

# BLAIR

## BULLETIN



**ALL IN**  
THE CAMPAIGN  
FOR BLAIR  
ACADEMY

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**HEALTH & WELL-BEING**  
A HOLISTIC  
APPROACH  
TO WELLNESS

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**HONORING**  
THE LIFE  
OF HERB  
SIEGEL '46

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# On Exhibit



## **Ramon Peralta**

*2 Times*

*October 17-November 18 in Blair's Romano Gallery*

*Artist talk: November 9 at 7 p.m.*

Artist Ramon Peralta is a native of Santiago, Dominican Republic, where he discovered a passion for painting and drawing before relocating to the United States. Studying art in both Santiago and New York City, Mr. Peralta has become a promising artist in the Lehigh Valley, and his work focuses on an imprint of human life and human creation. Several pieces on display in this exhibit will be from his Subway Series, a gallery inspired by his daily commute and the desire to draw the very real people around him. Mr. Peralta's use of strong colors and purposeful brushstrokes creates defined characters that welcome the viewer into their lives, if only to be filled with more questions than answers.

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04



## Announcing *All In*, the Comprehensive Campaign for Blair Academy

As Blair Academy celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2023, the School launched *All In*, the largest fundraising campaign in its history. Learn more about the people, programs and places this seven-year campaign aims to support.



## 20 Honoring the Life of Blair Trustee *Herb Siegel '46*

As we look back at the life and legacy of Blair Trustee **Herb Siegel '46**, we express our sincere gratitude for all that he contributed to lead Blair forward and put the School in the position of strength we find ourselves in today.



## 30 Blair Honors 175th Commencement

In May, as the School's demisemiseptcentennial approached its close, the Blair community came together to celebrate the Class of 2023's accomplishments.



## 25 Orchestra & Singers Share Blair Music on the International Stage

For the first time since the coronavirus pandemic, the Blair Academy Symphony Orchestra and Singers set sail on an international performance and cultural tour. With stops in London, Cambridge and Paris, our musicians took in the sights and sounds of Europe and performed in ancient spaces.

## 44 The Wildrick Family: Six Generations & Counting

Stretching back six generations, to before the Civil War, the Wildrick family's proud lineage contains more than 30 Blair alumni, including some of the School's earliest graduates. For the family, maintaining that relationship with Blair has become not only a means to an outstanding education but also a treasured legacy.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### Blair's Meredith Abbott '24 Appointed New Jersey Scholar

This past summer, Blair's **Meredith Abbott '24** was chosen to participate in the prestigious New Jersey Scholars Program. Established in 1977, the New Jersey Scholars Program selects 39 of the state's most academically talented students to live and learn

together annually. Over the course of five intensive weeks in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, participants engage in lectures and small-group seminars, undertake intensive reading assignments, and pursue research at premier libraries and museums, all while building relationships with peers and the talented faculty. Their work culminates with an interdisciplinary research paper.

As this year's cohort of scholars prepares to set out in a world that has seen ever-growing geopolitical, topographical and technological change, they examined the question: "How does one live in a world where the only constant is change?" Discussing the

impact of everything from society's view on immigration and refugees to the disproportionate effect of climate change and environmental issues on marginalized populations, the program led to a wide breadth of inquiry and challenged its students to tackle the program's central question from many perspectives. Meredith, a cross country runner at Blair and a hopeful environmental science or English major, found the program gave her the opportunity to focus on her specific passions and learn in new ways. "We are really allowed the space and freedom to learn from other people's stories and not just words on a page."

Meredith's final research project focused on sustainability. She believes that she benefited most from working closely with her New Jersey Scholars Program advisor, an environmental science professor, whose expertise proved invaluable to her exploration. "It was a really unique experience to work hand-in-hand with someone so active in the field, doing important, current research." Meredith's final presentation allowed her to consolidate the ideas discussed throughout the summer and demonstrate her new knowledge to her peers and professors. Since completing the program, she has continued to view environmental issues and the changing nature of our world in a new light, and she looks forward to carrying this perspective with her at Blair and beyond.

## Staff

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## SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

What do you think about the stories in this issue of the *Blair Bulletin*? Let us know—your letter may be published in the next issue. Please send your comments to [bulletin@blair.edu](mailto:bulletin@blair.edu).





## As our 176th school

year began this fall, the enthusiasm of our milestone anniversary year is still palpable across campus. Alumni Weekend in June drew a record crowd to celebrate our history, the amazing talents of our athletes and artists, and the work of our dedicated alumni volunteers. It was a vibrant and memorable few days filled with connection, and I very much enjoyed spending time with so many alums, hearing their Blair stories and witnessing firsthand just how much the institution means to them.

Over the weekend, we also publicly launched *All In*, the largest comprehensive campaign in School history, with the help of an incredible performance from The Grooveline Dallas, members of our Board of Trustees and some of Blair's beloved faculty members. That included Blair's 15th Head of School Chan Hardwick and his wife, Monie, who were with us to reflect on where Blair has been and where we are going. The fact that the Hardwicks planned and hosted Blair's historic 150th celebration during their tenure made their support especially meaningful given how much they have shaped the School as we know it since 1989; their legacy will forever be felt across our campus and community.

**"Throughout the coming year, as our advancement team plans events around the country to celebrate our campaign, I hope you will join us and continue to be 'all in' for Blair—in all the ways that resonate with you."**

Shortly after Alumni Weekend, my wife, Sarah, and I headed up to Cape Cod to visit family and, along the way, stopped to say hello to Elaine Kelley, wife of Blair's 14th Head of School, the Rev. James R. Kelley, who sadly passed away last year and whose life and legacy we honor in this issue of the magazine. Talking with her about how she and Jim prioritized creating a close-knit and warm community at Blair—which continues to be among the most important hallmarks of our culture—reinforced to me the continuity of the Blair family and how important it is to honor the contributions of the leaders who came before us and made the institution what it is today.

Certainly, Blair's 16th Head of School Chris Fortunato, whom I also had the opportunity to spend time with over the summer, built on the Hardwicks' legacy with innovative building projects and forward-thinking programming. We continue to expand upon that work as we seek to raise \$140 million to support faculty talent and excellence, the long-term financial strength of the School, and campus enhancements and curricular initiatives. Central to our campaign is the construction of a new Center for Health and Well-Being adjacent to Hardwick Hall. If you haven't seen it already, please take a moment to watch the architectural flythrough on our website. As you'll read in our cover story, this new facility will benefit students in many ways, and I look forward to breaking ground in spring 2024.

It seems fitting that our milestone anniversary year concluded with time spent with individuals who steered our School forward over the course of nearly 50 years. As we look toward Blair's next

chapter, a common thread that emerges from these interactions is that, at our foundation, we remain committed to being student-centered. It is the people who shape this academy—our students, parents, alums, faculty and staff make Blair the unique institution we all love, and every person has an impact on the culture we carry forward. We asked Alumni Weekend attendees what being "all in" for Blair meant to them, and they unequivocally answered by saying that once you join the Blair family, you are a member for life. Our Blair connections run deep; they are transformative and long-lasting. Leading Blair, and serving on its faculty, is a lifestyle, not just a job, and I am very much inspired by those who came before me.

Throughout the coming year, as our advancement team plans events around the country to celebrate our campaign, I hope you will join us and continue to be "all in" for Blair—in all the ways that resonate with you. Our focus will continue to be on the people at Blair as we teach our students how to take agency, discover new passions and lead with empathy. Equally important is learning to communicate across lines of difference and fostering connections among graduates as they leave our hilltop to go out into the world, make a positive impact and create communities like Blair in their own lives. Thank you, as always, for your support, generosity and partnership, which are so critical to delivering on our mission.

**Peter G. Curran, P'27 '27**  
Head of School





# *All In*

THE COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FOR BLAIR ACADEMY







## *Dear Blair family,*

As Blair Academy celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2023, we publicly announced *All In*, the largest comprehensive fundraising campaign in School history. The seven-year campaign, which began in 2018, seeks to raise \$140 million to support faculty talent and excellence, forward-thinking programs, campus enhancements and Blair's financial strength in the future. Thanks to the leadership and generosity of so many Blair parents, alumni and friends, it is indeed an exciting time for our School as we look back at where we have been and ahead to Blair's bright future.

Our plan focuses first and foremost on people and the powerful teacher-student relationships that form the foundation of great learning and make the Blair experience life-changing. We also seek to prepare students for a rapidly changing world through our curricular and co-curricular programs that prioritize growth, wellness and belonging.

*All In* has already done much to create and update facilities that amplify our programmatic needs; over the course of the campaign, we have constructed and renovated 11 buildings on and adjacent to campus, including three academic facilities, four faculty residences and a five-bedroom alumni house. Our Board of Trustees has approved the design plans for a new Center for Health and Well-Being connected to Hardwick Hall, for which we plan to break ground in spring 2024.

Of course, as we continue to fundraise for this new facility and to meet our overall campaign goal, securing Blair's financial foundation to elevate our School now and in the future is also a critical priority, and we remain committed to growing our endowment, Blair Fund support and endowed scholarship funds. Together, we can ensure that our School is stronger than ever and we are able to offer even more enriching and impactful educational offerings for future generations of students. Since 2018, Blair has created 31 endowed scholarships offering students of every background and experience an opportunity to take advantage of all a Blair education has to offer.

We end this note by expressing our sincere gratitude. Blair is thriving today because of your generosity and support. We couldn't be prouder to lead our School forward during this pivotal time as we look to the next chapter of Blair history with excitement, confidence, and commitment to our core values and mission. ■

*Maria Vinci Savettiere*

**Maria Vinci Savettiere, Esq. , P'17**

*Chair, Board of Trustees*

*Peter G. Curran*

**Peter G. Curran, P'27 '27**

*Head of School*



*All In*  
THE COMPREHENSIVE  
CAMPAIGN FOR BLAIR ACADEMY



## *Faculty Talent & Excellence*

*Goal: \$15 million*

"A Blair education teaches you much, but among the most important tools are the ability to build relationships, communicate effectively, work with others across lines of difference and advocate for yourselves. Everything we do at Blair is designed to give you the confidence to leave our hilltop campus with these skills and go out into the world to make meaningful contributions in your communities and in society."

—**Peter G. Curran**, *Head of School*



**R**ecruit, develop and retain outstanding faculty and staff who represent our student body and are dedicated to knowing our students well—in the process, creating a richly diverse, dynamic and inclusive community where everyone feels a sense of belonging and students are supported in every endeavor.

Teachers who challenge and connect with students as scholars, mentors and leaders are Blair's most powerful asset. We must invest in attracting and supporting gifted faculty who are committed to teaching careers at Blair, as well as to creating a superior learning environment for a diverse student body.

### **Supporting the Best & Brightest**

**Blair is committed to fostering a rich and rewarding professional environment that supports the best and brightest teachers from different disciplines and industries.** To prepare our students to navigate a complex global society, our faculty must be able to devote time to their craft, developing skills, pedagogies and partnerships beyond Blair, while also modeling fulfilling personal lives and well-being for our students. To ensure that Blair employees have the training, resources and time to thrive, the *All In* campaign supports enhanced faculty compensation and benefits, as well as training and professional development opportunities. We have hired additional teachers to meet the evolving needs of our programs and to foster the conditions that best allow faculty to know students well and to nurture their own personal and professional growth.

### **An Advanced Curriculum**

**Our transition to an advanced curriculum designed by the Blair faculty, which will better prepare our students for success,** will also amplify our ability to offer teachers autonomy and professional fulfillment as they determine what they want students to have learned at the end of each year and design courses to accomplish that mission. ■





# 2

## *Forward-Thinking Programs* *Goal: \$25 million*

P

prepare students for a rapidly changing world through our curricular and co-curricular programs that prioritize growth, well-being and belonging for all stakeholders.

To prepare students for success in a world that is constantly changing, our curricular and co-curricular programs help students develop the tools to lead successful, fulfilling and balanced lives. **Our focus is on students' personal growth, development and agency, and we emphasize the importance of well-being, resilience and feeling a sense of belonging at Blair.**

### **A Positive & Inclusive Climate**

The *All In* campaign is raising funds to integrate cross-curricular student learning experiences, which will guide curricular design and help students develop their readiness to engage with the world beyond Blair. Assessing our campus climate and supporting student-teacher connections have also been a large part of this campaign pillar. At the same time, we have sharpened our focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging through student-led groups; increased curricular focus; hiring our inaugural Dean of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging; and enhancing training, research and programming that support a positive





and inclusive campus climate. Beyond instilling in students a deep sense of connection at Blair, we encourage them to go out and create that experience for others and in communities they build beyond our hilltop campus. We continue to educate our community about the importance of physical and mental well-being, as well as nutrition, mindfulness and spiritual health. As we develop plans for a new Center for Health and Well-Being, we are committed to building upon our health-and-wellness curriculum to best utilize that new space. To watch a flythrough of the plans for the three-story building, visit [www.blair.edu/narrated-flythrough](http://www.blair.edu/narrated-flythrough). We are designing an inviting and modern facility for our community to come together, not just to access health and well-being resources, but also to take advantage of a wide range of spaces, programming and activities.

### In-Person Connection

As much as we have embraced technology to support learning, we are also mindful of finding balance. That's why we are purposeful about asking our students to put down their phones, make eye contact as they cross campus, be present and engage with others. **Again, this opportunity for in-person connection with people from across the globe is a core aspect of what makes the boarding school experience transformative and its impact lasting.**

As we prepare our students for their next educational chapter, we are purposeful about connecting them to experts and mentors outside Blair who will enhance their learning. Sigety Alumni House has been instrumental in our ability to do this in terms of offering accommodations on campus, and we expect to only increase collaboration as we move to an advanced curriculum. Our Integrated Science Research program offers an excellent model for developing these kinds of partnerships moving forward.

### Personalized College Counseling

**Finally, we remain committed to providing a holistic and personalized college counseling experience to meet the demands of the competitive undergraduate admission landscape.** To prepare students for excellent college outcomes, we help them discover the schools that fit them best and at which they will thrive. Toward this end, we have expanded the number of full-time counselors and created more robust programming for students and their families. ■





# All In

THE COMPREHENSIVE  
CAMPAIGN FOR BLAIR ACADEMY



# 3

## *Our Campus* *Goal: \$50 million*

**C**reate and update facilities that support Blair's programmatic needs and growth, amplifying its educational mission and enhancing the academic, artistic, athletic, and residential experience of students and faculty.

With relationship-based learning and superior academic preparation at the heart of the Blair experience, Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts (1997), Annie Hall (1999), Hardwick Hall (2009), and Kathryn and Lakeside Halls (2015) have provided **spaces where faculty members know, teach, train and support students across all dimensions of the Blair experience**. Here is a look at some recent campus enhancements and additions.

**2017:** The Blair community celebrates the opening of the Chiang-Elghanayan Center for Innovation and Collaboration, an open-architecture, technology-rich learning hub and home to Blair's fine arts and technology departments, and Weber Hall, repurposed to optimize the teaching of mathematics.

**2019:** J. Li Golf Center opens and provides year-round practice space for Blair's golf teams, featuring two hitting bays with simulators, a putting/chipping area and lockers.

**2019:** The winter sports complex, also known as "Lulu's Place," encloses a portion of the tennis center under a bubble during the coldest months of the year.



**2019:** Bogle Science Center is renovated and now boasts a three-story addition with new classrooms, labs for advanced courses and dedicated research space for long-term projects.

**2021:** The Crew Training Center opens; its features include dedicated weight and ergometer training areas, as well as an eight-seat rowing tank, which allows rowers the opportunity to practice year-round in optimal conditions.

**2022:** Blair further enhances the athletic experience through improvements to the golf course and Wallace Pool.

**2022:** The School also adds the student-named “Shipyard”—a complex that includes outdoor basketball and pickleball courts—to its athletic facilities.

## Faculty Housing

Over the course of the *All In* campaign, we have done much to increase and diversify quality housing for Blair teachers, commensurate with their age and family needs, in order to attract superior teaching candidates and retain the best teachers who coach, lead activities and work in Blair’s dormitories. **To foster a safe and welcoming local community beyond our campus,** Blair has supported improvements to Blairstown as part of our strategic plan since 2018, recently purchasing and renovating a number of properties on Main Street, including Kathleen House (2020), Hoby House (2022) and Sigety Alumni House (2022). In 2021, Blair dedicated Steckel & Miller House, which are two faculty residences overlooking the golf course, in honor of two veteran Blair teachers.

## Health & Well-Being

**Given that the health and wellness of our community is a top priority,** we have increased education and programmatic offerings and begun a new building project: a Center for Health and Well-Being connected to Hardwick Hall. The new facility, which will allow our health services and counseling teams to occupy the same space for the first time in School history, will include areas where students can access health resources, study and socialize. Looking ahead, we have identified a crucial need for a dining facility that can fit our entire community in one sitting. There will be more to follow on both projects in the months and years to come. ■





*All In*

THE COMPREHENSIVE  
CAMPAIGN FOR BLAIR ACADEMY



4

*Financial Strength*  
*Goal: \$50 million*





# S

ecure Blair's financial foundation to elevate our School now and in the future.

A strong endowment provides security for the future, a buffer against periodic economic downturns, and the flexibility to create and respond to opportunities as they arise. **We must grow endowed funds so that we may more fully invest in our students, teachers, staff, innovative programs and historic campus.**

As we build our endowment for generations to come, we must also strengthen annual giving to the Blair Fund. **Blair Fund gifts are critical to the School's operation and enhance the Blair experience for today's students and teachers by supporting financial aid, extracurricular activities, service and leadership opportunities, and many more everyday needs.**

Among the goals we have been working toward during the life of the *All In* campaign are:

- **Growing endowed scholarship support** so that we can continue to bring a diverse, talented student body to Blair by offering generous and necessary financial aid.
- **Expanding endowed support** for programs and activities across the spectrum of Blair's curricular and co-curricular programs to ensure that both new and long-standing meaningful experiences are fully supported and available to every student.
- **Increasing endowed support for facilities** to provide for maintenance, technological upgrades, and preservation of our campus and its new and historic buildings.
- **Increasing support of the Blair Fund** to \$3 million annually to fund imperative needs, a target we are proud to have reached in 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. ■



# A 360°

## *Look at Health & Well-Being at Blair*

**STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING** has long been a priority at Blair, and the School has invested in developing its curriculum, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, preventive education, counseling resources, and religious and spiritual support for the entire community. In this Q & A, five faculty and staff members involved in different aspects of caring for the health and well-being of Blair students share the work in which they are engaged as we look toward building a new facility that will bring the Health Center and counseling teams together for the first time in School history.



The future Center for Health and Well-Being, connected to Hardwick Hall, will allow our health services and counseling teams to occupy the same space and will include areas where students can access health resources, study and socialize.





## Ally Thomas

*Director of Counseling*

**Adolescents have grappled with and continue to face unprecedented pressures and challenges when it comes to their mental health. How has your team of three supported Blair students, and what aspects of the new Center for Health and Well-Being do you think will further your collective work the most?**

**A:** We know that mental health is something all our students have and something that continues to change and develop well beyond their time at Blair. It's important that we prepare students for the challenges, both good and bad, that life will inevitably throw at them. When adolescents have skills to manage stress, form meaningful relationships and problem solve, they are better able to learn and they have better health outcomes later in life.

We provide individual counseling to any student who wants support—mental health diagnosis or not, boarding and day students, big problems or the seemingly small ones. Providing accessible mental health resources in schools is key in ensuring the health and safety of students. We take a student-centered approach in our work, really meeting students where they are and identifying goals in collaboration with them. We work with students to process experiences, understand emotions, weigh decisions and develop tools to better manage the pressures of adolescence in today's world.

I'm really proud of the work my team does and the commitment they show to students every day. School counselor Melany Jimenez is in her fourth year at Blair, and she's developed great relationships with students through individual sessions, her role as the faculty advisor for the Black and Latinx Student Union and her work with Be Well @ Blair. School counselor **Tara Prezioso '96** is in her second year at Blair and already feels like an integral part of our community. She's always willing to jump in and help, whether it's meeting with a student, providing training to our prefects or supporting the mission of the Healthy Relationships Committee. Along with managing our

counseling team, I serve on the Inclusivity Committee, a faculty-and-staff group focused on ensuring every community member feels they belong. We know supporting a healthy and inclusive community is essential when it comes to mental health.

Another focus of the counseling office is ensuring all students have access to a trusted adult equipped to support them. We provide yearly training to faculty related to teen mental health and well-being. In addition to faculty training, we provide consultations as needed so we can support faculty as they work to support students. We also partner with parents in this way. Providing care for the adults who care for students has been an effective approach to caring for all students, regardless of whether they see us for individual counseling.

The new Center for Health and Well-Being will be a physical manifestation of how critical supporting students' mental and physical well-being is at Blair. The space has been designed with student needs at the forefront, providing an inviting space for connection and easy access to services and creating opportunities for independent self-care. Counselors will be able to collaborate with nurses, health teachers and the athletic department in new ways. The larger space will help us give students privacy when they need a moment before class, a room to jump on a private Zoom call with a therapist or to meet with one of our consulting clinicians in person. Our student groups, like Project Ally, which bring awareness to mental health, will be able to host events in the space. When I picture the opportunities this building will bring, I know it will enhance the student experience at Blair.



**Sarah O'Neil**  
*Religion, Philosophy & Mindfulness Teacher*

**You have defined mindfulness as “attention with intention.” What do you mean by that, and how are you working with Blair community members to incorporate a greater level of attention with purpose in their lives?**

**A:** This past spring, I gave a Chapel to the Blair community in which I offered that very simple definition of mindfulness (“attention with intention”), which means knowing where our attention is at any given moment and—more importantly—even having a choice in where we place our attention. Often, we are unwittingly lost in thought, ruminating on the past or anxiously planning for the future, so we don’t harness the full power of our attention in the present moment. We can miss out on the beauty and richness of our lives as a result.

A mindfulness practice helps us cultivate the skill of more purposeful attention, which is integral to our well-being. Present-moment awareness benefits our emotional and physical health by reducing stress and anxiety, and it also helps us be more productive and joyful in our day-to-day lives. At a school like Blair, mindfulness is also at the heart of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) work and community building, for it helps us see our biases and foster deeper connections with others. For all these reasons and more, we have begun to offer mindfulness instruction to students in various forms.

In the academic setting, we have two elective courses that introduce students to mindfulness and practices like meditation, metta (or lovingkindness) and mindful movement. Each sophomore LEADS class also receives two mindfulness lessons, which include guided meditations, mindful drawing and a mindful eating exercise. In all these classes, the goal is to help

students understand the nature of their attention and to give them tools to redirect the mind back to the present moment when they’ve been distracted from it. Outside the classroom, each Wednesday as our community enters Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts for Chapel, I guide students through a meditation or a contemplation that dovetails thematically with the speaker’s message. This offers them some quiet time each week and an opportunity to practice mindfulness in a larger group setting. This fall, all varsity athletes also began receiving training in yoga and mindfulness.

These are all the formal ways that mindfulness is being taught at Blair, but there are so many informal ways that we are encouraging mindful presence, including cellphone policies, family-style dinners and the student-led Be Well @ Blair residential life sessions. Plans for the new Center for Health and Well-Being are so exciting, as the facility will have a dedicated space for meditation and yoga where we can create opportunities for us all to practice together. Though meditation is in many ways a solitary endeavor, it can be very powerful when practiced in community.

I am so grateful to work at a place that not only values wellness for all of its students and employees, but also understands the importance of including mindfulness education in that pursuit. We are only as good as the quality of our attention in any given moment, so why wouldn’t we make that a top priority?





## Cency Middleton

### *Health & Well-Being Coordinator*



**Can you share more about what Blair is doing in terms of prevention and why it is so important?**



Prevention programming is critical to promoting student health and well-being, and Blair has been intentional in developing a wide range of educational opportunities led by students, faculty and experts beyond our hilltop. At the outset of their Blair career, students take a semester-long course covering the most foundational topics for their overall health and success as scholars, athletes, artists and community members, which can have many different demands than a non-residential environment. Some of the initial topics we touch on are healthy sleep habits, effective communication and time management skills, coping with stress and sexual health. Following their ninth-grade year, students build on these foundational skills in their yearlong sophomore LEADS course by exploring concepts of identity, values, mindfulness and leadership, while keeping a keen eye on how they interact with social media. In these two years, students are empowered to take ownership of their own growth, development, happiness and community engagement at Blair through class discussions, scenario and role-play work, and opportunities for exploring research and reflection.

Over the next two years, our 11th and 12th graders receive preventive health and well-being education through the student-led program, Be Well @ Blair. Student leaders bring topical issues to the table such as how to build healthy habits, how to give and gain consent, and how to help a friend struggling with mental health. These student-leaders then help to craft a meaningful lesson as a group and share this with their peers.

At Blair, we believe that peer education can be most impactful in delivering prevention education; research shows that students are more likely to listen

to the teachings and advice of their peers rather than adults, especially when it comes to topics of health and well-being. Equipping students with crucial data and information before they need it is the driving force behind our prevention education curriculum. This work doesn't just happen in classrooms, but we are always working to incorporate health and well-being in all our student interactions. As a community, we want students to feel equipped with the information they need to make the best decisions for themselves, both during their time at Blair and in the next chapter of their lives as adults, too.



Blair's new facility will replace the **J. Brooks Hoffman '36** Health Center, which has served our community well for many years.



## Rev. David Harvey

*Chaplain*

**As School Chaplain, you are charged with supporting the spiritual health and well-being of the Blair community. How have you approached this important work, and what are your takeaways as you enter year two on Blair's faculty after serving on the Blair Board of Trustees for many years?**

**A:** As Chaplain, my work at Blair is divided into three areas of the School's life: I teach ethics and world religions to ninth and 10th graders; I coordinate the Wednesday Chapel program and support student speakers preparing for their talks; and I work with Blair's Inclusivity Committee in supporting the various religious and spirituality groups, especially affiliate groups that align with the Abrahamic tradition. I also attend as many student activities as possible—arts exhibits and performances, athletic events and student-led Vespers. I've enjoyed seeing and experiencing the nuts and bolts of Blair Academy, allowing me to assimilate into the Blair community.

Being charged with overseeing the spiritual health and well-being of the community sometimes feels like a daunting task. My hope is to help students understand the importance of spirituality and its positive effects on their well-being. I do not seek to awaken students to a particular religion per se, but rather to a particular way of life, where beliefs influence behavior. Whether in the classroom or working with a student in preparation of their Chapel talk, sometimes students unearth a hidden part of their inner self. Accessing and articulating that inner self can be a beautiful thing. It involves, as my colleague Sarah O'Neil says so beautifully, giving

"attention with intention." Sarah speaks from a Buddhist perspective, and the impact of mindfulness, of being present and attentive, is powerful. We can all use a good dose of mindfulness at times.

Over the past several months, I've witnessed adolescents express kindness, compassion and empathy to their peers and teachers in many ways. Expressing concern for their classmates is one example. Helping students with physical injuries is another. In my ethics class, students talked about living by the Golden Rule: treating others as one would want to be treated. Acting mercifully, as one student put it, is just the right thing to do.

As I enter my second year at Blair, I hope to help students embrace their unique, spiritual selves, deeply rooted and grounded in a loving God. Hopefully, students will strive to become kinder, more compassionate, and empathetic toward others and their peers. I hope to help them embrace Blair's Five Fundamentals—see the good; show care in all spaces; be curious and suspend judgment; know yourself and practice honesty; and honor the dignity of others. These fuel the spirit, create well-being and define our life together in the Blair community.





Whether in the classroom or working with a student in preparation of their Chapel talk, sometimes students unearth a hidden part of their inner self. Accessing and articulating that inner self can be a beautiful thing.”

—Rev. David Harvey



**Rosalyn Zamora**  
*Director of Health Services*



**Blair’s Health Center does so much every day to keep Blair students healthy and well. In what ways will the facility be a game changer in terms of how your staff operates?**



The daily work of the Health Center team includes caring for students in many ways: dispensing medications, seeing patients and referring them to the school physician or other consulting professionals, and caring for the acutely ill during the day and, often, overnight. We have done this well in our current facility, but the existing structure is dated, and the opportunities for tailoring our environment to best serve students in a new building are exciting. The fact that our Health Center team, school counselors and athletic trainers will be under one roof will be a game changer in caring for students.

The designs call for a bright and airy aesthetic, with greenery and sunlight, as well as views of the Bowl, which will be a wonderful backdrop to promoting the health and well-being of all, and the healing process for those who are unwell. Functionally, we’ll be able to monitor students in open space and distribute medications in a setting designed

for doing that efficiently, and our surroundings will promote collaboration among the nursing staff, which has grown to include five full-time nurses, seven per diem nurses and a part-time licensed practical nurse. Our new space will separate our various functions to improve coordination of care with rooms for medication, triage, observation and overnight care.

In addition to normalizing health resources as something that can be accessed on the way to the Can to hang out with friends, as a stop on the way to practice or en route to the athletic trainer, our new Center for Health and Well-Being will give us flexibility and the ability to adapt as it will also foster efficiency in care delivery, improve patient safety and allow us to deliver a high standard of care. We are incredibly grateful to Blair’s leadership team for incorporating the suggestions of the frontline nursing team into the plans for the new facility.



In 1991, Herb was honored in Blair's Citation of Merit as "one of America's most engaging and admired corporate leaders."

—HONORING THE LIFE & LEGACY OF—

# Herb Siegel '46

by T. Chandler Hardwick III, Blair's 15th Head of School & current Blair Trustee



# THE

first thing to say about *Herbert J. Siegel '46* is that he was a good man. It may be the last thing to say about his life, too. Good to his family, good to his friends, good to the institutions that educated and cared for him, good to people he did not know but who needed help or a chance or his attention. Herb was not sweet, soft, gentle or retiring. He charged into daily life as if lots of things needed to get done, drumming a table for emphasis when talking, cheerful and wry, quick to dismiss what he saw as nonsense, but equally quick to embrace a fresh idea, a better plan, a worthwhile goal. If Herb Siegel gave you his word, he was good for his promises. He was a good person.

This memorial does not attempt to speak to all of Herb Siegel's life. His life and career were full of drama, exciting and memorable moments, crowded with well-known, even famous people, and significant events you can read about in books and the media. This portrait of Herb Siegel is mostly about his relationship with Blair, in small part as a student and in his adult years as an active Trustee, then as an honorary member of the Board, but always as someone who never lost his connection to the School—to the faculty, the students and his friends, especially to *Jack Bogle '47*.

Herb Siegel would say that he was “sent” to Blair in the early 1940s on the recommendation of another Philadelphian, *Ed Sabol '36*, who was at Blair carving out a name for himself as a top swimmer. (Famously, Ed Sabol would go on to found NFL Films and to marry Herb's sister, Audrey, tying Herb and Ed together beyond their Blair connection.) Herb's father had created a successful overcoat manufacturing business, and it is likely that the plan was that Herb would go to Blair, then to college (Lehigh University), and return to the family business in Philadelphia. That was not Herb's plan, however.

Even during his college years, Herb used the education funding his father had given him not just for school but also to enter business as an investor/owner rather than as a beginning executive. One of his business ventures led to another, and even if Herb's acquisition plans did not always gain ownership, the result seemed to be financial growth and success. After a series of more or less profitable business acquisitions, Herb bought a talent agency, in one swoop becoming the manager of such stars as Jackie Gleason and Perry Como, among others. He loved this business and through his ownership met and befriended many of the most famous talents of the day. Remarkably, Frank Sinatra sang at Herb's wedding to Ann Levy, whom he met during his



A devoted alum in the Class of 1946, Herb Siegel was instrumental in helping the School acquire the “Girl Scout Property” (later renamed the Siegel Property), which includes Lake Genevieve and miles of walking trails, expanding Blair's campus by 120 acres.



Herb and his late wife, Ann, with Chan Hardwick and his wife, Monie.



In the late 1990s, Herb dedicated Annie Hall in honor of his wife, Ann Levy Sabol Siegel, who sadly passed away in 2005 (pictured on right: Blair's 15th Head of School and current Blair Trustee T. Chandler Hardwick III).

“Among Herb's greatest legacies is the acquisition of the Girl Scout Property. Having long maintained that it was critical to Blair's future, Herb could never have imagined in the 1990s or 2000s how much difference those 120 acres meant to the Blair community during the pandemic. In the age of social distancing, it gave our students, faculty and staff the opportunity to be safely outside—hiking, exercising on the trails and fishing in the lake. The Siegel Property continues to offer our community a restorative respite that would not have been possible without Herb's perseverance and generosity.”

—Blair Board of Trustees Chair Maria Vinci Savettiere, Esq., P'17

# Herb Siegel '46

Blair years. And, later, as a widower, Herb married his second wife, former Blair Trustee Jeanne Sorenson, and Tony Bennett sang at their wedding.

Herb's early businesses were listed on the American Stock Exchange until he purchased Chris-Craft, the famous boat building company, securing a place on the New York Stock Exchange. The boat company, but not the name, was returned to the Michigan family who had owned it; Chris-Craft then was reinvented as a media company, owning television stations around the country.

Amid these revolving companies and his increasingly high-profile business life, Herb joined the Blair Board of Trustees in 1985. Though he was only occasionally able to attend meetings, Herb followed the School's progress and kept in touch with individual faculty he knew from his student days, looking for creative ways to be helpful. When he learned that longtime Blair faculty member **Ferd Marcial '39** was retiring but planned to live in Blirstown, Herb insisted on paying for a new house for

Ferd and his wife, Joan. The new home was built along the shore of Blair Lake, a project that eventually led to a group of faculty houses being built or purchased around the lake, giving the School critically important growth in faculty housing. Named "Marcial House," the home was given to Ferd and Joan who lived in the house; Ferd died there in 1994, after which Joan continued to live there until moving to Florida to be with her family. After she relocated, Marcial House became a regular addition to Blair faculty housing.

Herb left the Blair Board of Trustees as an active member in 1992 and was soon made an honorary Trustee of the School, the first Blair graduate to hold such a position. In the years that followed, Herb played a variety of roles. Throughout the 1990s and into the new century, he hosted many New York City



Longtime friends Herb (left) and **Jack Bogle '47** (right) reunited on Blair's campus for the dedication of the Chiang-Elghanayan Center for Innovation and Collaboration in 2017.

“Herb was one of those rare visionaries who led by example in setting the foundation to transform Blair into the School we are today. His no-nonsense, get-it-done attitude developed from decades of business success and created a mindset at Blair that there was no challenge that we could not overcome. Herb's Board of Trustees leadership and significant and consistent philanthropic support of Blair certainly inspired me to do my best to come close to the high bar that he set.”

—Doug Kimmelman P'12 '13 '15 '22, former Blair Board of Trustees Chair

“Herb Siegel was one of the most creative donors that I worked with as a fundraiser. In creating and structuring the Siegel Equity Plan—one of the only such funds in the secondary or college world—he provided incentives at critical junctures in a teacher's career, which have resulted in Blair attracting and retaining one of the finest boarding school faculties in the country.”

—Monie Hardwick, former Director of Development at Blair



events, most of which honored faculty success; he supported the careers of individual students and their families who otherwise could not have afforded to come to Blair; he gave Blair, Peddie and Lawrenceville the Big Three Trophy, honoring their annual football rivalry; he supported an important renovation and addition to Sharpe House, allowing the School to use the house for far more community and alumni events than had previously been the case. And, in 1999, he was the lead donor to the creation of Annie Hall, named for his wife, Ann, offering upper-school girls a beautiful new dormitory home.

At the turn of the century, the faculty who knew Herb as a student and many Trustees who served with him during his active phase were no longer at Blair; however, Herb's friendship

with longtime Board Chair Jack Bogle endured throughout both their lives and—through joint philanthropy—tied both men closer to the School. In 1994, Herb asked Jack to join the Chris-Craft board of directors, a position Jack held until the company was sold to News Corp in 2000. From both Blair service and working together on the Chris-Craft board, the two friends grew close and stayed in touch through the rest of their lives. It is fitting that the two men celebrated their 70-plus years of friendship with a coupled planned gift that bears their names and endows scholarship support for deserving students.

Working with Jack and subsequent Board Chair **Bill Timken '53** in the early years of the new century, Herb stepped up yet again to offer crucial funding for the School to



Former Head of School Chris Fortunato (*center*) welcomed Herb and his wife, former Blair Trustee Jeanne Sorensen Siegel, to Blair in January 2017.



Herb (*center*) celebrated the dedication of the Chiang-Elghanayan Center for Innovation and Collaboration with Jeanne (*left*), and their niece, **Sofia Sorensen '19** (*right*).



I came to Blair after my brother and I had to leave our public school because of an issue with our living in the district. Given we were prominent athletes in the community, there was some media coverage about it, and the next thing we knew, Herb Siegel had picked up the phone and offered to support us at Blair. While I never met him during my time as a student, we stayed in touch while I was at the University of Virginia, and I visited him at his New York City office when I was in college. As much as I thanked him for all he had done and was continuing to do for me, Herb made it clear that he was glad to help. It was very natural for him, and he encouraged me to express my gratitude by finding success in life—and, in his very genuine way, made it clear that there are different ways to define that.

He advised me to find something I love to do that makes people happy; if I accomplished that, he said I would never feel like I was working a day in my life. I took Herb's wisdom into account when I traded working on Wall Street for becoming a chef in the late 2000s. Herb Siegel changed my life for the better in so many ways. I continue to take his advice to heart and try to pay it forward wherever and whenever I can."

—Former commodities trader turned professional chef  
**Mark McLean '98**

# Herb Siegel '46

purchase the large, surrounding tract of land owned by the Girl Scouts. The land ownership gave Blair significant protection from future development, as well as immediate opportunity to reroute the golf course and create more field and facility space for Blair's growing athletic program. In recognition of his pivotal gift, the property is named the "Siegel Property," and continues to serve the School's mission and potential going forward. Herb and Jeanne were extremely proud that their niece, **Sofia Sorensen '19**, continued in her uncle's footsteps and carried on the family's Blair legacy.

Herb Siegel's place in Blair history will endure as long as the School does. His philanthropy embraced many institutions, such as Lehigh, as well as Blair, and continues to do so. Even as his reputation grew in the affirmed stature of a media mogul, Herb never lost sight of what was important to the success in his life and what could be important to others if they had the same opportunities. He kept friends close and always wanted to catch up, break bread, hear and tell stories, and open his heart to those in need. His death is a great loss, but his life was a great gift. ■



Herb and Ann, with a plaque for Annie Hall, the dormitory on campus Herb named in Ann's honor.

“We are deeply grateful for all that Herb, Jeanne and the Siegel family have done to shape the Blair we know today, not least of which was executing his vision of developing Blair's campus as one of the largest and most beautiful boarding schools in the nation and giving deserving students the opportunity to take advantage of all that Blair has to offer.”

—Head of School Peter G. Curran

“Herb built an incredible legacy filled with generosity, memorable stories, love for his family and friends (including his dear friend Jack Bogle) and his beloved Blair Academy. I had the privilege of knowing Herb throughout my tenure, enjoying over many lunches with him and Jeanne, his recounting of memories of his extraordinary life and his unwavering support for Blair and its future. And I was honored to partner with him and Jack on their historic gift in support of student financial aid at Blair that will transform lives for generations to come. I have no doubt that Herb and Jack are together smiling down upon Blair's hilltop.”

—Chris Fortunato, Blair's 16th Head of School

“In addition to being a big supporter of the wrestling program and giving generously to it, Herb was also worried about the long-term housing security of faculty retiring from their Blair careers while not owning any equity in their homes. To address this, the Siegel Equity Plan that he developed additionally compensates teachers who spend their careers at Blair. And, of course, with the land security of Blair in mind, Herb had long wanted to acquire the Girl Scout Property adjacent to campus, and he ultimately funded that acquisition, too. These are just a few of the long-term school needs that Herb and Jack Bogle worked together to identify and support.”

—Former Blair Board of Trustees Chair **James Jenkins '66**



# Orchestra & Singers Share *Blair Music* on the International Stage



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*For* the first time since the coronavirus pandemic, the Blair Academy Symphony Orchestra and Singers set sail on a European performance and cultural tour March 2 to 11. With stops in London, Cambridge and Paris, the performers took in the sights and sounds of England and France, including tours, museums and shows. At each location, Blair students shared their music at public performances in historic venues open to Blair families and alumni.

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“The chance to experience some of Europe’s most historic performance spaces and share repertoire they have spent months rehearsing was just incredible.”

—**Jennifer Pagotto**  
*Director of Instrumental Music*

**“I AM SO EXCITED** Blair’s music students showcased our hard work on tour at beautiful venues in London and Paris,” harpist and singer **Chloe Lau ’23** said. “We lined up a wide repertoire for the Orchestra, from the magnificent Dvořák’s ‘New World Symphony’ to the calming ‘The Road Home’ by composer Stephen Paulus.”

The troupe’s first visit was London, England, where they embarked on guided tours of the British Museum, Shakespeare’s Globe and Westminster Abbey. Students had the opportunity to attend a West End show, opera or concert during their stay as well. To cap off their trip to the capital city, the Symphony Orchestra and Singers performed at Stationers’ Hall, which was completed in 1673 and is one of the few ancient Livery Halls remaining in London.

From London, the group ventured to Cambridge, with a performance at Great St Mary’s Church, the University

Church. When they weren’t performing, students attended a performance of the world-famous King’s College Choir singing Evensong, a 470-year-old monastic tradition that promotes quiet contemplation at the end of one’s day. Tours of Cambridge University and the Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial at Madingley, the only permanent American military World War II cemetery in the United Kingdom, followed. Of course, the adventure continued on the Eurostar train to Paris via the Chunnel. Before boarding, students even participated in an impromptu performance with professional pianist Brendan Kavanagh (Dr. K) at the station to the surprise and delight of travelers passing by!

An afternoon on a Seine River cruise and the chance to study DaVinci’s “Mona Lisa” and the ancient Greek “Venus de Milo” in person at the Louvre Museum were highlights of the cultural tour in Paris. Before returning to the

States, students participated in a final performance at the Gothic Chartres Cathedral. As part of the cathedral’s International Concert Series, Blair’s choir members and instrumentalists took the stage within the church’s soaring interior, under stained glass windows that have survived since the Middle Ages. They experienced the magic of hearing their notes fill spaces that once held the coronation of kings, a memory that will stay with them long after their time on the hilltop has ended.

“We are so excited to have challenged our students to grow through this firsthand experience,” noted Director of Instrumental Music Jennifer Pagotto, who led the trip along with Director of Vocal Music Ryan Manni. “The chance to experience some of Europe’s most historic performance spaces and share repertoire they have spent months rehearsing was just incredible.” ■





**Selina Liu '26**, left, and **Shanayah Kasam '23**, right, share a moment during a performance at Stationers' Hall in London.



Students take in the sights and sounds of Cambridge during their European cultural and performance tour.



The Blair Academy Symphony Orchestra and Singers European tour met up with Head of School Peter G. Curran at Trafalgar Square in London.



Director of Instrumental Music Jennifer Pagotto conducts Blair's Symphony Orchestra at Stationers' Hall in London.



(From left to right) **Carnegie Johnson '23** and **Peter Knapp '25** warm up their voices en route to their next performance destination in Europe.



The European performance and cultural tour included a visit to Shakespeare's Globe in London.



The group got a chance to witness the Changing of the Guard at St. James's Palace in London.





# Belonging at Blair

*An update from Blair's Dean of Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Evan Thomas*

Allow me to express my gratitude in advance for your support, partnership and grace as we navigate what diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) looks and feels like within our community. It's become clear to me over the past several years that we are a school that relies on the mutual support of one another and we are at our best when we see our collective well-being as a shared responsibility. In this way, DEIB work at Blair is grounded in our mission to know our students and prepare them to thrive in a richly diverse world.

The milestone 175th year of Blair presented many opportunities for celebration, one being the growth of DEIB work in our community. Blair hired its first full-time Dean of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (yes, me), but this work is about more than one person—it's a true testament to our mission and our desire to make our community a place that empowers students to realize their full potential. To that end, I view my role as one meant to amplify voices in our community, present opportunities for deeper connection and hold us accountable when it comes to collective care. I was struck by the meaningful ways our students, faculty and staff showed up to join me in this work during the 2022-2023 school year.

## Learnings & Initiatives

Here are a few of the general initiatives and community learnings gleaned from the last year:

**Fostering DEIB work across campus:** My colleagues on the employee Inclusivity Committee brought topics to the table weekly so we could collectively problem solve from our varied perspectives. They also rolled up their sleeves and got to work when it came time to take action, for example, supporting students with their Black History Month seminars, celebrating diverse faiths and traditions at programs such as the Winter Gathering, and exploring ways that we can better communicate and experience our community values.

**Elevating student agency:** Student leaders in the Belonging and Equity Committee gave voice to campus programming provided to their peers through our Vespers program that discussed topics like cancel culture, Lunar New Year, microaggressions, Ramadan and Passover, creating a healthy culture for women





Blair's **Luis Jimenez '24** speaks to the full group of attendees during a student panel discussion at the Widening the Lens conference.

and so much more. These students identified important areas of growth and created events and opportunities for learning. They collaborated with the Gender and Sexuality Awareness (GSA) club to host a support table with resources and information for National Coming Out Day, and created a conversational experience to discuss the topic of “cancel culture” and how we might navigate the nuance of multiple perspectives. Our student-led Belonging and Equity Committee affirms that peer-to-peer education can be a powerful tool when done well. Our students showed up for one another in a way that was inspiring and hopeful in today's climate.

**DEIB learning for adults:** Faculty and staff professional development (PD) was a primary focus because we know that colleagues who feel equipped to meet the needs of students will show up in meaningful and transformative ways. For DEIB PD, we tapped experts in the field and also benefited from the knowledge of our own community members. In this way, adults had the opportunity to expand their knowledge of DEIB topics by learning from and with one another. This was exemplified in our January 2023 Equity Lab Day, where 10 community members offered sessions for employees throughout a full day of learning, and also through our Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) program, in which a cohort of 14 adults met for a yearlong seminar series to drive personal, institutional and societal change toward social justice. Much like peer-to-peer education with students, faculty and staff have benefited from learning through one another. After all, learning is enhanced through shared experiences.

And, in the vein of learning with one another, we also looked for opportunities to learn from external forums, including the Widening the Lens Conference at Far Brook School in Short Hills, New Jersey, and the New Jersey Students of Color Conference at Newark Academy. One of my favorites was the National Association of Independent School's People of Color Conference,

where we had the opportunity to send four faculty members to San Antonio, Texas, in November 2022. We're thrilled to be returning this November and for the opportunity to bring a group of students to St. Louis, Missouri, to experience the Student Diversity Leadership Conference.

## Visions for the Future: Upcoming Initiatives & Opportunities

As I said above, Blair is at its best when we see our collective well-being as our shared responsibility. This is not always easy, or without conflict, but we're a community built on asking questions, coming together and developing genuine relationships. In many ways, I see diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging as a lens for us to act upon the things that our community members care about the most—knowing and showing up for one another. It has been gratifying to work with members of the Blair Board of Trustees and members of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee as we continue to expand the work we are doing on campus to deepen connections and inclusion and belonging within our broader constituencies.

In the upcoming year, we'll build upon successes by strengthening lines of communication and by expanding opportunities for agency and peer-to-peer learning. I'm looking forward to how we'll continue to respond to the needs of our community, empowering voices, and celebrating our growth and accomplishments—while also acknowledging the ongoing work that still needs to be done. ■



At the Widening the Lens conference hosted by the Far Brook School in November 2022, Blair and the other participating schools attended with groups of constituents—including administrators, alumni, diversity practitioners, parents, students, teachers and trustees—and discussed ways to define, design and deliver equity.







A graphic for Blair Academy's 175th Commencement. The background is a light blue color with a repeating pattern of dark blue graduation caps. The text is centered and reads "BLAIR HONORS 175TH COMMENCEMENT". "BLAIR HONORS" and "COMMENCEMENT" are in a dark blue, serif font. "175TH" is in a large, bold, light blue, blocky font with a dark blue drop shadow.

# BLAIR HONORS 175TH COMMENCEMENT

**FOR** 175 years, aspiring learners have ascended the hilltop of Blair Academy to pursue a superior educational experience. Through generations, aspects of life at the School have evolved to meet the differing needs of each era, but many traditions have stood the test of time and become the common threads that tie a vast community of Buccaneers together, no matter where their journeys take them. As the Class of 2023 looks to their bright and promising futures, they leave Blair with strength, knowledge and skills, confident that their time here has prepared them for all that is to come.

In May, as the School's demisemiseptcentennial approached its close, the Blair community spilled onto Sharpe House lawn, filled with exuberance and pride as the commencement celebration began. As they took their seats, ready to join the School's alumni ranks,

the graduating seniors felt the support of the parents, grandparents, family and friends gathered behind them celebrating their success.

As she addressed the crowd at Blair's 175th Commencement, class speaker **Fiona Han '23** encouraged her classmates to bring the best of their hilltop experience into the world to generate a positive change of their own. "Approach one another with empathy and compassion to see beyond our disconnected apathy and the superficial differences that may divide us," Fiona said. "This era desperately needs the impactful work that the talented people in the Class of 2023 will do."

The entire Blair community extends heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2023! ■

BLAIR HONORS  
**175TH**  
COMMENCEMENT







## FACULTY AWARDS

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**Apgar Award for Teaching Excellence:**

History teacher Pamela Schulman

**John C. & Eve S. Bogle Teaching Prize:**

Science teacher Michael Ryerson

**Riether Residential Life Award:**

Language teachers Allan & Maria Issenschmidt

**Lillian & Samuel Tedlow Teaching Prize:**

Fine arts department chair Kate Sykes

**Headmaster's Faculty Prize:**

English, religion & philosophy teacher

**John Redos '09**

## STUDENT AWARDS

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Headmaster's Prize: **Mallory Allen & Michael Diaco**

Blair Academy Trophy: **Carnegie Johnson**

George P. Jenkins '32 Prize: **Fiona Han**

Appointments to the United States Naval Academy: **Sydney Beitler, Carnegie Johnson & Liam Kilrain**



# BLAIR HONORS 175TH COMMENCEMENT



“As you graduate Blair, I hope you will feel confident knowing that you are not only well prepared academically for whatever intellectual challenges await you, but also that your emotional intelligence will help you build support systems, lead with purpose and make good choices.”

—**Peter G. Curran**  
Head of School



# CLASS OF 2023

## College Matriculation List

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Adelphi University	Lehigh University (2)	University of Colorado, Boulder
American University (2)	Louisiana State University	University of Delaware
Auburn University	Miami University, Oxford	University of Deusto
Babson College	Monmouth University (2)	University of Florida
Bates College	Montana State University	University of Mary Washington
Boston College (4)	New York University (3)	University of Miami (4)
Boston University (1)	Northeastern University (3)	University of Notre Dame
Brandeis University	Northwestern University	University of Pennsylvania (3)
Brown University (2)	Penn State University	University of Pittsburgh
Bucknell University (2)	Princeton University (3)	University of Richmond (3)
Colgate University (3)	Purdue University	University of South Carolina
Colorado School of Mines	Rice University	University of Southern California (3)
Columbia University (2)	Rollins College	University of St Andrews (2)
Cornell University	Santa Clara University (2)	University of Toronto
Delaware Valley University (2)	Scripps College	University of Vermont (2)
Dickinson College	Skidmore College (2)	University of Virginia (3)
Duke University	Southern Methodist University	Vanderbilt University
Emory University	Stanford University (2)	Villanova University (5)
Franklin & Marshall College	The College of William and Mary	Wake Forest University (2)
George Washington University (2)	The University of Tampa	Washington University in St. Louis (2)
Georgetown University	The University of Tennessee	Wellesley College
Gettysburg College (2)	Tufts University	Wesleyan University
Hobart and William Smith Colleges	Tulane University of Louisiana (2)	Williams College
Indiana University	United States Naval Academy (3)	Yale University (3)
Johns Hopkins University	University of Bristol	
Lafayette College	University of California, San Diego (3)	

## Continuing to Build Blair's Robust College Counseling Program



Dean of College Counseling **Niki Applebaum '01** speaks so passionately about how to best support Blair's students in finding the right college that it is hard to believe she had plans to go into an area other than college admissions.

Though she has always been an educator, early in her career, Ms. Applebaum taught English at a series of independent boarding and day schools, where she also coached field hockey and lacrosse and choreographed musical productions. She then moved to the college admissions and higher education realm and gained broad experience, serving as an admissions officer and territory manager for Stanford University, as well as a senior admissions officer and assistant director of financial aid at Harvard University. There, she was the founding director of Harvard First Generation, a program designed to encourage first-generation students to apply to colleges and support them once there.

"Developing that program taught me so many valuable lessons about leading a team and developing new initiatives," Ms. Applebaum says. "As a first-generation college graduate myself, I wanted it to best support the students it aimed to serve."

Today, Ms. Applebaum has found her calling back at her alma mater, inspiring, motivating and directing students to reach their full potential in the next steps of their educational journeys. In her third year as Dean of College Counseling at Blair, Ms. Applebaum has made it her mission to continue supporting the robust college counseling program, one focused on helping students identify their own goals and interests, navigating the rapidly changing

college application process, and making informed and confident decisions with students and families about the college or university that will fit them best.

It is no small task.

During a recent conversation in Ms. Applebaum's office overlooking Hardwick lawn, she talked with excitement about the many ways in which she and her team work to give students and families a deeper understanding of the college admission process and peace of mind. The conversation covered the strong foundation built by longtime Dean of College Counseling Lew Stival (who was Ms. Applebaum's own college counselor!) and many other talented colleagues, as well as more recent additions to the office's offerings—such as introducing college counseling classes as part of Blair's weekly curriculum for juniors, taking students to visit nearby college campuses and hosting Saturday coffee chats with parents on a variety of topics. We also discussed the formation of Blair Bridges, an advisory board of college and university admission professionals that helps Blair best prepare its students for success as they pursue higher education.



Blair's tradition of college fairs allows students to meet on campus with representatives from more than 100 institutions to learn about different colleges and universities.



## Q&amp;A



**Tell me about Blair Bridges. What is this new program and how did it come about?**



This year, we started the Blair Bridges program to bring together college professionals from a wide variety of schools to have conversations about their universities' practices to guide our programs at Blair. We live by the motto, "We know our students," so we wanted to be sure we heard from those who represent the places and the people who will know our students in their next steps, too. Our goal is to gather input from a wide array of post-secondary schools—state flagship public universities, single-gender colleges, historically Black colleges, urban private research institutions, highly selective schools and less selective schools. By establishing regular touchpoints with them, it's easier to keep our finger on the pulse of what's happening on a variety of post-secondary campuses across the nation, so that we can shape our programs here and best prepare our students for what happens at college.



**Which schools are currently serving on the Blair Bridges advisory board?**



The advisory board of eight colleges that have partnered with us for a two- to three-year period currently consists of Elon University, Georgetown University, Grinnell College, Lehigh University, Middlebury College, Rice University, Penn State University and Spelman College.



**What occurred at the Blair Bridges summit held last spring?**



We invited the deans of admission from a number of colleges and universities to Blair for our first annual gathering. They got to know us better—taking a tour of our beautiful campus, meeting with Blair's senior leadership, and listening to students talk about our signature programs—while we got to know more about them and what's percolating on their campuses. We also discussed topics like enrollment, demographics, and health and well-being, and we took a deep dive into moving beyond advanced placement classes and how we can best communicate the changes in our curriculum.



As they prepare for the next steps in their education, Blair roommates **Amy Kim '24** and **Holiday Madel '24** delve into college literature and explore the possibilities together.

"It's about finding the home where you will be the happiest, where you will be comfortable challenging yourself to grow as you expand your horizons."

— Dean of College Counseling **Niki Applebaum '01**



**Can you tell me about the college counseling program that was already in place at Blair when you arrived in 2020?**



Thanks to the work of colleagues like former Dean of College Counseling Lew Stival and longtime college counselor Joe Mantegna, Blair already had a well-developed program focused on knowing our students well and guiding students through their processes with a huge wealth of institutional knowledge.

The college process really starts by taking stock of all our students have done and continue to do. Activities then start in full force during students' junior years. In 2023, our kickoff event occurred on February 8 when the deans of Fordham University, Lafayette College and Princeton University were here to talk to students and their families.

Almost every Saturday morning since then, we have also held virtual coffee chats to keep parents involved and informed. Each session covers different topics, from making the most of visits and understanding athletic recruitment to paying for college. We have past parent panels, too. We've also created a college counseling class for juniors, with each section co-taught by two members of the counseling team. Small sizes really allow for hands-on work. The students get to know two members of the team, in addition to their counselor, and become comfortable with what they need to do throughout the process.

Additionally, we've continued the tradition of in-person college fairs and added visits to nearby campuses as well. This April, our college fair welcomed representatives from more than 100 institutions. We have also planned trips to Rutgers, Lehigh, Princeton and New York universities. At each, we take a tour, meet an admission representative and, often, the best part is when we meet with a Blair alum currently at that school. It's a great way to give our students a comprehensive look at what their lives may look like next year, even if the institution itself is just representative of the type of school at which they ultimately end up enrolling.



Dean of College Counseling **Niki Applebaum '01** and students discover their "scarlet spirit" while touring Rutgers University.



Established last year, the Blair Bridges advisory board partners with the School's college counseling team to guide our counseling efforts and help us stay abreast of trends in higher education. Here, the deans from several prominent colleges and universities meet with Assistant Head of School for Academics Nathan Molteni at Blair to discuss advanced placement classes.



Q

**The college application process can seem daunting; how do you hope to put families' minds at ease?**

A

By providing students and families with the right information. We want to put in place a process that students trust and don't feel intimidated by. The idea is to provide more information up front. Having knowledge about those next steps—and a relationship with those who will be guiding them—helps reduce anxiety, because it expands understanding and promotes confidence.

Q

**Finally, what are you most excited about?**

A

I'm so excited to have four full-time counselors, which allows us to have small caseloads and support students robustly. The team of people who work with our students is just as important as the offerings, and I couldn't do it without my amazing colleagues who work here and support our students. I'm excited to tell students, "You're prepared to tackle these challenges, and Blair college counseling is by your side!" ■





## Moving Toward a New Vision of Advanced Curriculum

Blair Academy has begun a transition to broaden the college-level work our students have access to and move beyond traditional Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

The move, carefully researched by our faculty and administrators and supported by the eight-member college board that advises Blair, will increase the number of courses that deserve the credentialing of “advanced curriculum,” allowing students to increase their experiential learning and explore a depth of topics both in and outside of the classroom.

Introduced in the 1950s as a joint initiative between four independent schools and three colleges, AP courses were originally designed to allow secondary school students to complete higher-level work before enrolling at a university. While the system provided college-level credit and indication of rigor, the demands of the 21st century have brought a need for a greater sampling of high-level courses along with ownership over curriculum better suited to the skills required of today’s emerging leaders. For colleges and universities, the AP designation has, over time, become less significant than the question of whether students are challenging themselves to the most rigorous courses available at their school.

This redesign of our program will allow Blair to build comprehensive, engaging and distinguished offerings more closely aligned with skills needed for the future and the School’s vision for its graduates. To better understand what that will mean for our students and the curriculum at Blair, we sat down with Assistant Head of School for Academics Nathan Molteni to ask him about the transition and the new course offerings.



**How will Blair’s advanced curriculum differ from AP courses?**



Our advanced curriculum will go beyond credit or placement and offer a greater sampling of college-level work and ownership of coursework with room for exploration. Beyond credit and placement (which we are seeing fewer colleges and universities grant), APs are not the only way that advanced curriculum has been indicated. That said, it has become the most common without a very good definition of what rigor means. This is why we are making plans to design and deliver an advanced curriculum that would provide a greater sampling of college-level work created by faculty who are passionate about their respective fields.



**What does an advanced curriculum look like in terms of course offerings?**



Blair will offer two types of advanced curriculum courses. Advanced survey classes designed to align with first-year college courses in core subjects like Calculus, Economics, Java, Biology or U.S. History, for example, will introduce students to these disciplines at the equivalent level of first-year college courses. Advanced seminar courses will take a deep dive into a particular theme, skill or discipline along the same lines as Blair’s current Integrated Science Research (ISR) program.

These courses will be developed by the Blair faculty members who know our students well and are uniquely prepared to challenge them. This catalog will also update regularly to reflect the ideas and concepts most relevant and essential to our students.





### Are other schools moving in this direction?



Yes, in fact, more than 100 independent schools from all different regions of the United States do not currently utilize the AP designation in their curriculum.



### How will college outcomes be affected by this transition?



As more colleges stop accepting AP credit and come to understand the value of non-AP curricular sequencing in terms of rigor, student investment and outcomes, transitioning to an advanced curriculum will not affect students' college choices in the application process—other than creating more opportunities for students to follow passions and look at institutions they otherwise might not consider. As long as we are clear about which students are pursuing our most rigorous courses in our college profile, we don't anticipate this change affecting the college process for Blair students.



### How will we communicate this change to colleges and prospective families?



The academic and college counseling offices will work closely to ensure the curriculum, specifically those options representing the most rigorous courses available, are clearly delineated on student transcripts and records. A revised course catalog with clear differentiation between advanced and standard level courses will be available to prospective families and will support current students and their academic monitors with annual course planning. We will also keep turning to our advisory board of colleges that have partnered with us (Elon University, Georgetown University, Grinnell College, Lehigh University, Middlebury College, Rice University, Penn State University and Spelman College) and will help to guide our transition.



Starting in 2024, students, such as (from left to right) **Grant Krueger '24**, **Nathan Bo '24** and **Micah Balzarini '24**, will have the opportunity to increase their experiential learning through Blair's advanced curriculum.



In collaboration with the Independent Curriculum Group and Blair's Director of Advanced Curriculum Shelly Mantegna, newly appointed Dean of Teaching and Learning Joe Wagner (pictured center) and advanced course teachers at Blair established a set of standardized curriculum principles that all current and future advanced courses will meet.



Blair's new vision of advanced curriculum will help students like **Temi Ogunyomade '24** to take a deep dive into a particular theme, skill or discipline that interests them.



### What made now the right time to make this transition?



Navigating the pandemic reinforced that the best educational experiences at Blair live at the intersection of student enthusiasm and community-based experiences designed by faculty invested in adolescent growth and experience. Giving ourselves permission to explore advanced work at the high school level is a natural extension of Blair's long-standing mission to know our students. In this initiative, we intend to develop a cycle of ongoing curriculum development anchored in transferable skills and habits of mind, such as communication skills, critical analysis, research and inquiry, performance, design, collaborative practice, etc. While the courses themselves will update and grow, our targets remain relatively the same, and we have put mechanisms in place over the last few years that make this shift more natural. Our faculty are leaning into the fact that curriculum design is part of teaching, we have provided our teachers with the resources and space in the Sigety Summer Institute to prepare for curricular design and execution, and our department meetings give faculty the dedicated time to do the legwork required. The introduction of our J-term program is part of this ongoing vision, with three years of quality, student learning experiences offering a wealth of inspiration for deeper learning in the advanced curriculum.



Advanced curriculum courses will be developed by the Blair faculty members who know our students well and are uniquely prepared to challenge them, like Director of Integrated Science Research Dr. Nadia Abascal (center).



### How will Blair maintain rigor and quality?



In collaboration with the Independent Curriculum Group and Blair's newly appointed Dean of Teaching and Learning Joe Wagner and Director of Advanced Curriculum Shelly Mantegna, advanced course teachers at Blair established a set of standardized curriculum principles that all current and future advanced courses will meet. Advanced survey courses will take advantage of available information from universities to align skills and content taught in our courses with similar introductory offerings.

Working with our college counseling advisory board, we will gather feedback about the design and impact of our new advanced courses, which will be reviewed twice annually to ensure learning targets are being met. Students taking these courses will maintain and reflect upon the work they've done to understand their own growth in these subjects. We will also regularly review our course proposal process, which has been redesigned with this transition in mind. Student portfolio reviews will also be important.



### What is the transition timeline?



This past summer, the Sigety Summer Institute was dedicated to advanced coursework development. By January, the Advanced Coursework Catalog will be available to students and families, and initial offerings of advanced survey and seminar courses will begin by January 2024.

We believe students will have more tangible evidence of their learning to encourage the transfer of knowledge to their future pursuits, and we are fortunate to have put the mechanisms and resources in place to make this shift while maintaining quality and rigor. We are excited to be preparing our students well for the next steps in their educational journey. ■



# SIGETY ALUMNI HOUSE

## OPENS TO THE EXTENDED BLAIR FAMILY



The Sigety Alumni House features five guest suites with private baths that can be reserved by the extended Blair family.

Blair Academy is excited to announce the addition of a beautifully restored 3,200-square-foot guesthouse at the base of our campus overlooking historic Main Street. The Sigety Alumni House provides five guest suites that can be reserved by the extended Blair family, including alumni, parents of current or former students, as well as prospective families. In addition, a first-floor faculty apartment

further supports Blair's strategic priority of providing top-notch faculty housing on campus and continues the tradition of supporting improvements to downtown Blirstown. For more information about reserving a room at the Sigety Alumni House during your next visit to campus, please go to [www.blair.edu/alumni/sigety-alumni-house](http://www.blair.edu/alumni/sigety-alumni-house). Reservations may be requested by emailing [alumnihouse@blair.edu](mailto:alumnihouse@blair.edu). ■



### ALUMNI HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS

- A prominent feature of the Blirstown Historic District
- First-floor two-bedroom faculty apartment
- Five guest suites with private baths
- Two decks
- Wraparound porch
- Walking distance from campus



# THE WILDRICK FAMILY

## SIX GENERATIONS & COUNTING

**FOR** the Wildricks, Blair has become a way of life that is passed down through the generations. With a legacy that stretches back six generations, before the Civil War, the Wildrick family's proud lineage contains more than 30 Blair alumni, including some of the Blair Presbyterian Academy's earliest graduates. For the family, maintaining that relationship with Blair has become not only a means to an outstanding education but also a treasured legacy.

Retired U.S. Navy Captain **William Wildrick '63** grew up hearing the legends of those early Blair graduates. "I've been told by my father and one of my grandfathers that, for the founding of the school, John I. Blair put up the land, but the Wildricks put up the kids," he says, chuckling. Warm and self-effacing, Bill, as he is known to his family and friends, is 78 now and proud to be a fourth-generation Buccaneer. A grandfather and Eagle Scout, Bill is an avid swimmer, boxer and yogi in addition to serving as the family's de facto historian. He also happens to be a former Navy SEAL. When he retired at the age of 60, after a 39-year career that included a tour of duty in Vietnam, Bill held the distinction of being the oldest Navy SEAL on active duty and the second-highest-ranking-SEAL in the United States. His distinguished career included serving as the acting commander of SEAL

teams worldwide during the September 11, 2001, attacks. In some ways, Bill's career followed naturally from his own experience and family history. "I was captain of the swim team at Blair," he remembers, "and I followed in the long tradition of Wildricks who attended Blair and went on to military careers."

### ***A Storied Past***

Indeed, many in the Wildrick family have made a name for themselves in service to Blair and the nation. The family's namesake, a German immigrant, first settled in the nearby hamlet of Marksboro in the 1740s and made a living as a drover, buying cattle in Pennsylvania and Ohio and moving them to New Jersey for sale. One of his twin sons, Isaac Hampton Wildrick, struck up a friendship with school founder John I. Blair. The two, Bill says, had frequent business dealings and sat on a local church committee, and when the idea of starting a school arose, Issac Wildrick saw an opportunity to help. As the county sheriff and a local judge, Issac had connections to many local families, and between his own family and his brother's, they had 14 children. "Isaac was key to helping find students," Bill says, with a smile, "and they needed somewhere for those kids to go to school."



While several Wildrick children soon began toting their books and lunch pails up the long hill to fill the building now known as "Old Academy," several members of the family went on to careers of distinction. Isaac Hampton Wildrick served as congressman for New Jersey's third district, while his son, Abram, a member of Blair's first graduating class in 1852, attended West Point and went on to serve as a brigadier general in the Union Army during the Civil War. "Abram was in the Siege of Petersburg," Bill remembers, "and, in the attempt to overrun the defenses at Petersburg, he caught a bullet that ran through his mustache."

The Wildrick family has provided, in fact, Blair graduates who have served in every major conflict, save one, since the School's founding.

## A Promising Future

Bill's granddaughter, **Chandler '25**, is a current junior and well versed in the family's Buccaneer history. "Oh, when I got a cellphone, the family tree was sent to me," she says, with a laugh. For Chandler, so much of that history has been imparted by her grandfather, whom she affectionately calls "Pop." "Pop always makes waffles in the morning,

and sometimes he tells stories," she says. Sitting at the breakfast table as a child, watching her grandfather pour waffle batter, Chandler didn't realize that he, too, had gone on to such a distinguished career.

"Back then, I didn't realize that Pop had this career. He had his SEAL friends, and, at the time, they were all in their 60s and 70s. They would go on these swims, venturing out for miles into the ocean and coming back, and I would wait for them.



New Jersey Congressman Isaac Hampton Wildrick, whose connections proved instrumental in supplying pupils during the School's early years.



Early female Blair graduates from the Wildrick family included (back row) the Class of 1854's **Isabella Wildrick Swain** and **Henriette Wildrick Freeman**, (front row) **Annie Aurelia Wildrick 1863**, **Emma Wildrick Van Doren 1866** and **Hulda Elizabeth Wildrick Lentz 1868**.



(From left to right) **George Albert Wildrick 1852**, **Abram Calvin Wildrick 1853** and **John Albright Wildrick 1852**. Abram's harrowing experience during the Civil War's Siege of Petersburg resonates in Wildrick family lore.

I think that was the first time I realized that he was a SEAL." Much as Bill introduced his granddaughter gently to the things he loved, including waffles, swimming and his fellow SEALs, he also introduced her to Blair.

"The first time I visited Blair was in the fifth grade, at Pop's 55th reunion," she remembers. For Chandler, it was love at first sight. "The campus was just so beautiful."



## ***Memories That Last***

Of course, if one asks Bill what he remembers fondly about his years at Blair, it is not the School's structural beauty that comes to mind first. Like many alums, Bill recalls the long evenings spent with friends and the moments when classmates discussed everything ranging from politics, sports and world events to school, relationships and family. Many of those classmates, like **Bill Cashel '63**, **John Alden '63**, **Roger Blair '63** and **Carter Crewe '63**, became lifelong friends. Though they subsequently supported one another as they married, raised families, and faced life's opportunities and challenges, what Bill recalls most warmly, of course, are the capers they found themselves in at Blair.

"We came down to eat breakfast in Insley one morning, and there was not a single chair there," Bill recalls fondly. "[Assistant Headmaster] Ferd Marcial came down and, making an announcement over the loudspeaker, said, 'We have a real problem!' One of our classmates owned a dairy farm with cattle cars, and we had gotten a hold of one of them and put all the chairs in it."

On another occasion, "A couple of my buddies ushered cows into Clinton in the night and left them there. Once again, Mr. Marcial took to the loudspeaker. 'Whoever was responsible for this needs to report to me after breakfast! 'Cause we're going to need some help. The cows have made a mess.'"

Marveling that, somehow, he managed to keep his disciplinary record intact, Bill remembers, "It was a lot of fun."

## ***The Importance of Legacy***

Looking back on the legacy that the Wildrick family has left at the School over the last 175 years, Bill's commitment to serve others, like many of his forebears, stands out. In addition to serving the country, Bill has remained loyal to Blair throughout his life, devoting much of his time to documenting the family's history to the School and fostering connections with alumni. He has also committed his personal resources to advancing Blair's mission, giving to the School for four decades consecutively and helping

to establish a scholarship in 2001 that aids deserving students who would not otherwise have been afforded the opportunity to attend Blair.

Several summers ago, when Bill returned to Blairstown to catch up with friends and celebrate his class's 50th reunion, he set aside an afternoon to visit the old cemetery, just down the road from Blair, that holds the graves of his relatives, Isaac and Abram. There, Bill traced the footsteps of his grandparents and great-grandparents through the soft grass, past the four dozen headstones engraved "Wildrick" scattered over the hillside, and he thought about the importance of history and why he encouraged his daughter, **Ashley '96**, and granddaughter, Chandler, to attend Blair. Bill recalls that, most of all, he wanted them to experience the tight-knit community and shared experiences that had impacted him and his family deeply.

"My brother and my father, who graduated in 1931, went to Blair. I was introduced to Blair by my father, who was captain of the undefeated wrestling team in 1931. It's a strong legacy. I had such a good time, and we were well prepared for college," he says. In fact, Bill credits the School with helping him learn skills early that would become fundamental to his career. "One of the lines in the Navy is attention to detail. That was one of the things I learned at Blair."

Recognizing that it may be time for the sixth generation to take on the mantle, Chandler remains thoughtful about the future. Her younger brother, Kiesel, is currently in middle school and thinking about the next steps in his education. While no decisions have been made yet, the family hopes that Kiesel will follow in his grandfather's footsteps—in more ways than one. "Bill is just the kindest man on the face of the earth," notes his wife, Jo, "and he is so proud of his Blair heritage." As for Chandler, she also hopes her brother will take after the man who spent many mornings sharing waffles and teaching her to call Blair home. "My brother and I have been close all our lives, and I think coming here would be good for him," she says. "We can carry on the streak together." ■





(From left to right) Three generations of the Wildrick family reunite: **Edward (Ted) White Wildrick Jr. III '58**, **William Staniar Wildrick '63**, **Ashley Wildrick Swartout '96** and **Edward (Ned) White Wildrick Jr. '31**.



The most recent Wildricks, **Ashley Wildrick Swartout '96**, **William Staniar Wildrick '63**, **Chandler Gwynn Wildrick '25** and Sterling Kiesel Swartout, reunite under the Arch.



A plaque awarded to retired U.S. Navy Captain **William Staniar Wildrick '63** notes that upon the occasion of his retirement, he was the oldest Navy SEAL on active duty.



# STATE of **ADMISSION**

BY DEAN OF ENROLLMENT **TEDDY WENNER '96**

**A**s the admission team traveled around the world this year to bring the best of what Blair has to offer to prospective families and meet future Buccaneers, we heard from so many who share our vision for the boarding school experience. Our mission—to balance a warm and supportive environment with superior academic opportunities—resonates with so many students and parents, and it is what continues to make Blair a top choice among the nation's boarding schools. While the number of applications we receive each year continues to climb—with a record-breaking 1,600 this admission cycle—our acceptance rate has reached an all-time low of 14 percent.

This cycle, we began to discuss our advanced academic curriculum as we move beyond Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and our message was met with support and interest. This redesign of our program will allow Blair to attract those students looking for superior academic offerings as we build comprehensive, engaging and distinguished courses that are more closely aligned with skills needed for the future and the School's vision for its graduates. Families were incredibly excited to hear of the opportunities for their child and how they will be pushed academically at Blair in the upcoming years.

Blair is a student-centered, relationship-based learning environment, and we focus on the learning opportunities outside the classroom just as much as the education inside the classroom. Throughout this year, we've learned that support for adolescent physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health continues to be at the forefront of what parents are looking for, and now, more than ever, we are helping students acquire the skills that support their well-being through a wide range of offerings. In addition to providing healthy dining options and robust counseling services, our curriculum prioritizes a foundation of health-and-wellness education followed by peer-led "Be Well @ Blair" presentations to ensure that topics like mindfulness and spiritual health remain a community focus. When I meet with prospective families, I am thrilled to share the plans for our new Center for Health and Well-Being, which will mark an additional step in the mission of caring for our students as a whole. This new facility will allow us to educate our community about the importance of physical and mental well-being, as well as nutrition, mindfulness and spiritual health in one central location.

At the end of the day, the Blair experience is shaped by our facilities and curriculum and defined by the people students learn from on the hilltop on a daily basis. The



**36%**

**RECEIVING  
FINANCIAL AID**



**STUDENTS REPRESENTING 28 STATES**

**17%**

**INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS**

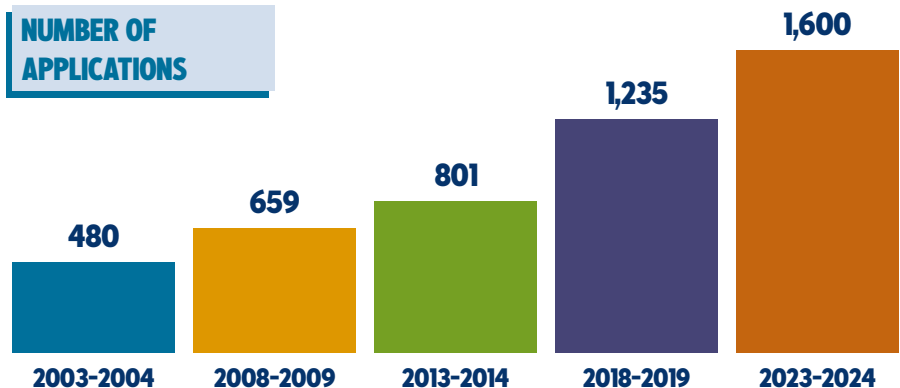


**STUDENTS REPRESENTING 23 COUNTRIES**

**14%**

**ACCEPTANCE  
RATE**

**NUMBER OF  
APPLICATIONS**



mentorship and guidance they receive through close relationships with their teachers, advisors and coaches are of the utmost importance for the full growth of our students, and an integral part of both the rigor of our curriculum and the warmth of our community.

As always, I am grateful for the network of Blair families that continues to assist in discovering our future generations of leaders. You have shared your enthusiasm for the School and encouraged other great families to

take part in this educational journey for their children. You show time and again that you are “all in” for this transformative experience.

It has been another great year for Blair admission, and our beloved School is certainly in a place of strength within the boarding school market. As we increasingly carve our niche in this competitive space, I look forward to the upcoming cycle and bringing in the next great group of Blair Bucs. ■

## English Teacher Tom Parauda Publishes First Board Game

Growing up in a large family, playing board games together was commonplace for English teacher Tom Parauda. Introducing unique games and keeping track of rules often fell to him—tasks he gladly assumed. Now, as a veteran gamer and creator, he has learned that one of his own designs will soon be brought to life. The Queen’s Dream, published by Eagle-Gryphon Games and scheduled for release in early 2024, is Mr. Parauda’s attempt to create what can best be described as a visual deduction game.

In the game, players are “dreamcatchers” who enter the dream space of a great mystic visionary—the Queen—and try to match details of the various dream fragments scattered throughout her kingdom. “The game combines visual, narrative and logic-based clues to provide layers of helpful but imperfect information,” Mr. Parauda explained. “Ultimately, dreamcatchers must rely on their own wits, some deduction, a sharp eye and a little guile to anticipate how the Queen’s dream will unfold.” The Queen’s Dream can be played competitively—in teams or individually—or cooperatively, giving a group of players the chance to navigate the Queen’s dream world together.

“Good games provide challenging choices as well as some sense of immersion, of entering a space that demands your attention,” Mr. Parauda explains, “yet I can rarely separate a good gaming experience from the people I am interacting with. In this way, board games are an invitation to socialize and learn about one another even as you take on the challenge of the game itself. My hope is that I have added one more unique take on such an interactive experience.” Apart from the ongoing challenge of designing, testing and editing, the biggest learning curve for Mr. Parauda was hiring artists to create “dream fragments” based on deliberately loose guidelines, asking for images that depicted scenes on...well, just about anything.



Veteran English teacher and game creator Tom Parauda.

After a tip from Evan Thomas, fine arts teacher and Dean of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, Mr. Parauda enlisted the talent of *Ceci Fralick '19*, his former student and one of two artists responsible for the artwork in the game. He gave both young artists free rein to let their imaginations run as much as their color palettes, and he was more than impressed with the results. “Ceci’s wonderful dream fragments and character art lend so much to the immersive theme of the game,” Mr. Parauda said with pride, “and it has been so rewarding to provide an opportunity for talented people to demonstrate their work and begin a rewarding professional career.”

All together, The Queen’s Dream encompasses 105 large cards that offer a spectrum of colorful dream fragments. With those images as the focal point, Mr. Parauda developed 26 dream sequences, each one making up a single game. Round by round, each scenario unfurls as players do their best to divine the details that will provide a portal to the Queen’s next dream image. Mr. Parauda added, “The results are interesting and, I hope, a fun, challenging experience for a range of players.” Now that he has one game about to be published, Mr. Parauda is looking forward to designing more games, keeping his creativity and critical thinking skills front and center—the same approach he has encouraged his students to develop in 35 years of teaching at Blair. ■



## Blair Trustee Victoria Bailey '97 Featured in *Barron's*



Blair Trustee and alum **Victoria Bailey '97** was featured on the Morgan Stanley ticker tape in New York, NY.

*Barron's* Magazine featured Blair Trustee and alum **Victoria Bailey '97** in an article this March titled, "Morgan Stanley's Victoria Bailey: Why I Stopped Trying to Be Perfect," highlighting her successful career as a wealth manager in Silicon Valley.

"I honestly think the moment I stopped pretending to be something I'm not was the moment I actually started being successful," Victoria told the magazine, ringing true to one of The Five Fundamentals of Blair Academy—know yourself and practice honesty.

In fact, the article details how Victoria has built her career on one of the principles of Blair: The people and the connections you make are what matter the most. After a chance encounter with a friend led to an analyst job at Barclays Capital more than a decade ago, Victoria climbed the financial industry ladder and now serves as Managing Director of Morgan Stanley Private

Wealth Management's 415 Group in San Francisco, helping to manage \$6.5 billion. Speaking with *Barron's*, Victoria explained how she built her network of venture capitalists by constantly making new connections and nurturing those relationships.

"I kept in touch with every single one of them and built this database where I was also providing them with information," she said in her interview. "It was trying to provide value in as many creative ways as possible so that when they needed something, they called."

In 2022, Victoria and her firm were also featured as one of *Barron's* "Top 100 Private Wealth Management Teams: Serving the Complex Needs of Silicon Valley's Elite." That feature highlighted more of her successful, humanistic approach to a mostly data-driven industry.

Victoria's optimism, energy and commitment to Blair are noted by many fortunate to work with her at the School, both as a student and dedicated alum. After graduating, she matriculated at Princeton University, where she studied economics and received a bachelor's degree in 2001. After a brief stint in New York City as an opera singer, she turned to the financial world and never looked back. In her current role based in Morgan Stanley's Silicon Valley office, Victoria is a Managing Director and Private Wealth Advisor in the company's Private Wealth Management division. She currently lives in Woodside, California, with her husband, Peter, and her three sons, Will, Andrew and Christopher. Victoria was appointed to the Blair Board of Trustees in April 2018. ■

*"I honestly think the moment I stopped pretending to be something I'm not was the moment I actually started being successful."*

**—Trustee Victoria Bailey '97**

## David Ojabo '19 & Odafe Oweh '18 Shine in Baltimore Ravens' Offseason



**David Ojabo '19** supports **Odafe Oweh '18** making a tackle during the 2017 Blair football season.

From being teammates on Hampshire Field to joining forces on football's biggest stage, Blair alums and Baltimore Ravens defensive linemen **David Ojabo '19** and **Odafe Oweh '18** were featured in a recent *Pressbox* article highlighting their paths to NFL stardom alongside photos from their high school days taken by Blair fine arts teacher and Director of School Photography Tyson Trish.

Both linebackers came to Blair in the hopes of illustrious basketball careers but quickly pivoted to football under the guidance of former Blair football coach Jim Saylor. The dynamic duo went their separate ways in college: Odafe earned first-team All-Big Ten honors at Penn State University, and David was a standout for the University of Michigan. They reunited in 2022, when David was drafted by the Ravens to join his former teammate, Odafe.

After a season riddled with injuries for both players, 2023 is looking bright. *Pressbox* reports that David and Odafe “were an imposing duo firing off the edge” at offseason practices, and the “Ravens are banking on their dynamic, disruptive potential for a team that is well positioned for a postseason run.”

The pair joke that their paths, at times, appear scripted, and they are fortunate to share in this journey together since their first connections as young Buccaneers.

“That’s why we’re smiling all the time,” David said in the *Pressbox* article. “To think that we both started playing football junior year of high school...and, God willing, are about to be playing big minutes for the same [NFL] team. Every time we’re out there now, we’re having fun with it like, ‘Man, what are the odds?’ We just want to take it as far as possible.” ■

*“To think that we both started playing football junior year of high school . . . and, God willing, are about to be playing big minutes for the same [NFL] team.”*

**—David Ojabo '19**





## Blair Alum **Chris Ayers '98** Secures Justice for Henrietta Lacks

Thanks in part to the efforts of Blair alum **Chris Ayers '98**, a measure of justice has finally been secured for Henrietta Lacks, whose cells have proved indispensable to modern medicine. Mrs. Lacks grew up in southern Virginia during the Great Depression, the child of a Black family of tobacco farmers with few resources. By the time she was diagnosed with cervical cancer at the age of 31 in 1951, she was mother to five children.

Mrs. Lacks' cancer cells, which showed a remarkable ability to replicate, were collected without her knowledge or consent by doctors and nicknamed "HeLa," from the first two letters of her first and last names, to conceal Mrs. Lacks' identity. Those cells have since played a revolutionary role in Western medicine, leading to the development of the polio and COVID-19 vaccines and proving central to dozens of medical breakthroughs that include genome mapping and in vitro fertilization.

In 2010, the best-selling book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and subsequent film brought widespread attention to Mrs. Lacks' story, highlighting the use of unethical medical practices

on people of color and raising important ethical questions about informed consent, patient privacy and the commercialization of medical research. In 2021, the Lacks family sued biotech giant Thermo Fisher Scientific, stating in court documents that the company "made staggering profits by using the HeLa cell line."

Now, thanks in part to the work of Blair alum Chris Ayers, the Lacks family is finally being compensated for their mother's contribution to science. Chris, a partner at the law firm Seeger Weiss, is one of the attorneys representing the Lacks family and, at a press conference in August, announced that a legal settlement had been reached.

"The fight against those who profit, and chose to profit, off of the deeply unethical and unlawful history and origins of the HeLa cells will continue," Chris said, according to articles in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*.

"It's a true honor to represent Henrietta Lacks' family in our historic lawsuit against Thermo Fisher Scientific with titans Chris Seeger and Ben Crump," he wrote on social media.



*A talented wrestler at Blair, Chris Ayers graduated in 1998 and went on to become a four-year varsity athlete on Brown University's wrestling team. After earning his bachelor of arts from Brown in 2002, Chris secured his JD in 2007 from the University of San Diego School of Law. Today, he is a highly respected trial attorney with Seeger Weiss and represents individual and corporate plaintiffs throughout the United States. He has most recently been honored by The New Jersey Law Journal, which named him as a New Leader of the Bar for the 2023 New Jersey Legal Awards, and Lawdragon, which recognized him in 2022 as one of the nation's leading plaintiff consumer lawyers. ■*

## STAFF & FACULTY HONORED FOR A DECADE OF SERVICE



Veteran faculty members Joanne Brandwood and Caroline Wilson celebrate with their commemorative chairs. (Not pictured: Assistant Director of Technology Sean Lex.)

As Blair's faculty and staff came together to celebrate a new academic year at the annual Opening of School Dinner on August 24, three members were honored for their continued service to the School. Following a reception at Sharpe House, the entire body of faculty and staff shared a meal in the Romano Dining Hall, where Head of School Peter G. Curran thanked the employees for their 10 years of service to the School and dedication to the success of its students.

To commemorate this milestone, faculty and staff members received wooden chairs engraved with the Blair seal. Joining this esteemed group in 2023 is Senior

Associate Dean of Admission and Director of Financial Aid Caroline Wilson, who serves as assistant swimming coach and dorm head of Locke Hall. History teacher Joanne Brandwood also celebrated a decade of working at Blair. When she's not in the classroom, Mrs. Brandwood directs the annual Day of Service, serves as a monitor for the sophomore class and is a co-leader of the Blair Service Corps. As technology has rapidly evolved over the past 10 years, Assistant Director of Technology Sean Lex has ensured that Blair keeps pace, supporting the day-to-day digital operations of the School and keeping members of the Blair community connected. ■



## WELCOME, NEW FACULTY & STAFF!

There are eight new faces gracing our hilltop campus this fall, and each of these educators and professionals brings knowledge, experience and passion to their role at Blair. Read on to learn more about our newest classroom teachers, coaches and staff members, each of whom has already become part of the fabric of the Blair community.



### ADMISSION

Mike Squillante joined Blair this fall as an admission associate and head boys' lacrosse coach. Prior to coming to Blair, he taught at Pope John XXIII Regional High School in Sparta, New Jersey, where he served as a physical education teacher and assistant lacrosse coach for five years. Since 2016, Mr. Squillante has been active in the True Lacrosse club, where he serves as national director of youth teams. In that role, he has founded programs in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. His previous coaching experience includes working at Centenary University in Hackettstown, New Jersey, as an assistant men's lacrosse coach and as a strength-and-conditioning intern for Marywood University. Mr. Squillante earned his BS in exercise science from Marywood in 2015 and has completed a number of master's of business administration classes at Centenary University. Mr. Squillante joins the Blair community along with his wife, Michele, and their two children, Henry, 2, and Christian, 1.



### ADVANCEMENT

Diane Kowalick joined Blair's advancement office in fall 2022 as an advancement associate. For the last 20 years, Mrs. Kowalick has worked as an office manager for a medical practice in Randolph, New Jersey, supervising and managing medical professionals and engaging with patients to ensure the smooth running of office operations. She lives in Hackettstown with her husband, Ken, and daughters, Joan and **Samantha '25**.



### ARTS

Caroline James, a 2023 graduate of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, has joined Blair's fine arts department as a video studies teacher. At Kenyon, Ms. James majored in studio art and minored in classics and art history, and she completed undergraduate internships with a wealth advisory firm, a law firm, a medical solutions firm and a mortgage company. She also played women's varsity lacrosse for four years and participated in the 2022 NCAA tournament as a Division III goalie. Ms. James is no stranger to the boarding school world, having graduated from The Governor's Academy in Byfield, Massachusetts, in 2019.



Blair welcomes Eliza Link as an adjunct teacher of ninth-grade program and Director of the Romano Gallery. Her previous experience includes remotely designing ninth- to 12th-grade curriculum and creating workshops for the advocacy program at Saint Edward's School in Vero Beach, Florida. As a member of Saint Edward's fine arts faculty from 2020 to 2022, Mrs. Link designed and taught studio art, design and art history. She also sponsored the Social Justice Club, which involved leading a diverse group of students in work relating to equity and privilege. A graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Mrs. Link began her teaching career in 2016 at The Kiski School in Saltsburg, Pennsylvania, where she served as a dorm parent, oversaw the yearbook, and taught two- and three-dimensional media, as well as English. Her husband, Patrick, teaches mathematics at Blair.



John Takacs joined Blair's staff as a part-time employee overseeing our maker space in the Chiang-Elghanayan Center for Innovation and Collaboration. He lives in Newton, New Jersey, with his wife, Ruthann, and they share a daughter, Jacqueline. Mr. Takacs taught creative design, robotics, game design and engineering design at West Morris Central High School in Chester, New Jersey, for 23 years before retiring in June. Mr. Takacs earned his BS in technology education from The College of New Jersey in 1986 and his MS in curriculum and instruction from the University of Scranton in 2014.

## COMMUNICATIONS



Ashley Schreyer joined Blair's communications office in fall 2022 as a copywriter and editor. In 2015, Ms. Schreyer earned her bachelor's degree in journalism and professional writing from The College of New Jersey while also working as an intern at the *New Jersey Herald*. For the last several years, she has served as a brewer and sales representative for Czig Meister Brewing in Hackettstown, New Jersey, and Angry Erik Brewing in Newton, New Jersey, overseeing many aspects of craft beer production from milling and fermenting to marketing and serving. She and her fiancé, Aaron, live in Byram, New Jersey.



“Fortunately, Blair has thrived greatly over the years due to the dedication and passion of our hardworking faculty and staff. We are thrilled about all of the ways that these new members to the community will enhance our rich legacy of deeply caring for our students and for one another.”

—Dean of Faculty Life Leucetia Shaw

## SCIENCE



Shannon Schrope joined our science department as a biology teacher, bringing to her role experience at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, where she began working as mitochondrial medicine research assistant in July 2022. Prior to that, she worked as a biochemistry SIGUE postbaccalaureate research fellow at Michigan State University in East Lansing from 2021 to 2022. Ms. Schrope earned her Spanish language certificate at Middlebury College in 2019 and studied abroad at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, in 2020, graduating from Vassar College with a BA in biology and Hispanic studies with honors in 2021. A swimmer and squash player who has also worked extensively for Habitat for Humanity, she got her start in education as a biology and chemistry tutor at Vassar, as well as a general chemistry supplemental instructor there from 2019 to 2021. Ms. Schrope has served as an assistant swim coach at a club in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, and broke records in swimming while at Vassar in the 50, 100 and 200 breaststroke as part of the swim and dive team.



Science teacher Will Svensson comes to Blair from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts, where he completed his master’s degree in 2023 in environmental science and policy with a focus on climate change, resiliency and societal impacts. Beyond his graduate studies and undergraduate work in ecology and evolutionary biology, also at Northeastern, Mr. Svensson has served as an ecologist in the Suisun Marsh for The Teal Club in Suisun, California, where he focused on raising and releasing game birds and assessing habitat through fieldwork and study. He also worked as public outreach coordinator for Northeastern’s College of Science, a communications-focused role that included the opportunity to conduct scientific interviews, and as a student researcher focused on the impact of disease on social insects. A 2018 graduate of Vermont Academy in Saxtons River, Vermont, where he captained the rowing and ski teams, Mr. Svensson is also a nature lover and jiu-jitsu practitioner.

# Jason Beck



**When history department chair** and Director of the Society of Skeptics Jason Beck embarked on his Blair journey in 2001, he took up residence in the Flight Deck of Insley Hall. He recruited his family to help move him in, up the four flights of steps, to his new home. What they didn't expect was to have to navigate a construction zone to get there while Insley was undergoing renovation.

"We actually carried all my belongings across a couple of planks over what is now the prefect stairs, and there was just a big hole in the ground," Jason recalled with a laugh. "I remember my sister's boyfriend at the time asking her what this place was. It was kind of an alien thing."

As first impressions go, Blair Academy made its indelible mark that August day, and the foreign hilltop would quickly become not just a home but also an extended family that Jason considers himself fortunate to be part of two decades later. He started his career at the School as Director of Financial Aid and Associate Director of Admissions. It was a field he was comfortable in, having served in the admission office at Vassar College in New York after completing his undergraduate degree there.

Now a veteran member and chair of the history department, Jason has taught Western Civilization, Honors Intellectual History, and Advanced Placement courses in U.S., world and European history. In addition, he previously served as Assistant Dean of

College Counseling, class monitor, chair of the Accreditation Committee and co-chair of the Faculty Professional Development Committee. Jason sat down to share more about his life outside the classroom, reflecting on his time at Blair and the people who have helped shape his career.



Jason celebrates with graduates at the 2022 Commencement.





In his classroom, Jason discusses readings with **Sarika Pyreddy '19** and other students around a Harkness table.

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**Q: You started your academic career in the admission office. How did you make the transition to the classroom?**

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**A:** I was in the admission office for three years or so, and that third year, they needed someone to teach an extra section of U.S. History. They asked me if I would be interested, and I said, "Sure!" From there, I moved to the history department full time, but I was still working with admission and then with college counseling for a few years. I enjoy teaching because every day varies. I am a very different teacher now than I was 19 years ago with that first block, but every class is different and every group of students is unique. From my perspective, what makes it so enjoyable is I get to read things and talk about them with students. What could be better than that?

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**Q: What aspects of the Current Events forum do you enjoy as the coordinator?**

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**A:** It's an opportunity to bring kids together to talk about whatever major global events are on their minds. I've been transitioning the forum to be entirely student-run conversations where they talk to one another about the topic of the day that matters to them. It's about having students recognize the whole world that's happening outside of our hilltop. Like so many different things we do here, it's about helping students connect to those greater issues and realize that they can be part of those conversations. The Current Events forum validates the idea that their points of view matter and they should be asking questions.

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**Q: Blair's Society of Skeptics is one of the premier high school lecture series in the United States and has**

**featured countless lecturers in its 45-year history. What has been the most rewarding part of serving as director?**

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**A:** When I interviewed here in 2001, I remember then Head of School Chan Hardwick talking about the Society of Skeptics as an intellectual opportunity for all of the community. It was a chance to hear from and interact with people from different walks of life, so obviously Skeptics has been a part of life for me here from the beginning. It's an incredible program and an important part of the intellectual landscape at Blair that I am honored to help continue and grow, but I consider myself a steward of something that has been here long before me and will be here long after me. To be able to carry on the legacies of former directors Dr. Elliott Trommald [Hon. '65] and Dr. Marty Miller [Hon. '81] is incredibly important to me.



Jason reconnects with Blair alum **Chris Hubbard '12** and his girlfriend around a firepit at Gateway House, Jason's home at the entrance of campus on Park Street.

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**Q: What do you see as the main advantages of boarding school life?**

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**A:** Obviously, the sense of community. I'm a public school kid and the first person in my family to go to college. This was a brave new world for me. I had heard about boarding schools in movies and literature as a kid, but to actually live in and be a part of a boarding school community was very new.

The thing that has been most compelling, the reason I decide to come back every year, is the community of people. Some of the most important people in the world to me are those I've worked with here and gotten to know over the years, people like Marty Miller, one of my dearest friends, to the students who live next door, and getting to see generations of faculty kids grow up. To be part of a community like that is so fulfilling.

I've also gotten the opportunity to do different things. I've lived many lives here over the course of 22 years,

and that's been exciting. I wouldn't still be here if I was still doing the same thing I was when I started.

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**Q: You've previously held several different titles at Blair, including Director of Financial Aid, Assistant Dean of College Counseling and co-chair of the Faculty Professional Development Committee. What advice would you give a new member of the Blair community, faculty or student?**

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**A:** For faculty members, especially young teachers, being in a place like this is about being part of a community. As a species, we don't live in intentional communities as much as we used to, especially in the United States, but it's the way humans have lived for the entirety of our existence. It's only in the last few generations that we've moved away from that, but Blair is an intentional, multigenerational community. There's something really powerful and affirming about that, as well as challenging, but the rewards

are pretty great. To be here for a period of time is profound. We're only a part of this for a little bit. Blair will be here long after us, but it's also a community that is ours while we're here.

For students, there are so many incredible opportunities at Blair, so many people to get to know and spend time with on campus. Not everything is perfect, there are challenges, but that's okay. The relationships you make here and the experience you take with you are worth it. In my 22 years, I've enjoyed seeing the School become something really important in people's lives.

*"The thing that has been most compelling, the reason I decide to come back every year, is the community of people."*

**—Jason Beck**





(From left to right) Colleagues who have become lifelong friends: Jason with fellow teachers Kate and Andrew Sykes.

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**Q: Outside the classroom, what hobbies and activities interest you?**

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**A:** I love to garden, I read and I love to travel. This summer, I traveled to Scandinavia in June, visiting Denmark, Sweden and Finland. I spent time with family in Pennsylvania for much of July, and I was in Maine for the wedding of an alum in August.

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**Q: After teaching nearly two decades of Blair students, what are some of your favorite memories in the classroom?**

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**A:** Every group, every class, is its own little community, and it's rewarding to see them figuring out ways to make that work. There's not a specific moment or memory that stands out, but there are a variety of wonderful

moments of good conversation and groups of people that got to know one another in different ways. When it really gels, when a group of students comes together with their own personality, their own sense of a learning community of a dozen people around a table, it's pretty cool. The opportunity to be in that mix with them is incredibly rewarding.

More generally, getting to know these young people and seeing the very impressive things they go off and do have been remarkably gratifying. I love to stay in touch and hear about all the amazing things happening in their lives all over the world. ■



Jason reads to Ollie, son of fellow Blair faculty Kate and Andrew Sykes.

# DemiSemi

ALUMNI WEEKEND

2023

A DEMISEMISEPTCENTENNIAL  
CELEBRATION



**Jon Williams II '89** and his band, The Grooveline Dallas, had everyone dancing under the stars.



Former faculty member Jenny Maine and **Joe Waddell '78** on the dance floor at Alumni Weekend.





The Grooveline Dallas band raised the tent roof and filled the dance floor all night long.



Blair Trustees **Neal '76** and Virginia Sigety P'16 '18 '19 at the demisemiseptcentennial celebration.



Head of School Peter G. Curran (left) and **Anita (Ricketts) Sarate '88** (right) commemorate Anita's induction into the Athletic Hall of Fame as a member of the 1984-1985 girls' cross country team and her Alumni Volunteer of the Year honor.

### MANY THANKS FOR THE TANTALIZING CATERING AND BEVERAGES PROVIDED BY:

**Tom Kehoe '83**, Yards Brewing Company

**Mark McLean '98**, Remarkable Cuisine

**Emily Downs '02**, Emily's Hearth

**Shaun Mehtani '02**, Mehndi

**Matthew Gallira '08**, Big Mozz

**WHAT** is it about the memory of a place that calls on us to return, time and again?

Could it be a result of the transformation the location had on our lives? Perhaps it is the recollection of the laughs we shared or the tears shed in sadness and joy? Most likely, it is the people who crossed our paths along the way and connected us to a shared experience and collective community—drawing us back to the root of it all.

No matter what reason beckoned them, more than 700 alumni and their families, as well as parents and current and former faculty and staff, convened on Blair Academy's hilltop for the demisemiseptcentennial Alumni Weekend celebration in June, to reminisce on cherished moments and create new memories. The festivities commenced on June 9 with a slew of activities, including the annual golf scramble, complete with a reception and awards, hikes of the Siegel Property, an arts open house in the maker space and gatherings of reunion classes in the evening. The Class of 1973 started the celebrations on Friday with a 50th reunion dinner, while a "Welcome Back, Bucs, Party!" with live music by **Nicole (Nicusanti) Tipton '93** and her band, Avenue 16, provided a spirit-raising kickoff for the milestone occasion.

"My experiences at Blair taught me to appreciate everything in life," **George Eric Olsen '73** said, reflecting on his school days after 50 years alongside his longtime friends. "It means so much to come back and celebrate my class and 175 years of Blair."



**Heather (Resnick) King '92** and her team at Argyle Home and Floral transformed the venue with exquisite floral designs and decor for the 175th celebration.

# ALUMNI WEEKEND 2023

On June 10, the hilltop was alive with early bird tai chi with Sensei **Francisco Santander '81** and a campus run with Head of School Peter G. Curran. The Athletic Hall of Fame inducted another all-star class (see page 78) before the quintessential alumni parade marched to the Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts for the Head of School assembly. During a sprawling picnic lunch, **Andy Peters '00** entertained with a magic show and balloon twisting, and the talented DJ **Jeremy Duncan '01** set the mood. While different generations of alumni stormed the field for the annual lacrosse game in the afternoon, six talented artists joined the ranks of Blair's Arts Guild inductees (see page 77) and **Paul Jacobs '63** opened his special exhibit of African objects from his private collection in the Romano Gallery. The Class of 1998 hosted a 25th reunion reception to commemorate their milestone anniversary. The festivities concluded with a night under the stars as Blair celebrated 175 years together.



**Jon Williams II '89**, shown here performing with his band The Grooveline Dallas, is inducted into the Class of 2023 Arts Guild.



Blair counselor Melany Jimenez and soccer coach James Smith with their daughter, Amalia.

**Heather (Resnick) King '92** and her team at Argyle Home and Floral transformed the venue with exquisite floral designs and decor, while **Jon Williams '89** and his band, The Grooveline Dallas, blew the roof off the tent and filled the dance floor all through the night at a banquet fit for a demisemiseptcentennial.

"It is always great to return to Blair," **Alyson (Pool) Peacock '83, P'08 '18** remarked, gathering with classmates to celebrate their 40th reunion. "It's amazing how easily we revert back to our old friendships, and the connections my son, **Tim '08**, who is here with me this weekend, and



Following tradition, Blair alumni march in the parade to the Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts, led by bagpipers.

## ADDITIONAL ALUMNI HONORED OVER THE COURSE OF THE WEEKEND INCLUDE:

Alumni Volunteer of the Year:

**Anita (Ricketts) Sarate '88 &  
Matthew Gallira '08**

Class Correspondents of the Year:

**Charles Inkeles '88 & John Inkeles '93**

Class Representative of the Year:

**Charisse Manzi '98 & Samantha Tilney '08**

Outstanding Reunion Committees:

Class of 1973 & Class of 1983





2023 Citation of Merit recipient **Richard Rubin '68** with his daughter, Alexandra.

## 2023 CITATION OF MERIT RICHARD RUBIN '68

When Blair calls, Richard Rubin answers. In every way personifying the best of servant leadership, Richard has been deeply involved in the School for over a half a century. Attending Blair for three years between 1965 and 1968, Richard fully immersed himself as a student in all the opportunities the School offered, serving as a prefect in East Hall and a multisport athlete, managing the football team and participating in baseball, basketball and golf. He was the sports editor of the yearbook and a member of the Blue & White Key Society and the Press Club, and his love of music found its outlet in the Blair Glee Club, choir, the Tweeds, and playing timpani in music teacher Nevett Bartow's "The Tower of Babel."

Richard has maintained close ties with the Blair community, serving two terms on Blair's Alumni Board of Governors and as a class representative for more than 15 years. Quietly giving his time and energy without the expectation of recognition, Richard has made a name among the Blair community for his thoughtful leadership.

He has guided the reunion committee for his class's 50th reunion, marshaling his classmates and inspiring their involvement, helping establish the Class of 1968 Society of Skeptics Endowment Fund. The first of its kind, the Fund raised more than \$100,000 to ensure that current and future generations of Blair students benefit from the lecture series and learn from its thought-provoking and accomplished speakers.

At every step of his life, Richard has stayed in touch with beloved faculty, forged friendships with students and parents, and continued to gather his fellow alumni together. Quick to reach out to classmates with a note, Richard informs the community about all that is happening at Blair to this day and often inspires others to make a call or a connection with their alma mater. For his unequivocal devotion to Blair across five decades and his generous commitments to uplift and support Buccaneers of all ages, we are proud to recognize Richard Rubin with the School's highest honor, the 2023 Citation of Merit.

To view the full text of the 2023 Citation of Merit, visit [www.blair.edu/citation-of-merit](http://www.blair.edu/citation-of-merit).



Blair's 15th Head of School T. Chandler Hardwick III (left) and Head of School Peter G. Curran (right) enjoyed catching up and announcing the public launch of the *All In* campaign at Alumni Weekend.

daughter, **Katie '18**, make by meeting my friends and their children. That is what the Blair community is all about."

The celebration paused Saturday evening for Head of School Peter G. Curran, Board Chair Maria Vinci Savettiere P'17 and Blair Trustee **Neal Sigety '76, P'16 '18 '19** to announce the most ambitious comprehensive fundraising campaign in School history, accompanied by Dean of Campus Life and Director of Leadership Programs **Carolyn Conforti-Browse '79**; Trustee and former Head of School T. Chandler Hardwick III and his wife, Monie; Trustee **Emmanuel Bello '04**; and English teacher Robert Brandwood. With a goal of \$140 million, the *All In* campaign will help ensure that the Blair experience is even more enriching and impactful for generations of students—a mission everyone at the demisemiseptcentennial celebrated as Blair looks toward its bicentennial. ■



Members of the Class of 1973 reunite at their 50th Reunion celebration with 15th Head of School T. Chandler Hardwick III and his wife, Monie, and current Head of School Peter G. Curran and his wife, Sarah.





Alumni of the Year **Norm Beatty '58** (left) and **Pete Cleary '58** (right) with Head of School Peter G. Curran.

## 2023 ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

### NORMAN BEATTY '58 & PETER CLEARY '58

The world has been captivated by its fair share of dynamic duos throughout history—the heroic Batman and Robin, the mischievous Tom and Jerry, and the infamous Bonnie and Clyde, to name a few. Blair has been fortunate enough to count among us our own self-proclaimed “ham-and-egg combination,” Class of 1958’s representatives and this year’s Alumni of the Year, Norman (Norm) Beatty and Peter (Pete) Cleary. Every year, Blair Academy awards the Alumnus of the Year to the single former student who best exemplifies outstanding and dedicated service to the School, but this year, there was no chance of separating this indispensable team. Their tireless service to the School, and to each other, embodies what it means to be active and engaged alumni and serves as an inspiration to us all.

During their illustrious career as Blair class representatives, Pete and Norm’s commitment to engaging the Blair community has manifested in organizing successful major class reunions to managing classmate outreach, and their contributions haven’t gone unnoticed at Blair. The team was awarded Class

Representative(s) of the Year in 2018 for their execution of a superb 60th-reunion celebration. Norm has been one of our most active alumni, and for his service, he was awarded Outstanding Class Correspondent in 2010 and Alumni Volunteer of the Year in 2013. As a former member of the Alumni Association Board of Governors, Pete served two terms as president, from 1991 to 1992 and again from 1993 to 1994. As generous benefactors of Blair, both Norm and Pete are unwavering in their continued support, enthusiasm and encouragement for their alma mater.

Two distinctly different individuals, yet the perfect combination to make a strong partnership, Norm and Pete have come to represent more than just their class. Today, their alliance epitomizes one of the greatest gifts that Blair can offer—an unexpected and enduring friendship to which students from all eras can relate. For their unwavering and long-standing commitment to engagement, participation and fundraising, we are honored to recognize both Norman Beatty and Peter Cleary as the 2023 Alumni of the Year.



## International Board of Governors Hosts First In-Person Meeting

Since its inception in 2021, the International Board of Governors has met virtually, with the purpose of building an even stronger Blair Academy brand across the globe, speaking firsthand with families about their international experiences with the School, attracting the best prospective students from around the world and increasing philanthropic support. For the first time, members met in person on April 15 in Singapore during Blair's spring trip to Asia.

"The Blair community is built on connections, so it was refreshing to finally share a room with the International Board of Governors and engage face-to-face with current parents and alumni," said Susan Long, Associate Director of Advancement.

Mrs. Long was joined by Head of School Peter G. Curran and Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall to attend the meeting with the board, which comprises international parents and alumni. International Board of Governors co-chair **William Bao Bean '91 P'23 '25** opened the meeting by thanking those in attendance for joining them and aiding the Board's mission. As a current Trustee and alum, Mr. Bean furthered the Board's message, stressing the importance and strength of the Blair network and how each member plays a vital role.

Throughout the meeting, Mr. Curran addressed the Board on the state of the School, sharing news of the most recent admission cycle and the upcoming events that will take place through the end of the school year. Mrs. Long took time to connect with

current international families, sharing resources available to them and discussing the needs many encounter as a growing population within the Blair community. Currently, Blair students represent 23 countries, and international students make up 17 percent of enrollment.

"Over the past few years, this Board has been instrumental in opening avenues of access for Blair Academy to educational and cultural opportunities," Mr. Hall noted. "I am grateful for all the members who have supported the School and assisted the advancement office by advocating for the needs of Blair today and in the future."

Also on the agenda for the Board meeting was an update on the *All In* campaign, and Mr. Hall shared the details of this dynamic and evolving blueprint for Blair's future beyond the 175th anniversary. Honoring and amplifying the core values of relationship-based learning and superior academic preparation, more than 60 Trustees, parents, alumni and faculty members collaborated to create this plan, which focuses on four key priorities: faculty talent and excellence, forward-thinking programs, our historic and state-of-the-art campus, and Blair's long-term financial strength. The International Board of Governors looks forward to supporting Blair in the efforts to achieve its strategic priorities—ensuring that the Blair experience continues to be enriching and impactful for generations of students and that the School is stronger than ever. ■





**Kirsten (Trommald) Bushick '82** presented her father, Elliott Trommald, PhD, Hon. '65, with a Blair scholarship in his name.

## Blair Announces **The Elliott 'E.T.' Trommald Scholarship in History**

Since joining Blair's history faculty in 1961, Elliott Trommald, PhD, Hon. '65, has left a legacy at the School that extends far beyond the classroom. Known as "E.T." to his friends and colleagues, Dr. Trommald taught history and chaired the department for more than 15 years, launched the nationally renowned Society of Skeptics series and initiated Blair's involvement in Model United Nations conferences. He coached tennis, served as a dorm head, and advised and counseled hundreds of students—formally and informally—throughout his long tenure. Like his treasured relationship with Blair, those relationships with students, fellow faculty members, administrators and staff were cherished. Many still are today, 60 years later!

When the Class of 1983 dedicated their yearbook to him, students wrote, "Through his commitment to education, Mr. Trommald has enriched all facets of our life at Blair. To Mr.

Trommald, education is not limited to the classes which he teaches; it is the opportunity to become involved in a variety of other areas."

A teacher and scholar at heart, Dr. Trommald has dedicated decades to researching John I. Blair and his impact on Blair Academy, and he is a foremost authority on the life of Blairstown's namesake. He has deepened his study of Abraham Lincoln and also continues to write and lecture on the nation's 16th president. While Dr. Trommald's abundant energy kept him running marathons well into his senior years, he has since diversified, taking to the stage in community theatre and biking up to 40 miles in a day near his home in Portland, Oregon. All the while, Dr. Trommald still never turns down an opportunity to philosophize about world affairs and the meaning of life with friends (and complete strangers) over coffee.

To cement Dr. Trommald's rich legacy at Blair, The Elliott ("E.T.") Trommald Scholarship in History has been established. During Alumni Weekend, Dr. Trommald's daughter, **Kirsten (Trommald) Bushick '82**, honored him with the scholarship after his and Dr. Martin Miller, Hon. '81's, presentation on the highlights of their careers, as he was surrounded by friends, former students and colleagues. "My father firmly believes that the purpose of life is human connection," Kirsten explained. "The goal of this scholarship is not only to help those students in need—a value our parents instilled in us at a young age—but also to sustain the principles he embodies and strengthen the relationships he cherished during his years on the hilltop."

The recipients awarded this scholarship will hopefully come to know his passion for lifelong learning by continuing to ask questions and maintain a curiosity about the world around them. Through this scholarship, Blair students will forever be influenced by him during their time on campus and beyond graduation. Reflecting on his career, Dr. Trommald wrote it best:

*"So much of what I am, what I enjoy, seems to me to have its roots in the ground we plowed in Blairstown in the '60s and early '80s—and just as important are the amazingly deep and still growing friendships with students, faculty and unforgettable people who plowed that same ground."*

—Elliott Trommald, PhD, Hon. '65

The School encourages members of the community to consider recognizing Dr. Trommald's service with a gift supporting a scholarship that bears his name. If Dr. Trommald left an impression, the gift of financial support will help celebrate his many contributions and ensure that Blair students continue to be influenced by his energy and vision. To make a gift, visit [www.blair.edu/trommald-scholarship](http://www.blair.edu/trommald-scholarship). ■



Dr. Trommald teaches a history class during his Blair days.



In retirement, Dr. Trommald enjoys the great outdoors near his home in Oregon.



A TRIBUTE TO GIVING: **THE SANTORO FAMILY**

The Santoro family poses for a graduation day memory in May 2022. From left to right: **Gavin '24**, Pete, **Aiden '22** and Chasity.

As the first members of their families to go to college, Pete and Chasity Santoro P'22 '24 have learned firsthand that education can make a world of difference. "We became convinced that education is the creator of opportunity," says Pete. "The doors that our educations opened for us were life-altering."

Pete graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1993, and, today, he serves as the global head of equities at one of the world's largest alternative asset management firms, Millennium Management. Chasity matriculated at the University of Minnesota in 1999 before embarking on a career in fashion. While the couple donates both to their alma maters and to Blair, they feel their

contributions to Blair may have a larger impact. As universities, MIT and the University of Minnesota likely boast wide bases of financial support, while Pete and Chasity know focusing their philanthropy at Blair will help the School that has changed their children's lives to a greater degree. "We have four boys, and they all went to boarding school. We saw the difference between what Blair and other very reputable schools offer. It was a dramatic difference," Pete explains. "Blair really has had a lifetime impact on our boys," Chasity adds.

"When you send your kids away at a young age, you hope for them to benefit from the opportunity," Pete reflects. Their son, **Gavin '24**, has had his world opened up to new possibilities thanks to Blair. He has traveled to Japan with

*"We feel fortunate to be able to support a place our children have come to call home in this way."*

*—Pete Santoro P'22 '24*

*"Education can be more than just what they learn in books and tests; the daily interactions within the Blair community have shaped our boys into curious thinkers with solid character."*

—Chasity Santoro P'22 '24

classmates, befriended international students, and taken lessons in guitar and photography, all while discovering an interest in engineering. His horizons have been expanded by the School, and, according to Pete, "The exposure to all that is Blair changed his perspective in a way that wouldn't have been possible anywhere else."

For Pete and Chasity, in addition to the many opportunities it afforded their children, the community at Blair set it apart from similar institutions. "Everyone is so supportive of one another at Blair. That is unique and so hard to find in a high school experience," Chasity says.

Pete agrees, noting the way that Blair has become a second family for their son, **Aiden '22**. Now a lacrosse player at Vassar College, Aiden has been visited by 10 Blair friends and faculty who have shown continual support even after his graduation, which is a stark difference from the support his children received at other boarding schools. "[History teacher] Jason Beck has come to watch his lacrosse games at college. Aiden has had many different people from Blair come and watch him play," Pete adds. "Seeing the community support is just unbelievable. The connections he built will last the rest of his life and support him in ways that we, as parents, cannot. It has changed both of their lives."

As for what Pete and Chasity hope their sons will take away from their time at Blair, they hope the values they learned on the hilltop will carry through their lives, encouraging them to be the upstanding and supportive people that members of the Blair community have been for them. "It's important that they understand there is more than yourself. They have been given a lot, and, hopefully, they will give a lot. That lesson has been ingrained at Blair. It starts with helping your teammate on the field, helping a classmate with a math problem. We expect them to continue to help."

Just as education transformed Pete's and Chasity's lives, Aiden and Gavin have been changed forever by an experience that is unique to Blair, and the couple entrust their money to Blair to continue changing young people's lives for years to come. "We put ourselves through college, so giving that opportunity to kids who may not have the means to do it is something we'd like to do," Chasity explains. While supporting deserving students—as well as stellar educators—with their donation are areas that appeal to Chasity, Pete trusts Blair to put the funds to their best use. "The most important thing I have in my life is my children. I gave them to Blair to take care of them," Pete says. "If I can give them my kids, I can give them my money. I trust them to do the right thing." ■



Interested in learning more? To join Pete and Chasity and other members of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers, please contact Director of Advancement Cara Mohlmann to discuss including Blair in your estate plans. If you have already made a provision for the School, let us know by contacting Ms. Mohlmann at [mohlmc@blair.edu](mailto:mohlmc@blair.edu).



## THE SANTORO FAMILY \$10 MILLION PLANNED GIVING CHALLENGE



The Santoro family challenges you to plan now for Blair's future! Pete and Chasity Santoro P'22 '24 will match your planned gift with a commitment of their own. Document your intentions by June 30, 2025, and the Santoro family will match your planned gift, dollar for dollar, up to \$10 million, with a generous gift from their estate. Secure your legacy by joining the Santoro family to double your gift in the coming years.

The majority of planned gifts that come to Blair are in the form of a will or bequest. You can name Blair as a beneficiary under your will or revocable living trust. Blair accepts gifts of specific dollar amounts, tangible personal property, securities or a percentage of the remainder of your estate. If you are 70 or older by the conclusion of the *All In* campaign on June 30, 2025, your gift will be used to fulfill the Santoro Family Challenge and count toward the campaign; those under 70 will activate the Santoro Family Challenge. Thank you for considering such a meaningful gift to Blair! ■

To learn more about including Blair in your estate plans, contact Cara Mohlmann, Director of Advancement, at (908) 362-2031 or [mohlmc@blair.edu](mailto:mohlmc@blair.edu), or visit [www.blair.edu/gift-planning](http://www.blair.edu/gift-planning).





## Alumni Connect **Across the Globe**

Throughout the last year, Blair hosted numerous receptions and events, inviting past, present and future Buccaneers to connect, network and learn together around the globe.

In November, Blair alumni of all ages displayed their School spirit at events in a dozen cities across the United States as they celebrated their favorite Peddie Day traditions and memories. And, for the first time since 2019, the admission office traveled to Asia to connect with current and prospective Blair families. The joy at the return to quintessential Blair events continued at the fourth annual Finance Summit in January, when Blair brought together a host of international business leaders in New York City to address the challenges and opportunities posed by venture capitalism and entrepreneurship, while in March, Blair hosted the third annual Women's Symposium—an event

featuring panel discussions and networking with female leaders on the topics of boldness, strength, values, courage and financial health. In April, Blair's Head of School joined members of the advancement team in traveling to Asia and California, where they hosted gatherings for current and prospective families as well as alumni and members of Blair's International Board of Governors. As the school year wound down, current and former Bogle Brothers Scholars gathered at Sharpe House in May to celebrate the fund that has, for more than 50 years, provided the gift of a Blair education to nearly 200 students.

Here, enjoy snapshots from a few of the many gatherings throughout 2022 and 2023 that have brought opportunities to reconnect with old friends, as well as forge new ties within the Blair community. ■

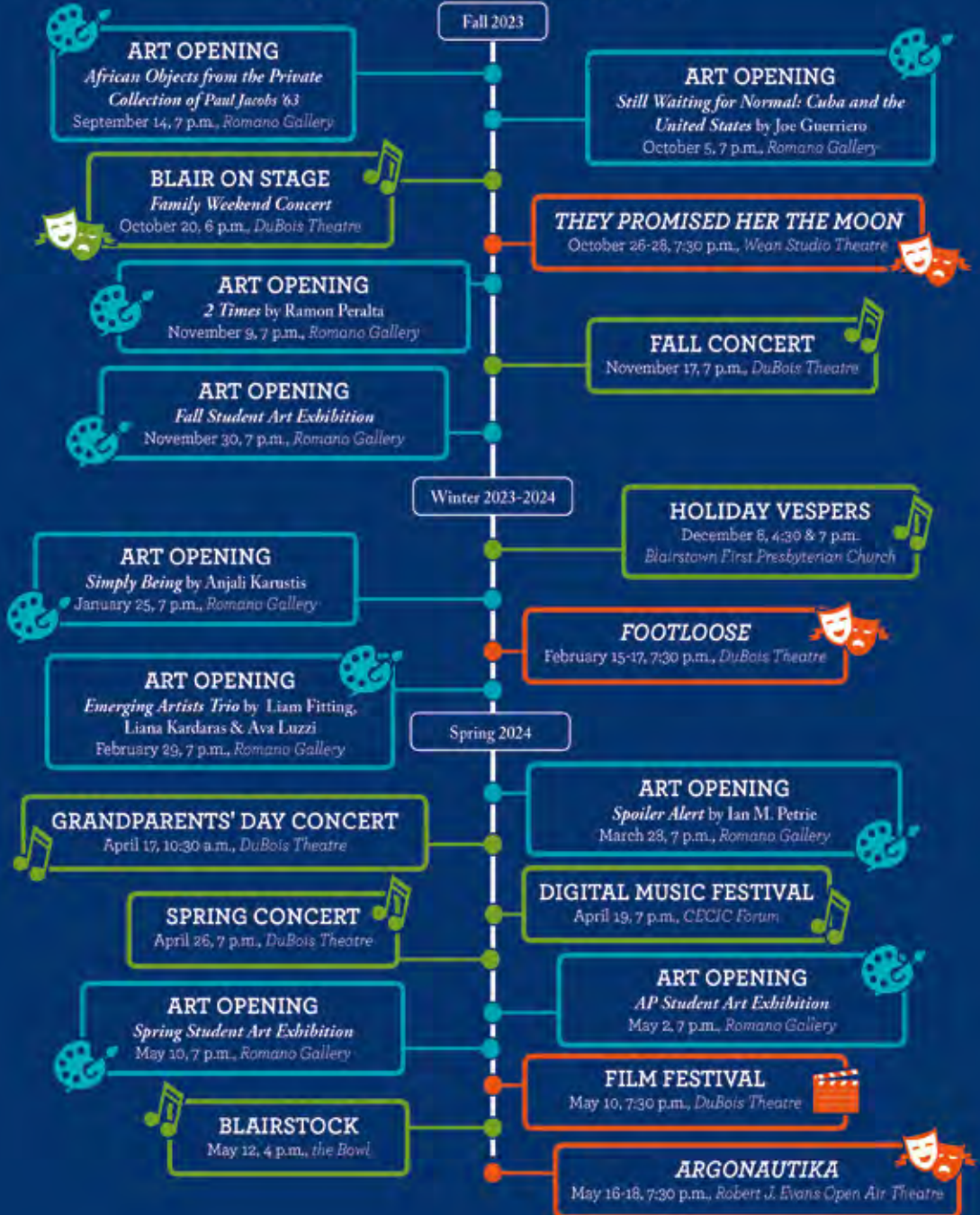






# the Arts @ Blair

## The Arts at BLAIR ACADEMY



**VISIT OUR WEBSITE:** Because this calendar is subject to change, please check Blair's website for the most up-to-date information available at [www.blair.edu](http://www.blair.edu), or call (908) 362-6121. The DuBois Theatre, Wean Theatre and Romano Gallery are housed within Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts on the Blair Academy campus in Blairstown, N.J.





Congratulations to Arts Guild inductees (from left to right): **Natessa Amin '06**, **Dr. Andrew R. Heinze '73** and **Meredith Habermann '04**. Inductees not pictured are the late **Nevett Bartow '52**, **Tara Nicole Whitaker '98** and **Jon Williams II '89** (pictured on page 64).

## Arts Guild Class of 2023 Paints a Picture of Arts Offerings at Blair

Salvador Dalí once said, “A true artist is not one who is inspired, but one who inspires others.” To recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions in the performing or visual arts of its alumni and former faculty, Blair created the Arts Guild in 2022. The Guild’s selection committee is proud to announce this year’s class of alumni and faculty inductees: **Natessa Amin '06**, the late **Nevett Bartow '52**, **Meredith Habermann '04**, **Dr. Andrew R. Heinze '73**, **Tara Nicole Whitaker '98** and **Jon Williams II '89**.

To be considered for the Arts Guild, nominees are evaluated on their involvement and achievements in the arts while at Blair, as well as accomplishments in the visual or performing arts that occurred after graduation. Nominees must have been outstanding members of the School community in the areas of scholastic achievement, citizenship, integrity and moral character. Finally, alumni nominees become eligible for the Arts Guild in the fifth year following their graduation, while former faculty become eligible after their retirement from Blair. The annual

selection is overseen by Kate Sykes, fine arts department chair, and Jennifer Pagotto, performing arts department chair and Director of Instrumental Music, with a steering committee to aid in the process, including Director of Alumni Relations **Courtney (Brennan) Stanford '95**.

“This year’s class of inductees truly represents the spectrum of the arts offerings here at Blair and beyond,” Mrs. Stanford said. “These talented students coupled their skills with the tools and confidence they learned at the School to pursue rich and fulfilling careers in all aspects of the arts—from writing to painting, animating to composing—and we are honored to celebrate them with this recognition.”

In a beautiful ceremony during Alumni Weekend, this year’s class joined the ranks of Blair’s most talented artists. Please visit the Blair Academy Arts website at [www.blair.edu/the-arts/arts-guild](http://www.blair.edu/the-arts/arts-guild) to read biographies of this year’s inductees and nominate an artist for next year’s class. ■



The Class of 2023 Athletic Hall of Fame inductees are (from left to right): the 1984-1985 girls' cross country team (represented by Peter and Cynthia Amerman and **Anita [Ricketts] Sarate '88**), **Christian C. Passannante '92**, **Kellen Russell '07**, **David T. Low Jr. '89**, A. Jon Frere, Hon. '74, and the late Coach **Robert H. Dalling Sr. '29** (represented by his grandson, Doug Dalling). **Sarah (Marcincin) Hartman '07** is not pictured.

## At the Top of Their Game: The Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2023

Over the past 175 years, many athletes have come to the hilltop to further their academic studies and hone their athletic skills. Thanks to their talent, tenacity and sportsmanship, each year a few standout graduates continue contributing to their sport and competing at the highest levels. The Blair Athletic Hall of Fame Committee is pleased to honor those individuals and announce the athletes and coaches chosen for the Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2023: **Robert H. Dalling Sr. '29**, A. Jon Frere, Hon. '74, **Christian C. Passannante '92**, **David T. Low Jr. '89**, **Sarah (Marcincin) Hartman '07**, **Kellen Russell '07** and the 1984-1985 girls' cross country team.

"It is a privilege to induct this year's class into Blair's Hall of Fame to honor

their love and dedication to their passions," said Director of Athletics **Paul Clavel '88**. "These coaches and alumni gave so much of themselves to the School and to their sport during their time on the hilltop and beyond, and they truly represent the excellence of the Blair Academy athletic program."

To recognize and celebrate the outstanding athletic achievements of its alumni and coaches, Blair established an Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016. To be considered for Hall of Fame membership, nominees must have exhibited the highest caliber of athletic accomplishment during their time at Blair and have been outstanding members of the School community in the areas of scholastic achievement,

citizenship, integrity and moral character. Selection is based primarily on athletic accomplishments while a Blair student or coach, although subsequent achievement in athletics or other areas may be considered. Alumni nominees become eligible for the Hall of Fame in the 10th year following their graduation, while coaches become eligible after their retirement from Blair.

During Alumni Weekend in June, Blair welcomed this newest class of Buccaneers to the Hall of Fame at an induction ceremony. To read the biographies of this year's inductees or to nominate an athlete for the Class of 2024, please visit the Blair Athletics website at [www.blair.edu/athletics/athletic-hall-of-fame](http://www.blair.edu/athletics/athletic-hall-of-fame). ■



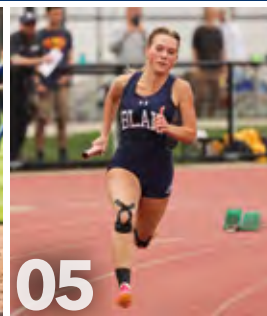
# BUCCANEERS



01



04



05

**01 Carson Bowman '25** earns a strikeout against a Peddie batter in their home game in early April.

**02 Kaleb Nelson '25** advances the ball up the field against Newton High School.

**03 Josh Seymour Thomas '23** looks at the fairway before his first tee shot of the boys' varsity golf team's match versus Hill.

**04 Jocelyn O'Keeffe '24** runs to third base, looking to earn a run for the Bucs off of multiple Blair hits against Kittatinny High School.

**05 Ivy Gore '24** runs hard in the 4x100 relay at Blair's home meet this April.

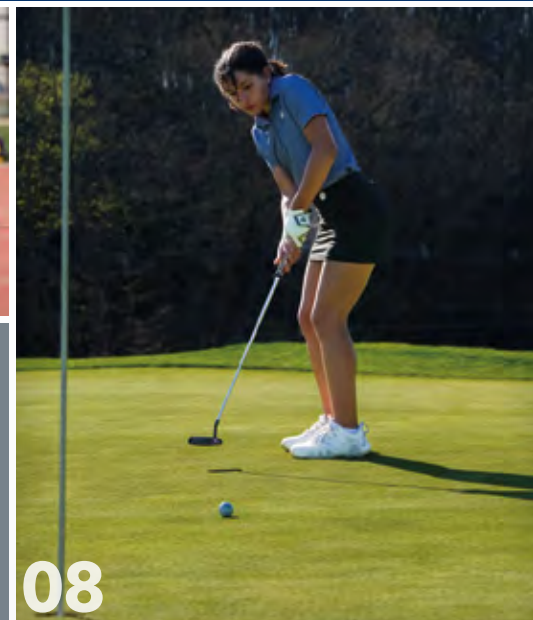
**06 Andy Lee '26** hits a powerful forehand shot against Hill, earning him the point.

**07 Patrick Payne '23** soars above the bar in his pole vault event at Blair's home meet.

**08 Jass Sanchez '24** makes a great putt in her match against Hill. The girls' golf team ended the season with their third consecutive Mid-Atlantic Prep League (MAPL) and ninth overall state championship.

**09 Kady Seck '24** dodges the Mercersburg defender in an effort to score.

**10** The girls' crew team reclaims the Mid-Atlantic Prep League championship title.



08



02



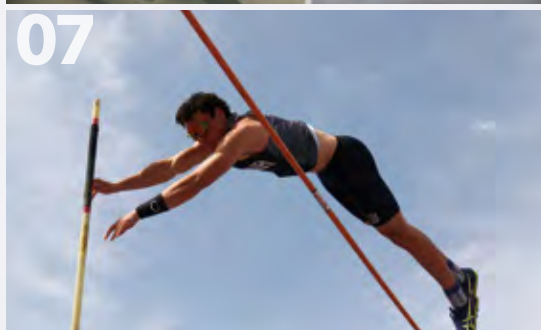
09



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07



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# Blair Celebrates the Lives & Legacies of Two Transformative Leaders

by Assistant Head of School for Strategic Communications **Suzy (Martin) Logan '99**

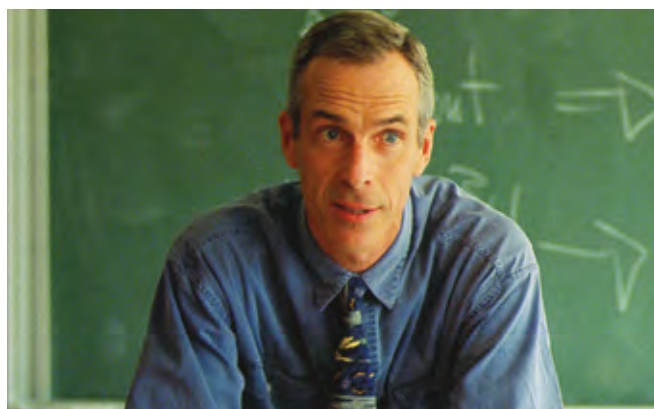
**AT** the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, the Blair community was deeply saddened by the passing of the Rev. James R. Kelley, Hon. '51 '89, who served as Blair's 14th Head of School from 1976 to 1989, and longtime Blair faculty member Rick Clarke, who spent 38 years at Blair and led our science department for many years before retiring in 2009. As we look back at the life and legacy of both men, we express our sincere gratitude for all they contributed to leading Blair forward and all they did to help put the School in the position of strength we find ourselves in today.

## Dr. Rick Clarke Jr.

*September 1, 1944-December 30, 2022*

**BLAIR** was a legacy in the Clarke family, with Rick's father, **Richard E. Clarke**, graduating from Blair in 1933. This tradition was continued by Rick and Tal's own children, **Brad '90** and **Quint '87**, the latter of whom went on to follow in Rick's footsteps—and had the opportunity to work with his dad when he was appointed as a Blair faculty member in 2001. Upon their retirement, Rick and Tal moved to be closer to Brad and his family in southern New Jersey.

Rick and Tal came to Blairstown in August 1971 after Rick earned his PhD in physics from the University of Florida. During his first year, he taught math and was dorm head of Freeman Hall, and in 1972, Head of School Jim Howard appointed Rick as science department chair. Over the course of his tenure at Blair, Rick and Tal lived in the dorm for a decade, and Rick coached varsity swimming and golf (while Tal, along with Martha Harrison, founded the Blair Children's Program. The program was Blair's first nursery school/daycare open to campus residents and the local public and was housed first in Bunnell House and later the Parsonage and West Hall).



“I had the pleasure of swimming for Dr. Clarke and Bob Brandwood all four years of my time at Blair. I will never forget Dr. Clarke's calm, cool demeanor—truly, very little seemed to get him worked up, and that carried over to his approach to coaching, and, in turn, how we as athletes approached training and our competition. He instilled a confidence in us as a coach that very few can. Even when we walked into the dreaded, annual 'Blackjack' practice (my swimmers will know this one), I knew he had prepared us all season to get through the next two hours.

“My favorite memory was when our women's medley relay team broke the School record at a home meet. He would not stop telling us how proud he was, and, when he said that, it really meant something. Still one of my proudest moments as an athlete. The Blair community is lucky to have had him for as long as we did!”

**—Jenna Catalano '10**



“

With a PhD in physics, Rick had impeccable academic qualifications. But it was not how much Rick knew about physics that made him an exceptional member of the Blair faculty. He made it his top priority to learn about whom he was teaching, coaching or advising. Rick wanted to know what each student cared about, what interested and motivated them, and what made them tick. This made him very effective in whatever he did at Blair.”

—Dick Malley, Blair’s former Assistant Headmaster for Student & Academic Affairs

Known by all as a progressive teacher and remarkable academic leader, Rick’s passion for physics made him beloved by students and his faculty colleagues, who remember him as an inspiring educator and mentor. Beyond the classroom, Rick served as head golf coach for 34 years and head swim coach for 36 years—records that speak to his dedication and willingness to develop generations of Blair athletes.

Over the years, Blair honored Rick a number of times for his excellence in teaching and outstanding contributions to the community over the course of almost four decades on campus: In the early 1980s, he received the Lillian & Samuel Tedlow Teaching Prize, and, in the early 1990s, he was awarded the John C. and Eve S. Bogle Teaching Prize. From 2003 to 2007, the Class of 1963 recognized Rick with its inaugural class faculty chair. All of us at Blair are grateful to Rick, Tal (who was also a beloved teacher at Blairstown Elementary School) and the entire Clarke family for their lasting legacy at Blair.

“

I remember Dr. Clarke fondly; he was my swim coach during the winter of my first year at Blair. And, even though I was awful—I was placed in lane six and had no idea that you could actually move up until I came to work at Blair and understood just how bad I was—and, yet, he made me feel like an important part of the team.”

—Suzy (Martin) Logan ’99

“

His teachings got me through engineering physics, not my college professor. Such a good teacher and such a good person.”

—Mark Feinberg ’86



Rick and his wife, Tal, made Blair their home for more than 35 years.



Rick and his older son, **Quint ’87**.

“

Rick was a really special man, and I had the pleasure of having him as a teacher when I started at Blair in September 1971 and then again as a fellow faculty member when I came back to Blair to teach right out of college in September 1979. He was always one to give an encouraging word and had a great, understated sense of humor that was so enjoyable and often took me by surprise in the best way.”

—Laura Cochran Morris ’75

“

As a teacher and coach, Rick exemplified the very best of independent school educators. Demanding and exacting, he was admired by colleagues and appreciated by students. He expected the best of his physics students, his swimmers and golfers and taught them to expect the best of themselves.”

—Dave Low, Assistant Headmaster, 1979-2011

Blair Celebrates the Lives & Legacies of  
**Two Transformative Leaders**



Jim and his wife, Elaine, helped foster a caring and nurturing environment at Blair that remains today.

**Rev. James R. Kelley, Hon. '51 '89**

**January 25, 1933-January 9, 2023**

**SINCE** leaving Blair in 1989, Jim and his wife, Elaine, lived on Cape Cod, and Head of School Peter G. Curran was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to visit with them and their son, *James Jr. '80*, last August, and again in late December 2022. The faculty and staff at Blair put together a tribute video wishing the Kelleys a peaceful holiday season and thanking Jim and Elaine for all they contributed to our community during their 13-year tenure, and all of us at Blair are grateful that Jim had the opportunity to watch it and know we were sending him all the best from Blairstown. Our deepest condolences go out to Elaine, James Jr., Kristin and the rest of the Kelley family.

Having earned his AB from Brown University and MDiv from Andover Newton Theological Seminary, Jim came to Blair from Brown University, where he was Dean of Freshmen and Associate Dean of the College. It is indeed hard to imagine Blair without the impact Jim and Elaine had on the School

in the years that followed. Over the course of their time at Blair, our enrollment and endowment increased sixfold. Blair purchased or built six new faculty residences, constructed and dedicated Bogle Hall, and made the Bowl into a usable campus space. A champion of liberal arts education, Jim held deeply that Blair should be all about community. He and his wife, Elaine, approached their work with that philosophy in mind and, in the process, set a standard for connection and warmth that continues to this day.

For those who didn't have the pleasure of meeting Jim, his legacy lives on in the Kelley-Potter Cup, which we have competed for every November on Peddie Day since 1988. The Cup is named in honor of Jim and then Peddie Head of School F. Edward Potter Jr. Team Kelley is always a force to be reckoned with in our February Headmasters' Societies Games and competes with great enthusiasm in honor of Jim. Each spring, we recognize the hard work, passion and commitment of Blair students with the James and Elaine Kelley Prize. There is also a faculty sabbatical named after Jim, as well as trees on campus that members of the Class of 1989 dedicated on their 10th reunion in tribute to the Kelleys. And, the Class of 1951 honored Jim and Elaine's extraordinary leadership with a window in Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts. Elaine helped to run the first daycare center and preschool on campus out of West Hall's basement, laying the groundwork for today's Childcare Learning Center, which so many of our faculty have come to rely on in the years since. Together, the Kelleys were gracious hosts of many gatherings over the years at Sharpe House and all of us at Blair thank the Kelley family for their continued impact on our culture and community. ■

“No account of the Kelley years would be complete without commenting on what they meant to Blair as a couple. Leading a school in the 1970s was not easy. Elaine's support for Jim through thick and thin was tremendously important. Together, they brought energy, openness and warmth that permeated Blair's culture. Jim and Elaine's love for each other and devotion to Blair were clearly evident and contagious. It was the tonic that Blair needed, and it made Blair a happy community in which to live, teach and learn.”

—Dick Malley, Blair's former Assistant Headmaster for Student & Academic Affairs



“

So many in the extended Blair family are grateful that, as Headmaster, Jim led Blair with determination, dedication and sensitivity, and, along with Elaine, created a tone of caring and friendliness that remains the hallmark of the community today.”

—Dave Low, Assistant Headmaster, 1979-2011

“

He had such a big impact on me while I was here at school. I remember coming by his office, smelling that pipe smoke and seeing those green Kelley patchwork pants. I miss those days! He really made my time at Blair so memorable.”

—**Marivelle Clavel-Davis '82**, Blair's assistant controller

“

I vividly remember when he arrived at Blair way back in 1976-1977, as our beloved Headmaster. Speaking on behalf of all his students from those days, we loved him. Unbeknownst to us running around, he worked so hard to make Blair solvent and healthy. He laid the groundwork for the school Blair has become. He so clearly established, clarified and projected to the world the values of Blair.

“He was one of the best role models as an educator. His patience, his concern, his ability to deliberate and his love of everyone at Blair—from everyone on the office staff, maintenance, the dining hall, the faculty—he united everyone and created that feeling of family.”

—**Carolyn Conforti-Browse '79**, Blair's Dean of Campus Life & Director of Leadership Programs

“

For Jim, Blair was more than a school, more even than a community. It was a family. You could see it in the way he cared for faculty, staff and spouses, as well as for students. We were always welcome at Sharpe House, which was often the social center of campus, especially at the holiday times that bring families together. Only a Headmaster who believed in this larger Blair family would have made by hand wooden Christmas ornaments for all the faculty and staff children every year. Jim's belief was rooted, of course, in his immediate family, in his love for Elaine, for James Jr. and for Kristin. As a Head of School, he knew firsthand the importance of family.”

—Phil Kokotailo, Blair English teacher, 1977-1981



The Kelleys (from left): Elaine, **James Jr. '80**, Kristin and Jim.

“

Jim led Blair with principled vision and good sense. Academic and personal standards for students and faculty were upheld with empathy and a focus on the ongoing reputation of the School. Jim endeared himself to all with a ready smile and twinkle in his eye. Though trained in divinity school, he did his best to establish Blair on a solid financial footing. As the years passed, our paths crossed in Siesta Key, Florida, and then, later, when my family moved to Boston. We visited Jim and Elaine many times in Hyannis, always remembering and celebrating our friendship nurtured at Blair.”

—Sally Stevens, Blair history & economics teacher, 1977-1983

# TRUSTEE SPOTLIGHT



## **Rev. Barbara Aspinall**

Pennsylvania native Barbara Aspinall brings to Blair's Board of Trustees a wealth of experience providing spiritual leadership to New Jersey communities. A graduate of The Baldwin School in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Barbara grew up in suburban Philadelphia before matriculating at Brown University with a BA in religious studies. In 1984, she received her MDiv from Yale Divinity School and, following her ordination a year later, served as pastor at several churches in New Jersey. She recently retired after more than 25 years serving the Meyersville Presbyterian Church in Gillette, New Jersey.

Barbara has worked in a variety of capacities in the Presbytery of the Highlands, an organization that encompasses 79 Presbyterian congregations in northern New Jersey. In addition to providing support, care and development for congregational leaders on the Committee on Ministry, she has served on the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, on the Search Committee for the current Presbytery Leader, as Presbytery Moderator and is now serving as the chair of the Nominating Committee.

Married to Doug Smith for 41 years, Barbara and her husband have three grown sons and became first-time grandparents in January 2023. She enjoys spending her free time with her horse, Spy, and volunteering at The Stable at Lord Stirling Park in Somerset County.



## **Jordan Price '97, P'25**

**Jordan M. Price '97**, proud mother of **Taylor '25**, Henry and William Ehmann, graduated from Boston College (BC) in 2001 with a BA in art history. From BC, she went on to attend The Institute of Culinary Education in New York City, completing the professional culinary arts program and founding her own catering company, Priceless Parties, in 2005. Over the years, Jordan's passion for health and well-being has continued to grow and deepen. In addition to caring for her family at home in Far Hills, New Jersey, she became certified in yoga in 2018 and has since been teaching donation-based hot vinyasa, prenatal and restorative classes several times a week. Always learning through teacher trainings on the body, nutrition and fitness, Jordan's feedback, perspective and support have been instrumental in Blair's design of plans for a new Center for Health and Well-Being, and we look forward to her continued work on the Board in this capacity.

With a strong family legacy at Blair, Jordan's father, Michael Price, served on the Blair Academy Board of Trustees from 1995 to 2001, and her twin brothers, **Jonathan** and **Andrew**, graduated from Blair in 2002. Jordan was elected to the School's Alumni Association Board of Governors in 2004, serving for two years in that role before being elected to the Blair Board of Trustees in May 2008, where she served on the Buildings and Grounds Committee and the Education and School Life Committee until her term ended in June 2014.





## Thomas C. Sansone Sr. P'26

A 2008 graduate of Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business, Tom Sansone is a technology executive who brings to Blair more than 25 years of experience scaling venture-backed, high-growth and disruptive businesses. He most recently served as Chief Financial Officer at Kobalt Music Group, a technology-driven music services platform representing more than 40 percent of the top 100 songs in the United States and United Kingdom, which he helped scale from \$250 million to a multibillion-dollar series of exits in only six years. Prior to Kobalt, Tom spent seven years as both Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer of Gilt Groupe, an e-commerce business that he helped build from 100 employees and \$27 million in revenue to over 1,200 employees and \$750 million in revenue. At the beginning of his career, he worked for Arthur Andersen and PricewaterhouseCoopers, consulting for technology businesses primarily in the areas of Internet and digital media, enterprise software and the semiconductor industries.

Prior to earning his MBA from Georgetown, where he continues to be a frequent speaker and contributor, Tom received a BA in finance and accounting from Gettysburg College. He lives in Madison, New Jersey, with his wife, Lena, and children, **Naomi '26**, Tommy Jr. and Henry. Along with his family, Tom enjoys spending summers in Nantucket, Massachusetts, working on his wife's family farm in Missouri, as well as skiing, golfing and traveling. Tom and Lena are longtime supporters of the Bowery Mission and Project Renewal, two organizations in New York City dedicated to providing services to the homeless.

## A Note of Gratitude to Blair's Board of Governors, 2023-2024

The Alumni Board of Governors (BOG) comprises 21 dedicated Blair graduates who volunteer their time and talent to promote a strong, meaningful relationship between the School and its alumni body. This year, under the leadership of President **Kaitlin G. Maillet Matyasovsky '04** and Vice President **Jonathan Januszewski '13**, BOG members have laid the groundwork for continued engagement—and exciting get-togethers—ahead.

We offer special thanks to **Robert L. Van Stone '69**, whose term as BOG president concluded in June 2023. "During the six years that he led the board, Bob attended nearly every school-sponsored alumni event and opened new avenues for alumni involvement at Blair," said Director of Advancement Cara Mohlmann. "We are so grateful for his leadership and look forward to all that our 2023-2024 board will do together to guide the School."

### 2023-2024 Board of Governors

**Kaitlin G. Maillet Matyasovsky '04**,  
President  
**Jonathan Januszewski '13**,  
Vice President  
**Robert D. Apgar '99**  
**Richard P. Boak '68, P'13**  
**Emily A. Collins '11**  
**Melina O. Fisher '93\***  
**Matthew C. Gallira '08**  
**Roger D. Gershman '82, P'25**  
**Lauren N. Haley '93**  
**Charles H. A. Inkeles '88**  
**Andrew N. Litvin '14\***  
**Graham N. McConnell '10\***  
**Michael E. McDonald '97**  
**Thomas E. McLean '73\***  
**James H. G. Naisby '57**  
**William J. Pemberton '16**  
**Brita Roy '98\***  
**Anita C. Sarate '88**  
**Tamsen I. Thorpe '79, P'21**  
**Evelyn B. Tilney '05**  
**Robert L. Van Stone '69**

\*Denotes new members this year

## Alexander 'ARob' Roberts Memorials Established



The Roberts family (left to right): Douglas, **Alex '18**, Nancy and Elizabeth.

To honor the memory of one of Blair's finest young alumni, **Alexander Roberts '18**, and continue his passion and service, the Alexander "ARob" Roberts Award for Spirit and the Alexander "ARob" Roberts Forum on Holocaust Education have been established, along with a memorial bench placed between Mason and Freeman Halls, overlooking Marcial Field. Alex, known affectionately as "ARob" during his four years at Blair, was a beloved Blair Buc and proud member of the Class of 2018. He was a football player, basketball manager and a Blair Academy Player. Alex left his mark on Blair's campus, leading the Jewish Student Union and a trip to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital with understanding, empathy and acceptance. He will be remembered for his kindness, positivity and true Blair spirit.

In Alex's memory, the Alexander "ARob" Roberts Award for Spirit is awarded annually to a member of the rising senior class who embodies his characteristics. Like ARob, the students selected fully immerse themselves in all that Blair has to offer and are distinguished by their character. They are known to be compassionate, humble, innately curious, passionate and

committed to Blair. Among both faculty and students alike, the recipients are described as unifiers on Blair's campus both on and off the field and in and out of the classroom. The students are people who bring out the best in those they surround and will leave an indelible mark on the Blair community with an impact as large as the hearts and minds of those they have touched. The inaugural award was presented to **Luis Jimenez '24** by Alex's former advisor, science teacher and Dean of Teaching and Learning Joe Wagner.

Besides his passion for Blair, Alex also left his mark in service to the community through Holocaust education. Through his Boy Scout Eagle Service Project, Alex created a permanent memorial and film for survivors and their families to honor Ira Lulinski, a Holocaust survivor Alex knew and loved, and those who perished. Alex said, "I wanted something to teach people young and old about the Holocaust and combat any denial." To continue his passion and service, the Alexander "ARob" Roberts Forum on Holocaust Education will bring speakers to Blair each year to present on topics relating to the Holocaust. ■



If you would like to contribute to this fund, please visit [www.blair.edu/make-a-gift](http://www.blair.edu/make-a-gift) and designate your gift to the Alexander "ARob" Roberts Award for Spirit or the Alexander "ARob" Roberts Forum on Holocaust Education. If you have any questions, please contact Associate Director of Advancement Susan Long at [longs@blair.edu](mailto:longs@blair.edu).





## Thank You from the Board Chair

Dear Blair family,

We have had a very eventful year at Blair, celebrating our 175th academic year, a historic occasion marked with a host of festivities and culminating in a fantastic Alumni Weekend in June. At the closing of our 175th celebration, we emphasized the importance of moving the School forward, as we announced Blair's *All In*, the largest comprehensive campaign in our history, with a goal of raising \$140 million by June 30, 2025. To date, we have raised an incredible \$120 million, and the impact of the campaign is already being felt in all areas of Blair life. We have constructed or renovated 11 buildings, established 31 endowed scholarships, and fully endowed an important faculty compensation plan to attract and retain the best and brightest teachers, coaches

and dorm parents. Our endowment has grown to over \$140 million, ensuring Blair's financial health for decades to come. Furthering our commitment to fostering innovative curricular and co-curricular offerings, we have also endowed the Sigety Faculty Summer Institute, a crucial faculty training-and-development tool that is vital to maintaining Blair's academic excellence and innovative programs. J-term is another way in which we have enriched academics at Blair by sparking student interest and passion in new areas of study.

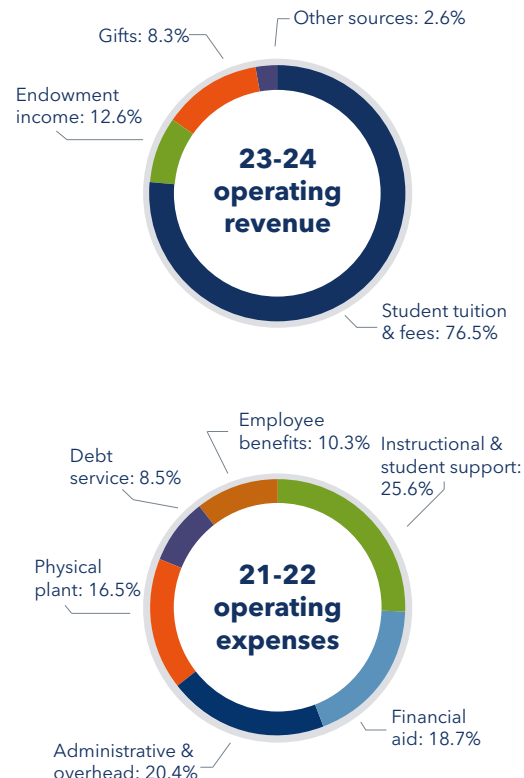
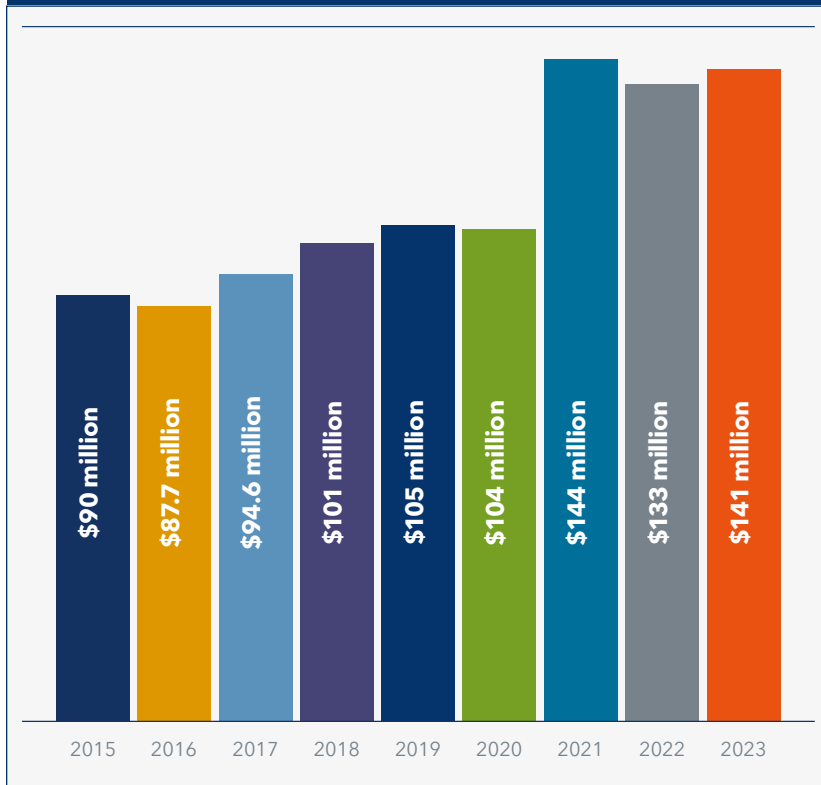
I am incredibly grateful for the continued generosity of the Blair community. In 2022-2023, we documented two estate gifts of \$10 million and raised a record \$11.4 million, our best year ever, including a new high mark for the Blair Fund at \$3.7 million and capital and endowment gifts of \$7.7 million. Especially noteworthy is that we achieved this record-breaking year with over 74 percent parent participation, 26 percent alumni participation, and 108 faculty and staff members honored by gifts. It has truly been a community-wide effort to attain this degree of fundraising success.

Our commitment to financial aid for Blair students also continues to grow. Now, with the generous support of the Blair community, we can offer 119 named scholarships. These scholarships enable us to add richness and diversity to the Blair experience as we continue to fulfill our mission to prepare Blair students for success beyond our hilltop.

Our admission team had its first normal admission cycle in four years, although virtual programming continues to help us reach a wider audience as we once again reached our enrollment goals by April 10. We received more than 1,600 applications, with just 14 percent of applicants accepted for the 2023-2024 school year. This fall, Blair will welcome 140 new students from 23 countries and 28 states, thanks to the efforts of our admission staff traveling throughout the United States and internationally, including visits to Japan, Singapore and Vietnam. In 2023, we look forward to returning to China and Hong Kong for the first time post-COVID.

Our college counseling office continues to guide our students to enroll at colleges and universities that best serve their goals and talents. In an incredibly competitive college admission climate, our students are achieving great successes and our graduates find that they are well prepared for the challenges of life beyond Blair. Our Blair Bridges advisory board, which includes the admission deans and directors of eight colleges and universities, helps us stay abreast of trends in higher education and the ways in which we can support our students in telling their authentic stories through compelling applications and supplemental materials.

## Endowment Growth



It has also been gratifying to see that the Blair experience extends far beyond the one, two, three or four years our students spend on campus. The wider Blair community continues to be engaged by programs designed to create Blair connections well after graduation. Peddie Day celebrations, the Finance Summit, the Women's Symposium and Alumni Weekend strengthen the lifelong and transformative impact of the Blair experience and the community ties that our students and alumni cherish.

As I reflect on my first year as Board Chair, I am grateful for the support of a dedicated and passionate Board of Trustees that continues to focus on ensuring that Blair offers the best student experience possible. A large part of that continued success depends on the Blair "secret sauce," which is borne out of the environment at Blair

that fosters meaningful relationships between students and faculty. Together with the support of our generous alumni, parents, faculty, staff and friends, I am proud of the warm, supportive community that we continue to prioritize, best preparing students for success in college and in life.

By staying true to the foundational principles of Blair, we prioritize meaningful relationships between students and faculty, and a warm, supportive and welcoming community where adolescents can discover their passions before going on to thrive in the next chapter of their educational journeys. In keeping with this pledge to our core values while continuing to move Blair forward, one of my focuses this year will be the planning and construction of our new Center for Health and Well-Being. It is essential that we give students the tools to cope

in healthy ways with the stresses that life will inevitably bring. I invite you to watch the architectural flythrough of the facility at [www.blair.edu/health-and-well-being](http://www.blair.edu/health-and-well-being). The combination of the quality and rigor of Blair's academics, its student-centered environment, and the teaching and nurturing of health and well-being tools, will ensure that every Blair student reaches their full academic and life potential.

Again, thank you for your generosity and support. Without it, we would not be in the strong position we find ourselves in today with a bright future ahead as we begin our 176th school year.

With sincere gratitude,

**Maria Vinci Savettiere, Esq., P'17**



# 2022 - 2023

## BY THE NUMBERS

**292**

Number of first-time donors

**\$11,444,471**

Total dollars raised

**\$99,046**

Dollars raised through gifts of \$100 or less

**504**

The number of \$100 gifts made

**2,435**

Total number of donors

**575**

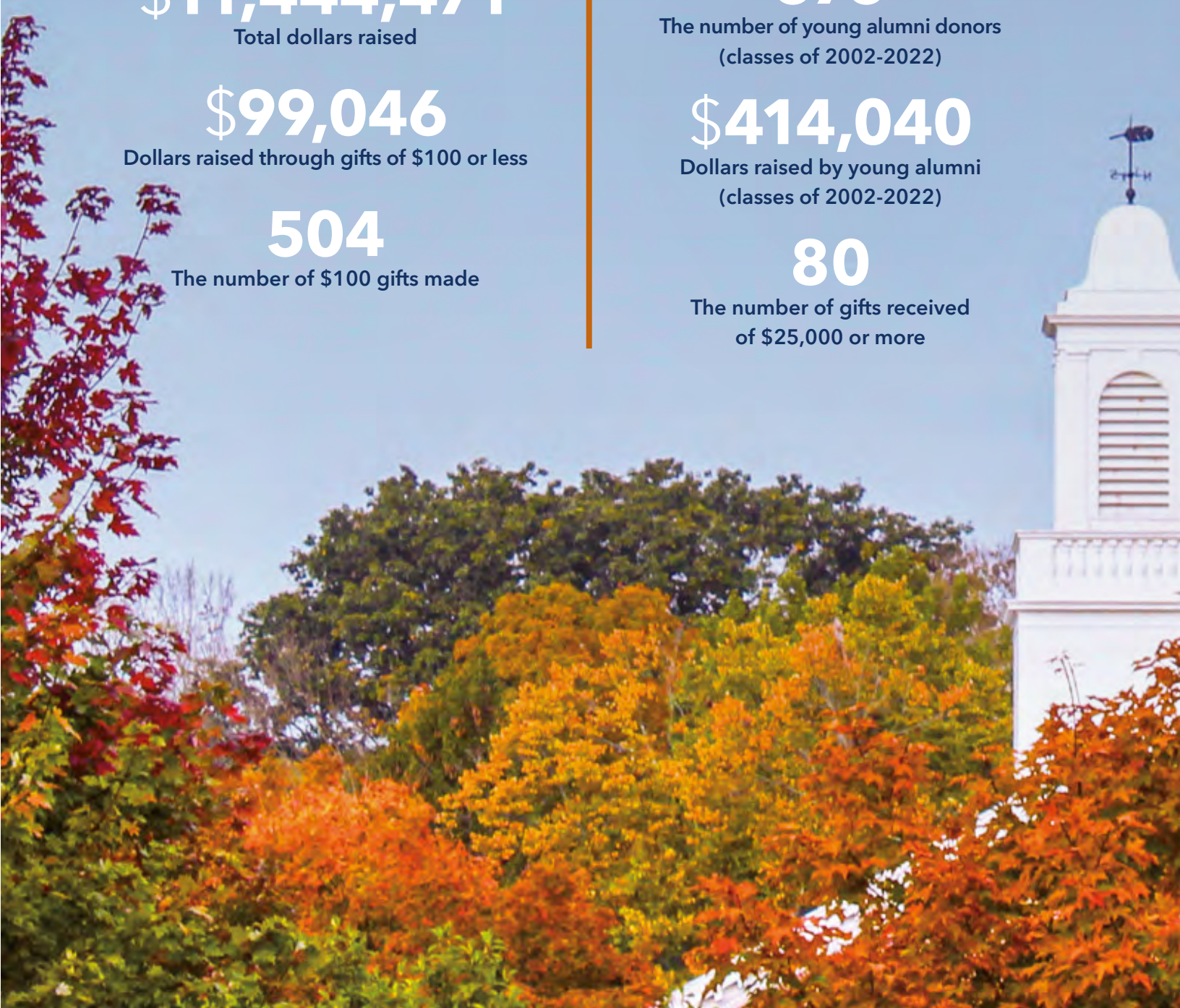
The number of young alumni donors  
(classes of 2002-2022)

**\$414,040**

Dollars raised by young alumni  
(classes of 2002-2022)

**80**

The number of gifts received  
of \$25,000 or more



Annual & Capital Fund Total	No. of Donors	%	Total Giving
Alumni	1,635	26%	\$1,334,872
Current Parent	357	74%	\$4,761,233
Parent of Alumni	196	6%	\$1,475,313
Friend	166		\$546,729
Estates	4		\$1,388,801
Matching Gift Company	34		\$79,622
Foundation	35		\$1,927,053
Corporation	12		\$152,142
			<b>Total</b> <b>\$11,444,471</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alumni and current parent totals include matching gift company giving.</li> <li>• Current parents who are also alumni are recognized in both categories.</li> <li>• Foundation giving has also been credited to the category of the donor who directed the gift.</li> <li>• Friend totals include gifts from grandparents and former and present faculty and staff.</li> <li>• Note: The numbers in this publication are not audited and are for recognition purposes only.</li> </ul>			

### All-Time Reunion Class Gift Records

Reunion Year	Highest Participation Percentage		Highest Dollars Raised	
60th Reunion	Class of 1956	74%	Class of 1962	\$705,560
55th Reunion	Class of 1956	91%	Class of 1953	\$1,094,448
50th Reunion	Class of 1945	100%	Class of 1966	\$385,656
45th Reunion	Class of 1944	59%	Class of 1976	\$746,391
40th Reunion	Class of 1961	60%	Class of 1976	\$218,684
35th Reunion	Class of 1956	46%	Class of 1974	\$80,040
30th Reunion	Class of 1977	55%	Class of 1974	\$64,312
25th Reunion	Class of 1990	58%	Class of 1997	\$91,006
20th Reunion	<b>* Class of 2003</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>* Class of 2003</b>	<b>\$166,350</b>
15th Reunion	Class of 1981	39%	<b>* Class of 2008</b>	<b>\$172,084</b>
10th Reunion	Class of 2002	46%	<b>* Class of 2013</b>	<b>\$101,877</b>
5th Reunion	Class of 2008	75%	Class of 2006	\$12,482

**Note:** Reunion records are cash donations only, except the 50th reunion.

\*New record established this year.



"I am 'all in' for Blair by giving my all to my teammates, teachers and friends, as well as always willing to help whether it's in the classroom or on the field."

– Kaleb Nelson '25





"When I think of Blair being 'all in' for me, I think of the overwhelming support and love that I get from the student body and faculty. No matter what hardships I face, whether academically or otherwise, I know I can go to a faculty member or friend, and they can help me navigate what to do next."

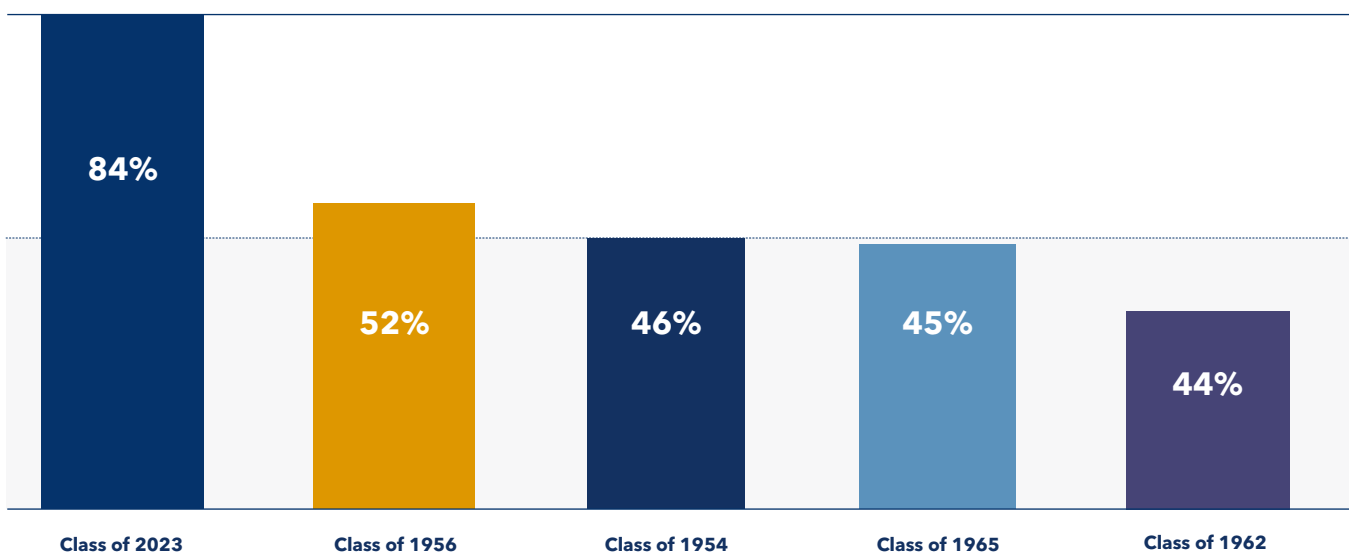
– **Josie Tetteh '26**

### Alumni Weekend Reunion Attendance Records

Year	Highest Percentage	
2023	Class of 1973	42%
2022	Class of 1962	25%
2019	Class of 1969	42%
2018	Class of 1968	40%
2017	Class of 1942	43%
2016	Class of 1956	35%
2015	Class of 1965	43%

**Note:** The traditional program was suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic.

### Leading Classes for Participation



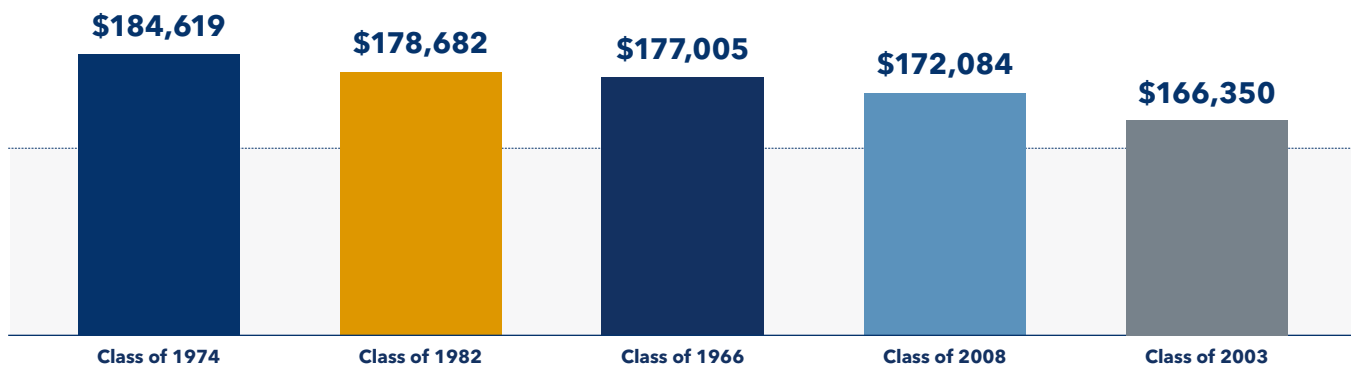
**Note:** Top-five list includes the classes of 1948-2023.



"I feel Blair is 'all in' for me by being there for me in every facet of my life. Whether it be in the classroom, on the field or in the dorm, there are faculty who actively try to get to know me better and who push me to enhance my strengths and support my growth."

– **Sage Christensen '23**

### Leading Classes for Financial Support



**Note:** Top-five list includes the classes of 1948-2023.



To read the full annual report, visit [www.blair.edu/support-blair/annual-report](http://www.blair.edu/support-blair/annual-report).



"Blair is a place where you have the ability, and the resources, to find yourself. Whether it be through the friends you make, the faculty who encourage you or the classes that allow you to explore all of your passions, Blair helps you find the best version of you."

– **Luis Jimenez '24**



<b>1945</b>	Bernard H. Natelson February 15, 2022 Little Silver, New Jersey	<b>1956</b>	Richard T. Barber April 4, 2023 Gloucester, North Carolina	<b>1970</b>	John A. Billings Jr. May 11, 2023 Wheaton, Illinois
	Richard P. Rubenoff March 18, 2023 Atlanta, Georgia		Stewart H. Cole June 7, 2023 Richmond, Virginia	<b>1972</b>	F. Stephen Flor January 6, 2023 Mesquite, Nevada
<b>1946</b>	Herbert J. Siegel August 9, 2023 New York, New York	<b>1957</b>	John E. Minton July 13, 2023 Sparta, New Jersey	<b>1976</b>	Peter J. Fletcher May 19, 2023 Branchville, New Jersey
<b>1947</b>	Gordon Granger November 28, 2022 Chatham, New Jersey		Jerre S. Riggs Jr. June 3, 2023 Blairstown, New Jersey	<b>1984</b>	Eric L. Gray March 6, 2023 Winston-Salem, North Carolina
<b>1951</b>	Irving C. Pettit June 4, 2023 Haddon Township, New Jersey	<b>1958</b>	John D. Gutierrez March 21, 2023 Hoboken, New Jersey	<b>1987</b>	Toten Francisco Comas Bacardí April 18, 2023 Guaynabo, Puerto Rico
	Frederick W. Rose April 8, 2023 Rumson, New Jersey	<b>1959</b>	G. Brian Dugan July 10, 2023 Bluffton, South Carolina	<b>1993</b>	Stephen W. Kennedy April 15, 2023 Cresco, Pennsylvania
<b>1952</b>	Bruce M. Dayton June 11, 2023 Bedford, Massachusetts	<b>1961</b>	Stuart G. Miller February 9, 2023 New York, New York	<b>1995</b>	Edward A. Johnson April 26, 2023 Chester, New Jersey
<b>1953</b>	Herbert D. Sturman April 2, 2023 Los Angeles, California	<b>1963</b>	Charles F. Morley III May 28, 2023 Sarasota, Florida	<b>1998</b>	Thomas R. Peck July 11, 2023 Lebanon, New Jersey
	Howard L. Tyne February 21, 2023 Menlo Park, California	<b>1967</b>	Jack L. Goldstein June 16, 2023 Cold Spring, New York	<b>Former Faculty</b>	Robert C. Cooke April 16, 2019 Hackettstown, New Jersey
<b>1954</b>	James J. Crouch II July 18, 2020 Eustis, Florida	<b>1969</b>	Ronald M. Neumunz March 30, 2023 Charleston, South Carolina		William J. DePue May 27, 2023 Stillwater, New Jersey

## 1945

**Bernard H. Natelson.** A four-year Buccaneer, Bud was a literary leader among his classmates. He was editor of both the 1945 *ACTA* and the *Breeze* publications. He served as president of the Press, Stylus, International, and Rook and Pawn clubs and vice president of the Webster Society. When he was not studying, Bud enjoyed basketball and was known to be disciplined in practicing his "deadly set-shot." Bud earned his BA from Yale University in English in 1950. That same year, he married his wife of 71 years, Arleen, after a storybook meeting

at the Jersey Shore. Bud and Arleen lived in Little Silver, New Jersey, for 57 years, where they raised their three sons and he became president of his family clothing chain, Natelsons. Bud was creative and enjoyed sculpting, welding and sketching in his off-hours, as well as reading biographies. He and Arleen were longtime members of the Congregation B'nai Israel in Rumson, New Jersey, and the Navesink Country Club, where he enjoyed playing golf and tennis. Bud was predeceased by Arleen in 2021 and is survived by his sons and their spouses,

eight grandchildren and their spouses, and 10 great-grandchildren.

**Richard P. Rubenoff.** Dick arrived at Blair in the spring of 1944 and could often be seen studying Saturday evenings in East Hall. Nicknamed "Ruby" among friends, he played tennis and was a member of the Blue Color Club. Graduating with distinction from Blair, Dick continued his education at Bucknell University, as well as New York University Law School. After law school, he served as an officer with the U.S. Marine Corps from 1953 to 1955.

Dick practiced law in New York until 1968 when he became the Southeastern attorney for JCPenney. After JCPenney, Dick continued practicing for another 10 years with Altman, Kritter and Levick until retirement. He enjoyed retirement with his wife of 54 years, Elizabeth, traveling and doing *The New York Times* crossword religiously, along with *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* jumble. He was an animal advocate, a collector of classical and operatic music, and a golfer at the Bonnie Briar Country Club in Larchmont, New York. Throughout his life, Dick supported Blair and was a respected member of the John C. Sharpe Society. He is survived by Elizabeth and will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery.

#### 1946

**Herbert J. Siegel.** (See page 20.)

#### 1947

**Gordon Granger.** Gordon, also known as "Gordie" among friends, was a three-year Buccaneer. During his time at Blair, he was a standout welterweight wrestler and earned varsity letters participating in the sports he loved, including football, track, swimming and baseball. While Gordon loved sports, he also excelled in extracurricular activities, serving as president of his dorm and the student council, while also participating on the

debate team and serving as a member of the Webster Society and the Church Society. Gifted with a lovely tenor voice, he proudly sang in Blair's choir. He was awarded Blair's Master Trophy, given to the graduating senior who most exemplifies a Blair student. Gordon went on to graduate from both Lehigh and Princeton universities and served as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Anti-Aircraft Command in Fort Totten, New York. He resided in Chatham, New Jersey, where he and his wife of 68 years raised their children and he worked in the banking and insurance industries. Later in life, Gordon remained active with golf, tennis and paddle games and was on the board at the Senior Center of the Chathams. His obituary described him as "a good storyteller, kind, patient, fun to be with and a true gentleman." Gordon was predeceased by his firstborn son and is survived by his wife, Marilyn, two daughters, a son, three grandsons, a granddaughter and a great-granddaughter.

#### 1952

**Bruce M. Dayton.** Following in the footsteps of his father, **George H. Dayton '15**, who was a former chairman of the Board of Trustees at Blair, Bruce came to Blair for his last two years of high school. He was vice president of his junior class, a member of the Stylus, Dramatics, Varsity "B" and Press clubs, business manager of the ACTA, managing editor of the *Breeze*

and ran for the varsity cross country and winter track teams. Bruce graduated from Williams College before serving in the U.S. Navy from 1957 to 1960. While in the Navy, Bruce graduated from San Francisco State College with a master of science degree in business. He had an extremely successful career in personal finance, including co-founding one of the first independent personal financial planning firms, Multi-Financial Services, Inc., in 1970. Throughout his career, he served as an instructor for the Insurance and Financial Services Institute at Northeastern University, as well as lectured and moderated seminars on personal finance. He was dedicated to the communities around him and served on many boards and committees throughout his life. Bruce and his wife of 67 years, Gracia, were supporters of the arts as well as U.S. Olympic teams, and loyal supporters of Blair. His obituary noted, "He will be remembered for his devotion to his family, his sense of humor and fun and his deep commitment to the communities and organizations that nurtured him." Bruce is survived by Gracia, three children and seven grandchildren.

#### 1953

**Herbert D. Sturman.** An active Buccaneer for three years, Herb's senior-year activities included writing

#### Former Trustee

**Irving C. Pettit.** Known as "Bin," Irving Pettit's one year at Blair saw him in the Dramatics Club, the choir and the Glee Club, and on the soccer and basketball teams. Upon graduation in 1951, he was inducted into the Cum Laude Society and continued his education at Cornell University. At Cornell he was a member of the Psi Upsilon Fraternity and sang with the Cornell Glee Club. Bin's obituary noted that, during these school years, "he counted those friendships among his most cherished memories." After Cornell, Bin married the love of his life, Jayne, with whom he raised three children,

and had a successful career with CIGNA. Throughout his life, Bin was a faithful supporter of Blair, including serving on both the Board of Governors (1984-1991, president 1988-1991) and the Board of Trustees (1991-1994). In retirement, Bin and Jayne resided in Vermont, where he was president of the Financial Planning Council of Southern Vermont and president of two condo associations. After 54 years of marriage, Bin was sadly predeceased by Jayne in 2009. He is survived by his three children, their spouses, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.



**Former Trustee**

**Frederick W. Rose.** When Bud arrived on campus there was already a proud family history at Blair. His father, John Rose, spent a year here from 1918 to 1919, and his two brothers, **John Rose Jr. '46** and **Alan Rose '48**, had already begun to leave their mark on the community. To say Bud left his own mark on Blair would be an understatement. He notably served as president of his class, and the 1951 ACTA noted that, "No one in the class is more deserving of its presidency than Bud Rose. As an athlete he is a fine sportsman and an ever encouraging, hard playing member of his team. As a student leader Bud took his many jobs seriously, earning respect from students and faculty alike. However, Bud's outstanding quality is his engaging humor. More than his sincere and intelligent talks in chapel we shall remember his friendly quips at bull sessions on Second East." Bud's list of activities at Blair runs long, and in many cases, he served

as president, vice president or co-captain. He garnered accomplishments, including the Headmaster's Prize and the Blair Academy Trophy and earned membership in the Cum Laude Society. After Blair, Bud graduated from Cornell University, served in the U.S. Army from 1955 to 1957, and went on to graduate from Cornell Law School in 1960. Throughout his life, Bud continued his service to Blair as class representative, member of the 1848 Society Committee, liaison for the Class of 1951 Scholarship and the Lee Rose Memorial Trophy, and a member of the Board of Trustees from 1976 to 1992. In 2016, Bud was honored with the Outstanding Class Correspondent award during his 65th reunion. Bud will be remembered for his humor, storytelling, and love for family and friends. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Judy, his five children and their spouses, 10 grandchildren, his brother, John, as well as many extended family members.

for the ACTA as a sports editor and serving as secretary of the Dramatics Club, the Stylus Club, Varsity "B" and the White Color Club. Herb was a loyal supporter of Blair and served on the 1848 Society Committee. Herb graduated from Columbia College with his BA and subsequently earned his JD from Columbia Law School. Throughout his career, he practiced with several law firms, including two he formed with partners, Sherman & Sturman and Fierstein & Sturman. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and the Department of Justice notably commended Herb for his work handling cases under the Internal Revenue Code. Herb was also active in the communities in which he lived. Above all, Herb valued his family. He and his beloved wife, Beverly, were married for 61 years, raising three children and, later in life, experienced the joy of two grandchildren. Herb is survived by Beverly, his children and grandchildren.

**Howard L. Tyne.** Howard spent one year at Blair beginning in 1952. Known for his appealing nature, Howard was always smiling and an easygoing, good student. He was active in the Press and Blue Color

clubs. Throughout his life, he stayed connected with the School by supporting the Blair Fund annually. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and had a steady career with Jersey Central Power & Light, from which he retired in 2003. Retirement brought him to the state of California, where he lived for the rest of his days. A lifelong bachelor, Howard will be remembered by his family and friends, including his niece, Jennifer, who wrote, "He was much loved and will be missed greatly."

**1956**

**Richard T. Barber.** A four-year Buc, Dick was seen everywhere on campus from the fields and pool to the stage and classrooms. His senior activities included the Webster Society, Rod and Reel Club, the Breeze, Omicron Kappa Delta, Dramatics Cub, varsity swimming and the Blue Color Club. In the 1956 ACTA, he noted that his favorite pastimes were physiological discussions and writing stories and said his ambition for life was "to be another Hemingway." By the end of his life, Dick proved to be an accomplished writer and a lover of the sea. A longtime faculty member and

professor emeritus at Duke University, Dick's pioneering studies on ocean biogeochemistry contributed much to what we know about the ocean's role in storing climate-warming greenhouse gasses. His 56-year career took him coast to coast researching the oceans, serving as the founding director of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute in California and ultimately working with NASA technology to further his research. During his time at Duke, Dick served as advisor to 15 PhD students, three master of science students and nine master of environmental management students. Before his retirement in 2006, Dick was honored several times, including a 30-foot research vessel named in his honor by the Nicholas School. He was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1991 and a fellow of the American Geophysical Union in 1995, among many other high honors. Dick is survived by his wife, Elaine, son, **Don Barber '85**, daughter, **Stephanie (Barber) Miscovich '85**, and two grandsons. He will be missed by many, including those in the world of oceanography.

**Stewart H. Cole.** Stew began his Blair education at the age of 12, graduating in five years with many accomplishments. In his senior year, he participated in the Dramatics Club, Academy Players, choir, Glee Club and Stylus Club; served as secretary of the Blue & White Key; was business manager of the *Breeze*, made honor roll all five years; and was a member of the varsity wrestling team. Stew graduated from Yale and New York University School of Business in 1960 and 1964, respectively. Post-graduation, he served in the United States Coast Guard. After his service, Stew's career brought him all over the world as he worked for several banks in places including Bogota, Colombia; Taipei, Taiwan; and New York City. Once retired, he continued to work for the U.S. government and the World Bank, managing the reconstruction and modernization of national banking systems, which once again took him around the world. During their 62 years of marriage, Stew and Nancy also lived in New Jersey, Vermont and Virginia. Stew was a steadfast and loyal supporter of Blair as a member of both the True Blue Society and the John C. Sharpe Society. Throughout his life he continued his love for languages and singing, notably being a member of the Yale Whiffenpoofs, with which he had the opportunity to travel and sing with the Yale Alumni Chorus, as well as singing in the St. Stephen's church choir. He was also a member of the Holland Society of New York and took great pride in his Dutch heritage. Stew is survived by his wife, Nancy, his son, **Bromme Cole '81**, and daughter and their spouses, his brother, **Alan Cole '58**, and sister, and seven grandchildren.

## 1957

**John E. Minton.** Jack came to Blair in 1952, beginning in the lower school, and stayed through his sophomore year. Along with his studies, Jack was active in the Dramatics Club and on the lightweight football team. After leaving

Blair, Jack served in the United States Air Force and graduated from Texas Christian University in the Class of 1962. He supported Blair through the years and enjoyed returning to campus for many of the Class of 1957 reunion gatherings. Jack spent his career in marketing programs for medical service companies and medical equipment sales. He was a member of the Branchville Rotary, as well as the Branchville Businessmen's Club. Jack was active in the Newton Country Club, where he served as president for a number of years and focused on new member recruitment. Jack is survived by his wife, Nancy, and his children and grandchildren.

**Jerre S. Riggs Jr.** Before graduating from Netcong High School, Jerre, known as "J," spent his first two years of high school at Blair, during which he was a class officer. He continued to stay connected through loyal support as a member of the True Blue Society and attending reunions when he was able to. J graduated from Wilmington College with a degree in management and served three years in the United States Army. During his career he was an estimator and office manager for Salmon Bros, Inc. a road construction business. J was part of the American Legion Post 418, Ruffed Grouse Society, RC Plantation and the National Rifle Association. He loved being outdoors and enjoyed land management and conservation across his properties. Some of his hobbies included golfing, playing softball, bird/deer hunting and fishing with his grandchildren. J also had a special knack for operating heavy equipment. Spending time with his family and friends is what truly made J's day. J was predeceased by his father, **Jerre S. Riggs Sr. '33**, and uncles, **Albert Riggs '39** and **John Riggs '39**. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Barbara, his son and daughter and their spouses, and five grandchildren.

## 1958

**John D. Gutierrez.** During his junior and senior years at Blair, John was a member of the wrestling and tennis teams and active in the Forensic Society, the *Breeze*, Omicron Kappa Delta, International Club, Dance Band, Student Council, Varsity "B" and Press Club. John earned the Superior Award at the 1957 Temple University Speech Contest. After graduating from Blair, he continued wrestling at Alfred University, majoring in English and participating in many offseason tournaments. In 1962, John earned his JD from Fordham Law School. He practiced for a short time before moving on to head a women's clothing company in New York. John also co-owned a restaurant named The Chelsea Commons in Lower Manhattan, a lunch and dinner spot with jazz music. He notably played the alto saxophone with several musical groups throughout his life. When he retired from the restaurant, he continued to be active with FEMA and gave walking tours of lower Manhattan using his deep knowledge of the area. With his longtime partner, Mary, he summered on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and traveled to Mexico. A lifelong sailor, racer, avid reader and music aficionado, John is survived by Mary and will be remembered as "a man for all seasons."

## 1959

**G. Brian Dugan.** Brian was an avid runner during his time at Blair. He ran for the cross country, winter and spring track teams. He participated in writing for the *Breeze* and the ACTA. Brian graduated from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service with a major in international affairs. He worked as a reporter for *The Record* in New Jersey and Rockland County, New York. He also graduated from St. John's University with an MBA in finance. After his work with *The Record*, he moved into public relations, specializing in media relations with large international corporations. He then went back to the newspaper



business to become a copy editor for *The Star Ledger* in Newark, New Jersey. In retirement, Brian managed the high school writing center for the Bridgewater-Raritan School District, helping students improve on their writing skills. Brian and his wife of 55 years, Cathy, enjoyed traveling the world, especially visiting their children where they were posted with the Peace Corps. He enjoyed studying history, current events, photography and genealogy, and spending time outdoors. Brian is survived by Cathy, their three children and two grandchildren.

#### 1961

**Stuart G. Miller.** A three-year Buc, Stu was seen on the athletic fields and courts as a football player and basketball manager. He wrote for the *Breeze* and was a member of the Press, French and Shades of Grey clubs. Throughout his life, Stu supported and stayed connected to Blair, including attending reunion gatherings and being a member of the 1848 Society Committee. After Blair, he attended the University of Pennsylvania, attaining his BA in history and MBA. Stu served as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1968 to 1970. After his service, he began his career at the First Pennsylvania Bank in Philadelphia before settling into a 38-year career at Citibank. At Citibank, Stu was known as a mentor to many and had a knack for hiring until he retired in 2012. He and his wife of 23 years, Nancy, loved to travel. Across the oceans, they made great friends, enjoyed local food and wine, and experienced all the world had to offer. With a trip to Antarctica in 2012, Stu visited every continent. When Stu was not traveling, he was a sailor, historian and an avid sports fan, notably attending the Penn-Princeton football game for over 25 years. He is survived by his beloved wife, Nancy, and will be remembered by many.

#### 1963

**Charles F. Morley III.** Fred Morley spent four years at Blair. During his time on campus, he was a member of the varsity soccer and swim teams and Camera Club. Fred was known for his fine woodworking craftsmanship and furniture design. Before settling in Sarasota, Florida, he lived in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Rochester, New York, where he managed production for Woods of Wisdom, a company that creates turned and hand-carved wooden bowls and vessels. Fred had two sons with his former wife, Yolanda, and enjoyed coaching youth soccer and baseball as well as spending time fishing. Although he was afflicted with illness in his later years, he remained as active as possible and kept the personality of his youth. Fred is survived by his sons and Yolanda.

#### 1967

**Jack. L. Goldstein.** A two-year senior, Jack was awarded the Robert F. Harris Memorial Trophy, given to a member of the senior class for special interest and outstanding achievement in the study of English literature. While at Blair, Jack was active in the choir, Blue and White Key, Tweeds, cheerleaders, Academy Players and the Glee, Dramatics and Spanish clubs. He went on to graduate from University of California at Berkeley and George Washington University. Jack moved to New York City and began his professional career as the executive director of Save the Theaters, where he led a campaign to landmark 27 Broadway theatres. He then went on to be executive director of the Theater Development Fund, most notably organizing an international design competition for the iconic red stairs of the TKTS booth in Times Square. Later in life, Jack studied, collected and traded art and antiques. He owned and

collaborated with shops and launched a blog named *Why This?* Jack will be remembered for his dedication to the theatre industry and for the mark he left on Times Square and Broadway.

#### 1969

**Ronald M. Neumunz.** Ron, a three-year senior, was awarded the Class Grind award in the 1969 ACTA for his class. Although Ron was noted to be lackadaisical toward his studies, his involvement in the literary aspects of Blair showed a different attitude. Along with playing on the soccer team, Ron was a member of the International Society, Press Club and Prom Committee. He was also president of the Webster Society, copy editor of the *Arch*, writer for the *Breeze*, layout editor of the ACTA and co-editor of the *Stylus*. Ron went on to Yale University, where he majored in American studies and minored in studio art. Seeking adventure after graduation, he worked as a seaman off the African coast and on the docks of New York City. He then graduated from Stanford University with an MBA in finance and marketing. He enjoyed a successful career in advertising and finance, living in different parts of the world. Ron settled in London, where he raised two daughters with his former wife, Jennifer, and mentored and supervised startups at Cambridge University, something he enjoyed immensely. Next to his two daughters, one of Ron's great loves in life was his time spent in his home on Nantucket Island, where he entertained friends and family for over 50 years. Ron lived an adventurous and curious life and maintained lifelong friendships with people from around the world. He is survived by his two daughters and fiancé, Mary Ellen.

## 1970

**John A. Billings Jr.** With a father in foreign service, John grew up traveling the world with his family until the age of 14. While at Blair, he participated in soccer and tennis and managed the varsity baseball team. He was also a member of the International Society and French Club. In French, he earned the French IV prize upon graduation. After a gap year in which he traveled through Quebec and lived in France, John returned to the States to begin his college studies. He quickly met the love of his life, Lori, and they began their journey together. John graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in political science and later Loyola College with an MA in finance. John's career was split between working with the Social Security Administration and being an analyst in corporate finance. This year marked the 50th year of John's practice within SGI-USA Nichiren Buddhism. In retirement, John studied his lineage and enjoyed gardening, hiking, and conversing with family and friends. He was known to be a kind and empathetic person. John is survived by Lori and their son.

## 1972

**F. Stephen Flor.** A three-year senior, Steve was the first of his siblings to graduate from Blair. He was able to spend one year on campus with his brother, **Scott Flor '74**, with both competing together on the swim team. He also was the news editor for the *Breeze* and member of the camera club and Blue and White Key Society. After graduating from Blair and Kenyon College, Steve was a free spirit who moved to Park City, Utah. He enjoyed the outdoors and had a great love for skiing and music, especially the Grateful Dead. He worked at Deer Valley Resort and later ran his own business. Steve never married or had children, but he was lucky enough to have had two long-term relationships and a daughter whom he

loved as his own. He was predeceased by his parents, **Dr. Frank Flor '44** and Ann S. Flor, and his brother **Scott**. He is survived by his brother, Andrew Flor, and sisters, **Julie Flor Currin '76** and **Mary (Flor) Crouch '81**.

## 1976

**Peter J. Fletcher.** Blair Academy was already a household name for Peter when he started. Both his father, **John Fletcher '45**, and uncle, **Lucian Fletcher Jr. '41**, were alumni as were his brother, **John Fletcher '70**; cousin, **Lucian Fletcher III '70**; and sisters, **Nancy (Fletcher) Love '71** and **Judith Fletcher '72**. His cousin, **Constance Fletcher-Hindle '74**, was the last family member to attend until cousins, **Nicholas Hindle '04** and **Colton Hindle '10**, arrived in the early 2000s. At Blair, Peter was well liked and highly accomplished. He served as a prefect and on the Admissions Committee, wrote for the *Breeze*, ran winter track, wrestled, played soccer and was a member of the Blue and White Key club. At Commencement, he was honored with the Phillips-James-Rosen Trophy, the John Kinch Leach '61 Merit Award and the Blair Academy Trophy, awarded in recognition of the senior with the highest all-around achievement. Peter went on to become an owner and operator of Dairy Queen and Stewarts from 1985 until 2007 and Blue Mountain Inn in Stillwater, New Jersey, from 1995 to 2008. Peter volunteered for Branchville Bombers Wrestling for 10 years. All who had the privilege to know Peter loved him for his generosity and ability to make you laugh and put a smile on your face. Peter is survived by his beloved wife, Joanne; three sons and their spouses; a granddaughter; his siblings, John and Nancy; and cousins.

## 1984

**Eric L. Gray.** A majority of Eric's time at Blair was happily spent behind the lens of a camera. His senior year culminated with him serving as head photographer for the 1984 ACTA, where he joked, "Yes I always carry a camera, no I do not sleep with it!" A wrestler and football player, Eric also served in the Blue and White Key club and as a prefect. He proudly claimed to be part of the last of the West Hall freshmen. After Blair, Eric graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology and settled in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where he had a career as a service advisor for recreational vehicles. Beloved by all who knew him for his humor, quick wit and compassion, Eric is survived by his wife, Suzanne, children, grandchildren and extensive family and friends.

## 1993

**Stephen W. Kennedy.** Steve attended Blair for his senior year. In the 1993 ACTA, he thanked his parents for the long journey his high school years had been and was glad to have ended up at Blair in the end. He mentioned Mr. Ostlund was a good advisor and someone who became a friend to him. Steve's favorite Blair memory was being a member of the Bonfire Crew saying, "They'll never build a bigger bonfire." He went on to earn college credit at both Lehigh University and Fordham. In his obituary, Steve was described as "an avid traveler with a passion for art, creativity and photography. He was a wonderful husband, father, son, brother and friend." He is survived by his wife, Amanda, and his son, as well as his father, brother and uncle, **William Harvey Jr. '48**.



## 1995

**Edward A. Johnson.** A three-season athlete, Andy played on the football team, skied and ran cross country. After Blair, he graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University with a degree in hospitality and restaurant tourism management and, later, a degree in history. Andy was active outdoors and truly passionate about skiing. He was a former ski instructor and past state champion. Other loves in his life included fishing, golfing, spending summers in Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and wine and food. His greatest joy was cooking and enjoying cozy fires with his wife, Susan, and their son. Andy is survived by Susan, his son, and extensive family and friends.

### Former Faculty

**Robert C. Cooke.** Bob taught English from 1993 to 2004 at Blair and is remembered fondly by former students and the Blair community alike. One colleague recalled that Bob was as “not only a wonderful teacher and human being but he had beautiful handwriting.” He taught many Bucs to write well, always allowing them a chance to submit a second draft of their essays incorporating his feedback. In an email from Bob concerning whether his contact information could be shared with students he quipped, “Since, surprisingly, I am not in an educational version of a witness protection program, you may certainly give my address to any alumni who ask for it, excepting, of course, those with careers as bill collectors. It will be gratifying to hear from them, although what I am ‘legendary’ for at Blair is my Internet ineptitude, so communication with me may assume a monosyllabic character.” His humor, mentorship and

good nature will be remembered. Bob is survived by his wife, Sharon, daughter and granddaughter.

**William J. DePue.** Graduating from Georgetown University with a BA in economics and chemistry, William spent the 1975-1976 year at Blair teaching algebra, chemistry and physics. He subsequently went on to be employed as a chemical engineer with the Howmet Aerospace Corporation of Dover, New Jersey, and as a real estate appraiser, eventually owning and operating DePue Appraisal Service, for more than 20 years. William was an accomplished pianist, playing in local bands and groups. He loved the outdoors and spending time with his beloved black Lab, Amos. A loyal and caring friend, he is survived by his partner, Patricia, and a large extended family.

# Save the Date!



JUNE 7-9,  
2024

#### Questions?

Contact **E. Courtney Stanford '95**,  
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