

BIRCH WATHEN LENOX STUDENT PROFILE



Robert Cohen '22

Robert Cohen's time at Birch Wathen Lenox honed his work ethic and gave him ample opportunity to explore interests that form the bedrock upon which his life ambitions rest.

Current college/university:

Johns Hopkins

Academic concentration/major:

Economics, Entrepreneurship, History

Academic/professional plans:

Finance

A Passionate and Driven Academician

ACADEMICS: LASER FOCUS AND GOOD HABITS DRIVE SUCCESS

Robert Cohen knows what he wants. With just one semester at Johns Hopkins under his belt, Robert has already mapped out an ambitious course of study, planning to major in Economics, with minors in Entrepreneurship and History. His interest in economics was fostered and nurtured in his time at Birch Wathen Lenox. In fact, he was the founding President of the Economics Club. "I didn't know much at the time, but I created that to make sense of policy, what was going on with the Fed, while I was at Birch." Additionally, as a member of the Young Conservatives, he had the opportunity to investigate and understand different policy perspectives in finance and infrastructure with like-minded peers. "Joining the Young Conservatives Club at a young age sparked an interest. A lot of what we talked about was public policy and monetary policy. I could gain an in-depth understanding of what was actually going on with economics, and it spurred a further interest." These experiences have informed his current academic pursuits, particularly in his macroeconomics class. "I'm just realizing how useful and applicable it could be to a wide variety of professions. It started at the Young Conservatives Club."

Unsurprisingly, Robert's favorite subject at BWL was math. "It was the one I excelled in the most, and it was, in the end, the one I was the most challenged in. Being in BC Calculus helped me challenge myself. It was rewarding to see the progress I'd made." Still, Robert counts his seventh-grade history teacher, Mr. Russell, as his all-time favorite teacher. "We got along really well. He always took an interest in the students. My younger sister is at Birch, and I hear that he still asks about me today. The genuine concern he has for his former students is really touching. He and I have always gotten along and really enjoy each other's company. We were really close over the years."

In his time at Birch Wathen Lenox, Robert developed key study habits, which he attributes to his success at Johns Hopkins. "Math is definitely the subject I was most prepared for, coming from BC Calculus. But one big thing Birch taught me was to work hard. I developed study habits at Birch that transitioned well to college." He notes a difference between high school and college: in high school, and especially at BWL, you have personal relationships with your teachers. In college, the class sizes are much bigger, and you don't have that



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deeper relationship and extra help available to you. The study skills and work ethic he developed at BWL carry him forward in his pursuit of excellence at Johns Hopkins.

LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN

The early days of the COVID pandemic were an uncertain and tumultuous time for all, but Robert feels that Birch Wathen Lenox handled the transition to online learning beautifully. “I think Birch was quite strong during the lockdown. They took a very structured approach to the online classes, and I felt the education was practically the same as had it been in-person. That year, my junior year, had to be one of my favorite years at Birch for how easy they made the adjustment to online. I know other kids in other schools had a hard time transitioning. That was something Birch really did well.”

LOOKING AHEAD: POSSIBILITY AND INTENTION

Though he is only a freshman in college, Robert has already formulated many ideas about where he wants to go and how he wants to get there. “I took a lot of time to think about it over the summer. Entering into finance, whether sales and trading, or eventually structured credit and private debt, those are my career aspirations right now. I love macroeconomics, and I’ve made the effort to think about ‘how can I apply this?’”

That drive to apply what he learns to the real world started in his time at BWL, most markedly in the Young Conservatives Club and the Economics Club. Robert is proof-positive that Birch Wathen Lenox is the kind of place where a student has the ability to carve out a meaningful niche for themselves. Robert saw a hole in the landscape and filled it by developing and nurturing a passion for economics and conservative politics while utilizing the exceptional support and relationships with his teachers and administrators. Now in college, looking ahead to the future, Robert continues to apply the same principle: how can I make a difference here?

IN HIS TEACHER’S WORDS

Robert was not only one of my sweetest, most engaging students, but he was also my foil, as our politics differed wildly. Ever curious, astute, articulate, thoughtful, witty, and analytical, Robert was also unfailingly warm, kind and respectful; he was always willing to listen to the opinions of others, but he held a special place for faculty whom he particularly liked and respected. Robert and I argued constantly, and I enjoyed it enormously, as did he; Robert thrived on banter, interchange, and the free exchange of ideas. I value my continued friendship with Robert; it’s been an honor to play a part in his intellectual, and personal, growth.

— Mr. Russell, Middle School history teacher

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