



Welcome, Lawrentians!

September 12, 2023

Dear Lawrenceville Community,

At our annual Convocation Ceremony, where we welcomed 252 new students and many returning Lawrentians, [I delivered remarks titled On Being Kind](#). I spoke of both extraordinary, heroic acts of kindness that can change the course of history, and also of ordinary, everyday measures of kindness that alter the trajectory of someone's day – or sometimes, unknowingly, their life. I told the students, “The quality of life in a given community is directly determined by how frequently each of us takes advantage of the small, daily opportunities to follow our hearts – to show kindness.” When we show courage in standing up against unkind acts, or in offering an empathetic ear, we set the tone and establish a standard; we contribute to the culture around us and we begin to expect more from each other. I encouraged students to focus on everyday opportunities to do their part in making an even better Lawrenceville. “Those moments add up, and if we act on our better impulses consistently, they become woven into the fabric that holds us together – they become the community, not just that we aspire to be, but who we are.”

This was a fitting bookend to a reimagined orientation, which included Form-level community building activities, daily themes, and intentional conversations around our respective roles in shaping a school culture that both affirms and inspires. Students sampled the academic schedule by using those blocks of time for orienting topics, including academic purpose and wellness, community expectations, social media and the impact of artificial intelligence (AI), Harkness skills, stewardship and sustainability, and academic integrity and success. The Student Council motto of “ROLL: Redefine Our Lasting Legacy” was reflected in Student Body President Bryce Langdon's [blog post](#) and opening remarks to fellow students. “In my eyes, to leave a legacy worth remembering means to leave a place better than you found it. But that doesn't mean leaving a legacy is only about creating something new – it's just as much about upholding the tradition and environment made possible by those who have come before you ... I encourage everyone reading this to think about how they can leave their footprint on this campus and do their part to impact the community positively.”

I invite you to catch a glimpse of the Lawrenceville spirit, forged through the camaraderie of the Houses, the voices around the Harkness table, and the kindness and generosity within the heart of every Lawrentian, in our [2023-2024 School Year opening video](#).

I believe in our Lawrenceville community, and in our ability to build something truly extraordinary together this year.

Sincerely,

Stephen S. Murray H'54 '55 '63 '65 '16 P'16 '21
The Shelby Cullom Davis '26 Head of School