

THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY EXISTS TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THEIR MISSION TO DEVELOP EXEMPLARY CITIZENS EQUIPPED WITH ANALYTICAL THINKING SKILLS, VIRTUOUS CHARACTER, AND A PASSION FOR LEARNING, ALL BUILT UPON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

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PALMARIUM

Remembering Our Roots

25 Years | Founder and Staff Panels

The 2022-23 school year marks the **25th Anniversary** of TCA. As we progress through this year the pages of the PALMARIUM will touch on different elements of our history, including *character* over the next few issues, and then hearing from some founders, plus long time staff early next year in 2023. To the right are photos from the panels with some of the founding families and staff at the October Conference All-Staff gathering in the North Campus Brown Center (*more details on that day are included on page 5*). Thanks for being a part of the TCA community and for your support. We look forward to the next 25 years.

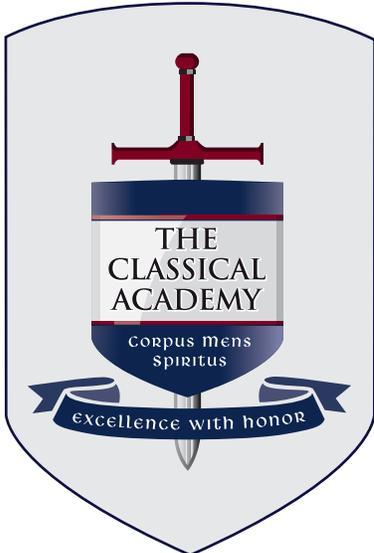


Top: Dr. Sojourner, Jim and Mary Kretchman, Betsy and Vance Brown.

Bottom: Dr. Sojourner, Jeremy Reed, Bruce Casson, Amber Luongo, Matt Sutton, Becca DeMeyer.



More about this day is on page 5 and some highlights will be featured in future 2023 PALMARIUM volumes.



In this month's issue you will find more from the interview of TCA's former Directors of Character. Additionally, details are provided on upcoming *Beyond the Book Club* studies, this year's TCA-wide fundraiser, and more information on the recent October Conference for staff.

The Editor

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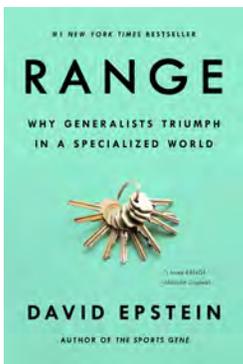
25 Years - Remembering Our Roots



RANGE

Beyond the Book Club Study

The third *Beyond the Book Club* study of the school year will be during the **February 21-23, 2023** timeframe. The 90-minute study sessions take place at the



TCA North Elementary library from 4:30-6:00 pm. For this study Wes Jolly, TCA's Director of Academic Services,

will lead us through a discussion of *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World* by David Epstein. If you'd like to be added to the RSVP invite that goes out about three weeks in advance of the book studies send an e-mail to me at wjolly@asd20.org and I'll add you to the list for the final details e-mail. Both staff and parents are invited to participate. Thoughts on this book from Amanda Ripley, a previous author we've read - "I want to give *Range* to any kid who is being forced to take violin lessons but really wants to learn the drums ; to any programmer who secretly dreams of becoming a psychologist; to everyone who wants humans to thrive in an age of robots. *Range* is full of surprises and hope, a twenty-first century survival guide."

Raising Caring, Ethical- and Happy- Children



Dr. Richard Weissbourd shared with our TCA community in late October from his book *The Parents We Mean to Be: How Well Intentioned Adults Undermine Children's Moral and Emotional Development*. A quote from his book resonates directly with the staff panel discussion at our October Conference held earlier in the month. **"Teachers do not, in fact get to choose whether they influence student's character. Teachers are inevitably and always influencing children's moral attitudes and capacities, for better or worse . . ."** [p. 128]. Nearly 140 parents and staff attended the Parent Academy and engaged with the author for ninety minutes on his research at Harvard University and his ongoing efforts to help parents develop caring young people. Our next Parent Academy is scheduled for February 16, 2023 when Dr. Michele Borba, author of *Unselfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World* and *Thrivers: The Surprising Reasons Why Some Kids Struggle and Others Shine* visits TCA. Mark your calendars to join us at this event early next year.



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PRESENTATION: RICHARD WEISSBOURD

In May 2022, I had the opportunity to interview TCA's three former Directors of Character: **Dr. Russ Soujourner, Ruth Miller, and Betsy Brown**. Over the course of the next few PALMARIUM volumes we will share portions of the interview transcripts to provide some insight into the development of our Character efforts at TCA over the past 25 years. The question below will be listed in blue followed by the individual answers.

W. Jolly: What practices did you find most effective at inculcating character in our students?

R. Soujourner: I will jump in first. When I was looking for a framework—this was back in 2004—I was looking for a framework that we could use as a common language. Betsy already mentioned that we transitioned to a framework that we still use today, the **VIA 24 Character Strengths**.

The first framework we used was not mine. It was from an organization called Character Counts. And they use an acronym called T.E.R.R.I.F.I.C. That stood for: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.

That framework allowed a common language and we used it for a while. We hoped it would help the process of inculcating a few basic character traits. Case in point, just today...we heard four people come and speak to our Board of Directors. We heard Amy Nelson as elementary principal talking about what is happening in the elementary school. We had Justin Peterson come speak about what is happening in our non-traditional programs. We had Hugh DiPreto talking about what is happening at the Jr. High. And we had Sean Shields talk about what is happening at the High School.

Now, the foundation for all principals' discussions are the VIA

24 Character Strengths and it allows us a common language. I think that common language has always helped us as a jumping off point for the different levels of both academic involvements. How do you involve your heart and hands? How do you bring these kinds of character traits into real life action? I appreciate that is something that we have always done.

B. Brown: I would say also, with the 24 [VIA Character Strengths], having that common language, which a kindergartener can understand and a senior in high school can understand, is amazing. To incorporate that into curriculum, when you are talking about **Where The Red Fern Grows** or whatever it is your talking about, you start using these words about, "what does bravery and courage look like? What does kindness look like?"

The power of that kind of teaching, I think is just...you cannot underestimate how much kids are catching character in that. I love intentional character lessons, but I really love it when it is worked into the curriculum, in a natural way.

R. Soujourner: And we heard that really strongly, Betsy, when our principals spoke. It is a lot easier to talk about at a grammar level—what these words mean to a third grader—and then to an eleventh grader or a tenth grader, "What kind of stories can we pull from, great literature...". It becomes more organic in classroom discussions verses just focusing on a word and what it means.

CHARACTER at TCA: Interview

R. Miller: And I will piggy-back on that. What is most important is how, we as a TCA staff, live out that common language in our day-to-day interactions with our students and beyond our TCA walls. So how does that teacher, when he or she lays a failed test in front of a student, how does compassion play out in real life? How does the teacher



respond when incorporating what that student has sitting in front of them? And the student experiences compassion from their teacher as it is lived out—by a word or a pat on the back. Not just having a character definition on the board and talking about it that way, but actually living it out in front of them. [And the student says,] "That's compassion. Oh, that is what forgiveness looks like. Oh, that is what being honest looks like. You are keeping me accountable to that."

I think inculcating character into our students is honestly best learned through lived out examples and experiences. Pouring into our teachers and staff so they, in return, can positively pour into our students is important. And, honestly, I believe TCA does an exceptional job of hiring incredible people whose character is at the forefront of how they live their life, and that foundation and focus is already there. We're simply blessed with the best that give their best.



SEE the NEXT PAGE for the 24 VIA CHARACTER STRENGTHS FRAMERWORK mentioned in this interview.





The VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

CHARACTER: VIA Character Strengths Chart

VIRTUE OF Wisdom



CREATIVITY
Original & Adaptive, Clever, A problem solver, Sees and does things in different ways



CURIOSITY
Interested, Explores new things, Open to new ideas



JUDGMENT
A critical thinker, Thinks things through, Open minded



LOVE OF LEARNING
Masters new skills & topics, Systematically adds to knowledge



PERSPECTIVE
Wise, Provides wise counsel, Takes the big picture view

VIRTUE OF Courage



BRAVERY
Shows valor, Doesn't shrink from fear, Speaks up for what's right



PERSEVERANCE
Persistent, Industrious, Finishes what one starts



HONESTY
Authentic, Trustworthy, Sincere



ZEST
Enthusiastic, Energetic, Doesn't do things half-heartedly

VIRTUE OF Humanity



LOVE
Warm and genuine, Values close relationships



KINDNESS
Generous, Nurturing, Caring, Compassionate, Altruistic



SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE
Aware of the motives and feelings of others, Knows what makes others tick

VIRTUE OF Justice



TEAMWORK
Team player, Socially responsible, Loyal



FAIRNESS
Just, Doesn't let feelings bias decisions about others



LEADERSHIP
Organizes group activities, Encourages a group to get things done

VIRTUE OF Temperance



FORGIVENESS
Merciful, Accepts others' shortcomings, Gives people a second chance



HUMILITY
Modest, Lets one's accomplishments speak for themselves



PRUDENCE
Careful, Cautious, Doesn't take undue risk



SELF-REGULATION
Self-controlled, Manages impulses and emotions

VIRTUE OF Transcendence



APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE
Feels awe & wonder in beauty, Inspired by goodness of others



GRATITUDE
Thankful for the good, Expresses thanks, Feels blessed



HOPE
Optimistic, Future-minded



HUMOR
Playful, Brings smiles to others, Lighthearted



SPIRITUALITY
Searches for meaning, Feels a sense of purpose, Senses a relationship with the sacred

October Conference | A Look to the Past as We Cast a Vision for Our Future

On Monday morning, October 10, TCA staff gathered in the Brown Center to listen to two panels celebrating our 25th Anniversary. The first panel included some of TCA's founding families for a 75-minute conversation with Dr. Sojourner leading the group through a series of questions. Right after the founders, another panel of long-time TCA teaching staff also participated in a 75-minute session with a different set of questions. In the afternoon staff broke up into smaller groups. The overview for the afternoon is included below, followed by descriptions of the four classes that staff attended (they could choose two).

As principal founders of the Western intellectual tradition, the educational philosophies of Plato and Aristotle greatly influenced liberal arts education and offer ideas worthy of study. Understanding Plato's philosophy of education and its impact around the world for nearly two-and-a-half millennia provides a gateway to gaining a better understanding of the historical roots of the Western educational tradition and a means of examining fundamental questions about the nature of education. Aristotle's theories of the nature and purpose of education has influenced classical education for centuries, especially for those educating in the liberal arts tradition. Meeting with the great minds who have influenced not only the long-standing tradition of a liberal arts education, but our own philosophy and core values, returns us to our roots and provides a foundation of common knowledge from which we can move forward together in pursuit of our great mission.



Spelunking with Plato – Exploring the Depths of the Cave

Here's a little story from Plato's most famous book, *The Republic*. In this story, Socrates is talking to a young follower of his named Glaucon. Plato tells Glaucon this allegory to illustrate what it's like to be a philosopher – a lover of wisdom. Let's put on our metaphorical head lamps, read this short story together, and see how it helped to form our Core Values and Mission Statement.

Bits and Pieces – Excerpts from Plato's Writings on Education

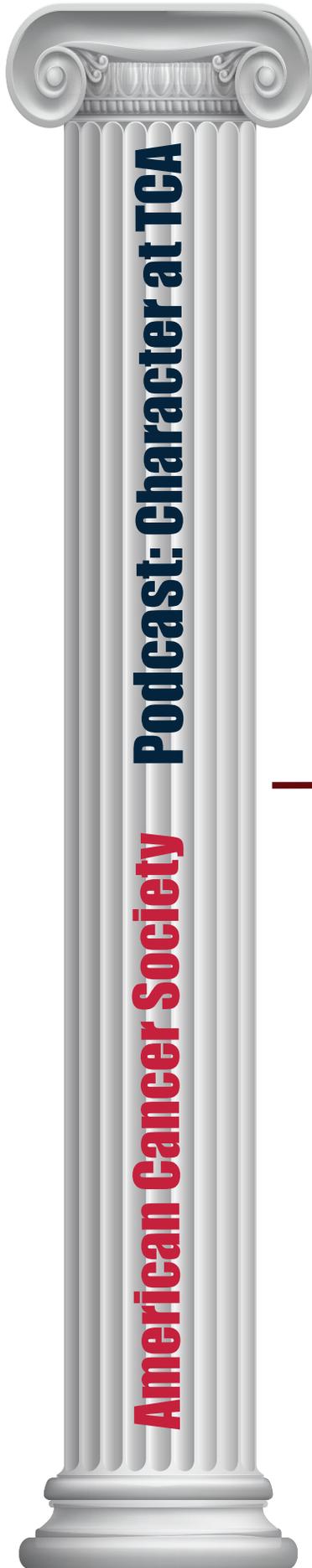
In many of his writings Plato demonstrated a passion for discussing many different aspects of education. This class will read and discuss several excerpts from Plato's writings addressing what Plato believed to be the purpose of education. We will discuss several specific disciplines (music, PE, and others) as well as his general thoughts on education. By the end of this course, we will have a better understanding of the foundation of our unique educational philosophy and Mission Statement.

Truth or Consequences – Exploring Aristotle's Ideas on the Formation of Character

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the first book written on the subject of how best to live, Aristotle argues that human happiness chiefly depends upon a person's character, which is formed by making good choices. This course examines some of Aristotle's ideas about character and how they pertain to our mission to develop exemplary citizens.

What is the Dopa-Meaning of Life?

How much pleasure should you have in your life? What is the relationship between the pleasurable and the good? Socrates has an answer for you in Plato's *Gorgias* with his famous example of the "leaky jars." Come read and discuss one of the favorite passages discussed in Senior Defenses each year and learn about the importance of sophrosyne (temperance or moderation).



The Titan Pulse: The President's Podcast



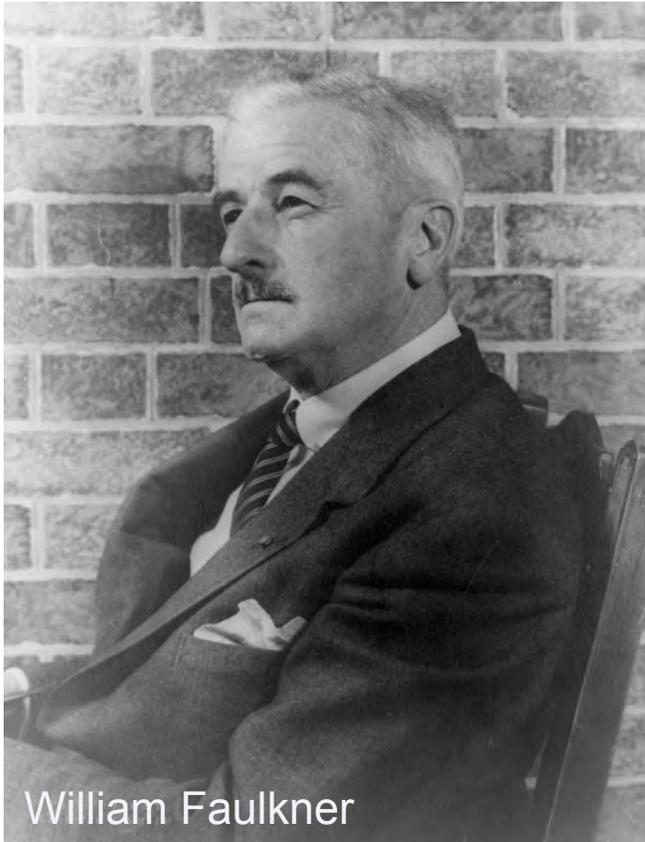
For the October edition of **The Titan Pulse**, the interviews with the three previous Character Directors continues. Click on the image above to listen.

TCA All-School Fundraiser for 2022-23



Last year TCA raised over \$100,000 for **Make-A-Wish Colorado** and this year we will be supporting the **American Cancer Society** throughout the 2022-23 school year. Look for more information from each school and their individual fundraising efforts throughout this coming year.

Quote from Concluding Chapter of Dr. Weissbourd's Book



William Faulkner

"I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, **a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance.** The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail."

from Faulkner's Nobel Prize speech in 1950

EXTERNAL REVIEW: ACCREDITATION VISIT BY DISTRICT 20

In early November, our chartering authority, District 20, will be visiting with an External Review team, as part of the every three to four year required Accreditation process. Our leadership team developed a question for them to examine (*included below*). Results will be shared with the TCA Board later this school year after we receive the team's feedback.

As TCA prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary two questions frame our focus: **what three things do members of our community (both external/outside and internal/within) see as our distinctives and keys to success?** and likewise, **looking to the next 25 years what are viewed as three areas of focus for our continued success?**



But let us not take ourselves too seriously. None of us has a monopoly of wisdom and we must always be ready to listen and respect other points of view.

*from the Queen's
Christmas Broadcast 1991*

**QUEEN ELIZABETH II
1926-2022**

