddy '19** and **Andrew Brooks '19**, establishing new School records the 200-free and 400-free relays; and, Anna besting the School record in a 500-free preliminary race, then breaking her own record in the event's final, placing tenth overall.

"The spectacular performances, both by individuals and relay teams, were the culmination of a great deal of hard work, commitment and determination," said Robert Brandwood, Blair's head swimming coach, who added that all members of the swim team "displayed grit, spirit and sportsmanship" throughout the winter season.

## Blair Basketball Teams Earn MAPL Titles

Both the girls' and boys' teams were crowned 2018 Mid-Atlantic Prep League (MAPL) champions on February 11. This marked the girls' eighth-consecutive MAPL title and the boys' third title in the past four years and tenth in School history.

In the boys' championship game, the Bucs defeated the Hill School in thrilling fashion, winning 68-66. Blair trailed most of the game and was down by nine points at the half. As the final seconds ticked away, the Bucs closed the deficit to a score of 65-66. With six seconds to go, **Gabe Ravetz '18** knocked down a three-pointer from the right side of the arc, putting Blair ahead by two to earn the MAPL title. Gabe finished with 15 points, **Tucker Richardson '18** contributed 10 points and **Jordan Dingle '19** led all scorers with 25 points.



"I am so happy for this group of guys as they committed to a process all season and played for each other," said boys' varsity head coach Joe Mantegna. "Their level of joyfulness, grit and selflessness made this team a deserving champion."

The girls' team won both of its tournament games by wide margins, defeating The Hun School, 64-35, and Peddie School in the championship matchup, 77-39. In that game, **Onome Akinbode-James '18**, **Sydney Brown '18** and **Olivia Miles '21** led the Bucs in scoring with 16, 15 and 14 points, respectively. Blair achieved a perfect 7-0 record against MAPL teams this season.

"It's been an incredible privilege to work with such an amazing group of athletes this winter," said girls' varsity head coach **Quinten Clarke '87**. "Their commitment to each other and the team has allowed us to overcome adversity and challenge in reaching the first of our many goals this season."

The girls closed their season on another high note, placing fifth in the Insider Exposure Independent School National Championship held in North Carolina in late February. The Bucs faced teams from Florida, Virginia, North Carolina and Canada during the invitation-only tournament, winning three of their four matchups to finish a winning season overall. ■

## For the Love of the Game: Program Director Jim Moore Reflects on Squash at Blair

by Joanne Miceli

English department chair Jim Moore describes squash as a “lifetime sport,” and that makes perfect sense when you realize how much of his own life the veteran director of Blair’s squash programs has devoted to the game: He has played squash, on a team or recreationally, for 47 years and counting. He has coached throughout his 25-year teaching career at three independent schools and during many summers at Williams College, and he has spent countless behind-the-scenes hours at Blair establishing and growing a squash program that annually engages nearly 60 students, boasts a roster of more than 400 alumni and takes place on seven international courts in Tracy Hall, none of which existed before he arrived at the School in 1990.

All of this points to Coach Moore’s love of a game that combines the “intellectual challenge of chess with the exhilaration of being pushed to your physical limits.” His number-one goal in coaching Blair squash players is to instill in them that same love of the game, and he has worked steadily—and with great enthusiasm—during his 19 years at Blair to make that happen.

### In the Vanguard

Coach Moore joined Blair’s faculty as director of college counseling in 1990, but his hire was strategic for the School’s athletic ambitions as well. Blair was considering establishing a squash program, and Coach Moore had two decades of experience in the sport under his belt, including playing for Cornell University for a year as an undergraduate and coaching one of the top teams in the country at The Hill School and a start-up team at Savannah Country Day School in his first several years after college.

“I couldn’t have walked into a better situation at Blair,” Coach Moore observed. “One of the first things Headmaster



Chan Hardwick asked me to do was accompany architect Bill Houghton on a visit to Chairman of the Blair Board of Trustees *Jack Bogle '47* to talk about building squash courts on campus.” Among the topics of discussion was whether the School should opt for larger, international courts to reflect the way the game was transitioning worldwide or whether it should follow the lead of peer schools by building narrower North American courts.

The decision was made, funds were committed and, when the first three international courts opened in Tracy Hall later that year, the School was only the second among independent schools with the larger courts, placing Blair firmly “in the vanguard,” according to Coach Moore. Junior varsity play began during the 1993-1994 season, and Blair’s squash program was off and running with Coach Moore at the helm.

### Building a Solid Program

From the beginning, Coach Moore welcomed players of all levels to Blair’s squash teams, relishing his role as program organizer and technical coach. “I’m interested in having experienced players come in and will actively recruit kids at times, but my





underlying strategy has always been to teach the game of squash to anyone who is interested in playing,” he said.

Through the early years of the program, many students tried the sport and enjoyed success, but there were a few standouts, according to Coach Moore, who “put our program on the map.” These athletes included **Rafael Alvarez ’96**, Blair’s first squash recruit; **Adam Berk ’95**, who had never picked up a racquet before coming to Blair and went on to play at the U.S. Naval Academy; **Laura Inkeles ’97**, who played for four years at Bowdoin College; and **Briggs Johnson ’97**, who was ranked among the top three players nationally during his years at Blair.

A career move took Coach Moore back to his Rochester roots in 1997, and, over the next nine years as he worked at the William E. Simon Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Rochester and as a management consultant, he “played squash all the time,” including in the 2000 Lapham-Grant Tournament against Canada. In 2006, however, an opening in Blair’s advancement office brought him back to the School, and his efforts on behalf of Blair squash began anew.

In his role as director of capital giving, Coach Moore helped raise *Ever, Always* Campaign funds to expand Blair’s squash center to its current seven international courts, “a very fine

facility by any measure,” he said with pride, and one that was easily on par with peer schools’ new, larger squash venues. In 2007, Coach Moore once again took the reins of Blair squash, which former science teacher Blair Buck and former history teacher Maggie Smith had held admirably, and turned his attention from building courts to building players.

A significant development for Blair squash around that time was the team’s new relationship with urban squash programs like CitySquash, which brought outstanding student-athletes, including **Manny Perez ’12** and **Darrius Campbell ’13**, to Blair. “Each of the six students who has come to Blair through urban squash programs over the years has been top-notch,” Coach Moore noted. “They’re terrific kids who come here because we have squash, they do great things throughout the community while they’re here, and they go on to represent Blair well in college and beyond.”

Another boon to the program was the burgeoning support of parents, many of whom regularly attended matches and made financial contributions to the team. In 2014, three parents—Maura Fitzgerald (mother of **Kendall Fitzgerald ’16** and **Griffin Fitzgerald ’17**), now-Trustee Robin Scheman (mother of **Rebecca Litvin ’10** and **Andrew Litvin ’14**)

and Liz Giddins (mother of *Sam Giddins '14*)—worked with the advancement office on a special fundraising project to honor Coach Moore by naming a Tracy Hall court for him. Their success in that endeavor inspired the trio to tap even further into Blair's network of squash supporters and

alumni, and, in 2015, they and fellow donors celebrated the establishment of the Blair Squash Endowment, the School's first endowed fund for an athletic team.

"Parent and alumni support have helped the squash program grow in new and exciting ways," Coach Moore said, explaining that funds from the endowment provide above-and-beyond opportunities for players to attend camps and participate in additional tournaments. "We are exceptionally fortunate to have such dedicated parents and alumni in this program."

### Importance of Teamwork

Squash at Blair today takes place during two seasons: In the fall, Coach Moore supervises the recreational squash program for about 20 athletes, some of whom are beginners just learning the game while others are accomplished players looking to sharpen their skills for the season ahead. The program kicks into high gear during the regular season each winter, when 50-plus varsity, JV and thirds girls and boys become part of the team. They practice daily after school, rotating on and off Blair's courts on a precisely choreographed schedule, and take part in weekend Mid-Atlantic Prep League and non-league matches up and down the East Coast.



In addition to coordinating the many details and logistics of the overall program, Coach Moore is the girls' varsity coach, a role he's held since former Bates University team captain and squash pro Douglass Compton took over the boys' varsity team when he joined Blair's English faculty in 2014. Rounding out the coaching staff are math teacher Tracy Klein and science teacher Rod Gerdson, coaches of the JV girls' and boys' teams, respectively, and thirds' coach, language department chair Joyce Lang.

One point that Coach Moore emphasizes across the program is the importance of teamwork—although he admits that's not easy to do in what is essentially a competitive, individual sport. "We approach teamwork from a character perspective, and our coaches work to create a team atmosphere," he said, describing how Coach Compton has the varsity boys create—and sign—a team mission statement every year. "On the girls' side, we spend a lot of time together, always try to help one another and go out frequently for meals as a team. When we won a tournament in Buffalo last year, it would be hard to say if the highlight of the weekend was the victory or the post-tournament dinner at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que," he laughed.





### Measure of Success

As Blair squash prepares to mark its quarter-century anniversary next fall, it's evident that Coach Moore is proud of the program's growth over the years and, especially, of the positive impact the sport has had on so many Blair athletes' lives. Some students—even a few who never played before coming to Blair—have been recruited by college squash programs and have gone on to play at the next level (*see sidebar on right*). But many others simply discovered a sport they enjoyed, played with teammates and coaches who fully supported their efforts, and achieved a variety of goals, on and off the court.

"My true measure of success is whether or not alumni keep playing squash long after they leave Blair," reflected Coach Moore, who is always happy to hear from former players about their matches and squash adventures. "*Jim Stalbkraatz '12* and *Nick Ladd '12* texted a report just recently, after a friendly match in San Francisco. To me," he said with a satisfied smile, "that's success." ■

### Blair Squash Alumni at the Next Level

#### Current Professional Coaches:

**Henry Clutsam '01**

Squash pro at Cincinnati Country Club

**Eric Katerman '98**

Men's head squash coach at University of California, Berkeley  
Varsity coach at Greens Farms Academy

**Emma Moore '12**

#### Current College Players:

**Griffin Fitzgerald '17**

Fordham University

**Kendall Fitzgerald '16**

University of California, Berkeley

**Sam Giddins '14**

Middlebury College

**Andrew Litvin '14**

Williams College

**David Mascarenhas '14**

Georgetown University

**Aya Sobhy '17**

Dickinson College

**Liana Zranchev '16**

Franklin & Marshall College

#### Former College Players:

**Stefan Ades '97**

Hobart College

**Adam Berk '95**

U.S. Naval Academy

**Darrius Campbell '13**

Bates College

**Henry Clutsam '01**

Hobart College

**Alison Crevi '07**

Colby College

**Colton Hardman '13**

Boston College

**Tyler Horton '99**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Stephen Huber '98**

U.S. Naval Academy

**Laura Inkeles '97**

Bowdoin College

**Briggs Johnson '97**

Hobart College

**Eric Katerman '98**

Williams College

**Lawrence Liu '10**

Washington University

**Andrew McCann '98**

U.S. Naval Academy

**Emma Moore '12**

University of Rochester

**Cherylann Mucciolo '14**

Vassar College

**Phoebe O'Rourke '12**

Fordham University

**Haley San Giacomo '12**

New York University

**Emilie (Slack) Rendall '02**

Colby College

**Ashley Strunk '11**

Franklin & Marshall College

**Carolyn Troy '99**

William Smith College

**Amanda Zranchev '08**

Colgate University

# MELINDA SHUMWAY '73

## 'WE ALL BENEFITED FROM THE GIFTS OF OTHERS'

When former Trustee **Melinda Shumway '73** and her husband, John, included a modest bequest for Blair in their estate plans several years ago, the timing of the gift was a matter of practicality as much as it was a keen awareness of the School's needs. "I was serving on the Board of Trustees in the mid-'90s when John and I rewrote our will during our move from New Jersey to Massachusetts," the two-term Trustee said. "I knew that alumni participation was critical to the success of the campus improvements underway at that time, and I also knew that estate gifts were necessary to help build the endowment. John and I felt we could do something to help."

The ways that Melinda has helped her alma mater go far beyond her faithful financial support. After attending the School for her senior year—a year in which she enjoyed Blair's warm, welcoming atmosphere and the camaraderie of field hockey teammates, Ivy Hall dorm mates and fellow singers in the Tweeds—she graduated from Bucknell University in 1977, launched her career in high-tech marketing and, within two years, began serving on Blair's Alumni Board of Governors (BOG).

"BOG service was a lot of fun, and living in New Jersey made it easy for me to get to campus," she reminisced. Her interest in School governance

deepened with her involvement over the next several years, and, in 1993, she was delighted to be elected to the Board of Trustees, becoming the second alumna, after **Anne Cramer '75**, to serve in that role.

Melinda's Board service from 1993 to 1999 and again from 2000 to 2006 gave her a bird's-eye view of the exciting changes underway at Blair under the leadership of then-Chairman of the Board **John C. Bogle '47** and then-Headmaster Chan Hardwick. Serving on the Buildings and Grounds, Education and School Life, Development and Strategic Planning Committees, she played a role in the expansion of facilities and programs that were bringing Blair to new prominence in the boarding school landscape. "Jack Bogle was the consummate leader, and I enjoyed working with many wonderful Trustee colleagues," she said. "Everyone wanted the School to thrive, and it was very rewarding to see Blair grow and continually improve throughout my 12 years on the Board."

Over the last decade or so, Melinda has focused on her family (she and John have two children, Jack and Caroline) and building a second successful career in real estate. But she remains in close touch with her classmates and with developments at Blair, and she continues to spread



**Melinda Shumway '73.**

the word about the importance of supporting the School where she and so many fellow alumni got their start.

"When you think about it, everyone who attends Blair is the beneficiary of someone else's gift, since tuition does not cover the full cost of a Blair education," Melinda observed. "Gifts to the endowment—including estate gifts of any size—help the School provide scholarship aid to the best and brightest future students, and cover a host of other needs, too."

Melinda hoped her planned gift to Blair might inspire others to "do something similar." Her advice was as practical as the gift she and John made years ago: "If you feel you got a lot out of your years at Blair—whether they led to a great career or lifelong friendships—then it's important to support the School in any way you can." ■

"When you think about it, everyone who attends Blair is the beneficiary of someone else's gift."

—**Melinda Shumway '73**



## Gatherings Bring Together Alumni & Parents

Peddie Week is traditionally an opportunity for members of Blair's extended family to show their school pride and celebrate one of New Jersey's longest-standing prep school football rivalries and traditions. In addition to inviting alumni, parents and friends of the School to Blairstown for the bonfire and pep rally and to Peddie School for the away athletic competitions, Blair hosted early November 2017 gatherings in New York City, Boston, Los Angeles,

Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley, at which attendees had the opportunity to socialize and reminisce about their favorite Peddie Week memories.

The advancement office continued its efforts to connect graduates with one another and current faculty at two winter events in New York. Blair's New York City Regional Chapter held its inaugural holiday gathering at Flatiron Hall in early December. Then, in late February, Emeritus Trustee

*continued on page 66*



1- Former Blair faculty member Marty Haase, **Colin Miller '01**, **Andrew Clark '08** and **Chrissy Devenney '08** at the Los Angeles Peddie Day celebration gathering. 2- **Ashley Iannone '11**, **Evie Tilney '05**, **Ali Surdoval '13**, **Maddie Kling '13** and **David Owen '81** at the Peddie Day Celebration Gathering at Highball Lounge in Boston, Mass. 3- **Jeremy Kirk '98**, **Whitney Potter '98**, **Mary Margaret Herman '00** and **Jamiyl Peters '98** celebrated the Blair-Peddie rivalry at Blaguard in Washington, D.C. 4- Members of the class of 2013 gather for a picture at the February 2018 Young Alumni Reception hosted by Trustee Emeritus **Jim Krugman '65**, and his wife Connie. Left to right: Tati Kalainoff, Sierra Yit, Bea Wu, Audrey Tseng, Jamie Kim, Kevin Kim, Kyle Tierney and Jake Spezial.



## ALUMNI EVENTS

*continued from page 65*

**Jim Krugman '65** and his wife, Connie, hosted the annual Young Alumni Reception at their home on the Upper East Side. While chapter members toasted one another at what they hope will become an annual event, the long-standing reception has become a Blair tradition that gives alumni opportunities to mingle with former classmates.

And, a few weeks into the spring semester, some of Blair's most dedicated basketball and wrestling enthusiasts had the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of athletes and coaches. On January 19, the advancement office hosted a reception for wrestling fans prior to Blair's victory over rival Wyoming

Seminary. The get-together included alumni and parents of all class years, including some former student all-stars who returned to campus to partake in the festivities. A week later, a large crowd came out to support longtime boys' varsity basketball coach Joe Mantegna and his wife, Shelly, at the January 26 dedication of the court named in their honor (*see story on page 52*).

We hope you will join us at a range of spring gatherings up and down the East Coast! For more details about what the advancement office is planning, please visit [www.blair.edu/alumni](http://www.blair.edu/alumni).



1- **Pat '91** and Lisa Folts celebrated Blair wrestling at a January reception with advancement office staffer Kristine Scialla P'20, Head of School Chris Fortunato and his son, Matty. 2- **Carolyn Conforti-Browse '79**, **Juliana Furey '08** and **Marissa Mattar '08** at Chelsea Piers' Sunset Terrace for the joint Blair-Peddie pregame party in New York City. 3- **Lauren Anderson '05**, **Emily Anderson '07** and **Emmanuel Bello '04** showed their Buccaneer pride at the Blair-Peddie event. 4- The Bucs came together for a group photo during the NYC pregame party. 5- NYC pregame party attendees **Neal Sigety '76 P'16 '18 '19**, **Singleton Cox '90** and Blair's Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall admired the Kelley-Potter Cup.



<b>1939</b>	George H. Atherholt Jr. August 25, 2017 Southern Pines, North Carolina	<b>1953</b>	James A. Crichton October 6, 2017 Saline, Michigan	Ted F. Rabold September 8, 2017 Chambersburg, Pennsylvania	
<b>1943</b>	Valeria B. Stewart June 9, 2017 Davidsville, Pennsylvania	<b>1955</b>	Jon C. Mazuy October 11, 2017 Norwell, Massachusetts	Richard W. Smith May 20, 2016 Wayne, New Jersey	
<b>1946</b>	Charles T. Thomas January 16, 2018 Short Hills, New Jersey	<b>1956</b>	Charles K. Hoyt October 19, 2017 Lyme, Connecticut	<b>1964</b>	James H. Earhart June 10, 2017 Schwenksville, Pennsylvania
	Kit Y. Wong September 7, 2017 West Windsor, New Jersey		Thomas M. Peirsel Jr. December 4, 2017 Morris Plains, New Jersey	<b>1965</b>	Henry O. Clutsam III September 26, 2017 New Vernon, New Jersey
<b>1947</b>	Allan E. DiSanto January 15, 2018 Lawrence, Kansas	<b>1958</b>	John A. Whitehouse January 2, 2018 San Miguel de Allende, Mexico	<b>1970</b>	Frank G. Dane October 21, 2017 McDonough, Georgia
<b>1948</b>	George F. Aberle August 2017 Henrietta, New York	<b>1959</b>	James P. Hanlon Jr. March 17, 2016 Sanibel, Florida	<b>1973</b>	Deborah L. Kling October 23, 2017 Hackettstown, New Jersey
	T. Clarke Benton March 21, 2017 Loch Hill, Maryland	<b>1962</b>	John F. Arthur January 5, 2018 Silver Spring, Maryland	<b>1976</b>	Margaret O. Bergh November 17, 2017 Pocasset, Massachusetts
<b>1949</b>	Edgar B. Hunt Jr. November 14, 2017 Midlothian, Virginia		Charles F. Bernhard January 3, 2018 Guilford, Connecticut	<b>1999</b>	Jason S. Kobrin October 13, 2017 Millstone Township, New Jersey
	Raymond A. Meyrowitz May 26, 2017 Gainesville, Florida		William B. Taylor Jr. July 28, 2017 Port Charlotte, Florida	<b>2012</b>	Hanna O. Huntley October 31, 2017 Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
<b>1952</b>	John Cheston October 28, 2017 Belfast, Maine	<b>1963</b>	Arthur E. Lederman November 20, 2017 Beverly, Massachusetts	<b>Past Parent</b>	Margery I. Inkeles October 30, 2017 Sparta, New Jersey

## 1939

**George H. Atherholt Jr.** Mr. Atherholt enjoyed a 37-year career in the steel industry and lived a life of service to others. A proud World War II U.S. Army veteran, he was active in many civic organizations throughout his life, including the United Way of Baltimore, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, numerous hospital boards and committees, and the American Cancer Society. Mr. Atherholt was a 56-year member of Rotary International, which included membership in nine Rotary Clubs, presidency of two clubs and a term as Rotary governor of Georgia. In

addition, he was an 89-year member of the Boy Scouts of America and was recognized as the Occoneechee Boy Scout Council's 2013 Distinguished Citizen of the Year. Mr. Atherholt's love of travel took him to six continents and 49 states, and he was a renowned big-game hunter and conservationist. He was a state champion swimmer in the 100-yard backstroke and 150-yard medley relay during his Blair days, and a member of the soccer and baseball teams. Predeceased by his first and second wives, Leona and Judy, Mr. Atherholt is survived by his third wife, Sheila, and five children.

## 1943

**Valeria B. Stewart.** Mrs. Stewart and her husband, **W. Donald Stewart '43**, by whom she was predeceased in 2008, were deeply loyal supporters of the School and members of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers. They established the W. Donald and Valeria B. Stewart Scholarship to make a Blair education possible for future generations of students. Mrs. Stewart was a graduate of the Conemaugh School of Nursing, and she met Mr. Stewart while they both worked for the FBI. The Stewarts eventually retired to Florida before returning to Mrs. Stewart's roots

in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. A kind, gentle and thoughtful person, Mrs. Stewart was a proud honorary member of Blair's class of 1943. Predeceased by her first husband, Fred Grantham, and her second husband, Mr. Stewart, she is survived by several nieces and nephews and her extended family.

#### 1946

**Charles T. Thomas.** As mayor of Millburn-Short Hills, New Jersey, from 1969 to 1975, Mr. Thomas was instrumental in the construction of a new library. A founding member of the Friends of the Millburn Library and a library trustee, he also served as police commissioner and helped the town receive state grants to fund the purchase of land that would become Old Short Hills Park. Mr. Thomas' civic involvement further included membership on the Essex County Board of Canvassers, the National Conference of Mayors, the Junior Achievement advisory council, the Essex County GOP Committee, New Eyes for the Needy, and the Elizabeth and Meadowlands Civic and Improvement Association, which he founded. A Blair football player and 1950 graduate of Lafayette College, Mr. Thomas served several years as a U.S. Marine Corps officer before embarking on his business career at companies including Ted Bates and Co., Procter & Gamble Co. and Inter Community Bank. He and his wife, Joan, were co-founders of New Jersey's first Montessori school, Christopher Academy, in Westfield, and they enjoyed traveling the world together. Mr. Thomas was predeceased by Joan, and he is survived by three children and five grandchildren.

**Kit Y. Wong.** Born in China, "Larry" emigrated to the U.S. in 1945 at the age of 17. He attended Blair for one year to learn English before matriculating at Lehigh University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in engineering. He worked for many years as a mechanical engineer at Picatinny Arsenal in Wharton, New Jersey. Mr. Wong was known

among his family members and friends for his generous spirit and willingness to help others, especially immigrants and those suffering abroad. He was a life master in bridge, a master at chess, and a champion at soccer, ping-pong, bowling and tennis. His interests also included poetry, dancing and music. Mr. Wong and his wife, Jeanette, were married for 66 years; his grandson, **Christopher S. Wong '02**, followed in his footsteps at Blair. Mr. Wong's survivors include his wife, three children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

#### 1947

**Allan E. DiSanto.** Mr. DiSanto ran track during his two years at Blair and was a member of the Blair Academy Players and the band. He served in the Air Force upon graduation, returning to school in 1952 to earn his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Utah. Mr. DiSanto enjoyed a 41-year career with Essex Wire International in Fort Wayne, Indiana, retiring in 1997 as vice president of manufacturing. His interests included travel, woodworking and antique vehicle restoration. He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Linda, seven children, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

#### 1948

**George F. Aberle.** A five-year Buccaneer, Mr. Aberle was an honor roll student, a swimmer and a class leader who served on *The Blair Breeze* circulation board and as Blue and White Key Society Cabinet president. He remained a steadfast supporter of the School and devoted member of the class of 1948, attending his 50th and 65th reunions. Mr. Aberle graduated from Providence Bible Institute in 1951, earned bachelor's (1953) and master's (1956) degrees in Christian education at Wheaton College, and master's degrees in divinity (1961) and theology (1967) at Princeton Theological Seminary. His long career as a minister took him to Presbyterian churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California and Oregon, and he served as chaplain at Lewis and Clark College

in Portland, Oregon. He retired in 1994 and was subsequently involved in Grace Urban Ministries, an inner-city mission in Rochester, New York. Mr. Aberle is survived by his wife, Mary, and his brother, **James L. Aberle '49**.

**T. Clarke Benton.** "Clarke" was a varsity cross country and track runner during his two years at Blair, as well as a member of the science club. The 1948 ACTA notes that he wanted to "take up agriculture," and he went on to own a successful dairy farm in Blairstown and, later, one of the largest Christmas tree farms in New Jersey. Mr. Benton earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture at Rutgers University (1952) and a master's degree in education at the University of Connecticut (1965). He taught math and calculus in Connecticut while earning his master's degree, and then continued his career in education as a science teacher at Weequahic High School in Newark, New Jersey. Mr. Benton was a proud U.S. Navy veteran, having served as a pilot during the Korean War, and a longtime scoutmaster with the Boy Scouts of America. He and his beloved wife, Marilyn, married in 1954 and raised three children; the family enjoyed many camping trips and summer vacations together. Preceded in death by Marilyn, Mr. Benton is survived by his children, four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and his brother, **William A. Benton '51**.

#### 1949

**Edgar B. Hunt Jr.** A member of Blair's track team, "Ted" matriculated at Cornell University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in hotel management. After serving as a U.S. Army officer from 1954 to 1962, Mr. Hunt enjoyed a career as an accountant, eventually retiring from the Federal Paper Bond Company. Storytelling, photography, swimming and walking in the great outdoors were among his favorite pastimes; he was a member of the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling. Deeply devoted to his family,



Mr. Hunt is survived by two daughters, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife of 43 years, Meredith.

**Raymond A. Meyrowitz.** A three-year Blair student, Mr. Meyrowitz played soccer and served as president of *The Blair Breeze* circulation board. He completed his undergraduate degree at Brown University, earned his JD at New York University School of Law and worked as a regional claims attorney for Nationwide Insurance. An avid traveler, Mr. Meyrowitz also counted theatre, opera, concerts and cooking among his many interests. He was a dedicated mentor to young adults and served in several leadership roles for The Arc of Alachua County in Florida. Mr. Meyrowitz is survived by his loving wife, Joan, two children and two granddaughters.

#### 1952

**John Cheston.** Mr. Cheston was a cum laude student and leader during his Blair days, serving as a class officer and football captain. He received the Blair Academy Trophy at graduation, an honor accorded to the member of the senior class with the highest all-around achievement, and he remained a proud, lifelong supporter of the School. Mr. Cheston graduated from Yale University in 1956 and served six years as a U.S. Navy officer. In 1962, he began a two-decade federal government career, working first for the predecessor organization to the Office of Management and Budget and later for the Office of Economic Opportunity, where he helped create and manage the Job Corps program. He earned a master's degree in political science at The George Washington University in 1962. For 20 years during his retirement, Mr. Cheston fulfilled his lifelong dream of living and working at sea. He and his wife, Nancy C. Hauswald, settled in Belfast, Maine, in 1994, where Mr. Cheston became a community leader. He served two terms as an elected city councilor, directed the Camden Yacht Club sailing program for two years, and was a founding member and the first

president of the Belfast Senior College, among many other activities. Known for his intelligence, sense of humor and compassion, Mr. Cheston is survived by his wife of 32 years, four children, 14 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

#### 1953

**James A. Crichton.** Mr. Crichton was a varsity swimmer and baseball player during his year at Blair, and he devoted his professional life to a career in marketing and sales. He and his beloved wife of 57 years, Nancy, are the parents of two sons, including **Peter Crichton '84**. Mr. Crichton is survived by his wife, sons and three grandchildren.

#### 1955

**Jon C. Mazuy.** A member of the track team during his two years at Blair, Mr. Mazuy enjoyed a long career as a litigation attorney in Boston. He earned his JD at the University of North Carolina Law School and served in the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps. A strong proponent of conservation, Mr. Mazuy served on the Beverly, Massachusetts, conservation committee. He enjoyed gardening, sailing and travel, and he and his wife of 39 years, Carol, spent winters in Cap Cana, Dominican Republic, where they supported the local community. Mr. Mazuy's survivors include Carol, two children, two stepchildren and four grandchildren.

#### 1956

**Charles K. Hoyt.** An architect with a long, distinguished career, Mr. Hoyt earned his degree in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. He worked for several prestigious New York City firms, later becoming chief architect in the New York City regional office of the New York State Urban Development Corporation. He joined the *Architectural Record* in 1973, his industry's pre-eminent trade magazine, and became senior editor in charge of interior design coverage. After his retirement in 1997, he established a practice devoted to restoration in

the Lyme, Connecticut, area. Mr. Hoyt attended Blair for his senior year of high school and won the 1955 Headmaster's Essay Prize. He is survived by his life partner and spouse, Roger Parkman.

**Thomas M. Peirsel Jr.** A U.S. Navy veteran, "Tim" was the longtime owner and operator of The Vail Bar and Liquors and Peirsel's Florist in Morris Plains, New Jersey. He played on the golf and football teams at Blair and returned to campus for his 55th reunion. An avid golfer, Mr. Peirsel belonged to the Springbrook Country Club. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Suzanne, three children and four grandsons.

#### 1958

**John A. Whitehouse.** Raised in Mexico, where his family brought him at age 5 to recover from rheumatic fever, "Jock" came to Blair for his junior and senior years. He attended Lafayette College, where he met his first wife, Ann. They had two daughters, Elizabeth and Catherine. After serving in the Army, Mr. Whitehouse worked as an advertising copywriter while living with his second wife, Deborah, and his family in New York City, rural Pennsylvania and Atlanta. In 2002, he returned to Mexico, his true spiritual center, with Deborah. He published three books: *The Ledge of Quetzal*, *Beyond 2012: A Magical Adventure to Discover the Real Promise of the Mayan Prophecy*; *Dawn on Kukulcan: The Return of the Beginning* and *Songs to Deborah*. Mr. Whitehouse was predeceased by Deborah in 2015, and he is survived by his daughters and two grandsons.

#### 1959

**James P. Hanlon Jr.** After graduating from Lehigh University in 1963 with a bachelor's degree in accounting, Mr. Hanlon enjoyed a nearly 40-year career as a CPA, accountant, auditor and management consultant with the firm now known as Deloitte. He and his wife of 52 years, Maddy, lived abroad in Brussels, Tehran and Athens, as well as in Chicago, Connecticut and Florida. Upon Mr. Hanlon's retirement in 2002, they divided their time between Sanibel

Island, Florida, and Newport, Rhode Island. He was active in the Sanibel community, serving as director of the Committee of the Islands and Big Arts. Mr. Hanlon is survived by his wife, two children, three granddaughters and his brother, **George R. Hanlon '65**.

## 1962

**John F. Arthur.** Mr. Arthur was a decorated Vietnam veteran who earned a Bronze Star, an Air Medal and additional commendations while serving in the Army. He began his civilian career in 1971, working for the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for more than 25 years. At Blair, Mr. Arthur ran winter track and was a member of *The Blair Breeze*; he continued his studies at American University. He was a gifted singer and guitarist and known for his generosity. Mr. Arthur is survived by his sister, nieces and nephew.

**Charles F. Bernhard.** Mr. Bernhard served as class president during his student days; he was also a member of the Blue and White Key Society and a varsity swimmer. He graduated from Colgate University and, following a corporate career, he became a registered investment advisor.

**William B. Taylor Jr.** Mr. Taylor matriculated at Bucknell University and launched his career in teaching. He spent 39 years at Woodstock Academy in Woodstock, Connecticut, where he was a beloved department chair, coach, technology coordinator, class advisor and mentor to hundreds of students over the years. After his retirement in 2007, he and his wife, Rebecca, traveled the country in their RV before settling in Florida. Mr. Taylor is survived by his wife of 36 years, their son and two grandchildren.

## 1963

**Arthur E. Lederman.** A four-year Blair student, "Art" was a member of the fencing team and served as photo editor of the *ACTA* and *The Blair Breeze*. He studied Asian religions and

philosophy at New York University and Columbia University. Mr. Lederman graduated from Boston University while pursuing his doctorate and taught philosophy and the New Testament there. His survivors include his wife of 35 years, Sara, and his stepdaughter.

**Ted F. Rabold.** Dr. Rabold earned his undergraduate degree at Gettysburg College (1967) and his master's in elementary education (1969) and doctorate in education (1978) at Lehigh University. He spent his entire career in Pennsylvania public education, during which he advanced from a special education teacher in Salisbury Township in Allentown to superintendent of Tuscarora school district in Mercersburg. Following his retirement, he returned to education as an assistant superintendent and an adjunct professor at Temple University. Dr. Rabold was active in his community as a church elder, trustee and Sunday school teacher, as well as a member of Rotary International and several other organizations. He was a graduate of Liberty High School in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, having spent a year at Blair from 1959 to 1960. Dr. Rabold is survived by his wife, Bonnie, three children and eight grandchildren.

**Richard W. Smith.** A three-sport varsity athlete at Blair, Mr. Smith co-captained the basketball and baseball teams and served on the Blue and White Key Society. He graduated from Hope College in 1967, served four years in the U.S. Air Force and then worked for many years as an auto dealership service manager. Predeceased by his wife, Joan, Mr. Smith is survived by their son.

## 1964

**James H. Earhart.** Mr. Earhart was a member of the varsity football, wrestling and track teams, as well as a JV swimmer, during his years at Blair. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at Ursinus College (1968) and a master's degree in education at Temple University (1972), and worked

in private practice as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. He is survived by his wife, Patricia, and two children.

## 1965

**Henry O. Clutsam III.** A deeply loyal member of Blair's class of 1965, Mr. Clutsam served the School as a Trustee (2005-2010), a member of the Alumni Board of Governors (1974-1980), and as a dedicated Parent Fund Group, 1848 Society and reunion committee volunteer. His family's three-generation Blair legacy includes his late father, former Trustee and Board of Governors member **Henry O. "Og" Clutsam Jr. '38**, and son, **Henry Clutsam '01**. Mr. Clutsam and his wife, Cheryl, honored that legacy in 2013 by establishing the Clutsam Family Scholarship, a gift that enables future generations of students to experience the benefits of a Blair education, just as members of their family did. During his four years at the School, Mr. Clutsam played on the varsity golf team, an activity he continued throughout his life. He was a graduate of Hanover College in Madison, Indiana, and he enjoyed a successful 45-year career in the mortgage industry. An active and generous community volunteer, Mr. Clutsam was past president and treasurer of the New Vernon (New Jersey) fire department, a member of the New Vernon first aid squad, a board member of the Glenburnie Cottagers Association and chairman of the Glenburnie Golf Committee. He was passionate about cars and car restoration, and he loved vacationing with his family. Mr. Clutsam was a member of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, their son and daughter, and three grandchildren.

## 1970

**Frank G. Dane.** A four-year Blair student, "Rusty" played football for the Bucs. His Blair legacy spanned four generations as his great-grandfather, **John I. Blair Reiley**, class of 1871, grandmother, **Claire Reiley Guthrie**, class of 1901, and uncle, **John R. Guthrie '38**, were all graduates



of the School. Mr. Dane served proudly in the U.S. Army, retiring as a sergeant major after a 30-year career. A lifelong sports enthusiast, he enjoyed golf and racquetball, and coached youth soccer for more than 20 years. Mr. Dane is survived by his wife, Diane, and two sons.

#### 1973

**Deborah L. Kling.** Mrs. Kling (née Miller) attended Blair for her sophomore year but remained connected to the School for life through her husband, **Stefan A. Kling '71**; children, **Marjory '11** and **Madeline '13**; and her many friends. She was an enthusiastic parent volunteer and a familiar face at Peddie Day, Alumni Weekend and many Blair events over the years. Mrs. Kling earned a bachelor's degree in education at Southern Connecticut State University in 1977 and a master's degree in education at East Stroudsburg University in 1994. She spent her entire 33-year teaching career at her alma mater, Hackettstown High School, where she taught health, physical education, family life, driver education and life skills, and coached the swim and ski teams. Mrs. Kling will be remembered for her courage, faith and gratitude for her many blessings. She is survived by her husband, her daughters and sons, Samuel and Benjamin, and her stepson, Owen.

#### 1976

**Margaret O. Bergh.** "Magy" (née Osborn) was a Bogle Brothers Scholar and *The Blair Breeze* news editor during her Blair days and a lifelong loyal member of the class of 1976. She was a graduate of Cape Cod Community College and Johnson & Wales University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in hotel restaurant management in 1983. Mrs. Bergh was a passionate fan of the Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots who was well known among her

family and friends for her exuberance, generosity and thoughtfulness. Predeceased in 2016 by her beloved husband, David, Mrs. Bergh's survivors include her sister, **Patience M. Osborn Chalmers '78**, her daughter, two stepdaughters and four grandchildren.

#### 1999

**Jason S. Kobrin.** Mr. Kobrin was a member of the squash team during his years at Blair. A 2003 graduate of the University of Miami, he earned his master's in business administration at Nova Southeastern University in 2006. Mr. Kobrin worked as a manager for Accenture and, most recently, as a worldwide digital advisor for Microsoft. He enjoyed travel, music and hosting family and friends, and he is survived by his wife, Whitney, and their son.

#### 2012

**Hanna O. Huntley.** Hanna was serving in the Peace Corps when she lost her life following a car accident in Armenia. Since June 2017, she had been working as a community youth development volunteer with a nongovernmental organization in Sevan, Armenia, where she helped organize a summer music festival, participated in the opening of the community's first artistic teahouse and started an English club. Acting Peace Corps Director Sheila Crowley praised Hanna's "gift for languages and passion for helping women and children." Hanna was a three-year Blair student who served as a prefect during her senior year. She was a member of the Blair Academy Players, as well as the crew, field hockey and swimming teams. While earning her bachelor's degree in international relations at American University (2016), Hanna tutored elementary students at DC Reads and was involved in Chi Alpha campus ministries and the AU Independent Arts Collective. Fluent in Hungarian, Spanish and Russian, she taught English in Hungary and Slovakia during the summer of 2013; she also lived in Romania for several months, caring for and teaching young orphans. Hanna is survived by her

parents, Krista and Col. Peter D. Huntley, and her brothers, **Maxwell Huntley '10** and Lt. Peter Oscar Huntley.

#### Past Parent

**Margery I. Inkeles.** Devoted mother of **Charles '88**, **Barbara '90**, **John '93** and **Laura '97**, Mrs. Inkeles was a familiar face on campus throughout her children's Blair years. Together with her husband, Dr. David Inkeles, she was a generous supporter of the School, and the Timken Library conference room bears their family name. Mrs. Inkeles earned a bachelor's degree in speech therapy from the University of Missouri and enjoyed a long career in her field. She also served her community of Sparta, New Jersey, as a school and Girl Scout volunteer. Mrs. Inkeles is survived by her beloved husband of 49 years and their children.

# COME BACK TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN!

SAVE THE DATE FOR BLAIR ACADEMY'S  
ALUMNI WEEKEND

June 8-10, 2018

## Weekend Highlights:

- » Blair Cup Golf Scramble
- » Guided Hike of the Siegel Property
- » All-Alumni Welcome Back Party, featuring food & beverages by:
  - Tom Kehoe '83** (Yards Brewing Company)
  - Mark McLean '98** (Remarkable Cuisine)
  - Shaun Mehtani '02** (Mehtani Restaurant Group)
  - Matt Gallira '08** (Big Mozz, Inc.)
- » Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony:
  - Craig Scott '68**
  - Milton (Skip) Waddell '73**
  - Stacey (Gorski) Spring '95**
  - John Giacche '98**
  - Nicole (Armano) Weston '98**
  - Charlie Villanueva '03**
- » Head of School Assembly & Awards Presentation
- » Picnic, Class Photos, Live Entertainment & Children's Activities
- » Alumni Soccer Game in memory of **Ryan Newton '08**
- » "Skeptics" Presentation by **Dick Boak '68**
- » Alumni Lacrosse Game, led by **Teddy Wenner '96**
- » Dinner & Dancing to "The Good Times Band"

Stay connected to Blair by visiting [www.blair.edu/alumni](http://www.blair.edu/alumni) for information about:

- Upcoming alumni events and receptions
- Alumni in the news
- Networking and the Alumni Stories Series
- Class Facebook pages
- And, of course, Alumni Weekend 2018

Questions? Contact Shaunna Murphy, director of alumni relations, at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5655, or [murphs@blair.edu](mailto:murphs@blair.edu).

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## BLAIR ACADEMY

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### Questions?

Contact Colleen Smarth P '18 '20, director of annual giving, at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5684, or [smarco@blair.edu](mailto:smarco@blair.edu).

