

THE GLEANER

2022

FRONTLINE ALUMNI

Meet six Academy alumni
serving their communities

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The refurbished weathervane on the Academy Building clock tower

OUR MISSION

The Woodstock Academy prepares all students by providing diverse opportunities through a rigorous curriculum and a variety of programs in order to cultivate the necessary skills to become lifelong learners and global citizens.

EDITOR

Madison Millar

DESIGNER & PHOTOGRAPHER

Joel Tretheway

CONTRIBUTORS

Marc Allard
Michael Harten
Doreen Holt '75
Brad Favreau '88
Christopher Sandford
Samantha Romero
Holly Singleton '86
Jonathan Sturdevant
Julie Woodland

Please direct magazine
inquiries to
communications@woodstockacademy.org

The Woodstock Academy
57 Academy Road
Woodstock, CT 06281
(860) 928-6575

woodstockacademy.org

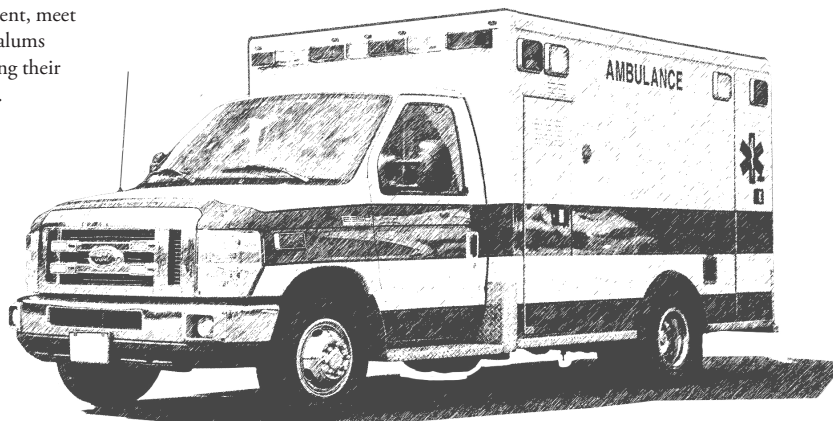
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Dr. Kristen Xeller '01
Photo by Joel Tretheway

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six Academy alums
proudly serving their
communities.



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The Woodstock Academy



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The Woodstock Academy



FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL'S DESK

As I write this letter to The Woodstock Academy community, it is a unique time in our history. While much of the future may be filled with challenges and uncertainty, at The Academy, we are meeting these challenges and facing uncertainties in new and innovative ways. I could not be prouder of our students, staff, families, alumni, and community members for how they have supported each other and our mission over the past year.

While our current students have not had the traditional Academy experience which many of us have come to know and love, they have had unique experiences that they can call their own. We have started new traditions and “retired” some of the old ones. Our students were forced to learn resiliency in ways The Academy could have never had as a part of our curriculum in the past.

The staff learned to build relationships with students differently and adjusted curriculum to focus more on what is important in the learning process. Staff was reminded of how fragile students can be and how impactful each interaction is with them. The creativity and dedication shown by the staff here at The Academy reached new and incredible heights.

Woodstock Academy families, alumni, and community members supported our students and mission in many ways, whether it was through encouragement and adaptation or through a new respect of traditional ways. We learned to appreciate student activities and needs, which became evident with the increase in the number of fans at sporting events and having maintained a near perfect graduation rate even during the pandemic. We owe many people in our larger community a debt of gratitude for the work they did. In this issue of *The Gleaner*, you will read about some of our alumni who are a part of the essential worker community that supported each of us through the last few years.

Even with the challenges, I truly believe this is an inspiring moment in our history that has allowed The Academy to embrace new beginnings. The overwhelming generosity and support of our community has been the pillar in our efforts of welcoming students from Ukraine who have been displaced by the war. We have started the complete restoration of the beloved and historic Academy Building, which you will read more about in the InSpire 150 Campaign section. In addition, we have undertaken an equity and inclusion initiative which is actively working to make our institution more supportive of all students. You will see a few examples throughout this magazine.

The last few years have brought all of us a new appreciation for our fragility as individuals and our need as humans to stay connected in a positive way. At The Academy, we continue to improve and remain together as one, even when we are physically apart. We have become stronger as an institution because of the people in our community. Your ongoing support is deeply appreciated.

In Partnership,

Christopher J. Sanford
Head of School

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Christopher J. Sanford
Head of School

Mrs. Holly G. Singleton '86
Associate Head of School

Mr. Jonathan D. Sturdevant
Associate Head of School for Advancement

Mr. Michael P. Susi
Associate Head of School for Finance & Operations

Mrs. Amy W. Favreau '93
Assistant Head of School for Enrollment

Mr. John D. Rigney
Assistant Head of School

Dr. Michael D. Harten
Dean of Academics

Mrs. Karin A. Hughes '01
Dean of Student Affairs

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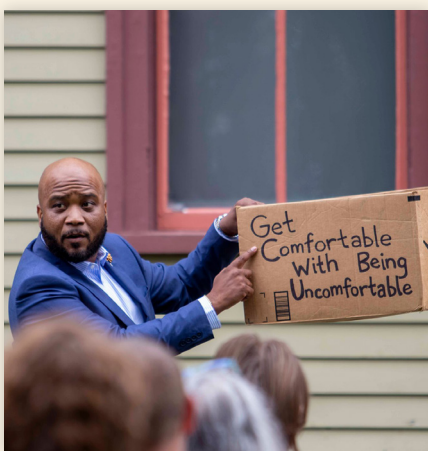
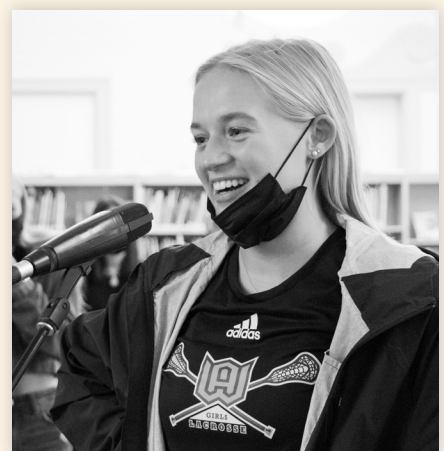
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NEWSFEED



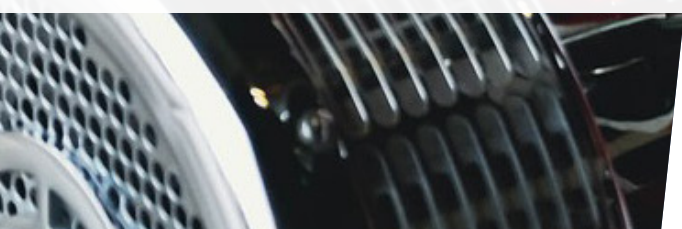
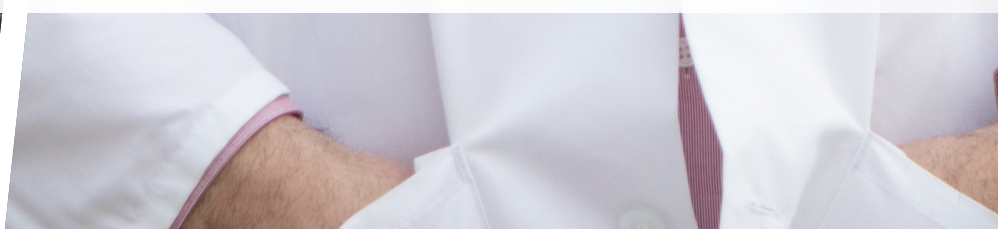
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FRONTLINE ALUMNI

From Woodstock Academy students to firefighters, healthcare professionals, and law enforcement, meet six alumni serving and protecting their communities. We spoke with each of them about their day-to-day tasks and their leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Madison Millar, Editor





'01

KRISTEN (BAUM) XELLER

Family Physician & Owner of Quiet Corner Family Practice



For Family Physician Kristen (Baum) Xeller '01, having a parent in medicine made her aware at an early age of the power of helping people. "My dad is also a doctor in town and has been able to improve so many lives over his career. I think I knew from an early age that whatever I did, I wanted to work to have a similar impact on my community," she shared.

After high school, Xeller attended Boston College, graduated in 2005, and met her husband. She then went on to attend medical school at Loyola Chicago Stritch School of Medicine. After graduating in 2009, she matched at Tufts University Family Medicine Residency, and started practicing locally in 2012.

As a physician and owner of Quiet Corner Family Practice in Pomfret since 2016, a typical day for Xeller starts at about 8 a.m. with the first hour consumed by responding to phone calls and emails before her patients begin to arrive at 9 a.m. Because of the functionality and size of her practice, Xeller and her sole employee are always busy. There are times where she can spend two hours with a patient and other times spend two hours on the phone with insurance or speaking with medical specialists to initiate a plan of action for her patients. On top of the daily responsibilities of her own practice, Xeller also performs physicals for local fire departments, schools, and home visits for home-bound patients, making each day very different.

Xeller's favorite element of her career is the opportunity to continuously learn and perform a variety of different tasks. "I really enjoy that there is no monotony," she said. "I am constantly learning from my patients, and medicine changes so quickly that there is no shortage of things to keep learning about!" While COVID-19 has significantly impacted the world, Xeller explained that her day-to-day operations have not changed in a noteworthy fashion. She describes herself in a pandemic-related role as a "COVID navigator," mostly offering guidance to both her patients and school districts, including The Woodstock Academy, to keep the community safe.

"Dr. Xeller was a tremendous resource during the COVID-19 pandemic consistently evaluating school-wide and community data to help us make the best decisions regarding protocols, keeping the health and safety of the community at the forefront," said Bobbie-Jo Saucier, director of health services at The Academy.

As a Woodstock Academy student, Xeller loved a variety of her high school experiences, highlighting the time spent out of the classroom as her most cherished. "What I really remember when I look back though, was the extra-curriculars; sports and clubs made school feel like home." She was a member of the tennis team and captured an ECC Championship title in her senior year. Academically, she enjoyed hands-on projects in physics class, such as building catapults, and felt that The Academy prepared her well for college.

Having a parent
in medicine made
me aware at an
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power of helping
people.

MORE ABOUT KRISTEN

A mom of two, Kristen and her spouse are always busy with the activities in which her kids are involved. In her spare time, she loves to listen to true crime and forensics podcasts and still plays tennis weekly.

188

DEREK MAY

Emergency Manager at the Town of Pomfret
All-Hazards Planner at Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency



Most of the people I meet on 911 calls are my community neighbors, just like me, who are having a really lousy day.

MORE ABOUT DEREK

Derek loves to learn new things and enjoys the unique experiences of volunteering. Fishing, hunting, crafting tools out of firewood, and traveling with his wife Val and son David are among some of Derek's favorite hobbies. Val has been teaching at WA for over 20 years, and David was a fourth-generation Academy graduate in 2020.

Like many people in small towns, class of 1988 alumnus Derek May wears many hats within his community. For over 20 years, he has served in volunteer roles as the assistant fire chief and EMT for the Pomfret Fire Department. Since 2008, May has also volunteered as Pomfret's emergency management director, a role that leaves him in charge of implementing preparedness plans for the town's response actions for emergencies such as extreme weather or natural disaster. While these are big jobs in and of themselves, May has simultaneously been employed as the public health emergency preparedness coordinator at the Northeast District Department of Health since 2007, and by the Eastern Highlands District in Mansfield since 2018. Between the two districts, he oversees emergency operations in 22 towns across Northeastern Connecticut.

"Our community owes a huge debt of gratitude to Derek for his time, dedication, innovation, and commitment as a first responder, volunteer firefighter, and emergency management director for Pomfret," Maureen Nicholson, Town of Pomfret First Selectman shared. "His contribution is immeasurable."

Prior to the pandemic, a typical day on the job at the health department has been creating and testing public health plans for pandemic response. Beginning in early 2020, May worked with local public health teams to adapt those plans and address the reality of COVID-19. "We worked very hard to provide our community with the

best guidance and advice available during a rapidly changing situation," he said. When the COVID-19 vaccine became available to the public in early 2021, May helped organize dozens of vaccination clinics across Northeastern Connecticut.

For May, being part of a team to solve a problem and helping people when they need it most are what empower him to take on the tasks of his many duties. "Most of the people I meet on 911 calls are my community neighbors, just like me, who are having a really lousy day," May explained. In addition, he "likes the challenge of bringing order to a chaotic situation," creating systems which allow his community to be better prepared for emergencies and more resilient to challenges as they strike.

As a student at The Woodstock Academy, May was drawn to creative writing and literature studies, and was the editor for the school's newspaper, *The Centaurian*. He also took shop class with Mr. Beatson, who The Academy's refurbished "Beatson Makerspace" was recently named after, and proudly stated that the woodworking skills he learned will stay with him for a lifetime. May has a group of Academy friends he remains very close with today. After graduating from The Academy, he attended University of Connecticut and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

In March 2022, May accepted a new position at the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency as the all-hazards planner.

'15

ANNA GRUDZINSKI

Firefighter & EMT at University of Connecticut

From a nationally ranked high school soccer player and track and field star to an emergency responder, University of Connecticut Firefighter and EMT Anna Grudzinski '15 decided in college that helping others and serving her community was her calling. Each morning at the UConn Fire Department, her task upon arrival at 7:00 a.m. is to perform a complete truck check to ensure it is functioning and ready to conquer the day. She joins her team for breakfast and a brief daily meeting to touch base about important events happening in the community, and the rest of her morning is spent on training and chores.

Grudzinski has been a member of the university's emergency department since August 2018, approaching the four-year mark of her service as a firefighter. With the demanding job comes a significant set of challenges in the fight to save lives. "The biggest challenges I face include being able to adapt and overcome any emergency," Grudzinski shared. "We can be called by the community for any type of emergency and need to be able to use the tools and resources available to assist. It is important that individually and as a crew we are continuously training and furthering our education."

Although firefighting is a high-risk, strenuous job, the rewarding parts of it are why Grudzinski chose it as a career. Serving her community and helping others are what motivate her to give back and give her best every day. Her favorite part of the fire service is "the sense of family and taking on different challenges every

shift," she said. "I have a big sense of pride for my department and the community I work in. My department and crew strive to make a positive impact on someone's life, even though it may be their worst day." Additionally, a personal touch to her career decision was watching her grandfather as a firefighter. "I grew up seeing him be a hero!"

Outside of her daily duties, Grudzinski connects with the community through teaching the importance of her profession and expressing the need for firefighters. She assists a local private teaching company, Back to Basics, with introduction to fire classes, where she instructs the next generation of volunteer firefighter departments as well as high school fire science courses. She believes it is important to educate the community on how to get involved in firefighting.

Throughout her tenure at The Academy, Grudzinski mostly enjoyed science, nutrition, and fitness classes, all fitting to her background of a former-athlete-turned-firefighter. She was very involved with athletics, participating in a variety of sports, including soccer and track and field. Reflecting on her experience as a Centaur, she was "fortunate to have the best teammates and experiences," and went on to compete at nationals for track.



My department and crew strive to make a positive impact on someone's life, even though it may be their worst day.

MORE ABOUT ANNA

During her down time, Anna loves to be active and travel the country with her family and dog, Blitzen. She owns a small camper and travels frequently around the country. Still an avid runner and soccer player, Anna also competes in road races and currently plays on a co-ed soccer team.

'93

CHRIS DESMOND

Nurse Practitioner, Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Windham Hospital



Class of 1993 alumnus Chris Desmond knew at a young age that he wasn't ready to go off to college immediately after high school. Growing up in a family who served in the military, he decided to follow that same path to the United States Navy where he served at the Naval submarine base in Groton, CT, followed by service with the 2nd Marine Division based in Camp Lejeune, NC. Desmond gives credit to his service in the Navy for molding him into the person he is today, stating he "would do it all over again, given the chance."

Prior to serving in the Fleet, he attended Hospital Corpsman "A" School. After transitioning back to civilian life, he sought to continue his career in medicine and ultimately began his educational journey with the goal of becoming a healthcare professional. In 2004, Desmond graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, then graduated from UConn again in 2007 where he earned a Master of Science and became a Nurse Practitioner, also becoming board certified as an Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP) and Emergency Nurse Practitioner (ENP). Throughout his career, Desmond has worked as an Emergency Department (ED) Patient Care Technician, ED Nurse, ED and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Manager, ED Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN), and today, as a Nurse Practitioner in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Windham Hospital.

A typical day on the job for Desmond begins at 6:00 a.m., rounding on the

patients on the floors, followed by the scheduled surgeries for the remainder of the day. The times, types, and amount of surgery vary by patient and change on a weekly basis. When the pandemic arose, all elective surgeries were canceled, and he was re-tasked to work as a Hospitalist on the inpatient floors of the hospital. The most vital elements of working through the uncertainty of COVID-19 were "the need to be flexible and adaptive to changing needs both for patients and the hospital," he said.

Desmond described the most rewarding experience of his career as "the opportunity to help people improve their quality of life whether through elective surgeries such as hip or knee replacements, or through the delivery of all manners of emergency care during my previous position in Emergency Medicine."

For Desmond, many of his experiences at WA were enjoyable and memorable. While he was involved in a variety of clubs and activities throughout his four years, athletics was the most consistent, sharing "it would be hard to match the level of camaraderie and teamwork that varsity athletics develop." Academically, he gave a shout out to his soccer coach and health teacher Bob Derrico, as well as guidance counselor and student council advisor Al Cormier for being instrumental during his time at The Academy.

My time in the service shaped and molded me into the person that I am today - I would do it all over again given the chance.

MORE ABOUT CHRIS

He loves to spend time with his wife and kids, staying busy with his two boys who play ice hockey and his daughter, a volleyball player and swimmer (WA class of '23). A Woodstock resident, he also enjoys fishing, golfing, and spending time with friends, many of who are Academy alumni.

'64

JEANNINE (GARCEAU) SPINK

Active Veteran Member of Eastford Independent Fire Company



Alumna Jeannine (Garceau) Spink has dabbled in multiple fields during her seasoned career since graduating from The Woodstock Academy in 1964. As a lifelong resident of the Quiet Corner, she has been an active community member and continues to give back even after retirement from the workforce.

During high school, Jeannine attended Providence College of Music, where she earned certification to teach piano and organ from her home. As an Academy student, she was a pianist for the Glee Club, Chapel Choir, and was a member of the cheerleading team for all four years. She also met her high school sweetheart, Gordon Spink '64, and they married in 1966.

After graduating from The Academy, Jeannine decided to forego the college route and dive right into her first job in the Air Force ROTC at UConn, where she was Secretary to the Colonel. Shortly after, she left to have her two children, Gordon, Jr. and Kimberly, and begin her career in motherhood. She proudly transitioned to a stay-at-home mom for the next thirteen years, where she taught piano and organ lessons and helped Gordon manage their small farm.

Upon her return to the workforce, she found herself in the business office at Pomfret School. Much to her surprise, the typewriter she knew so well was replaced by a computer, which she joked that she had “no clue” how to operate.

Her next position was inspired by her husband and son, who were both firefighters for the Eastford Independent Fire Company #1, Inc. She joined the department and became an EMT, where she recently retired as a veteran member after 36 years of service. “The highlight of that career was the opportunity to fly in the helicopter of the Life Flight and Life Star programs,” she shared.

Along the way, she had also been employed as the secretary to the headmaster at The Woodstock Academy, secretary to the CEO at Data General, and secretary in attendance and pit pianist at Windham High School for ten years, where she retired at the age of 62.

Today, Jeannine is the assistant to the chief at Pomfret Fire Department. Additionally, she is an instructor for the American Red Cross and American Heart Association, teaching classes in CPR/Defibrillation, First Aid, Professional Rescue, and Babysitting. Since the start of the pandemic, she became involved with the Northeast District Department of Health, volunteering at the health clinic in Brooklyn as a greeter to patients coming in to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Jeannine keeps in touch with her high school friends regularly and often reminisces with them about their days at The Woodstock Academy.

As a lifelong resident of this area, it's really fun to see a lot of people I know and greet them at the clinic.



MORE ABOUT JEANNINE

Jeannine lives on a farm and enjoys dog-sitting her “grand-puppy” every day. She is the aunt of Woodstock Academy social studies teacher Rich Garceau '84, and was married to her high school sweetheart for 55 years.

'89

HANS RHYNHART

Associate Vice President for University Safety at University of Connecticut

In a rapidly changing environment, Hans Rhynhart '89 knows when he goes to work every day that he needs to be adaptable and prepared for any emergency. Being consistently on his feet, engaging with others, and working in a team environment to solve problems are all elements that attracted him to a career in public service. "I like to problem solve, and this position involves a lot of problem solving. I like to identify a problem, or take that challenge to an opportunity, and then get it done." To describe a typical day on the job is a difficult task itself; however, there's never a dull moment.

Rhynhart started at UConn in 2001 as a police officer. For 15 years, he worked his way up through the police department, and in 2016 was appointed chief and associate vice president. Just this past year, a police chief was added to the team, and his title officially became associate vice president for university safety. In this role, he oversees the safety of students and staff, events, and overall climate across all of UConn's campuses statewide. Depending on what has happened the night before, he works with the emergency communication center to effectively manage critical situations as they arise and ensure that the environmental health and safety of the school remains solid.

"Hans has accomplished so much at UConn, including much of it quietly behind the scenes, yet he's incredibly humble and always the first to give others credit and deflect the praise from himself," said

Stephanie Reitz, university spokesperson at UConn. "He has exactly the kind of temperament you'd want from someone in his position, and really epitomizes the 'service' in being a public servant."

Throughout the pandemic, his safety department has taken a lead role in the decision to keep the university open, not open, or to delay the return of students in order to keep the community safe, working in conjunction with university leadership as well as state and federal guidelines.

As a WA student, Rhynhart described himself as "academically average." Where he was able to thrive at The Academy was getting involved in clubs and activities. He was class president for four years, a member of Hill Singers, band, and participated in a variety of athletics. Reflecting on his WA experience, he felt "everyone had a place where they could excel, and when I think about my time at The Academy, I was given opportunities to excel in areas that I have carried through my life and career. I've taken what I learned there and was able to amplify it and turn it into a career."

A proud member of the Board of Trustees at The Woodstock Academy, Rhynhart loves the opportunity to connect and interact with a group of "wonderful, great, passionate people," in the combined effort to enhance The Academy and its community. "I can have the worst day at work, but I'll go to a board meeting, and I feel invigorated and inspired when I leave."

W



I go about solving problems by really listening to what people have to say.

”

MORE ABOUT HANS

Both of Hans' children have attended The Academy—his daughter, a 2020 grad and senior class president, and his son, currently studying in Germany, who is set to graduate in 2022. Although it can be hard to disconnect from work, in his spare time, he likes woodworking, home improvement, reading, and learning history.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

2021–2022



Richard Telford, English Department Chair

On the cusp of his twenty-fifth year of teaching at The Woodstock Academy, Richard Telford, English department chair, is The Academy's 2021-22 Teacher of the Year.

Throughout his career, Telford has adhered to some basic, essential principles. The first: kindness matters more than just about anything else. "We always remember people who were kind to us, especially in our worst moments, and I have aspired to always be kind to both students and colleagues, even in difficult situations," he explained.

"Mr. Telford has had quite a few senior classes this [past] year. He has made a particular effort to help all of them to graduate, offering flexibility, extra help, encouragement, and personalized support," emphasized Dr. Michael Harten, dean of academics at The Woodstock Academy. He describes Telford as a "story-teller," stating "whether it's recounting a specific interaction with a student or class, explaining something he has researched, or sharing an anecdote from this own life, Rich always has the right story for the moment on-the-ready."

Receiving a number of nominations for Teacher of the Year, one student wrote, "he teaches entertaining classes with a lot of interesting topics. I have a lot of fun in his classes, and I like his charisma a lot. I actually think he's one of the best teachers I've ever had."

For Telford, teaching comes with many rewards and privilege. He feels inspired by his students and fellow staff members each day and strives to give the best he has in and out of the classroom. In his own words, "I have always believed that teaching is amongst the most noble work. It's a privilege to shape young people's lives. Teaching, if done with intention, allows for constant learning and growth."

When asked about being named teacher of the year, Telford replied, "I feel grateful and humbled to receive this award. Right after it was announced, I received a wonderful email from one of the students who nominated me, and that email meant as much to me as the award itself. When I look at the amazing work that my colleagues did this year, under such difficult circumstances, I feel that many of them were just as deserving as me. This award is not about being the best; instead, I think it is about giving individuals a turn to be recognized for the largely unsung work they do year in, year out. This year, students and colleagues decided it was my turn, and I am thankful for that." **W**

STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR



“All of our nursing staff have done an amazing job keeping us safe.”

Bobbie-Jo Saucier, Director of Health Services

When the world was struck by a pandemic without warning, people looked to our health care professionals to lead us to safety. Bobbie-Jo Saucier, director of health services, stepped up and did just that for The Woodstock Academy.

“Bobbie-Jo’s professionalism, steadfastness, and leadership were essential to the success we experienced as a community here on South Campus. She helped guide our staff through planning and decision making which kept COVID-19 at bay while also allowing us to create a deep feeling of community. We owe much of our success this year to her expertise and partnership,” emphasized John Rigney, assistant head of school for South Campus.

For Saucier, it isn’t just a job, but a commitment to students, the community, and a lifestyle both working and living on South Campus at The Academy. “My favorite part about my job at WA is the students and getting to know them and watch them grow. Whether it be illness related visits, mental health concerns, or injury, we see many students in our office daily, so every day is different. I enjoy the diversity of our student population and having the boarding students to care for as well,” she said.

Saucier received several nominations for Staff Member of The Year. One nomination read, “Incredible leadership over the past year supporting students, families, and colleagues during the pandemic.

The amount of time and effort she put in during this challenging time has been incredible!” She puts her all into her profession, approaching each student that walks through her door with care, kindness, and compassion.

It’s hard to imagine or describe what the past year was like as a health care professional. “There were a ton of different emotions throughout the year,” she explained. “All of our nursing staff have done an amazing job keeping us safe and informed. The entire group deserves to be recognized for their efforts.”

As challenging as it is to be a nurse in the health office during a pandemic, Saucier states “Now that we have rounded the corner and are getting a sense of normalcy back, I would say that the year was filled with uncertainty, anxiety, and fears while also bringing a sense of pride, resiliency and strength.” She feels lucky to be part of both The Woodstock Academy and nursing communities, who “stepped up to do whatever was needed to care for people during the pandemic.” **W**

RICARDO '22

DANIELLE '24

TAEWOO '22

MIA '22



KEENAN '22



ZOE '22



MEET A CENTAUR

Meet six students making the most of their WA experiences.



KEENAN LAMONTAGNE '22
Connecticut

A very active member of the WA community, Keenan participates in a variety of clubs and activities. He “loves” his classes, athletics, and being a positive presence on the football team, indoor and outdoor track teams, EarthSave club, and the National, Science, Math, and Scholar-Athlete honor societies. The senior is most proud of his accomplishments throwing the discus and shot put in track and field and earning the starting center position of the ECC Division II Champion football team; however, he still has hopes to set a school record for track.

“I challenged myself academically by taking various AP and ECE classes in order to prepare myself for college,” Keenan shared. Despite the difficulty level of the course, AP Calculus BC was the most fun and memorable. “I knew everyone in it because we had taken all of the prerequisites for that class together.”

Balancing his academics with multiple honor societies, clubs, athletics, a social life, and a job was a valued skill acquired throughout his four years at The Academy that has prepared him for the near future. Keenan has committed to compete in NCAA Division I track and field at Bucknell University while he studies Engineering.

“I have grown to understand that hard work and perseverance really do pay off.”



DANIELLE CABASSA '24
Connecticut

Since she started grade nine at The Woodstock Academy last year, Danielle has evolved her abilities to explore outside of her comfort zone, which has allowed her to branch out and form connections with a variety of other students. Now in grade ten, she is a member of the Multicultural Club, PAVE (Promoting Awareness Victim Empowerment), and Arts Outreach, contributing to The Academy’s mission of shaping a diverse and inclusive environment for all.

Of all her accomplishments, such as earning honor roll and performing in several concerts in chorus, Danielle is most proud of her success in auditions for the higher-level chorus. Although she loves to sing, her favorite class this year is English 2. “I’ve been enjoying learning more about non-fiction writing,” she shared.

With two more years left at The Academy, Danielle’s focus is to continue to grow as a person and to pursue the achievement of her academic goals.

“What I like most about WA is the openness to diversity and the effort from everyone to be friendly and accepting.”



TAEWOO (ANDY) KIM '22
South Korea

From Ansan, South Korea, senior Taewoo decided that The Woodstock Academy’s student life and the course offerings were the right fit for him. Academics are important to Taewoo, as he came to the United States to study and gain a variety of life experiences. Having spent most of his time at WA through a pandemic, eLearning, and being distanced from friends and family, he has still had wonderful experiences and continues to thrive in and out of the classroom.

Discovering a love for science, and more specifically, anatomy and physiology, he joined the Medical Club to share his knowledge and learn even more about the medical field surrounded by his peers.

Of all his accomplishments, Taewoo is most proud of his grades, recognizing such when he started to apply for college and see all his hard work over the years come into fruition. Among his grades, he proudly shared his outstanding achievement recognition in Guitar at Academic Convocation.

Before he graduates, Taewoo’s focus is to finish his senior year with good grades. After high school, he is unsure of what he wants to study, but plans to “study deeper in university” to further his education.

“The teachers at The Academy are very supportive of me, which makes me feel really comfortable whether I’m facing a tough situation or a challenging academic problem.”



ZOE BOTTA '22
Connecticut

If there's ever an opportunity to help the WA community, chances are Zoe will be the first one to volunteer. EarthSave, Student Climate Activists, Student Council, Science Honor Society, Latin Honor Society, Social Studies Honor Society, Tri-M Music Honor Society, National Honor Society, Pep Band, and the WA Music Department are just some of the ways Zoe gets herself involved at The Academy. She has helped run fundraisers, prom, carnivals, eco-friendly school initiatives, and more, which have given her the opportunity to "formulate a multitude of relationships as well as have academic success."

Upon graduating, Zoe's goal is to "leave a positive legacy with honesty and motivation," by approaching every opportunity with curiosity over judgment and to learn as much as possible from each course and each person she crosses paths with. Without any specific plans in mind, she plans to head to college to study something creative and rooted in STEAM, possibly architecture.

As Zoe shares the positive impact of her WA experience, she also leaves a word of advice for the next generation of Academy students. "Do what you want to do, not what other people want you to do. You may actually have more opportunities if you lead with kindness and curiosity. Do things with good intention — the results are spectacular."

"I have grown more than I could ever anticipate at The Academy. I can honestly say that even though there have been adversities and triumphs, I would not trade my experience for anything."



RICARDO MORA '22
Costa Rica

Ricardo moved away from his warm hometown of San José, Costa Rica, to Connecticut in pursuit of his soccer goals and exploring new environments. As a competitive student-athlete on the prep soccer team, he describes his experience at The Woodstock Academy as a "very good experience for students who want good academics and to meet people from different places."

Although he is in no rush to graduate, Ricardo is a senior with confidence in his next steps. He loves to learn and live in the moment, which is why his favorite course at The Academy is Current Affairs. "I enjoy learning about things that are happening right now and events that are currently affecting the world."

During his final year as a Centaur, he hopes to accomplish two simple goals: to finish strong academically, and to leave WA with new friends and lifelong relationships. After graduation, Ricardo hopes to commit to a NCAA Division I university for soccer and plans to study Business Management with a minor in Marketing.

"I will take the experience of living here and what it means to be in a different environment with me for the rest of my life."



MIA DANG '22
Massachusetts

A native of Worcester, MA, Mia came to The Woodstock Academy as a transfer student in her junior year after her former high school permanently closed its doors. Even though the town of Woodstock and The Academy were unfamiliar environments for Mia, it didn't take long for her to join the athletic community, make new friends, and connect with WA's ResLife family as a dorm student.

Growing up as a student-athlete for most of her life, Mia did not hesitate to join the girls' ice hockey and golf teams. In just two years of golfing as a Centaur, she went undefeated for an entire season, won an ECC championship and then a state championship, and was named an ECC All-Star.

Her favorite class is Anatomy and Physiology with Mrs. Jolliff, which is fitting of her plan to study medicine or physical therapy at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California. Mia will also play for the Tigers on their women's golf team beginning in Fall 2022.

"My experience has been amazing. I love all the new friends I've made and sports I've had the opportunity to participate in."



ALUMNI WEEKEND 2021

With good company, beautiful weather, and endless Centaur pride, WA alumni gathered from around the country to join us at The Academy for what turned out to be a monumental weekend. All alumni were invited to reminisce and catch up with old classmates while celebrating the 60th reunions of 1960 and 1961, 50th reunions of 1970 and 1971, and 25th reunion of 1996.

From Thursday, September 30 to Saturday, October 2, a special schedule of alumni events unfolded throughout campus and the Woodstock community.

The Alumni Art Show, "Soar," kicked off the weekend on Thursday, displaying artwork for auction in The Gallery at Loos Center for the Arts. The theme for the event had artists create pieces in reflection of how they have soared in their creative endeavors since they graduated from The Woodstock Academy, along with the programs and people who have helped them soar in their artistic journeys. The room was filled with family, friends, and community members in support of the alumni who submitted artwork.

The Alumni Shindig was a fun and casual gathering of catching up with Academy alumni and staff members, wrapping up the second day of the weekend at Taylor Brooke Brewery.

A variety of events packed Saturday's schedule, beginning with the Centaur Sculpture reveal and dedication at Centaur Plaza. Funds for the production of the sculpture were given by the classes of 2017, 2019, and 2021. The sculpture was created by Woodstock

Academy art teacher Prescott Powers, and is made of weathered steel that features four different characters when viewed from different angles. The depicted individuals celebrate The Academy's diversity of students and create a welcoming sense of community pride for all that visit South Campus.

Following the dedication, campus tours began at South Campus, introducing alumni to the advancements of facilities and technology since the last time they visited The Academy.

The tipoff to a joyful evening saluted Guy Grube, class of 1961 alumnus and accomplished photographic artist, at the dedication of what is now called the Grube Galerie. A whitewashed brick hallway in the Hyde Building displays portraits of distinguished Academy alumni and leaders, including some taken by Grube, for students and staff to admire with each passing through the Galerie.

The dedication and celebration was followed by the annual alumni banquet dinner in the Dining Commons, overlooking The Academy's "million dollar view." Attendees were delighted to reminisce with classmates over a delectable meal prepared by students and staff. Each class year had their own tables and cheerfully mingled with all attendees.

The sounds of Wooden Horse, a Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young tribute band capped off the day and weekend. Alumni and community members came together in harmony for what would be the first concert at Loos Center for the Arts since the onset of the pandemic.

SAVE THE DATE



CONNECT WITH US



BRAD FAVREAU '88

Director of Alumni Relations & Development Officer

bfavreau@woodstockacademy.org

(860) 928-6575 ext. 1213



Woodstock Academy Alumni Community



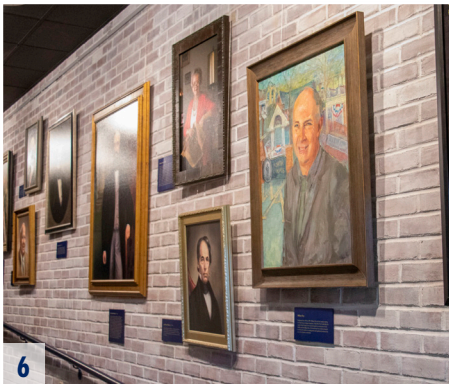
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The Woodstock Academy



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1 Guy Grube '61 and Holly Grube Singleton '86 giving speeches at the opening of Grube Galerie 2 Centaur Sculpture made by art teacher Prescott Powers dedicated at Centaur Plaza 3 Art teacher Ian Howley '10 and his parents in front of his art submission at the alumni art show 4 Joseph '92 and Jeri '63 Musumeci at the alumni banquet dinner 5 Chris Sandford, Prescott Powers, and Holly Grube Singleton '86 at the Centaur Sculpture dedication 6 A wall of the Grube Galerie on North Campus 7 One of the views of the multi-angle Centaur Sculpture 8 (Left-right, top-bottom) Director of The Gallery Rachael Budd '09, Pauline Delin '81, Caitie Crosby '11, Jen Dean '87, Demetri Kasperson '87, Melissa Parent '07, Guy Grube '61, Zachary Zavorskas '18, Ian Howley '10, Rebekah Budd '15, and David Sullivan '07

ADVANCING OUR WA FAMILY



WA Forward!

If you spend much time around The Academy, you will likely hear our head of school, Chris Sanford say “if we’re not moving forward, we’re falling behind.” This is essentially how we operate. We ask how we can continually move forward and continue to grow and strengthen our programs and meet our mission to prepare all students to become global citizens.

As you will see on the next page, we have been blessed with several new and exciting programs this year. These are facilities and programs that would not be possible without great support from donors and corporations in our community. Among others listed, we began our STRIVE program, increased services and staff to address mental health, further diversified our staff and student body, and piloted a summer institute for DEI that has guided our professional development throughout the year. We are already seeing positive results and building on what we have learned to move us forward.

Last fall we launched the InSpire 150 campaign to help fund the renovation of what will be a greatly enhanced Academy Building. Work is just beginning this spring, and the campaign will continue throughout the year as we continue to build on the great number of gifts and pledges we have already received. An alumni survey allowed us to update information for more than 1,600 alumni and these results are already helping us engage with more of our community. This will in turn strengthen our ability to serve our students better in the future.

Concerts and exhibits are back in Loos Center for the Arts, and as this edition of *The Gleaner* hits the printer, we have received overwhelming financial and volunteer support from our alumni and community to welcome our newest future alumni – students from Ukraine displaced by the war.

Once again, we are grateful to so many of you who have helped us with these and many other opportunities. If you have questions about what’s coming next or are interested in helping us continue to enhance our program or sustain it for the future, please let us know.

With gratitude,

Jonathan D. Sturdevant
Associate Head of School for Advancement



Learn more about how we are welcoming
displaced students from Ukraine

NEW PROGRAMS



COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

On the third floor of the Student Center on South Campus sits a professional industry-standard TV studio, launching new, hands-on opportunities for Academy students to explore the world of journalism. The TV studio is adaptable and equipped to host a variety of live events. The news anchor desk is on wheels and can be moved to accommodate other set pieces, while the screen behind it can feature graphics, photos, and video customized to the event that is being broadcast. The TV studio was recently donated to The Academy by NBC Connecticut.

STRIVE

The STRIVE (Structured Teaching Reinforcing Individualized Varied Experiences) Program serves eligible students (grades 9-12) by providing special education and related services. STRIVE is designed to support students with learning or intellectual disabilities, or students with social-emotional exceptionalities who require programming to develop the skills and behaviors necessary to become independent and confident learners. The kitchen on North Campus was recently renovated in partnership with Northeast Flooring and Kitchens of Putnam, providing enhanced vocational learning opportunities for STRIVE students.



PREP SOCCER

The Woodstock Academy partnered with GESF, a global educational recruitment agency based in Massachusetts and Spain, to build an elite prep soccer program at WA. The boys prep soccer program launched its inaugural season in fall 2021. The team plays a full prep schedule in the fall, then shifts to a club-like schedule in the winter and spring, even competing at a tournament in Guatemala. Led by head coach Joseph Cherackal, the squad of 24 student-athletes collectively represent Spain, Bermuda, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, Brazil, Portugal, and the United States. A girls prep program is planned to launch at The Academy in fall 2023.

HOCKEY RINK RENOVATION

Thanks to a very generous gift from a donor, The Woodstock Academy partnered with Pomfret School to renovate the Jahn Ice Rink, home of the Centaurs ice hockey programs. The updates provide a stronger, smoother ice surface and allow the arena to operate for most of the year. The partnership also secured prime ice time for The Academy. WA-branded locker rooms are also part of the planned improvements and will be the result of future fundraising efforts.



Photo: Jamey McSweeney, Pomfret School

Embracing Diversity at WA

By Samantha Romero, *English Teacher*

When Denzel Washington joined The Woodstock Academy five years ago, he was no stranger to the field of education. He had already served as a tutor, paraprofessional, and teacher in his hometown of Springfield, Massachusetts. Washington then went on to graduate from Fitchburg State University in 2017, after majoring in Cognitive Neuroscience, with a minor in History.

“I’ve been doing this work since I was younger. I started giving back to the community through my involvement with basketball programs when I was just a teenager,” said Washington. As a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, he seeks to apply the organization’s motto, “first of all, servants of all, we shall transcend all” to his work at The Woodstock Academy. With his appointment to Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in 2021, Washington was able to take that focus on service to the next level.

“As Director of DEI, my job is to teach people to understand one another. We’re all coming from different backgrounds and cultures, but in order to achieve our common goals, we have to understand and learn to work with one another,” explained Washington.

DIVERSITY AT WA

Indeed, the faculty, staff, and student populations at WA are more diverse than at any other time in the school’s long history. With students from 28 countries and 17 states walking the halls, more than 10 different languages can be heard around campus. This has inspired The Woodstock Academy administration to set a school goal for the 2021-2022 school year that focused on promoting acceptance and encouraging mutual understanding in our community.

According to Washington, the process began with a careful examination of The Academy’s hiring practices, because “in order to say we’re a diverse school, we need to hire a staff that reflects our student population.” Then, last spring, WA partnered with educator Kevin Booker Jr., of Booker Empowerment LLC, to begin training faculty and staff on DEI. More than 30 members of our faculty, staff, and administration attended a DEI Summer Institute,

which became the foundation for our own DEI Committee and this year’s Professional Learning Communities’ (PLCs) work. The training focused on recognizing and properly responding to micro-aggressions, unpacking implicit biases, and expanding cultural awareness.

DOING THE WORK

The Academy’s talented faculty members have hit the ground running with thoughtful lessons and activities that directly tie elements of DEI to various subjects’ curricula. For English teacher Katie Burns ’03, this means beginning a new semester by having students take inventory of their “circles of influence.”

“I got the idea from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Ted Talk ‘The Danger of a Single Story,’” explained Burns. “It got me thinking: whose stories do we encounter most often?”

She asks students to consider the voices they hear from most often in their lives, taking stock of friends, teachers, celebrities, musicians, and authors. Burns shared that “the majority of responses showed the dominance and prevalence of white stories in our community’s sphere of influence. This becomes the start of multiple conversations that encourage us to look at diversity and be comfortable addressing it, learning, and growing.”

In an effort to include diverse perspectives in its curriculum, the English department has made a conscious move toward incorporating more short works like poetry, essays, and short stories. Whereas tackling a few novels or plays over the course of a semester limits the voices that are heard, shifting to more concise literary works allows for many more stories to be told, thereby broadening students’ circles of influence. Now, more than ever, Baldwin, Hurston, Cisneros, and Tan share that space beside Fitzgerald and Hawthorne.

Similarly, Science Department Chair Melany Gronski was inspired to integrate DEI in her classes after hearing moving testimonies from Woodstock Academy students whose lives had been impacted by discrimination.



Denzel Washington, *Director of Equity & Inclusion*

“When those students shared their experiences, that inspired me to action, and then the Summer DEI Institute energized me and gave me tools and different perspectives,” said Gronski. “It offered me the opportunity to reflect on my history, my views, my education, and my teaching.”

Thanks to funding from the Beagary Investment Grants & Scholarships (BIGS), Gronski was able to partner with The Innocence Project, an organization that advocates for wrongfully convicted individuals and helps to exonerate them and reform the criminal justice system. Her forensics classes welcomed Clemente Aguirre-Jarquin as a virtual guest speaker in December, and he shared his story of how forensic scientists and DNA evidence helped to exonerate him after he was wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death for first-degree murder. Students were moved by his personal account of how cultural biases influenced the initial mishandling of his case.

“His story was so powerful,” affirmed Gronski. “In our class we talk about ‘science for justice,’ so this guest speaker brought that conversation full circle. It’s our responsibility to bring these difficult conversations here to WA. They’re happening already, so we need to model compassionate and caring discussion of these topics for our students.”

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

In response to a DEI student survey conducted in December 2021, several students expressed appreciation for the strides WA has made in this regard. They listed the school’s strengths

as “being open to different cultures and accepting of all people,” and “being inclusive of everyone and trying to be as helpful as possible.” One student even remarked that “there are seemingly countless opportunities offered to me here.” Washington hopes to expand on those opportunities even more in the near future. A student DEI group is in the works for the 2022-2023 school year. In it, students will receive training on how to lead discussions around the topic of DEI. Washington explains, “We want the student perspective. We want them collaborating with our faculty and staff DEI Committee and working on developing leadership skills that will serve them well when they leave Woodstock.”

For Associate Head of School Holly Singleton ’86, the goal moving forward is all about continuing our pursuit of Woodstock Academy’s mission to prepare all students for lifelong learning and global citizenship. “If we’re not working on our DEI goals, then we’re just giving lip service to our mission,” she said. “The ‘all’ in ‘all students’ is hard work, but I see DEI as part of the hard work we need to do to make sure what we offer for educational opportunities truly does include all.”

“The work is never finished,” remarked Washington, “but this community is ready for change and ready to move forward in a positive light. We’re doing great things in Woodstock.” **W**



The restored clocktower
and weathervane on the
Academy Building

INSPIRE 150

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ACADEMY BUILDING

On October 14, 2021, The Woodstock Academy officially launched InSpire 150, the Campaign for the Academy Building. The iconic structure's complete renovation is set to revitalize and restore the historic elements and update them for modern, innovative classroom usage for future generations of Academy students.

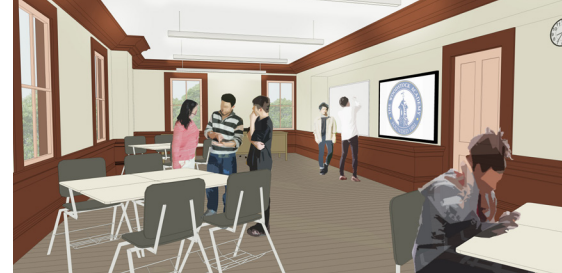
Phase one of the project, already completed in summer 2021, included a full restoration of the clocktower and weathervane, new structural bracing, new roofing, and fresh paint. Additionally, it received new clock controllers and bell interface, which enables the bell to chime on the hour every day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. as it traditionally did in the past.

Phase two, currently in progress, consists of a combination of new and restored windows, accessibility throughout the building, restroom upgrades, restoration of the central auditorium and stage, new electrical and heating systems, new AV systems, stabilization of the existing wood framing at the base of the building, interior painting, and new metal batten seam roofing to match the original roof from 1873.

The renovation of the central auditorium, the largest space in the building, is the future home of the nationally-ranked Model United Nations program and a key element in providing students access to the innovative, inclusive environment necessary to learn and grow beyond their expectations. The Woodstock Academy's four-time defending national champion Model United Nations program is just one of the many programs that will significantly benefit from the Academy Building's renovations.

The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2023, just in time for the 150th anniversary of the building's construction in 1873.

To explore giving options or learn more about InSpire 150, the ongoing Campaign for the Academy Building, visit woodstockacademy.org/inspire150, scan the QR code below, or contact Jonathan Sturdevant, associate head of school for advancement, at (860) 928-6575 ext. 1211 or jsturdevant@woodstockacademy.org.



ARCHITECT'S RENDERING OF UPDATED CLASSROOM SPACE



ARCHITECT'S RENDERING OF THE CENTRAL AUDITORIUM



CAMPUS VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE ACADEMY BUILDING



PRIMING AND PAINTING THE PULLEY



THE ORIGINAL BELL FROM THE CLOKKTOWER



RESTORING THE CLOKKTOWER STRUCTURE

IT'S A NEW DAWN

The Academy's First-Ever Poet Laureate

By Madison Millar, *Editor*

Emma Heimgartner '23 has a unique distinction at The Woodstock Academy. In 2021, the Brooklyn native was selected to be the inaugural Robert Holland National English Honor Society (NEHS) Poet Laureate at The Academy.

In her first address as Poet Laureate at the class of 2021 commencement ceremony, Heimgartner shared her poem "New Dawn," highlighting both the challenges of living through the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the opportunity for growth that tagged along with those obstacles.

"I want people to walk away thinking about how COVID-19 has changed them and how despite everything we lost, we were resilient and pushed on," Heimgartner said.

She titled her poem based on the concept that each generation brings new ideas, technology, and efforts to change and improve the world we live in.

"Dawns are the start of new days full of limitless possibilities – especially with the COVID nightmare simmering down, we are on the cusp of a new type of dawn. A new beginning other generations haven't really seen," Heimgartner said.

Her selection as Woodstock Academy Poet Laureate was something the school had never seen before. The idea of a Poet Laureate at The Academy was inspired by a poetic address to the nation at President Joe Biden's inauguration by young poet, Amanda Gorman, during what was also a historic time as a country.

"As a first-year, brand-new honor society, the officers and I brainstormed a list of priorities for the first year. All of us were inspired by Amanda Gorman's poem, and so creating a Poet Laureate made it onto the list and was very popular when we presented the list to the members at large," said Dr. Michael Harten, dean of academics at The Academy.

It was also decided that it was only appropriate to name the newly-established Poet Laureate in honor of long-time Academy Trustee Robert Holland.

"I think that Mr. Holland would be pleased by the naming of the NEHS to honor his dual legacy, both as a dedicated Trustee and as an accomplished writer," said Richard Telford, English department chair. "His long tenure on the Board of Trustees was marked by a constant dedication to providing Academy students with the richest education possible."

To fill the needs of the role, the NEHS were looking for a candidate who could both craft beautiful poetry as well as present their work to a large audience. Another key factor was flexibility and versatility within their poetry to reflect the variety of events and audiences the Poet Laureate would be presenting to. To be considered, students submitted three original poems to the NEHS for the first round of voting. Of those students, the top three candidates were selected for the final round of voting and submitted a video of themselves reciting one of their original poems and an explanation of why they wanted to be Poet Laureate. The final round of voting was placed in the hands of the WA community.

"Dr. Harten and I felt that our school would benefit from such a figure – one that would deliver powerful poems during some of the most important times as a nation. We wanted the Poet Laureate to, when needed, give hope and inspiration to our Woodstock Academy community." President of the NEHS, Hans Rhynhart '22 said.

Throughout the 2021-22 school year, Heimgartner has worked to bring a fresh perspective on poetry to the student body and use it as a tool to bring together a community of writers.

"I hope to start encouraging poetry through spreading more poetry through The Academy – small posters with inspirational or humorous poetry that people might take the time to stop and read," Heimgartner shared. "I've even been toying with the idea of a club or website where people could share poetry or short stories they've written to get compliments or advice." **W**



**The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it**

— *The Hill We Climb* by Amanda Gorman



NEHS President
Hans Rhynhart '22
and Heimgartner '23

NEW DAWN by Emma Heimgartner

We are weary.
Weary of reminiscing on losses.
Lost loved ones, lost lives, lost futures.
We grew old in our youth,
Time wears on.

We are defiant.
Defiant to unrestrained injustice,
Braving tumultuous skies,
Becoming eyes of swift storms.
Hurricanes reforming ancient landscapes.

We redefine resilience.
A generation of wildflowers breaking through ash piles,
Steadfast pines standing tall against harsh winds.
Isolation stings our hearts, suffering pounds our doors.
We weather squalls, cracking but ever stronger.

We champion ourselves.
Walk paths known only to us.
We cast North aside, blaze new trails.
Without traditional binds,
We stride towards newfound dawns.

We are untold tales.
Tales of heroes battling for equality.
Of dreamers recreating known worlds.
Of healers mending broken souls.
We are modern-age myths.

We rise.
Phoenixes born from simmering embers.
We soar towards distant stars.
Potential flows from our cups and coats weary lands
in hope.
We are promises of brighter days ahead.



Heimgartner presenting her
poem at commencement in
2021

THE HON. HENRY C. BOWEN MEMORIAL

Henry C. Bowen was an alumnus and community member who was instrumental in the survival and success of The Woodstock Academy. This memorial was published in *The Gleaner* of 1896, the year of his passing. Approaching the 150th anniversary of the Academy Building's construction in 2023, which Bowen both provided and raised funds to refurbish, the legacy of this iconic structure will remain due to his contributions.

Written by E.E.C., *The Gleaner*, 1896.

The issue of *The Gleaner* for the year 1896 would be incomplete with the simple announcement of the death of Henry C. Bowen as one of the alumni of Woodstock Academy; for Mr. Bowen was not an alumnus simply in name. His alma mater was very dear to his heart; and among the acts of his life were those for her future prosperity. There are times when it is well to rehearse the good deeds in a man's life, and to follow, in a measure, the results of those deeds. This can only effectually be done in the summary of a long life such as was granted to Mr. Bowen. It was filled with varied schemes, all of which attained a greater or less degree of success.

Of his marked career as a businessman and as a journalist, with original methods pursued, we will not speak, for they are matters of history, and as such are well known; but the story of his efforts for the advancement of Woodstock Academy will be the theme of this memorial sketch.

Henry Chandler Bowen, the son of George and Lydia Eaton Bowen, was born in the old Bowen homestead, September 11, 1813. This ancient house is one of the notable houses in Connecticut, and was built in 1782, but was not purchased by William Bowen, the grandfather of Henry Chandler, until several years later. His boyhood home was kept as a tavern, with a store adjoining, "where the politics of the town and the state of the church were discussed and regulated; from whose windows was hung the brigade flag for general training, which was held on the historic common below." His home was one of the "vitualing places" of the stage line between New York and Boston. All these stirring scenes could but have their influence upon the active mind of the growing boy.

"To his mother he felt that he owed whatever was best in his early training and subsequent career." She must have been a woman of strong and unique characteristics, a woman "who looked well to the ways of her household," whose sayings are still held as maxims among the people of Woodstock, and are transmitted

from generation to generation as household words. To her can be traced the strong convictions of right and marked executive ability which characterized all the business transactions of Mr. Bowen. His education was acquired in the schools of his native town, finishing in Woodstock Academy. For a time he was a clerk in his father's store, but at the age of twenty "his earnest, pushing and driving mind took him away from this town to seek a larger sphere." In a very few years a measure of success crowned his efforts, and his thoughts turned at once to the home of his boyhood. For the first time in years after his removal to New York his vacations were spent with his mother, who had removed her home to the residence now occupied by Mrs. Polly Bowen. One fact will show that even in these early days of prosperity Woodstock Academy held a large place in his affections.

Some years before Mr. Bowen was in circumstances warranting the possession of a summer home in Woodstock, measures were taken by him for the improvement of the Academy.

During several years previous to 1843 the school had languished. At times no school was held during the year, and academy interests even became so degenerated that the building was used as a private dwelling. But in the spring of 1843 new life was infused into the school by the advent of a new and extremely capable principal, Mr. Averill. It was during the summer of that year that Mr. Bowen made the generous offer to the citizens of the community that if they would provide the board for the workmen he would pay all bills for putting the building in perfect repair. This offer was gladly accepted, and so thoroughly was the work done that the framework and some of the partitions were all that remained of the original structure. New desks were put in; in fact, everything was done to put it in good working order for the uses of the school. At this time chemical apparatus was needed by the school, and Mr. Bowen suggested the engagement of then renowned Hutchinson Family to give concerts for this need. Mr. Bowen paid the entire expenses of their coming, and the proceeds were sufficient to purchase the desired



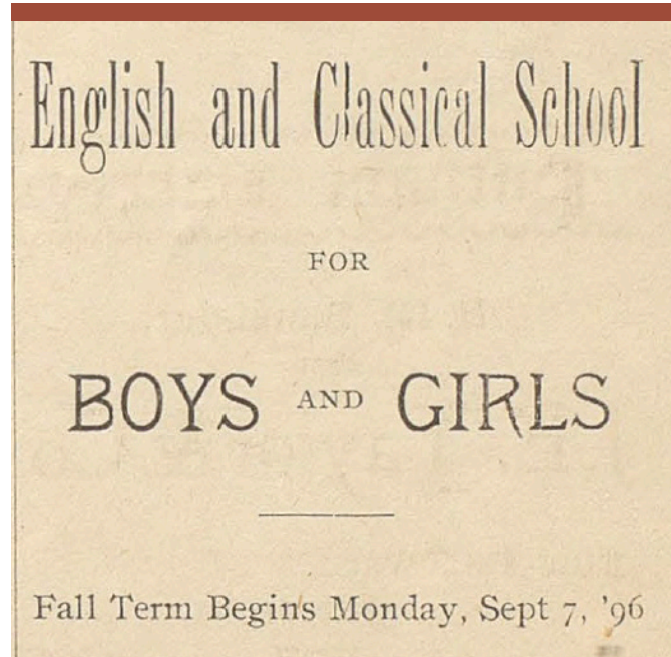
Painting of Bowen in Head of School's office (Bracken Admin. Center)

apparatus, which was used for many, many years. At this time also a large number of boarding pupils were to be provided with homes, consequently between the years of '44 and '46 Mr. Bowen, together with Mr. Amasa Carpenter, of North Woodstock, built what is now known as Elmwood Hall. For several years following the school attained its greatest prosperity in numbers in its history, for those were the palmy days of the Academy, before the advent of the present public high school.

This building remained substantially the same for the next twenty-five years, and is well remembered by the pupils of that period. Who can calculate the results of the few thousands of dollars put into the work of the education of his native town at this time? "Surely he builded better than he knew." For it may be said that the whole future of the schools was the result of his individual effort.

After twenty-five years of varied history, Mr. Bowen conceived the plan of an endowment fund, that the Academy might be placed upon a permanent basis, making the generous offer that if \$5,000 was raised, he would make the sum \$10,000. This offer served to show the interest felt in the cause of education by the citizens of this and neighboring towns. For nearly six weeks Mr. Bowen, accompanied usually by the present President of the Board of Trustees, visited from house to house, making appeals for the fund. Abundant success crowned their efforts, and over \$16,000 was the result of this indefatigable labor.

Now all things were propitious for the renewed prosperity of this time-honored institution, but after a short period it was felt that the school had outgrown the building, which had served its generations for seventy years. Again, Mr. Bowen arose to the emergency, and would give another \$5,000 toward a building fund, providing a corresponding amount was pledged. Much personal appeal to friends at home and abroad followed, and right nobly did the people respond to this second call, following so soon upon the first. "On this subscription list the rich and poor met together, the latter



Woodstock Academy advertisement, *The Gleaner*, 1896.

largely outnumbering the former," until the godly sum of \$17,000 was announced as pledged to the building fund. In 1873 the present academy building was dedicated. Its cost was about \$20,000. The funds were exhausted, and provision for the furnishing and general equipment of the building was made by Mr. Bowen.

And the end was not yet, for while Mr. Bowen lived he was devising new schemes for the forward moment of his beloved Academy. For years the increase of the endowment fund had been upon his mind, and from time to time, through his instrumentality, various sums were added to it, but he had placed the amount of \$50,000 as the acme of his desires.

It seemed unattainable, but to his indomitable perseverance all things were possible, and behold! before the end of the year 1895 it was an accomplished fact. Above \$50,000 was pledged, largely by bequest, to the endowment fund, for the benefit of the coming generations, descendants of those whom Mr. Bowen had fostered the love of knowledge by his efforts for their educational advancement in 1843.

In March, 1896, the people of Woodstock were called to bid good-bye to the form of their honored friend, for death had claimed all that was mortal of Henry Chandler Bowen, and he was borne to his last resting place upon the brow of the "hill," so loved by him, his dust to mingle with six generations of ancestors.

"We do not bid good-bye, however, to the influences which have gone out from the boy, who, from Woodstock Academy, went out into the larger world and gave himself to man and to God; and who, with invincible determination, carried through to high success eighty-two years of life. The influences of these years shall go down through the ages," and shall be held in everlasting memorial.

SERVING UP SMILES

By Samantha Romero, *English Teacher*



In 2016, Pomfret resident Bill Abbott reached out to The Woodstock Academy with a great idea: to create a student-led organization aimed at helping the families of medically fragile children in Northeastern Connecticut. Along with the Pomfret Lions Club, Abbott donated enough funds to start what would become The Woodstock Academy's B Club. They've been serving up smiles ever since.

The B Club bills itself as a group of "social engineers for good days," and consists of about 40 students who come together to support one or two "B's" (the code name given to the children they serve in order to protect their privacy) each year. That support can come in the form of monetary donations that help to cover healthcare and related costs, but according to the club's advisor and Associate Head of School Holly Singleton '86, it goes beyond financial help. "There's more to supporting a person than just paying medical bills. It's about supporting people as whole human beings, so if we can help them to enjoy life in any way, that's valuable too," remarked Singleton.

She's been advising the group since 2018, when it was originally called Sparrow Club. With the belief that they could accomplish more for local families if they separated themselves from the nationally recognized Sparrow Club NGO, the club tackled a rebranding in 2019.

"When we met to discuss new names for the club, we kept coming up with ideas that started with the letter 'B,'" Singleton explained.

"Finally, we decided to just call ourselves The B Club. It's a name that purposefully means nothing because we want the focus to be on the work that's done for others. It has nothing to do with us." And that work certainly speaks for itself. The B Club has raised more than \$20,000 for its B's through fundraising efforts that run the gamut from Skate for a Cause, to a burpee contest with the field hockey team, to the volleyball team's Big Dig Pink event. Perhaps just as important, though, is the strong bond students form with the children they serve. Club members have organized drive-by parades, fishing trips, craft activities, and more, with some even being held via Zoom when the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to meet in-person.

"The B Club makes sure these kids feel loved in a way that goes beyond financial support," said Singleton. "Fun is a big component of what we do."

The fun will undoubtedly continue as The B Club gears up for its spring fundraisers, which are slated to include an event at a popular local restaurant and the sale of limited edition and student-designed backpack pins.

One member of The B Club said it best when explaining, "Our activities and fundraisers are not only fun, but I get to learn and help other people. That just makes the fun stuff even more exciting and special." **W**



B Club members 2021-22

“

I think what we do is really important and I think we also encourage others, whether they are in the club or not, to be kind and giving towards others.

I joined the B Club because I wanted an opportunity to connect with the Woodstock Academy community for a great cause. I moved this year to Pomfret and wanted to get involved with a club that means a lot to the school.

Meeting our B's has helped me understand the purpose behind our cause, and getting to give them gifts makes everything better because you get to experience joy with them.

B Club has introduced me to a group of people with the same interests as me. All of us work towards benefiting local families who deserve a group of students advocating for them and working to help them.

Quotes from B Club students





WITH *BEATSON MAKERSPACE COORDINATOR, BRIELLE DUBOIS '03*

Q&A

The Beatson Makerspace is named in honor of longtime industrial arts teacher Kenneth Beatson and is one of the unique spaces within the SPIROL STEAM Center that encourages students to expand their learning experiences.

WHAT ARE THE MOST POPULAR PIECES OF EQUIPMENT?

A lot of classes are coming in to use the green screen to start. It's a fresh and creative way to do a presentation that is all encompassing and fun for the students. It allows them to really be a part of their project, and there is science behind them retaining the content because of how creative it allows them to be. The 3D Printers are a big hit too, and once the students get playing in the software to create things, they get really excited to see the final product.

WHAT DO STUDENTS ENJOY ABOUT USING THE MAKERSPACE?

The students enjoy the options they have, and the opportunity to be in a creative space and not just in a traditional classroom. They're able to be kids; converse, problem solve, and laugh as they figure out their processes.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT USING THE MAKERSPACE WITH STUDENTS?

I love being able to watch the students come down and get excited to use the space, be creative, and come into themselves while they are here. It allows them to detach from everyday technology, while also using different technology or basics to be creative and build problem solving skills as well as social skills. I have really enjoyed the connections I've made with students as well in my short time here. I get to see a multitude of students come through each week, which is fun to see changing faces and make new connections.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS IN THE MAKERSPACE THAT MAKE IT A UNIQUE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR STUDENTS?

The Makerspace is certainly a unique learning environment for students. It allows them to be creative in a way that they wouldn't be able to in a regular classroom. It also really bridges the gap between standard academics and problem solving, as well as being creative to open doors for more interest in STEAM. A Spanish student, for instance, that has never 3D Printed anything, was able to do so, which led her to become further interested in taking engineering and architecture classes for her future, all because her Spanish class was able to come down and create in the space that she otherwise wouldn't have had the opportunity to do in her Spanish classroom. I'm really grateful to be able to watch the students grow like this and thirst for more knowledge. Students want to continue spending time in the space or branch out to new subjects that they wouldn't have before and it's really great to see.





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HAN ZHENG '22

Metal Fish, a portfolio series

SENIOR HAN ZHENG WINS NATIONAL ART AWARD FOR DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

In February, senior student-artist Han Zheng was awarded as a Gold Key winner along with a Hartford Art School scholarship at the Regional Scholastic Art Awards for his digital art portfolio, *Metal Fish*. This achievement automatically qualified his entry for the National Scholastic Art Awards, the nation's longest-running and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens. Each year, the jurors look for submissions that contain a combination of originality, technical skill, and the emergence of a personal voice or vision. In April, Han was awarded the Silver Medal with Distinction and a scholarship of one thousand dollars for his submission of *Metal Fish*. He is one of 29 students in the country to receive this award and will attend the ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City on June 9, 2022.