



# The Taft School

February 25, 2022

To the Taft Community:

It is with mixed feelings that I share that for Pam and me, the academic year 2022-2023 will be our last at Taft. At that point, we will have been at the school some 65 combined years. Each was a gift. Serving with board chair Grant Porter has been an absolute privilege, just as it was to work alongside former chairs Rod Moorhead '62, Will Miller '74 and John Vogelstein '52. Pam and I have been so fortunate, and following the incredible careers of Lance and Patsy Odden meant we inherited a model of what the finest school leadership looks like.

I arrived at Taft as an Upper Middler in 1976 and returned to teach and coach in 1983. Pam and I began our years together at Taft in 1990 living in CPT while she taught at a public high school. From that day on, Taft was home and where we raised our sons, their babysitters Taft students and their mentors Taft teachers. In 1995, Pam joined the faculty, and with great pride (and obvious bias!) I say what so many of you know: in addition to being my partner, she has been an inspiring teacher and colleague. Together we woke each day to the promise of teaching diverse, bright, curious and nice students, working with dedicated, caring and passionate faculty and staff, living on a beautiful historic campus, and serving a school with a timeless and important mission. What more could anyone ask for?

Beginning in 2001 when I was appointed head of school, we began a new life which has brought deep satisfaction, meaning and joy. We were very fortunate: we were able to stay involved in the day-to-day life of the school even as we were able to see alumni and parent friends in our travels around the world. For us, it was a privilege to serve.

Today I realize I had four goals as head of school: first, to give back to the school that had given me so much; second, to continue to meet our historic mission of the education of the whole student; third, to help the school change, grow and improve; and fourth, to find ways that Taft would be a profoundly relevant and needed global institution. Put simply, I wanted to locate and keep Taft on the thin line between history and tradition and innovation and improvement.

Today, Taft is in an extraordinary position. We have an amazing Board of Trustees, men and women who serve with vision and wisdom. We attract a talented and diverse student body from around the nation and world. Our faculty and staff are singularly passionate, committed, and caring, and more diverse than ever. The academic program is broad and deep, marked by rigor and challenge. The campus, a combination of historic, renovated and new spaces, is beautiful. The generosity of alumni, parents, and friends combined



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with our fiscal discipline means our financial architecture is sound. The culture on campus rests on core values: service, honor, respect, belonging, kindness, excellence, and perseverance.

But schools benefit from new views. Change can lead to improvement. Taft deserves and will be well served by a new voice, and I am very confident my successor will bring new ideas and make Taft even stronger.

Pam and I are excited about the next chapter of our lives. The opportunity to spend time with our families and parents, and also for travel and adventure, will be welcome. And to be clear, there is much I hope to do in my last fifteen months!

We will leave with memories that will nourish and sustain, much as my favorite poet William Wordsworth penned in 1805 in his autobiographical poem *The Prelude*, when he reflected on the power of memory: “There are in our existence spots of time,/That with distinct pre-eminence retain/A renovating virtue.” For the two of us, our years at Taft have been a collection of spots of time, to which we will return often and carry forever. We will always be grateful.

Non Ut Sibi,

William R. MacMullen '78, P'14,'16  
Head of School