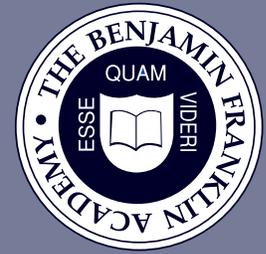


POOR RICHARD'S GAZETTE

A Publication of the Ben Franklin Academy

Contents

Note from the Head of School
Celebrating the Class of 2022
Commencement Speaker
STAR Student
Founders' Day
William H. Izlar, Jr.
Poetry Contest
Student Lunches
The Franklin Players
Service Award
Extracurricular Activities
and Sports
Alumni News
Annual Fund



Note from the Head of School

Dear Friends,

The 2021–2022 school year was a year of growth and achievement on many levels as the school moved through to a positive conclusion with the renewal of our SAIS/SACS (COGNIA) Accreditation, which was delayed a year because of COVID-19. The Head of the SAIS Visiting Committee, John Meehl, led fellow members of the Visiting Committee – Gil Brandon (St. George's Independent School), Brian Dolinger (LaGrange Academy), and Alan Stob (Grandview Preparatory School) – through the process of evaluating the school during our first ever Hybrid Visit. With Mr. Meehl on campus, and the other members “visiting virtually,” our Trustees, Overseers, faculty, parents, and students shared with the Committee members all the ways in which BFA meets the SAIS/SACS (COGNIA) Accreditation Standards. In so doing, we showed the Visiting Committee how we are ever in alignment with Benjamin Franklin's belief that “without continual growth and progress, such words as *improvement*, *achievement*, and *success* have no meaning.” In addition to numerous commendations, the Committee applauded BFA's “unique and warm model of mastery learning...that is hard to accomplish on any scale” and praised the school for being “a real oasis for an educational system that is very rare in the United States today.”

In this issue of “Poor Richard's Gazette,” you will read about the many ways the school progressed in clubs, activities, sports, and academics, even during a pandemic. You will also read how our community came together to achieve our goals by remaining true to our mission. We celebrated the spirit of our community, the respect for individual strengths and differences, and the commitment to our model of education, even during uncertain times. We are sincerely grateful to every member of our school community for contributing to our SAIS/SACS(COGNIA) Accreditation Renewal and to our ongoing overall success.

In gratitude,

Martha B. Burdette, Ph.D.
Head of School



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Graduation 2022



Ben Franklin Academy seniors were able to gather for graduation with faculty, family, and friends at Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church at Emory University for the first time since the COVID 19 pandemic started. Baccalaureate was at the church on Friday, May 20, followed by the commencement ceremony and reception on Saturday, May 21. Kaitlyn Crutcher was the valedictorian and Catie Rooks was the salutatorian. Professor Claire Sterk, past president of Emory University was the commencement speaker (See

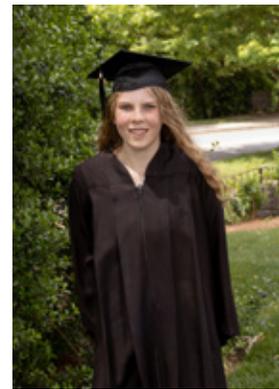
below and on the next page for the text of her speech.). This year's senior class received \$3.46 million in merit scholarships and will attend Georgia Tech (Honors Program), Davidson College, University of Denver, University of Arizona, The New School, Oglethorpe University, and Birmingham-Southern College among others.



Catie Rooks



The Class of 2022



Kaitlyn Crutcher

Dr. Sterk's Speech



Dr. Claire E. Sterk is President Emerita, Emory University and Charles Howard Candler Professor of Public Health, Rollins School of Public Health. She delivered the following speech at BFA's graduation service:

Graduating seniors, family and friends of today's graduates, faculty and staff, and all present here today, it is such an honor to be with you for the graduation of the 2022 class of the Ben Franklin Academy.

Class of 2022 --- You made it. You completed all requirements. You engaged deeply, in and outside the classroom. You allowed yourself to be curious and creative, to challenge each other, and to take some risks. You pushed yourself and worked hard. You are ready for your future. You are ready for the next phase in your journey. We are here today, to celebrate you.

Graduates, I have learned just a little bit about you. Your collective record of volunteering is impressive. You served people - young and old - and improved their lives. You were part of one or more clubs, at the school and served as school ambassadors. You had some fun as well: woodworking, playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing, acting, and more. You participated in sports -- soccer, tennis, swimming, rock-climbing, ultimate frisbee and more.

Dr. Sterk's Speech (continued)

And, yes, this summary is far from complete. Your time at the Ben Franklin Academy has provided you with many opportunities for achievement. And --- you sure did rise to the occasion!

Class of 2022, you are an impressive group! You are ready for the future; you are ready for the next phase in your journey. And part of that means, looking ahead at what comes next. Seeing your hard work come to fruition. Graduation symbolizes the leap you will be taking into your future. You get to try out even more things and make even more choices than you already have. How awesome is that?

Some of you may have created a "to-do" list. Checking off your goals -one by one - as you achieved these. This works -sure- until life interrupts our lists. The author Stephen King divides writers into the plotters and the pantsers. The plotters start with an outline of their novels ahead of time, planning every detail. They like to control the process. The pantsers, on the other hand, cannot do that. They figure out the story as they are writing it. Another way to think about this -for life in general - is that plotters like to know what life ahead will be like. Pantsers, on the other hand, go "with the flow," let new experiences guide them, let life evolve, and embrace opportunities as these emerge. I believe that people need to have a little bit of both: being a plotter and a pantsers.

As you plot and pant, as your high school years are over, remind yourself that you are prepared for the unexpected that awaits you. You are prepared for the next phase in the journey of your life. Not everything in life will fit neatly on your To-Do list. Some experiences will appear as surprises. . . . And the story of your life will reveal itself to you over time.

I remember being so proud when I graduated from high school. I thought that I had my future worked out. Okay, maybe just for the next several years. It was quite a dialectic process to get to where I am today. Looking back, it took me many years to figure out what I wanted to do with my life, and still more time to figure out how to get there. And surprises showed up at every step along the way. When I was in my teens, I thought I might like to be a symphony conductor.

Then I realized there were no female conductors, and that the adults in my life were not so excited about this plan. Several years later, I wanted to be a competitive swimmer until I realized that playing sports with my head under water was not my thing. Again, later, I aspired to be a nurse, until I realized that the doctors called all the shots, even when they might not know as much about the whole patient as the nurses. Finally, I recognized that I wanted to work in public health.

It is a process. Some people will encourage you to take the time to figure out your future. Others will have a road-map ready for you. And you, yourself, will contemplate where life will take you. Be excited about all the opportunities that will come your way. It is not easy to figure it all out. My advice is -- be open to the what the future will bring and be open to learning and growing as your life evolves.

When I began putting my education into practice in the field of public health, working with people who were sick, with children who were suffering, with human beings who were falling through the cracks of society, I realized that my education was just beginning—that learning never ends.

I felt that way throughout my career, including as president of Emory University. I believe that learning truly never ends and I see that as positive. Recognizing that we don't know everything, admitting we need others, is important. It means being open to learning and growing, being open to being changed by our encounters with others and the world. Being open means being willing to take risks. Sometimes, it also means being afraid. That is okay, too.

I imagine that some of you worry about moving away from home, of falling short of expectations, of disappointing yourself, or your parents or friends. All of us, I think, have those moments when we wonder if we are making the right choice, the best choice. Ask the "grown ups" in your life, and you might be surprised that they too had -- and continue to have -- such thoughts and doubts. To be perfectly honest, I would be more worried if you did not have such thoughts. Doubt is part of what it means to be human. It also is the gift of freedom of being able to make choices. Choices about who we want to be and choices about what we want to accomplish.

Today, I am going to resist the temptation to give you advice. I am not going to tell you how to overcome those "challenges and opportunities" of where life will take you. You may have noticed that around graduation time, just about everyone has advice for you. But for now, enjoy your Ben Franklin Academy experience. It will shape you forever. You have made friends for life. You learned about being leaders, conscientious leaders, leaders who are committed to making the world a better place. Leaders who are prepared to tackle injustices, leaders who are committed to peace, leaders who care about the future of our planet. Life will continue to show you that the impossible still might be possible.

Embrace the power of listening. Listening – consciously deciding to keep an open mind and heart is an act of courage. Listening calls us to act, saying yes to what matters, saying no to what might pull us apart.

Class of 2022, I charge you to be open to the opportunities that will come your way. The world needs your ideas. It needs your compassion, and, it needs your courage and integrity. We are so proud of you. Congratulations to the Class of 2022. Godspeed.

Senior Yard Signs



The seniors in the class of 2022 received their yard signs in the early spring to announce their graduation from Ben Franklin Academy.

STAR Student

Leo Koh-Maitre was named BFA's STAR Student for the 2021-2022 school year for posting the highest SAT score. He chose Dr. Martha Burdette as his STAR Teacher.



Founders' Day

Ben Franklin Academy celebrated Founders' Day -- its 34th birthday -- on November 11. The school was established on November 11, 1987, and every year students and faculty gather to celebrate the school's birthday with cake and stories about the founding and early days of the school. The students and teachers enjoyed the BFA trivia game about the history of the school when we met on Founders' Courtyard this year.



William H. Izlar, Jr. Poetry Contest



We held our annual celebration of National Poetry Week in April by holding our spring William H. Izlar, Jr. Poetry Contest. Students are offered the opportunity to submit up to two poems for consideration. We announced our four winners as all of our students congregated on Founders' Courtyard. The winning poems were read by faculty members. Maya Boulden placed first for her poem, "A Blue Bird's Life." Katherine Thompson was awarded Second Place, with Ava Brackett in Third Place. Avi Belcher and G. Slezinger tied for Fourth Place. All the winners received

books of poetry, and the top two winners also received monetary awards. The winning poets are pictured above.

Student Lunches

This year we were able to gather everyone together to enjoy food and games during the Senior Luncheons and the Underclassmen/Women Luncheons. Everyone looked forward to the luncheons in the fall and again in the spring.



The Franklin Players

THE FRANKLIN PLAYERS TRY TO MAKE ‘CENTS’ OF THE ‘60S

The Franklin Players came back after their successful fall 2021 production of Three Plays Three Ways and a needed holiday break ready to take on another challenge for the winter show, which opened at the Ben Franklin Academy Carriage House in March. We wanted to build on our season theme of “ruptured” romantic relationships, but this time we decided to focus on the funny side of unrequited love with a refashioned presentation of Neil Simon’s three-character play The Star-Spangled Girl. The cast for this hilarious show featured Catie Rooks, Will Lynch, and Ben Shackelford. The tech crew for lighting, sets, costumes, and props -- including the creation of a 60’s-style underground magazine -- includes Dylan Gillin, Humphrey May, and Sarah Shelby. Dr. Pamela Turner is Director of the BF A Theatre Program with Jeff Guthrie as Tech Director and Wright Howell as Line Coach.

The Star-Spangled Girl was first presented on Broadway in December 1966 and features some behaviors that may be questionable in today’s more gender diverse and culturally sensitive climate. This led to thoughtful conversations and the artistic decision to stage the piece through the frame of a 60s-era television sit-com complete with the “studio” audience and laugh tracks.



Service Award

The Jane and Dameron Black, III Service Award was recently presented to Jessica and Jeff DeHart, who are parents of two BFA graduates and are members of BFA’s Board of Overseers. They have been wonderful advocates for the school for many years. They are pictured here receiving the award from Jane and Dameron Black. Thank you, Jessica and Jeff, for all you do!



Arts and Crafts Club

When it comes to fun and creativity, it's hard to beat the Arts and Crafts Club. Between 12 and 15 students gathered every Monday to converse and work on a project. From Valentine cards for the homeless in Atlanta, to Purim masks, to terrariums, the students created art. Jan Bedol, Debby Keenan and Hilary Druckman provided direction and encouragement as students produced some impressive pieces of art.

The terrarium was a STEAM project, combining botany, ecology, and artistic design. Students researched ways to make a largely self-sustaining closed miniature ecosystem in a one gallon glass terrarium. They had their choice of miniature plants, and even had the option of adding a tiny terrestrial crustacean, an isopod, to their terrarium. Since these little crustaceans came in a choice of powder blue or orange, they were a design element in themselves! Students further personalized their terrariums by bringing in mosses, rocks, and small figurines to complete their designs.



Community Engagement

Current BFA student, Ian Greenbaum, completed a book drive project that collected books for Children Read Atlanta. He gathered books over the summer months and delivered 944 books to Marleen, founder of the Tall Tales Book Shop (and the founder of Children Read Atlanta). Congratulations, Ian, and thank you for your willingness to serve the community! BFA Junior, Ella Greenbaum (and Ian's sister), advanced to Eagle Scout and became the first female Eagle Scout in the Southern Crescent District. Ella was also recognized by the Atlanta Area Council of Scouts BSA at their honors banquet, where she was named the Hank Aaron Role Model honoree.



Golf

The Spring 2022 BFA golf season came to a close with the season-ending Regional Tournament on April 25th. This year's team was exceptional in the level of dedication and effort consistently demonstrated by the members, which included regularly getting together to practice outside of official school practices. The team consisted of sophomores Asa Barfield, Sam Joiner, and Calvin Reed as well as seniors Ryan King and team captain, Danny Conley. Each one played a crucial role in the team's success. The season consisted of matches against Midtown, Galloway, Atlanta Classical Academy, and Drew Charter School and included two exciting BFA victories by just one stroke! Asa, Sam, and Calvin will return to the team in 2022-2023 to build on the momentum of this season while Ryan King and Danny Conley both head to college. Team captain, Danny Conley, continued to dedicate himself to golf, competing in GSGA junior tournaments throughout the summer with the hope of joining the varsity team at Oglethorpe University, where he is a freshman.



Nature Club

The BFA Green Club had a fantastic fall season! Last semester, we planted a winged elm tree in front of the Senior House in the space where a tree fell last spring. This newly planted tree continues a row of elm trees along the side of the building. We also attended the Emory Farmers' Market to buy fresh produce, speak to farmers, and eat lunch. The Green Club revived the organic garden this fall, but our vegetables were discovered by two major herbivores, cabbage moths and deer. Cabbage moths frequently laid eggs on our kale, cabbage, and broccoli, and when the eggs hatched, green caterpillar larvae voraciously fed on our cruciferous vegetables. As we monitored the situation, we gently placed each of these hungry guys in our organic compost pile. The other herbivore affecting our garden, a white-tailed deer, chewed whole leaves off our broccoli and kale plants. A couple of students in our club were very talented in identifying living creatures in nature, so we conducted a thorough "bioblitz" in the garden area each time after tending to the plants. We found Carolina anolis, earwigs, silverfish, roaches, different kinds of ants, red-shouldered hawks, winged elms, cow itches, greenbriars, and cicada killers, among many other wonders of nature!



Constitution Day at BFA

Jan Bedol celebrated Constitution Day with her US Government and US History classes by reading the Constitution and showing students how to write with quills and ink.



Philanthropy Club

In 2021-2022, the students of the BFA Philanthropy Project made over 100 turkey, ham, and cheese sandwiches, which they combined with packaged snacks and juices, for The Sandwich Project, a nonprofit which serves the food insecure population in Atlanta. The entire fund was raised by the Philanthropy Project students themselves. They also held a pet drive, where they collected pet food, blankets, towels, chew sticks, toys, treats, newspaper, crates, and beds for a local shelter. They held a collection drive for Afghan refugees as well, and donated various household items, particularly for women and children, including cooking oil, pots and pans, some clothing, pencils and pens, blankets. Eden Shaw delivered additional pencils and pens to an elementary school with under-served students. Additionally, as part of the holiday drive, they were able to cover the wish lists for two families (single moms with kids) and two single men (one with a health issue and one with a mental health issue) in the Atlanta area. Each family also received a couple of gift cards for groceries. Overall, the BFA Philanthropy Project had an incredible year, and we are so grateful that the students were able to share their time and talents with our community.



Alumni News

Carrie Lambert (2006) is a LSW (Licensed Social Worker) at the Department of Veterans Affairs, where she works with homeless veterans and supports them once the housing team finds stable housing for them. The program is called HUD VASH, which partners with local housing authority offices that process Section 8, supportive housing vouchers. Carrie's department connects these veterans to resources and provides ongoing clinical case management to support independent living. Carrie graduated from the Tulane School of Social Work in 2019 and has been working in the mental health field since 2014.

James Loper (2009) is a software designer who started Hux in 2011. Hux enables consumers to locate trusted home cleaners and handymen and book an appointment in under 90 seconds.

Drew Hayner (2010), Project Manager, Designer and Artist at ABV Gallery is excited to be painting a series of Man of the Match trophies for the Atlanta United soccer team.

Sarah Lauren Huber (2010) is a Real Estate Agent, a RE Investment Owner, an Operations Consultant, and a landlord.

Josh Babb (2012) graduated in 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts from The Evergreen State College.

Miles Clark (2013) graduated in 2017 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Writing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and in 2019 graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from The New School in New York.

Lauren Bond (2014) is teaching English to children in northern Thailand.

Anna Lloyd (2014) has published a children's book entitled Miss Anna's Dream in Stratford, which is available on Amazon. (ISBN: 9781649793492)

Steven Bailey (2015) graduated from Auburn University in the Class of 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Design. He has been accepted to the Mississippi State University Masters Program in Landscape Architecture.

Benjamin Heller (2015) graduated from Champlain College with a Bachelor of Science in Professional Writing in 2019.

Celine Macke (2015) graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Georgia Institute of Technology in 2019.

Gabrielle Troiano (2015) has just released his first digital book of poetry and short stories, Inner Worlds. The preface is by Gabriel's BFA advisor and teacher, Dr. Edward Ellis. Gabriel will visit the school soon to do a reading from his book. (ISBN: 9786587953229)

Lillian Paris (2015) is enjoying her work at CORE (Center for Oncology Research and Education).

Rachael Starks (2015) was named to the Fall 2021 President's List at Georgia State University.

Will Block (2016) completed his B.S. and is in Charleston selling real estate.

Olivia Basch (2017) graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Georgia State University in 2021.

Alumni News (continued)

Chris Fleischman (2017), a Second Lieutenant in the US Army, married Jenna Lagasse of Roswell, Georgia, on April 29, 2022, at the Wheeler House in Ballground, Georgia. They met at the University of North Georgia while attending college. They are currently stationed at Fort Hood, Texas.

Jackson Meyers (2017) is a Marine working on weapons systems for the Ch-53 transport helicopter. He is proud to serve his country!

Liam Murphy (2017) was named to the University of Utah's Fall 2021 Dean's List.

CaroleAnne Block (2018) is majoring in Human Development at UGA and will graduate at the end of fall semester 2022.

Jack Gryboski (2018) graduated from SMU this spring and moved to Charleston to join Will Block in real estate.

Savannah Henry (2018), a Bonner Scholar at Guilford College, graduated this spring. She was named the Outstanding Senior in Public Health. She will start graduate school at Yale University this fall, where she will study the Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases in the MPH program.

Shelby Salisbury (2018) graduated from TCU Magna Cum Laude with her BA in Youth Advocacy in May. She will begin her Masters program at UGA this fall in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Adele McLees (2018) recently graduated Summa Cum Laude from Macalester College with a double major in International Studies and French. She will be entering the Peace Corps with an assignment in Madagascar.

Emma Tracy (2018) graduated from Auburn in May. She is heading to the Speech-Language Pathology graduate school at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston. She plans to become a clinician treating speech, language, and swallowing impairments.

Mackenzie Westen (2019) is majoring in Psychology at Emory University and will graduate in May, 2023.

Jonas Iskander (2020) is focusing primarily on math at Harvard and sings in the Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum. Last summer he participated in the University of Virginia Number Theory REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates), and this summer he worked on projects at the Minnesota REU in Combinatorics.

Anna-Taite Murphy (2020) is a junior this fall at Colorado College majoring in Studio Art. She wants to minor in Education and become an Art teacher like her BFA Art teacher, Robin Olson!

Ike Rolader (2020) is a junior at Arizona State University majoring in Engineering. He is in the Honors College at ASU.

Peter Merrill (2020) was named to the Fall 2021 Dean's List at Berry College.

Augustin Bonta (2021) excelled at Emory University his freshman year. He volunteered this summer with an Emory organization to provide food for several homeless shelters.

Annual Fund

Ben Franklin Academy's Annual Fund raises funds above and beyond tuition to invest in strategic resources for our teachers and students so they can focus on what matters most—pursuing a passion for learning.

Gifts to the 2021-2022 Annual Fund supported need-based scholarships through the Wood Smethurst Scholarship Fund, a hallmark of BFA's commitment to educating students from all backgrounds. Additionally, support allowed us to invest in technology enhancements and upgrades for increased flexibility and support for each student's unique strengths and needs. Students and teachers value in-person classes at BFA, but many of our on-line platforms and student management software will continue to be utilized into the coming years. Technology priorities for the year included laptops and desktops for teacher use and testing, teacher learning tools, and increased internet bandwidth and data storage.

To learn more about BFA's Annual Fund, and other ways you can support the school, please visit www.benfranklinacademy.org.

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