

ALUMNI
ACHIEVEMENT
Awards
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Webb School
OF KNOXVILLE



“I want to start a school
that educates young people
in extraordinary ways.”

Robert Webb
Founder, Webb School of Knoxville
1955

*Webb School of Knoxville's Alumni Achievement Awards
are presented annually to those alumni who have
distinguished themselves in their respective careers
and have achieved outstanding success
in their chosen professions while upholding
the mission of Webb School.*



TWELVE WEBB SCHOOL ALUMNI,
NOMINATED BY THEIR CLASSMATES
AND REPRESENTING THIS YEAR'S REUNION CLASSES,
ARE BEING HONORED FOR 2021.

WE ARE PLEASED TO CELEBRATE THE FOLLOWING
ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS FOR 2021:

MARIBEL KOELLA '66

JEFF McCRORY '71

SALLEE REYNOLDS '76

DEREK KIRK '81

GREG HAGOOD '86 & FRANK MAJORS '86

CARLA AINSWORTH '91

ELLERY FOUTCH '96

BRAD SMITH '01

MATTHEW CROSS '06

TAYLOR CAO '11

ARIEL GALE '16

Maribel Koella '66



Maribel Koella is Director and Principal Broker of NAI Koella | RM Moore, a nationally certified woman-owned and minority-owned organization of professionally trained brokers, with international reach and local expertise in commercial real estate. Considered the driving force behind the largest commercial real estate firm in East Tennessee, Koella provides strategic counseling to clients, helping them envision and evaluate options, and then develop strategies aligned with their business aims. She also works with nonprofits on issues related to lease

negotiation, property purchase and sales, and evaluating and responding to real estate donations.

With professional accreditations that include Counselors of Real Estate (CRE), Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (FRICS), Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR), and Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM), Koella and her firm's association with NAI Global have created an unparalleled international network of professionals and research capabilities.

Since graduating from the University of the Americas of Mexico City with a bachelor's degree in business administration, Koella has built a professional career marked by firsts, including serving as the first female appraiser for the Tennessee Veteran's Administration and the first woman CRE in Tennessee (one of 13 in the state). In addition, she was the first and remains the only female Industrial Designated SIOR in Tennessee and was the first woman chair of the NAI Global Leadership Board.

Also founder of the Knoxville chapter of the Urban Land Institute, Koella was presented with an Enterprising Women of the Year Award in 2016. In addition, she is a recipient of the National Association of Realtors' National Commercial Award and a CCIM Impact Award. A two-time CoStar Power Broker honoree, she was also a Real Estate Forum's Women of Influence selection and recipient of the March of Dimes Commercial Real Estate Industry Award. In 2008, Koella earned NAI Global's Eagle Award and Member of the Year honors for leadership and service. A year later, she received NAI Global's Chairman Award in Secondary Markets.

Koella is active on the Knoxville Metropolitan Airport Authority Board of Commissioners as well as the State of Tennessee Assessment Tax Appeals Commission. She is a former chair of the NAI Global Leadership Board and the Knoxville Chamber Workforce Development/Education Committee. She has served as a board member of numerous nonprofits and other organizations, including Technology 2020, Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, Smoky Mountain Convention & Visitors Bureau, National Parks Conservation Association, and East Tennessee Economic Development Authority.

Jeff McCrory '71



Jeff McCrory Jr. is a Presbyterian pastor with over 40 years' experience in churches and seminaries. Rev. McCrory has served in Presbyterian churches in California (Geneva Presbyterian Church, Laguna Hills), Colorado (First Presbyterian Church of Boulder), and Washington, D.C. (National Presbyterian Church). Currently, he is interim pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Tennessee.

McCrory is also a certified spiritual director. He teaches and ministers as a senior associate for Soul Shepherding (soulshepherding.org), a spiritual direction organization.

An ordained minister, McCrory is a teaching pastor, and is experienced as a professor of the Bible and associate pastor for discipleship programming. He taught Old Testament and New Testament studies and biblical Hebrew for seminaries in California, Colorado, and Washington, D.C.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee, McCrory headed west, working with the Young Life organization. He later graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary in California with a Master of Divinity degree and went on to complete his Master of Arts degree and Ph.D. in Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Claremont Graduate University.

In addition to pastoring and teaching, McCrory is an avid acoustic musician, playing guitar, mandolin, octave mandolin, and autoharp in various Bluegrass bands, Christian worship bands, and roots rock and big band swing groups.

Thinking back to the teachers he had as a student at Webb School, McCrory says Webb English teachers Cabell Tutwiler and William Tadler were two of his favorites, adding, "They taught me a love of literature and how to think creatively."

Sallee Reynolds '76



Sallee Reynolds is Supervisor of Secondary Education for Knox County Schools. A graduate of the University of Tennessee with a Bachelor of Science degree in joint elementary and secondary mathematics education, Reynolds began her teaching career at Knoxville Catholic High School where she taught mathematics and chaired the school's mathematics department. She was also a coach for the Fighting Irish and was later voted Knoxville Catholic High School Teacher of the Year.

Reynolds went on to teach mathematics and coach track and field at West High School while also pursuing her Master of Science degree at UT in administration and supervision. In 2001, she was named West High School Teacher of the Year. She transitioned to school administration in 2001, serving as assistant principal at Central High School, and then returned to West as principal. In 2007, she was named founding principal of Hardin Valley Academy, picking up Tennessee Association of Student Councils State Principal of the Year honors along the way.

As she reflects on her 40-year career in education, Reynolds says that her passion and the work she has done have their roots in both how she was raised and in her time as a student at Webb School. "My parents made sacrifices to send me to Webb and they held high expectations for me as a student," Reynolds recalls. They never expected me to make straight As, but they did expect me to always do my best, not settle for less than the best, and to make sure that tomorrow is better than today. They gave me my beginnings of a strong work ethic and set of values. Webb School enabled me to put those in motion and build upon them."

While she intended to pursue accounting during high school and her early college years, Reynolds said she soon realized that her life was meant to go down a different path, partly due to the impact of Webb teachers Joyce Hunter and Frank Lee. "I loved the challenge that they provided, the relationships that they established," she noted, "and the sense of accomplishment that I gained from working diligently in their classes to please them as well as myself." She added that Webb educators Kelton Tidwell, Johanna Dilworth, and Ruth Graf also helped her realize the importance of asking questions without caring what others might think and of speaking and writing correctly.

"Challenge, relationships, and accomplishment are the qualities that I have brought to my classrooms, my schools, and my career," Reynolds continued. "The importance of questioning, speaking, and writing are soft skills that I have tried to instill in students. A positive attitude and a strong work ethic are two things over which we have complete control and must be shared with others to build a strong sense of community and a successful, happy life. These traits are rooted in my time at Webb, and I am eternally grateful for the wonderful experience. My passion for education and what I put into practice today did not come from my four years of college; they came from having a phenomenal experience at Webb School of Knoxville!"

Derek Kirk '81



Derek Kirk is the founder and President of The Restaurant Nerd, a restaurant strategy and marketing consultancy group focused on assisting Black-owned food service establishments.

He is also the founder of soulPhoodie, an online community that informs, educates, and entertains those passionate about Black food culture. soulPhoodie highlights the stories and showcases the talents of creators excelling and innovating in the world of food

and beverage, including chefs, sommeliers, writers, and more in between. With nearly 150,000 followers and growing daily, soulPhoodie shares timely, fun, and engaging content about all facets of Black foodways.

Kirk graduated from North Carolina Central University with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in finance and went on to earn a Master of Business Administration in entrepreneurial management and marketing from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

He has spent most of the last 20-plus years of his career as a brand marketer, working for and leading brands in the restaurant space, with a focus on utilizing technology to attract and retain customers.

While Kirk says he has many great memories from when he was a student at Webb School, two of his favorites, besides those of his fellow Spartan classmates, would be “overdosing on gummy bears and Toblerone pushed on us by the German Club on the long rides home on Bus No. 2,” he recalls, “and trying to negotiate the validity of my demerits with Mr. Snodgrass.”

1986: Greg Hagood & Frank Majors



Greg Hagood and Frank Majors are co-founders of Nephila Capital Ltd. Since its launch in 1998, the company has grown to become the largest catastrophe insurance-linked securities manager in the world, with over 250 employees firmwide and offices in Bermuda; San Francisco, California; Nashville, Tennessee; and London, United Kingdom.

Hagood completed his Bachelor of Science degree in finance from the University of Tennessee and worked for Bear Stearns Companies in New York City, where he managed the mortgage servicing desk and was responsible for trading and brokering mortgage servicing portfolios, advising on mortgage banking mergers and acquisitions, and structuring hedging instruments for institutional clients. Hagood later joined Willis Group Ltd. in London to start what is now Nephila Capital.



Majors is a graduate of Vanderbilt University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics and a Master of Business Administration in finance from the Owen Graduate School of Management. He began his career as a reinsurance broker in New York City before moving to London with Willis Group Ltd.

Initially created as a specialist fund, investing in catastrophe risk on behalf of institutional investors, Nephila Capital was the first to focus on the convergence of catastrophe reinsurance and weather risk transfer markets with capital markets. It was also the first provider of alternative capital to the reinsurance market and is a global leader in the business of weather and climate resilience risk transfer.

At Nephila, Hagood is co-CEO of Nephila Holdings and a Director of Nephila Capital, focusing on investor relations, risk management, and the firm's strategy. Majors is co-CEO and President of Nephila Holdings, as well as a Director of Nephila Capital. His primary responsibilities include risk management and the firm's strategy.

Hagood and Majors commented on their working relationship and a friendship that stems back to high school at Webb. "It definitely freaks people out when they learn that we went to high school together," says Hagood. "People laugh, but I also think that they like the story and figure that if we can get along with each other for this long, maybe we will be okay to deal with. Our families are also really close, and the kids get a kick out of the history."

"It's been a ton of fun working with a Webb friend all these years," Majors added. "We're different personalities that complement each other, but we have a very similar worldview, and a lot of that came from Webb School. We both consider Webb to be, other than our families, the most formative influence on who we are, and we both lean a lot on our experiences there. We were very lucky to graduate from Webb School and to be part of such a talented, special class like the Class of '86."

Carla Ainsworth '91



Carla Ainsworth is Care Team Medical Director and physician at Iora Primary Care in Seattle, Washington, where her practice offers comprehensive primary care for seniors. She is also a clinical faculty member at the University of Washington School of Medicine.

Ainsworth earned her bachelor's degree from Kenyon College, majoring in chemistry and history. A national championship swimmer for the Kenyon College Ladies, she graduated as the all-time leader in NCAA Division III history with 26 national championships. During her four years with the Ladies, Ainsworth garnered 28 All-American honors, established seven NCAA records, and collected 15 conference titles. She was named Division III Swimmer of the Year three times, a first in NCAA history, and became the first woman to win the 200-yard freestyle four consecutive years. Additionally, she won four straight titles in the 100-yard free, set 15 Division III championship records, and is a four-time Academic All-American. Recognized as one of the greatest athletes ever at Kenyon College, Ainsworth was inducted into the Kenyon Athletics Hall of Fame. In 2019, she was presented with the NCAA Silver Anniversary Award, given annually to former college athletes in recognition of their collegiate and professional achievements.

Ainsworth completed her Doctor of Medicine at Washington University in St. Louis, and later attended University of California, Berkeley, where she earned a Master of Public Health degree in maternal and child health. Following her family medicine residency at Swedish Family Medicine-Cherry Hill in Seattle, Ainsworth was offered a fellowship in geriatric medicine at Swedish Family Medicine-First Hill.

At Swedish-First Hill, Ainsworth also served as a faculty physician in family medicine and geriatrics, as well as Associate Director of Clinical Operations and Family Medicine Residency Program Director. She was also a family physician at Seattle's Carolyn Downs Family Medical Center.

Ainsworth is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Geriatrics Society, and board certified in family medicine, geriatric medicine, and hospice and palliative medicine. She continues to mentor medical students and residents and has been active as a board member for several organizations, including the Washington Academy of Family Physicians Foundation and the King County Academy of Family Physicians, where she worked to transform health care by promoting the ideals of family medicine.

Ainsworth notes that her favorite memories from her time at Webb School are mostly related to morning Chapel. She also fondly recalled a daylong scavenger hunt her senior year. "It was fun to be at a chill event that was small enough so that we could all get to know each other."

Ellery Foutch '96



Ellery Foutch is an assistant professor in the American studies department at Middlebury College, where she teaches classes on the art and material culture of the United States. Foutch graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College, majoring in art history, and later completed her Master of Arts at the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art. After earning her Ph.D. in the history of art from the University of Pennsylvania, she held postdoctoral teaching fellowships at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and The Courtauld Institute of Art in London.

Foutch has published several articles on a variety of topics, such as patents for portable magic lanterns as illuminated, wearable technologies, 19th-century glass ballot boxes and political transparency, and artists' natural history collections. Her collaborative project, "The Sheldon Relic Chair 1884/2018," received honorable mention recognition for the Library Company of Philadelphia's first biennial Innovation Award in 2019.

Foutch's research has been granted fellowships from the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Research Center, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, the Terra Foundation for American Art, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Her teaching has been supported by Middlebury's Academic Outreach Endowment Grants and the Center for Community Engagement. In 2021, she was named Middlebury College's Faculty Feminist of the Year. Previously, Foutch served as co-chair of the Association of Historians of American Art and as co-editor of the "Object Lessons" column for *Common-place: The Journal of Early American Life*. She serves on the Board of Trustees of the Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History and was recently elected to Middlebury's Faculty Council. Her book manuscript-in-progress explores 19th-century obsessions with perfection and its preservation in art and natural history.

Looking back on her time at Webb School, Foutch says that she's grateful to her teachers for cultivating an environment of intellectual curiosity and rigor that foregrounded learning over grades. She added that she especially appreciated the skills of close reading and literary analysis that were honed over the years in many Webb English classes, where teachers also designed creative assignments that nurtured strong writing and the articulation of ideas. "I fondly remember that for every Friday's social studies lesson, Mrs. Bigelow would bring in a snack or treat related to the world culture under discussion," Foutch recalls, "a practice that fostered enthusiasm and compassion for our fellow global citizens, as well as an early awareness of and appreciation for the diversity of foodways!"

She credited Webb's Shirley "Frau" Briggs' rigorous German classes with later helping her to pass her graduate school language exams and German requirements, as well as being able to use what she learned for her research on a turn-of-the-century Prussian bodybuilder and the creators of Harvard's glass botanical models, Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka. "Webb opened up so many possibilities to me," says Foutch, "and I'm continually grateful."

Brad Smith '01



Brad Smith is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Russell Street Ventures (RSV), an innovative health care firm focused on launching and scaling companies that serve some of our nation's most vulnerable patient populations. Smith is also the CEO of Main Street Health, RSV's latest venture. Main Street Health is a value-based health care company committed exclusively to serving rural America. Formerly co-founder and CEO of Aspire Health, which he grew into the nation's largest home-based palliative care provider before selling it to Anthem in 2018, Smith later

became Chief Operating Officer of Anthem's Diversified Business Group, a multi-billion-dollar portfolio of five companies.

While in government, Smith served as Deputy Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Deputy Administrator at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and Director of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI).

At the White House, Smith helped operationalize various elements of the federal response to COVID-19, including scaling testing across the country and launching Project Airbridge. He was also a Board Member of Operation Warp Speed, helping to develop COVID-19 vaccines in record time. At HHS, Smith launched innovative payment models that lowered the price of prescription drugs and allowed rural communities to transform how health care is delivered. Smith previously served as Chief of Staff at the Tennessee Department of Economic Development, where he helped create over 28,000 jobs while reducing the cost to taxpayers. He was also the founding Executive Director of the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), a K-12 education nonprofit in Tennessee.

Smith graduated summa cum laude from Harvard University and completed his Master of Philosophy from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He has lectured at Duke University, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Pennsylvania, and has authored articles in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Fierce Healthcare*, *The Tennessean*, *Knoxville News Sentinel*, and *Memphis Commercial Appeal*.

Smith says that Webb School opened doors for him that he could never have imagined. "During my time at Webb, I had the opportunity to meet Bill Haslam, who was on the school's Board of Trustees," Smith recalls. "I also learned about Harvard, a school I don't remember having heard of prior to my time at Webb and one I certainly would have never thought about applying to. With the encouragement of Bill and Webb's president at the time, I applied, was accepted, and attended Harvard, which opened my eyes to a world of opportunities." Smith added that Haslam also helped introduce him to Sen. Bob Corker, who hired him to be his driver – his first job out of college. "That opportunity indirectly led to a slew of others, including working for Sen. Bill Frist, serving in the White House, and launching several companies. Without Webb, I'm not sure if any of this would have been possible. I am very grateful for the opportunities Webb School created."

Matthew Cross '06



Matthew Cross is founding partner and Chief Executive Officer of OE Experiences, a consulting and development company focused on engaging experientially driven business models. OE Experiences, in partnership with Kituwah LLC, the business development arm of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, was recently retained to develop a 200-acre site located at I-40's Exit 407 in Sevierville, Tennessee. Named "The 407: Gateway to Adventure," the project will allow tourists and shoppers access to premium dining and lodging options, unique shopping experiences, and visually stimulating attractions and entertainment concepts.

A graduate of Wake Forest University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in finance from the Calloway School of Business and Accountancy, Cross has a proven executive track record in the hospitality, real estate development, financial services, and themed entertainment industries.

Prior to starting OE Experiences, he was CEO of Boyd Hollow Resorts, Inc., where he oversaw the development of Ancient Lore Village, a 40-acre South Knoxville tourism development project. Ancient Lore Village earned a Top 5 announcement at the 2019 IAAPA Expo. Cross was previously vice president at USI Consulting Group, a registered investment advisory firm with more than \$20 billion in assets under advisement. He also worked at Finard Properties, a Boston-based real estate development company, and in the finance department of Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort.

A founding member of the Zoo Knoxville Circle of Friends Leadership Council, Cross was recently named to serve on the Themed Entertainment Association Board of Directors-Eastern Division.

"Webb School was an instrumental part of my journey to who I am and how I got here," Cross says. "There is no doubt that its culture, value system, and resources elevated my abilities and my character," he noted. Cross added that the people he met at Webb had a huge effect on his life. "After all – I married a fellow Spartan!" Cross' wife is classmate Sandra (Shieh) Cross.

For Cross, his experience in Webb English teacher Warren Heiser's class was particularly impactful. "The critical thinking skills he instilled in me and the confidence I gained in myself and in my public speaking ability helped elevate me in my career," Cross noted. "I can clearly remember when my paper was the anonymous example of a '9' AP essay, and I recall Mr. Heiser challenging my Chapel Talk topic and pushing me to do better. And, of course, 'the claw.'" It was a moment of reassurance at Wake Forest, Cross said, when he was told of the critical presentations students would have to make and how confidently he was able to prepare for them after the rigor of Webb's English program and the scale of students' Chapel Talks. "That cultivated ability stayed with me into my professional career and has allowed me to clearly and succinctly address large crowds, assess complex situations, and communicate effectively," Cross continued. "I believe we're a summary of the investments others have made in us, and I left Webb with enormous intellectual and emotional capital that has benefited me and my family. I'm proud to live the Spartan motto and serve as a leader among exceptional people."

Taylor Cao '11



Taylor Cao is a seventh-grade science teacher at St. George's Independent School (SGIS) in Collierville, Tennessee. For the 2020-2021 school year, he received St. George's Apple Award for Distinguished Teacher, voted upon annually by the members of the current eighth-grade class. "The Class of 2025 was the first I taught at SGIS," Cao said. "I watched them grow academically, win athletic championships, and perform on the biggest stages. I was honored and humbled to receive the award from this special group of students."

Cao's path to education started in 2015 after he graduated from Lipscomb University with a Bachelor of Science degree in exercise science and moved to Memphis, Tennessee to join Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR). Founded in 2009, MTR is a faith-based, nonprofit organization that recruits, trains, and supports effective teachers in a Christian context. During his time in the program, Cao taught a variety of science courses in three different high schools across Memphis.

Cao is also a graduate of the New Memphis Embark program, a four-month engagement that empowers high performing 20-somethings to grow as leaders and build relationships as they help make a difference in Memphis. Embark prepares young leaders to push forward in their careers while shaping the city for a better future.

This fall, Cao will be transitioning out of the classroom and stepping into the role of Director of Student Life at St. George's. In his new position, he will be responsible for promoting student connections through events such as homecoming, class trips, and prom.

Cao says that his time as a student at Webb School prepared him to lead in the real world. "When I arrived at Webb, it was the first time I had been in an uncomfortable situation," Cao recalls. "My peers looked different from me. My teachers expected more from me. I had to learn how to adapt quickly to my new normal. I struggled to do this while balancing homework, practices, relationships, and everything else that comes with being a high schooler." Now, as an educator working in an independent school similar to Webb, Cao says he can use what Webb School taught him to help students who may have similar experiences.

Ariel Gale '16



Ariel Gale is a second-year graduate student at Emory University, with research interests in quantum chemistry, high-pressure chemistry, atmospheric chemistry, prebiotic chemistry, and computational chemistry. She graduated from Furman University in 2020 with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and a minor in women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

As an undergraduate, she was a member of a computational chemistry research group, studying solvent effects, configurational sampling, and non-covalent

interactions. She has authored several papers on the role of molecular water clusters in the origin of life and climate change. Gale was the recipient of the highly selective Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship – the nation's preeminent undergraduate award in the sciences – granted to top-performing students who show research aptitude and who plan on a research career in selected science, technology, engineering, and math fields. She was also chosen for the Beckman Scholars Program, a 15-month mentored research experience for exceptional undergraduate students in chemistry, biological sciences, or interdisciplinary combinations thereof.

Committed to improving accessibility and promoting diversity and inclusion through peer mentorship and outreach, especially in STEM fields, Gale served as a peer tutor, teaching assistant, and leader in the Women's Chorale at Furman. As a senior lab member, she also helped train new students in computational techniques and guided them through their research experiences.

At Emory, Gale received a Women in Natural Sciences fellowship through the graduate school, and together with an ARCS Foundation Scholarship Award, she is focusing her research on developing high pressure quantum chemistry methods as well as optimizing workflow and developing new methods for calculating redox potentials of organic and organometallic molecules. She continues to mentor students, including assisting chemistry undergraduates from across the country in applying to graduate school through the Chemistry Graduate School Prep Club. In addition, as Vice President of Community Service for the Pi Alpha Chemical Society, Gale is helping Emory students share their passion for chemistry with the broader Atlanta community.

Gale says that her high school experience at Webb gave her the confidence to pursue her interests and seek out exciting opportunities. "After building so many good relationships with my Webb teachers and seeing how they believed in me, I felt totally comfortable as an undergraduate in approaching professors to discuss their research or have a quick conversation," she noted. "I cherish the connections that I have built in my communities with both my peers and mentors, and that started at Webb School."



OUR MISSION

WEBB SCHOOL OF KNOXVILLE'S MISSION IS TO
INSPIRE AND NURTURE THE FULL POTENTIAL
OF EACH INDIVIDUAL AND TO PREPARE OUR
STUDENTS TO SERVE AS LEADERS OF CHARACTER
IN TOMORROW'S WORLD.



Webb School

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