

THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL



SUMMER 2019

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HEAD OF SCHOOL

Chris Durst

EDITOR

Julie Beckwith

DESIGNER

Derek Gaylard

SEND CONTACT INFORMATION CORRECTIONS TO:

Emily Johnson
Altamont School
4801 Altamont Road South
Birmingham, AL 35222
ejohnson@altamontschool.org



On February 6, 2019, Altamont was honored to have Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin as our guest speaker for Black History month. Mayor Woodfin was invited by students in our LEAD program, which is the middle school component of the C. Kyser Miree Ethical Leadership Center. He spoke to students about challenges and opportunities for the city, and he encouraged them to use their voices to speak out against things that are wrong or that they know can be better. He said, "The youngest generation has always been responsible for making adults do what needs to be done." Learn more about Miree on page 10-13. *Left to right: Arthur Anders, Mayor Woodfin, Matthew Mugweru, Lewis Rand, and Sophia Sultan*

THE MISSION OF THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL

is to improve the fabric of society by graduating compassionate, well-educated individuals capable of independent thinking and innovative ideas. To this end, the school attracts, nurtures, and challenges students whose commitment to truth, knowledge, and honor will prepare them not only for the most rigorous college programs, but also for productive lives.

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Altamont's boys cross country team won the AHSAA Class 1A-2A State Cross Country Championship; girls were State Runner Up, story on page 20. Coach Jamie Rediker '00 pictured with State trophies.



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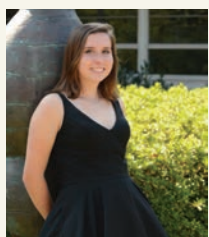
What are the Odds?

Six Altamont students, six perfect ACT scores

The ACT is a standardized test used for college admissions in the United States. It was first introduced in 1959 and is administrated by the nonprofit organization ACT. The ACT consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science, each scored on a scale of 1–36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores.

On average, only one-tenth of one percent of all test takers receive the top score. Among recent U.S. high school graduates just 2,760 out of more than two million students who took the ACT reached a composite score of 36. During the 2018-19 school year, Altamont had six students with a perfect 36 composite score on the test. What are the odds of that? Let's just say they are struck-by-lightning-while-holding-a-winning-Powerball-ticket low.

How did our ace students prepare and what advice would they give?



Sara Catherine Cook '19: I had an ACT tutor for a couple of months, which was helpful in learning specific skills. Tutoring did not improve my score enough to warrant continuing, so I self-studied by doing practice sections from a book and watching YouTube videos on strategies for specific aspects of the test. My advice is to start early. The ACT is a test that anyone can do well on, or improve their score on, but it takes time to master. Practicing the test and then reviewing answers that were wrong is very helpful in improving your score.



Robert Pigue '20: The best way to prepare for the ACT is practice. I practiced for about an hour a day for two months, doing tests, checking my answers, and making sure I fixed my mistakes. The most important thing that I did though was to not treat studying like a chore, but instead treat it as an opportunity. My advice to other students is to have some perspective. Don't let standardized tests control your sense of self-worth; they are not a measure of your value as a person.



Asher Desai '19: I went over grammar rules the night before the test. My advice is to drink coffee and focus. Know that there are three wrong answers to each question, and that all of the wrong answers have something specific that disqualifies them.



Sameer Sultan '20: After some point, the ACT isn't about learning anything new as much as it's about creating muscle memory. My advice is to take practice tests and more practice tests to build endurance and familiarity. Then, at the moment of truth, you will be ready to go through the motions and do well.



Ahad Bashir '20: I prepared for the ACT primarily by doing practice tests out of the Official ACT Red Prep Book. I believe that the best advice I can give to anybody taking the test is to bring a watch to time yourself, as I mistimed myself during the ACT and almost didn't answer a number of questions in the reading section.



Benjamin Tang '20: I took a few practice tests to find my strong and weak points. Then, I reviewed my mistakes. I also realized that I had to remain focused during the latter sections of the test. My advice is to take practice tests to understand the types of questions the ACT asks and stay concentrated on test day.

2019 College Acceptances and Matriculations



The Class of 2019 will be spreading their wings at colleges and universities across the country this fall. We can't wait to hear stories of their success!

Auburn University *

Auburn University at Montgomery

Babson College *

Barnard College *

Baylor University

Belmont University *

Birmingham-Southern College *

Boston College

Boston University

Bowdoin College

Brandeis University

Brown University

Carleton College

Carnegie Mellon University

Case Western Reserve University

Chapman University

Claremont McKenna College

College of Charleston *

Colorado School of Mines

Dartmouth College

Davidson College

Dickinson College

Duke University

Eckerd College

Elon University *

Emory University

Fordham University

Furman University

George Washington University

Georgetown University *

Georgia Institute of Technology *

Grinnell College *

Hampden-Sydney College

Hollins University

Jacksonville State University

Kenyon College

Lewis & Clark College

Louisiana State University A&M

Loyola Marymount University

Loyola University Chicago *

Loyola University New Orleans *

Mary Baldwin University

Mississippi State University *

Morehouse College

North Carolina A & T State University

Northeastern University *

Northwestern University

Oberlin College

Oglethorpe University *

Pepperdine University

Pitzer College

Regis University

Rhodes College *

Rice University *

Samford University *

Sewanee: The University of the South *

Southern Methodist University

Spring Hill College *

Texas Christian University *

The University of Alabama *

The University of West Florida

Trinity University

Tulane University *

University of Alabama at Birmingham *

University of Alabama at Birmingham, EMSAP

University of Alabama in Huntsville *

University of California (Berkeley)

University of California (Davis)

University of California (Los Angeles) *

University of California (Riverside) *

University of California (San Diego)

University of California (Santa Barbara)

University of California (Santa Cruz)

University of Chicago

University of Colorado, Boulder

University of Colorado Denver/

Anschutz Medical Campus

University of Denver *

University of Florida

University of Georgia

University of Memphis

University of Michigan *

University of Mississippi *

University of Montevallo *

University of North Carolina

at Chapel Hill *

University of Pennsylvania

University of Puget Sound

University of Rochester

University of South Alabama

University of South Carolina

University of Southern California

University of Virginia *

Wake Forest University

Washington and Lee University *

Wellesley College *

Wofford College

*More than 1 student admitted

Bold – Student will matriculate

FOUR ALUMNI – STUDIES IN LEADERSHIP

By: Dan Monroe '78

The Altamont School believes that everyone has the ability to lead. We help students discover their individual expression of leadership through our C. Kyser Miree Ethical Leadership Center. Altamont alumni are also well prepared to uniquely express their leadership skills, often in unexpected ways and professions. The following pages profile several alumni and their routes to leadership and highlight ways in which current students are trailblazing their own distinctive paths.

Leadership is one of those bandied-about words, a concept that has been interpreted in myriad ways, especially over the past few decades. Here are four studies — each a look at the leadership of an Altamont alumnus, each different in its own way, as if seeing leadership through four unique lenses.

Hillery Head '84 The Leadership of Geometry

About the time Hillery Head graduated from Altamont and headed off to Yale, her mother, Mimi, purchased Ram Tool Construction Supply Company, a small distributor of construction-related tools and equipment. Hillery would go on to graduate from Yale with a degree in American Studies and follow that with a law degree from Washington and Lee. While she was away, Mimi grew the company.

A law degree had been Hillery's father's suggestion. He pointed out that law is a good general sort of degree. After all, it provides a great foundation for running a company, or doing further graduate work if one is so inclined; or one can even practice law. In Hillery's case, it turned out to be option one. She returned to Birmingham to work in her mother's business after Washington and Lee.

That was 1993. Now, more than 25 years later, Ram Tool has extended its reach as far north as Chicago, as far west as San Antonio, as far east as Chesapeake, Virginia, and as far south as Miami. It's pretty clear Hillery made a smart decision. It's even clearer that Mimi Head made a smart decision in bringing her daughter into the business.



Hillery Head '84

If you speak with Hillery for any length of time about leading people, you begin to see the shape of how she understands management. For Hillery, leading

people is geometry. “There are algebra people and geometry people,” she explains. “I’m a geometry person. You put the proof out there, you go 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – done! It’s almost like turning math into art. You have to see the problem to solve it.”

This approach shows in her leadership philosophy — one that embraces human differences and develops people according to those things that make them different, according to their natural strengths. When it comes to people, Hillery’s secret is in matching up the shape of a person’s skills with the shape of a position’s requirements. And to do that, she must get to know them. “I believe everybody has a key,” she says. “If you’re not motivating that person, you just haven’t found the right key. Altamont was like that. Everybody had some talent. The trick was in figuring out what that talent was.”

Much of what Hillery learned about leading came from her mother and from her natural curiosity — a curiosity that was instilled in her during her Altamont years. While she sees herself as a thoughtful, analytical sort of person, she also avoids what Mimi calls “paralysis by analysis.” For Hillery, the problems one must solve when it comes to managing a company are puzzles. “I look at business like that. You take this complex problem — you’ve got the people, the market, the competition, the customers — how do you put all those pieces together and make something that is a viable product at the end of the day? You work with the information you have. And if you see the problem you are solving as sort of a game or a puzzle, it makes it lighter. It doesn’t make it life and death. I just think, ‘let me see if I can work that one out.’ You come up with a solution, and if you’re about 75% sure it will work, you go for it. If you see it isn’t working, you can always go back.”

Fred Schonenberg '94

The Leadership of Underdoggedness

Fred knows what it’s like to be the underdog, to be David squaring off against Goliath, sling in hand. He’s used to small teams with big dreams. After all, Fred played sports at Altamont, and anybody who’s ever played sports at Altamont will tell you that you frequently find yourself facing much larger schools with deeper benches and loads of talent.



Fred Schonenberg '94

Fred played baseball and ran cross country at Altamont, but basketball was his jam. He looks back fondly on those days and the lessons he learned from them. His willingness to take on the big guys served him well, first at Trinity College, where he was recruited to play basketball and where he graduated with a degree in American Studies, then to a couple of startups along the way, and now to VentureFuel, the company Fred founded.

VentureFuel connects early-stage startups with larger, well-known companies that are looking for what’s next. Fred finds great joy working with startups. After all, startups are small, highly-motivated teams with big dreams. They are the Davids in a world of Goliaths. They are the underdogs.

Fred enjoys a challenge. During his Altamont days, he captained the varsity basketball team to a berth in the playoffs after they had gone 0 for 33 two short years before. He credits this change of success to creating what he calls “group buy-in.”

Fred explains, “We had this group of guys who believed we could contend. Several of us would meet at 5:00 a.m. for workouts before school. They weren’t mandatory workouts, a few of us just had

the drive and motivation. We leaned into the notion that, together, we could accomplish more.” This sense of what it took to motivate a team to achieve what might seem like impossible dreams took root. To this day, he uses what he learned on the court.

When it comes to leadership, Fred will tell you that rallying a team is the secret sauce. And in his professional life, Fred has rallied his fair share. Early in his career, Fred was the executive vice president of sales for Zoom — a New York company that sells targeted advertising solutions through video screens in workout facilities. During his tenure, his #1 industry-rated sales team grew the company to dizzying heights. Equally important from a personal standpoint, Fred developed a number of contacts with larger companies throughout the country.

Through his interaction with large companies such as Nike, Pepsi, Anheuser-Busch InBev, General Mills and the like, Fred learned that they were curious about what new companies and technologies were on the horizon. They wanted to know what was “next.” A chance meeting with a fellow Altamont alumnus, David Goldenberg ’97, provided even more insight. Goldenberg had a start-up company that was exactly the sort of “next” the larger companies were looking for. David just didn’t know how to get to the right people at these Goliaths of companies. And so rose VentureFuel to connect the Davids (literally in this case) with the Goliaths.

Great ideas, cool companies, and talent can arise anywhere. Small motivated teams can achieve unimaginable dreams as long as they have that “group buy-in” and work hard. Fred knows this first hand. Leadership, when it comes to these powerful young companies, always comes down to a small team of bought-in folks who are willing to pursue the dream together.

Lara Avsar '07

The Leadership of Mythbusting

Lara Avsar’s story is one of becoming a leader, of that journey, and how its meandering path can be affected by age-old philosophical constraints, notions that have lived so long as to become archetypal. There are a pair of these constraints, “myths,” if you will, that have had a profound impact on Lara Avsar’s journey. The first one goes something like this: Once upon a time there was a poor, helpless — though beautiful — princess who



fell into some deep dark trouble because of witches or evil step-relatives, or some other sort of nefarious situation that left the already helpless — though beautiful — princess even more helpless — though still beautiful. Finally, when all seemed lost, a handsome young, powerful prince came to the rescue of the helpless — though beautiful — princess, and she (and he) lived happily ever after.

The second myth goes like this: There once was a Super Woman who was as lovely as Aphrodite, as wise as Athena, with the speed of Mercury and the strength of Hercules. Everything came easy to her. There were no bumps in the road because she was invincible, and powerful, and perfect in every way. And so she lived happily ever after because she was perfect.



Lara Avsar '07

Lara will tell you that both myths are equally damaging to the psyches of young girls.

Lara attended Barnard College after Altamont. At Barnard, Lara joined a sorority in hopes of feeling pretty. Here, she encountered a prevalence of women in powerful positions. “At Barnard, I saw women in positions of power. And, in hearing their stories, I began to believe that success for a woman in this world was about being perfect in every way — invincible, infallible, and above all smart. So, while I joined a sorority in hopes of feeling pretty, I studied math in hopes of being smart.”

Lara did well at Barnard. She became the president of the student government. She earned high marks.

At one point, she self-funded a solo trip around the world. She meditated in a monastery in Nepal. She taught English to Bedouins and hung chalkboards in classrooms in the Wadi Araba desert of Jordan. And as she traveled and studied, she learned. She saw firsthand how experiences and mythologies inform the lives of women the world over. She began to shed the myth of the princess. But, in many ways, she still struggled with the myth of the Super Woman. She still felt a compunction to be perfect, live the life of zero bumps in the road. She decided to attend Harvard Business School.

At Harvard, she learned that the self-esteem of a young girl peaks at the age of nine. She felt deeply that to combat the statistic the female narrative had

to change. Young girls needed to see that there was a different path, that they neither had to be Super Women, nor had they to wait for prince charming to come along and sweep them off their feet.

She had been nurturing the notion of starting a media company that offered young girls a different storyline, that gave them permission to shed the myths. It was a rough start. At one point, she took a break from Harvard and worked on the company. There was a prince charming who came and went. But, she prevailed, finished Harvard Business School and built Her Little Story. Along the way, she galvanized her commitment to changing the narratives. She shared her own story, flaws included, in a TEDx talk, which you can find on her website: herlittlestory.com.

Lara found her path toward leadership. And she's since been invited to share her thoughts on the topic at corporations like TD Ameritrade, coached corporate executives through difficult moments of transition, and traveled to Saudi Arabia with MISK, the Crown Prince's education foundation, to speak with young girls in Riyadh about their education and professional futures.

Lara has the opportunity to reach a whole new generation of leaders — leaders who neither see themselves as princesses awaiting their princes or Super Women who are infallible and perfect. It makes for a pretty great story.

Daniel Coleman '82

The Leadership of Credibility

Daniel Coleman's journey has been as circuitous as it has been fortuitous. From Altamont he went to Columbia for a couple of years before transferring to Yale, where he studied literature. From Yale, he went to University of Chicago for his MBA. Along the way, he considered working in academia — perhaps teaching, maybe writing. But, at the time, he wasn't so sure that was the right path. A friend in Chicago suggested futures and options trading as a way of making a buck or two while he figured the rest of it all out. So he gave it a try. It took.

Now, some 30+ years later, Daniel has experienced corporate America in ways that many only dream of. He was a senior trader at Swiss Bank Corporation and after mergers with SG Warburg, Dillon Read & CO., Union Bank of Switzerland and Paine Webber, rose to the rank of senior management as the Head of Global Equities at UBS. He was the CEO of



GETCO and then KCG Holdings. He has been through multiple mergers and acquisitions. He has managed firms through the historic downturn of 2008. He has traveled the world. And over the course of it all, he has learned valuable, and sometimes painful, lessons about leadership.

Daniel learned always to put the team — his people — first. He learned that if they had to make sacrifices so did he. He learned that the best leaders were painfully honest — not in a way that was humiliating or degrading — just straightforward and direct. At the end of the day, he learned that a leader's strength comes from credibility.



Daniel Coleman '82

He explains it this way: “Whether you’re a small group leader or large group leader, your credibility is vital. When you’re a small group leader, you’re a domain expert and your credibility derives from how

well you know your stuff. But, when you’re a large-group leader, you are no longer able to be a domain expert in all areas. So, ultimately being a domain expert is not the same as leadership. Making others domain experts is what makes great leaders. So, if you find that you’re able to do the job better than the person who answers to you and do it in, say, 10% of the time, while it takes them 100% of their time — not only have you failed, but so have they.”

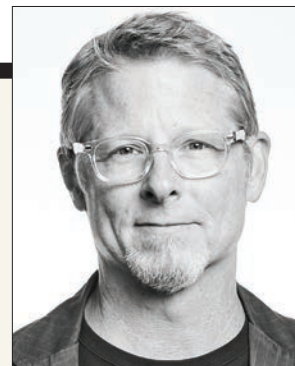
One might be inclined to think that his time spent at Yale on a literature degree was wasted. But, Daniel would disagree. He has developed what he sees as a literary understanding of management. “As with any great piece of literature, there’s always a core conflict,” he says. “Being able to recognize the conflict, who the protagonists and antagonists are and what is motivating them is a key attribute of a great leader.”

Daniel has moved on from corporate America. He’s back in Birmingham now. A while ago, he started teaching as an adjunct at Birmingham-Southern College. In December 2018, he was appointed the college’s 16th president. As if crafted by a novelist, Daniel’s life has come full circle.

Over the decades, Altamont, and the schools that merged to form it, have produced leaders of all types — business leaders, social leaders, government leaders, leaders in the arts and sciences.

In recent years Altamont has undertaken the study of leadership. With the development of the C. Kyser Miree Ethical Leadership Center, Altamont now offers students a way of formally studying the art of leadership with the goal of helping them find their own unique expressions of it through service. Because of this program, and because of everything else Altamont, we look forward to telling more stories like these four in the years to come.

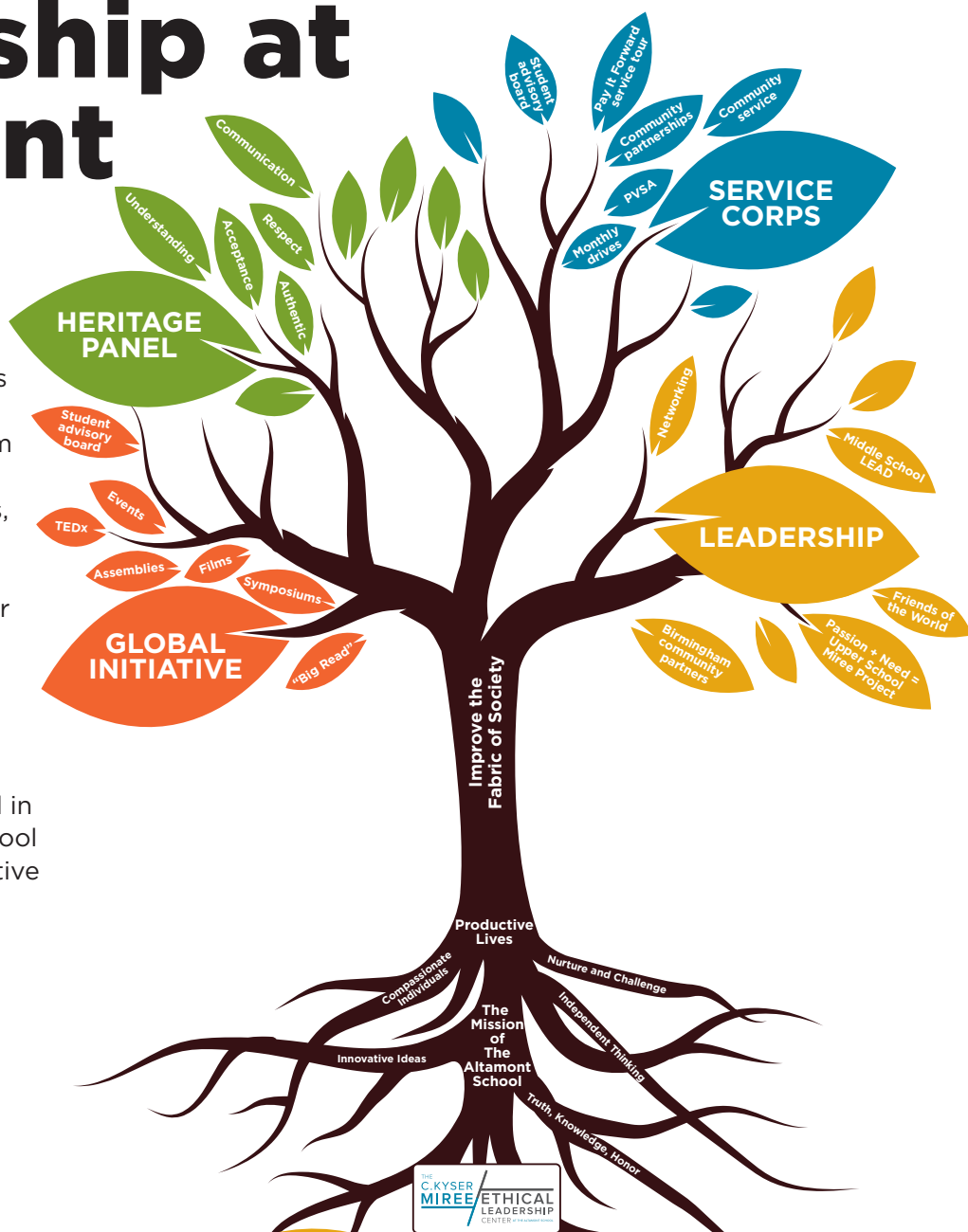
Dan Monroe '78, is a partner and the chief wordsmith of Cayenne Creative Group — a creative, brand-development agency in Birmingham that offers national and international brand experience in the form of an agile creative firm. He is on the boards of the Birmingham YMCA and Crisis Center and is actively involved with the Birmingham Sunrise Rotary.



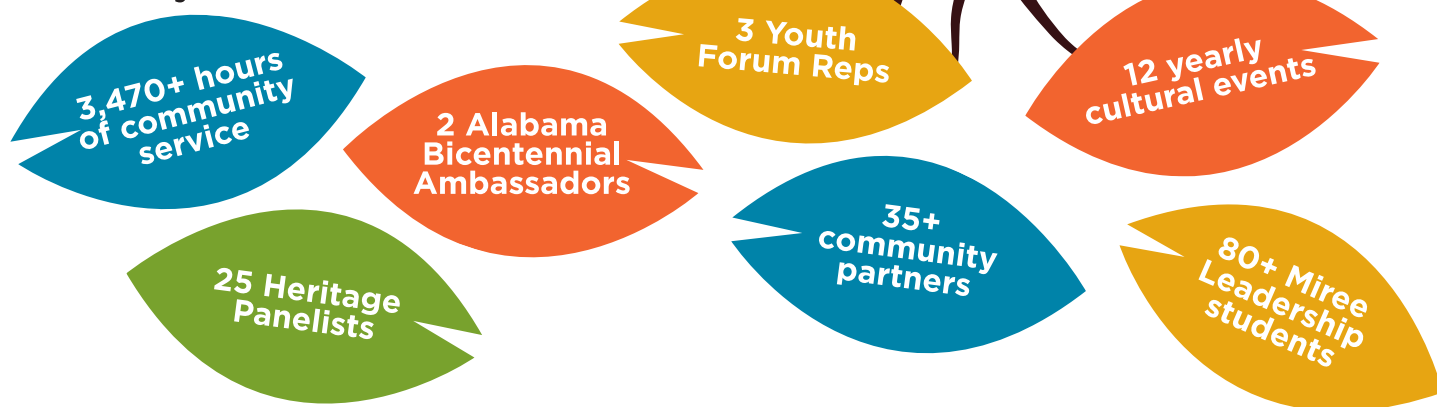
Leadership at Altamont

The C. Kyser Miree Ethical Leadership Center at Altamont connects students to opportunities for leadership through service at the school and in the Birmingham community. Katherine Berdy '91, director of the Miree Center, says, "In life you have to strive toward solutions using the resources you have. This program challenges our students to work independently, to problem solve and to become more innovative as they develop and pursue their passions."

Miree Center is like a tree, rooted in the mission of The Altamont School but branching out in four distinctive areas: Global, Service Corps, Heritage Panel, and Leadership. These programs find different expression in the middle and upper school.



Miree by the Numbers





Middle School LEAD retreat

Middle School

Students in 7th and 8th grade apply to the LEAD program and collaboratively develop middle school initiatives within the Altamont community, such as dances, service projects, and all-school assemblies. Students in 5th and 6th grade participate in Friends of the World service club, which planted flowers and other vegetation in Altamont's International Monarch Waystation garden this Spring.



Friends of the World



Knights of the World

Sixth graders are also able to take a quarter-long leadership elective course.

One rotation of students, the Knights of the World, won the \$10,000 grand prize in a national service project competition sponsored by the nonprofit Lead2Feed: Student Leadership Program. Knights of the World (pictured above) organized a community drive on behalf of Firehouse Shelter in which they filled a bus to capacity with donations. These students were able to present the grant to Firehouse Shelter on television during the WBRC Fox 6 News morning show "Good Day Alabama."



Upper School Miree participants

Upper School

Miree Leaders create and implement projects based on individual interests that serve a need in the greater Birmingham community. The leadership aspect of a Miree project starts on day one, as students must choose their projects independently. “The process is intentionally vague,” said Berdy. “This is motivating for some and frustrating for others. Like many things in life, rarely do these projects end up the way they were originally conceived. Having ups and downs is part of the program. Building resilience, management and communication skills, and persistence are just some of the ways the program benefits our students.”

There are currently more than 80 active Miree projects. The pages that follow highlight a few of these projects.

Color Run Benefitting Rise Against Hunger

Recent graduates Chandni Patel '19 and McLean Bell '19 fulfilled the requirements for their Miree distinction twice. Chandni and McLean chose to focus on hunger, and they partnered with the international nonprofit Rise Against Hunger. During



Chandni Patel '19 and McLean Bell '19



Rise Against Hunger Meal Packing Event in the Diner



Eleanor Roth

the 2017-18 school year, the girls organized a Color Run to raise money to purchase meals. They set up a website, designed T-shirts, secured corporate sponsorships, worked with the city of Fultondale on the race site, organized volunteers, and even hired a DJ! The mayor of Fultondale gave a speech before the event started, and the city featured the event in its community magazine.

The girls raised enough money to purchase 20,000 meals, which they then had to organize volunteers to pack. McLean and Chandni had fulfilled the requirements of the Miree program at this point and could have relaxed and enjoyed their senior year. Instead, they organized a second Color Run for the 2018-19 school year and raised enough money to purchase (and pack) an additional 30,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger.

Education Symposium

Eleanor Roth, a rising junior, has two interests that she is pursuing: knitting and education. She helped “knit” students into the fabric of the school at the start of the year with several installation art pieces that added a pop of color to the library and Livingston Gallery and a sense of school spirit.

Eleanor also organized a free, community-wide education symposium “Teaching and Learning: Boundaries and Pathways in Birmingham Education.” This event brought former Alabama State Superintendent of Education Tommy Bice as well as other teachers to the Cabaniss-Kaul Center for the Arts for a panel discussion on topics such as: influential teaching environments, liberal arts vs. skills-based education, and the relevance of community involvement in a well-rounded education.

In reflecting on the value of this experience, Eleanor said, “Organizing this symposium taught me soft skills that are so important. I had to learn how to organize and market an event, invite guest speakers, coordinate schedules and venues, write a persuasive email, facilitate a productive discussion, and so much more. It was an incredibly valuable experience.”

Music Academy

Rising senior Sameer Sultan, who plays the saxophone in Altamont’s jazz band, wanted to find a way to make music accessible to everyone. Sameer turned his attention to working with underserved communities needing music education. He has written a curriculum, worked with the A.G. Gaston Boys and Girls Club and is now teaching music to eight students at Hayes Elementary. “Walking in my first time to see the students, I was intimidated. That all quickly crumbled away and became just me and eight kids having fun. We all love hearing and playing music.”



Sameer Sultan

Global Cuisine

Last year, Altamont's Global Initiative theme was footprint. A significant aspect of any culture's footprint is its cuisine. Jennifer Grissom, food service director, says, "It's always been important to me to include food service in the global program. Last summer, I was reading about the theme for global, and it occurred to me that we have such an incredibly diverse student body and faculty. It was not only appropriate but also manageable to involve the entire community. And who doesn't like food?"

A different food culture was highlighted each month. Altamont staff and students worked with Mrs. Grissom to put together a menu reflecting their culinary footprint. "My starting point would be asking: 'What were you raised on? What is meaningful to you?' People would bring me their mother's and grandmother's recipes."

Mrs. Grissom was pleasantly surprised at how well the initiative was received. "Students still want taco salad

and chicken fingers, but they loved trying new food, so much so that some dishes, like Gulab Jamun, will be added to the regular menu next year. We ended up with more responses than I could fit into the year, so we already have menus from the Czech Republic, Israel, Lebanon, and Peru in the works for next year."



Jennifer Grissom



One of our most popular global footprint lunches celebrated Indian cuisine and featured Chicken Makhani, Basmati Rice, Aloo Palak, Roasted Chickpeas with Cumin, Naan, and Gulab Jamun.

Mr. T's Global Footprint Cuisine: Greek

Niko Tsivourakis teaches 5th and 6th grade English, and his global footprint cuisine is Greek. He says, "Like it or not, a Greek person is married to his cuisine. We're known for philosophy, democracy, and feta. I'm ok with that. Why does Greek food have a legacy? It is simple, accessible, unpretentious, and social—a celebration of humble ingredients married with a few others, a lively table, and teacups full of olive oil! One doesn't need to know chemistry; one just needs a grove, a garden, and the sea. Poetic, if you ask me. *Yamas!*"



Niko Tsivourakis

Menu:

Greek Meatballs in Tomato-Cumin Sauce over Orzo with Feta, Tomatoes, & Capers
 Roast Chicken with Lemon & Artichoke Hearts
 Sautéed Spinach with Garlic & Lemon
 Fried Eggplant
 Pita Bread with Tzatziki Sauce
 Baklava

Mr. Ballard's Global Footprint Cuisine: Cajun

Fifth and sixth grade history teacher Robby Ballard '03 shared his 19th-century Louisianan heritage. He says, "My mother's side of the family, the Beaumont clan, came out of Mer Rouge, Louisiana, in the early 1870s, fleeing post-Civil War riots in the area. They headed north to the burgeoning burg of Birmingham, bringing with them what possessions they could and, most importantly, their cuisine. Cajun cooking is magnificent because it's almost impossible to mess up. Reflective of the people who developed it, it's a mishmash of different spices and meats. But, one aspect remains constant: onions, celery, and peppers are omnipresent."

**Menu:**

Popcorn Shrimp Po-Boys with Creole Mayonnaise
 Zapp's Kettle Chips and Cajun Crawtators
 Shrimp Creole over Steamed White Rice
 Cajun Meatloaf
 Roasted Corn & Peppers
 Spicy Green Beans with Bacon
 Red Beans & Rice

Mr. Dominguez's Global Footprint Cuisine: Cuban

Seventh grade geography teacher Rob Dominguez shared his Cuban heritage. He says, "culture's defining dishes are rooted in simplicity, necessity, and low cost. Peasant dishes, that can be produced en masse and cooked to feed laborers, give us insight into the day-to-day lives of peoples from all walks of life."



Rob Dominguez

Growing up, picadillo made regular appearances at my family's table with flavors representing Cuba's colonial heritage and status as the Spanish point-of-entry for the Americas. As a kid, the dish of black beans and rice — born by Spain's Reconquista and its more common name: *moros y cristianos* — was served alongside Thanksgiving turkey/dressing dinners. Dishes like these make up the traditional diet of many Cubans and are served — depending on availability — any time of the year, from average weeknight meals, to celebratory dinners."

Menu:

Picadillo (seasoned ground beef with green olives, raisins, & capers)
 Roasted Citrus & Garlic Chicken
 Black Beans & Bacon with Rice
 Fried Plantains
 Fresh Green Beans with Cilantro & Lime
 Cuban Bread
 Tres Leches Cake



Bobbye Johnson

Altamont's May Day barbecue is one of the most eagerly anticipated meals of the year. A sort of American global footprint lunch, the May Day menu features BBQ Pork Ribs, BBQ Chicken and standard picnic fare. Pictured above: Bobbye Johnson grilling 270+ pounds of ribs on May Day.

Rising Junior Pursues Creative Work

If you have attended any event at Altamont in the past two years, whether it be athletics, the arts, or a ceremony, chances are excellent that Aryan Caplash has had a behind-the-scenes role. A rising junior, Aryan wears many hats at the school. He operates the scoreboard/video wall and sound system at home volleyball and basketball games; he produces the hype videos and player lineups that show on the big screen during the games; he manages the Altamont Athletics Instagram account and designs most posts; he operates the spotlights, screen, and sound for many events in the Cabaniss-Kaul Center; he has a part-time job with Altamont's director of technology imaging and repairing laptops for the school's 1-to-1 program; and he somehow finds time to be a student and pursue other extracurricular interests such as playing soccer, giving tennis lessons to Birmingham city elementary students, serving as an Altamont Ambassador, and participating in tech theatre and the C4E computing club.

Aryan's inspiration for Altamont athletics marketing comes from colleges and universities. "I follow college athletics social media accounts and wanted to bring the same level of design and branding to our school. It was an interest of mine, so I connected the pieces. After I won a Scholastic Gold Key for one of my athletics photos, I saw an opportunity."

In December 2018, Aryan started the company Laminar Digital (www.laminardigital.com). Laminar offers design and photography services, consulting, website design, photography, videography, merchandising, and branding. He says, "Laminar is basically a hub for other designers. When I take on a project, I manage it and then bring on designers and other creatives to do the work. Laminar is a start-up company, but it's also a starting place for designers looking to get their work, their brand, out in front of people."

Although he prefers creative work, like branding, Aryan did his research, consulted lawyers and accountants, and



Aryan Caplash

Aryan is licensed to fly personal and corporate drones, like the medium-UAV DJI Phantom 4 pictured above, which he used to take the photograph on the back cover of this magazine.

completed all the paperwork associated with making Laminar an LLC. Working on the business side of a business has sparked a new interest for him, "Consulting is the area that I am most interested in growing. There are many things that I still need to learn."

Aryan also has a personal website, aryancaplash.com, where he highlights his creative work in photography and merchandising. About his creative work he says, "Whatever I am in the mood for that day. I like to stay with a specific theme. If I have an idea, I get up and play around with it, for hours, until I have it the way I want it." His growing portfolio of creative work has led to an internship with Starnes Media and a freelance photography gig for the professional soccer club Birmingham Legion FC.

Aryan plans to continue his social media and tech work for the school, but hopes to train a younger student to take on some of the work and eventually take over after he graduates.

National Merit Scholars

Recent graduates Amrita Lakhanpal, Vivek Sasse and Asher Desai were three of only 33 students in the state of Alabama to be awarded \$2,500 National Merit scholarships. Spencer Skidmore was also awarded a college-sponsored Merit Scholarship through Grinnell College. Earlier this spring, Amrita, Vivek, Asher and Spencer were distinguished as National Merit Finalists.

Merit Scholar designees were chosen from a talent pool of more than 15,000 outstanding Finalists in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program. National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship winners are the Finalists in each state judged to have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills, and potential for success in rigorous college studies. The number of winners named in each state is proportional to the state's percentage of graduating high school seniors. These Scholars were selected by a committee of college admissions officers and high school counselors, who appraised a substantial amount of information submitted by both the Finalists and their high schools: the academic record, including difficulty level of subjects studied and grades earned; scores from two standardized tests; contributions and leadership in school and community activities; an essay written by the Finalist; and a recommendation written by a high school official.

This year's National Merit Scholarship Program began in October 2017 when over 1.6 million juniors in approximately 22,000 high schools took the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants.



Left to right: Vivek Sasse, Asher Desai, Amrita Lakhanpal and Spencer Skidmore



Left to right: Kuleen Sasse, Vivek Sasse, Asher Desai, Suneeti Chambers and Benjamin Tang

Scholars Bowl

Altamont's Varsity Scholars Bowl team, Kuleen Sasse, Vivek Sasse, Asher Desai, Suneeti Chambers, and Benjamin Tang won the 2019 Alabama Scholastic Challenge State Private/Magnet School Championship. Vivek was named to the Division I All State Team.

At the 2019 National Academic Quiz Tournament held in Atlanta, Georgia, Vivek Sasse was the 33rd highest scorer in the nation out of 1,602 students and Altamont placed in the top 15% out of 336 teams. This was the first time the school attended the tournament.

The 2019 Alabama Scholastic Challenge (ASCA) held its state-wide junior varsity scholars bowl competition at Hoover High School. Altamont's junior varsity scholars bowl team, Maddie Thomas, Hannah Ashraf, Maaz Zuberi, Tyler Walley, and Kuleen Sasse, were State Runner Up. Kuleen was named to the All-Tournament Team. Earlier in the year, Altamont's JV Scholars Bowl team went undefeated at the ASCA District meet.

Debate

Congratulations to William Coleman, Anna Kate Lembke, Lewis Rand, Pranav Goli, Iman Zuberi, Wesley Sudarshan, Shawn Goyal, Sameer Sultan, Ahad Bashir, and Sara Catherine Cook for qualifying for the National Speech and Debate Association Tournament in public forum debate. The tournament was held in Dallas, Texas, June 16-21, 2019. Pranav and Wesley made it to octafinals, finishing in the top 16 of middle school public forum teams in the nation.



At the Alabama State Debate Tournament, held on the campus of Montgomery Academy and LAMP in Montgomery, Alabama, April 11-13, 2019, Pranav and Wesley won the title of state champion in junior varsity public forum (JVPF); Lewis and Iman advanced to the semifinals in JVPF, finishing 3rd overall. In varsity public forum William and Sameer advanced to the finals, placing 2nd overall. Sara Catherine and Anna Kate advanced to the semifinals, finishing 3rd overall.

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AltamontSchool

In case you missed them, below are some highlights from our social media for the 2018-19 school year.





ATHLETICS HIGHLIGHTS



This school year was a very successful one for Altamont athletics. Five teams brought home five state maps, including championships in boys cross country and boys track and field, and runner up trophies in girls cross country, girls soccer and boys soccer. Below are athletic highlights from the year. Please visit our website altamontschool.org/athletics for more information about all of our teams. Go Knights!

Cross Country

On November 10, 2018, at Oakville Indian Mounds Park in Danville, Alabama, Altamont's boys cross country team won the AHSAA Class 1A-2A State Cross Country Championship, bringing home the blue map for the first time since 2001. Asher Desai '19 finished his cross country career at Altamont by becoming the first individual male state champion in Altamont history with a time of 16:31. James Dixon '19 (4th), Spencer Skidmore '19 (5th), and James Gregory (14th) each achieved All-State honors, and Jack Engel '19 rounded out our top five.



Altamont's girls cross country team edged out Hatton by one point to win the AHSAA Class 1A-2A State Cross Country runner up title, bringing home the red map. Ariel Dean '23 was All-State with a 7th place finish.

Track and Field



Altamont's boys team won the 2019 AHSAA Class 2A Track & Field State Championship, held May 3-4, 2019, at Cullman High School. The Knights brought home the blue map for the first time since 2006, emerging from a deep and competitive field of more than 40 2A schools. The team was anchored by many strong performances, including James Dixon's state-record-setting run in the 800 meters, earning him the gold medal for the third consecutive year. James was also State Champion in the 1600 meter run, and Cole Hall '20 was State Champion in the pole vault.

Altamont's girls team finished 4th in state with many outstanding individual and relay team performances.

Varsity Girls Basketball

Altamont's girls varsity basketball capped a successful season with a Sweet Sixteen appearance in the AHSAA Class 2A State tournament on Feb. 15, 2019 at Wallace State Community College in Hanceville, where they fell just short to Red Bay. The Knights went undefeated in the regular season, securing the Area 10 title. The girls were also undefeated in conference post-season play, winning the Area 10 2A championship for the 13th time in 14 years with a victory over Vincent High School. Named to the Area 10 All-tournament team were Kalia Todd, Samantha Torch, and tournament MVP Tianna Shelton.





Boys and Girls Soccer

Altamont's boys and girls soccer teams capped off outstanding seasons earning State Runner Up trophies at the 2019 AHSAA 1A-3A State Tournament, held at John Hunt Park in Huntsville, Alabama, May 10-11. In the championship match, the girls lost a heartbreaker to Westminster-Oak Mountain, falling in overtime (3-2) with just two seconds left to go, and the boys came up just short (2-0) against Bayside. Boys and girls soccer teams won the first round of State playoffs, 5-0, 5-1 respectively, and advanced to the finals with the boys team defeating Susan Moore 2-1 and the girls team sweeping Donoho 6-0.

Named to the 2019 Birmingham All-Metro girls soccer team were: first team Mimi Davis, Allie Ritchie and Rachel Wright; second team Ava Muller and Amelia Pak; and honorable mention EB Hornak and Carlisle Wilson. Named to the 2019 coaches All-State boys soccer team were: second team Daniel Kutsch; and honorable mention Ashton Collier and James Dixon.



Volleyball

Altamont volleyball finished third in the AHSAA 2A Elite 8 Championships for the third year in a row. Altamont defeated #1 Seed Arton in five sets to set up a rematch with Winston County. In our rematch, we took Winston County to five sets, but ended up falling just short (15-12) in the deciding set. Earlier, Altamont captured the Area 10 crown. Kalia Todd, Abby Sharff, and Claire Lynton (MVP) were named to the All-Area Team. Varsity volleyball completed its 2018 season with an overall record of 28-8, and this year's graduating class compiled an amazing 87-21 (81% win) record over the last three seasons.

Golf

For the third straight year Altamont's girls golf team captured the sectional tournament championship, held April 29, 2019, at the Anniston Country Club. Senior Yun Ya Fong had the best individual score, finishing as Low Medalist. The girls advanced to the Sub-State tournament. The boys golf team finished second at sectionals and advanced to the Sub-State tournament as well.



Altamont Arts

Photography & Fine Arts



The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards competition is the nation's longest-running and most prestigious scholarship and recognition initiative for creative teens in grades 7-12. Altamont had many art, photography and creative writing students win awards in the Regional competition. Nine Altamont students were also selected from more than 59,000 schools in the national Dick Blick student art competition. Pictured above are Scholastic and Dick Blick award winners. Please visit altamontschool.org/news for a complete list of award recipients.



Several Altamont students won awards in District IV-A in the State of Alabama Visual Arts Achievement Awards in Photography: Liz Patterson - Best of Upper School Photography, James Stephens - Best of Middle School Photography, Ryoya Yamada - Best of Middle School Computer Images. In the Double Exposure Juried Photography competition, Liz Patterson won "Best in Show", Amrita Lakhanpal, Emily Muller and Aaron Swiney also won awards in the competition.



Nearly 340,000 works of art and writing were submitted to the 2019 Scholastic Awards. Zoe Jacks, Carson Hicks, and Emily Muller all received silver national medals for their photography, placing them within the top one percent of all submissions.



Three Altamont photography students—Raju Sudarshan, Lily Davis, and James Stephens—were selected as 2019 Finalists in River of Words, an international youth poetry and art contest that inspires children ages 5 to 19 to translate their observations of nature into creative expression.



Three students won awards in District IV-A in the State of Alabama Visual Arts Achievement Awards in Fine Arts: Sophie Cornelius - Best of High School Drawing, Jack Johnson - Best of Middle School Drawing, and Merritt Edwards- Juror's Choice (Painting).

Theatre



Altamont's production of *The Addams Family* musical was selected as one of two mainstage plays to perform at The Alabama Educational Theatre Association's statewide Thespan festival.



Six students portraying 39 characters took audiences to seven continents in the spring production of Mark Brown's *Around the World in 80 Days*.

Orchestra, Band & Choir



This spring the orchestra traveled to the Smoky Mountain Music Festival in Tennessee, where they received recognition as outstanding ensemble in their division and had several students recognized for special distinctions.



In the winter concert Altamont's choir took concert goers "Home for the Holidays" with favorite songs from the season. The spring musical featured selections from Broadway favorites including *Hamilton*, *Mama Mia*, *Hairspray*, *Cats*, *Les Mis* and more.

Altamont's jazz band performed spring and winter concerts at the school and at several local elementary schools.



“The old lift of heart, the best of all breathing”

After 26 years of excellence at Altamont, beloved English teacher Jim Palmer '70 is moving on to the next chapter of his life. During May Day festivities, he led students, faculty and staff in a final victory lap around the track in celebration of all that he has meant to the school. Mr. Palmer was gracious enough to answer a few questions before embarking on his next adventure.

Altamont's mission statement is at the heart of all that we do. You wrote it, didn't you?

Dr. Pete Bunting was the chair of Altamont's Board of Trustees at the time, and he asked the school to come up with a mission statement. I sat down, opened my heart and in about 15 minutes this is what came out:

The Mission of the Altamont School is to improve the fabric of society by graduating compassionate, well-educated individuals capable of independent thinking and innovative ideas. To this end, the school attracts, nurtures, and challenges students whose commitment to truth, knowledge, and honor will prepare them not only for the most rigorous college programs, but also for productive lives.

What is your favorite book to teach?

It is a shock to me to say this, but *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. I couldn't understand it in high school, and Martin Hames, my English teacher all four years, did his best. The book beat me up and beat me up until I got it. It is as good as American fiction gets. The language and the emotion are so beautiful. Faulkner has four narrators, four different points of view. One student said it was like looking at a statue, just rotating it slightly every time. It's a beautiful story of love and loss.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame by Victor Hugo is another favorite. When the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris burned this past April, 400 firefighters fought especially hard to save the tower where Quasimodo lived. That says something.

What do you hope students take away from your class?

I try to get students to feel the magic of words. I want them to love words as I do. If I can get them to do that, then I have done something. I am a passionate guy with a good book standing on the shoulders of giants. I am just trying to pass on what I have learned. It's a great way to spend a life.

What is your teaching style?

Passionate. Challenging, but fair. I treat everyone equally. I think you can challenge and nurture at the same time. I set a high bar so that when students get their grade they will know that they have earned something. And we will get there together. I will nurture the heck out of a kid, but I refuse to coddle. Kids want to do well. If you expect a lot, you will get a lot. If you expect very little, you will get very little. I walk around my class the whole time to keep students on task and engaged. I am all the way in.





You did a lot of coaching too.

I was head coach for all the track and cross country teams for 15 years at Altamont, 18 at Randolph, 33 years total. Combined 40 state titles. We had 91 teams place in the top three at the State level. I have been blessed with wonderful students, wonderful athletes. There were years in which I worked 100-hour weeks. Coaching was a big part of that and being the chair of the English department. I look back on those 44 years, and I have loved every day. How many people can say that? I have been lucky. I have been blessed.

What good books have you read recently?

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles. It shows the seasons. The old order giving way to the new. How two different societies and values collide. The Count is one of the last of his breed.

This isn't a new book, but everyone should read *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

What's next for you?

I want to keep teaching. I am exploring my options. I still love it. Teaching is like magic. I could be tired or sick or sad, not knowing how I was going to teach, but I could go in to a class and see those smiling faces and get a good book in my hands, and it was like Faulkner said, "The old lift of heart, the best of all breathing," and I would think to myself, "Let's do it again."

Thank you, Mr. Palmer. We will miss you!





"Everyone wants to be remembered - 'to leave a mark on the wall' as Faulkner said. Though my family and students are my legacy, something tangible like the Palmer Reading Garden helps put that visible mark. I want to thank you for remembering me and for thinking enough of me to help make this garden a reality."

—Jim Palmer

Palmer Reading Garden

After teaching for more than 40 years, including 26 at Altamont, Mr. Palmer is entering the next chapter of his life. We will miss him dearly. He loved taking his classes outside, so to honor him, Altamont's newest outdoor learning space will be named the Palmer Reading Garden. Connected to the Orange Bowl with a new glass doorway, it will feature Adirondack chairs, a

patio, an outdoor white board, landscaping and shade. We envision the garden being used for outdoor classes as well as a place to socialize and have meetings.

We invite you to honor Mr. Palmer with a gift to the Garden. All donors will receive an invitation to join him and his wife, Jocelyn, as we unveil the new space this fall.

Levels of giving:

Adirondack Chairs: \$1,000 contribution payable over two years or in one payment, your name plate will be affixed to the chair. (Only 13 chairs left.)

Japanese Cherry Trees, SOLD OUT as requested by Mr. Palmer: \$750 contribution, your name will appear on a tree marker.

Brick Walkway: \$500 contribution (or \$41.66/mo.), your name will appear on a brick. July 31, 2019 is the deadline to purchase a brick. You may set up a recurring gift through our website.

Landscaping: Contributions up to \$499 will be directed to the landscaping of the garden, which may include drift roses, arborvitae, azaleas, loropetalum, and liriop.

A donor wall in the garden will include the names of all contributors to the project.

Questions?

Please contact Director of Advancement Charlotte Russ 205-445-1225 or cruss@altamontschool.org

Visit our website at www.altamontschool.org/giving/giving/in-honor-of-mr-palmer

Guggenheim Fellow Gifts Altamont with Art



Amy Pleasant and Marci Henderson '19 pictured with *The Journey I* in Hames Gallery

This April, Altamont was honored to receive a new piece of artwork from Guggenheim Fellow Amy Pleasant. Pleasant gifted the first part of the signed and titled diptych *The Journey I* to the school in honor of her daughter, Marci Henderson '19, graduating from Altamont. The artwork, ink and gouache on paper, measures 30.25 x 22.5 inches and is currently on display in the Hames Gallery. She plans to gift the school with *The Journey II* when her son, Ellis, graduates from Altamont in 2023.

"The ideas behind the diptych are that they are two of the same but totally unique, linked like brother and sister. The legs show a 'pattern' but have alternate directions and continue to walk toward and away from each other, as they will throughout their lives. The legs also represent the journey, the path, the search and passage of time. They walked the

halls of Altamont and were a part of this place, and then they moved on," said Pleasant.

In May, Pleasant was named the 10th recipient of the Magic City Art Connection's Distinguished Artist Award. She was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2018 and is the recipient of many other accolades and distinctions. Her work, which includes painting, drawing and ceramic sculpture all exploring the body and language through repetition, is represented by Jeff Bailey Gallery in New York. With a limited palette and an economy of line, she draws images like writing a letter, documenting essential, universal motions and human behaviors. This repetitive drawing process creates a visual language over time, like an alphabet.

Altamont is delighted to add her artwork to our collection.

Four Generations of Altamont

Altamont welcomed 5th grader Joe Porter '26 as the school's first 4th generation student! Joe plays the piano and is a sports fanatic. His favorite subjects are reading, math, and science. He likes a challenge!

Joe's great grandmother, Joan Barber Hicks '44, was captain of the white team, Brooke Hill Girl, and the first alumna to send her children to Brooke Hill. His grandmother, Kathryn Porter '67, served on Altamont's Board of Trustees from 1989-97, serving as vice president and secretary. She was named a Distinguished Alumna in 1996 for her significant contributions to the school. Kathryn is a founding member of the Altamont Alumni Association and started the Altamont Parents Association. She is married to Jim Porter and their children are Jay '96 and Katie '05.

Joe's father, Jay Porter '96, is an attorney at Bradley. He is married to Dr. Kristin Porter, a radiologist in Birmingham.

We are so grateful for the loyalty and support of families like Joe's. We look forward to welcoming even more 4th generation Altamont families in the future.



Left to right: Jay Porter '96, Joe Porter '26, Kathryn Porter '67



Greetings from the Altamont Alumni Board!

We have been planning some great initiatives to connect more alumni to the school in the coming year, including Alumni Lunch and Learns, an opportunity for an alumnus to have lunch with several current students to discuss his/her career path. Be on the lookout for more information about this and other ways to engage with the school in the coming school year. We hope to see you at the annual holiday party Dec. 22, 2019!

Best regards,
Emily Schultz '01
President, Altamont Alumni Association

Reunions

Calling all classes ending in 0 or 5!

2020 is your reunion year.

Please have your class president or representative reach out to Emily Johnson to begin planning.



Class of 2008 - 10-year reunion (November 2018)



Class of 1969 - 50-year reunion! (May 2019)



Brooke Hill Class of 1968 - 50-Year reunion

Send any address updates and alumni news to:

Emily Johnson

Database & Alumni Relations Associate

ejohnson@altamontschool.org

205-874-3502

And don't forget to join our Alumni Facebook page!
facebook.com/groups/altamontalumni

Save the Date!

ALTAMONT ALUMNI

Holiday
PARTY

Sunday, December 22, 2019

4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Save the Date!

ALTAMONT'S GALA

April 17, 2020

at 6 p.m.

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The Club

Dinner & Auction

Auction Committee
volunteers needed
in January.

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Photo by Aryan Caplash '21, see story on page 16



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