

Kent Quarterly

SPRING 2024



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Photography & Media Specialist
Kay Bermudez-Pires

Creative & Print Services Specialist
Donna Greene

Communications Manager
David Head '10

Editorial Manager
Marisa Scarnati

Director of Marketing & Communications
Martin Voss

Contributors
Katy Armstrong (Hon) '71
Christina Cumberton P'24, P'27
Larry Gile '73
Mike Hirschfeld
Denny Mantegani (Hon) '58, '62, '67, '72
Robert Ober Jr. '54
Seong Wong

Feature Illustrations
Rachel Wright

The *Kent Quarterly* invites contributions, letters to the editor, and feedback at kentcommunications@kent-school.edu.

To submit class notes or changes in address, email alumni@kent-school.edu. To reach the Alumni and Development Office by phone, please call 877-770-5368.

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Dear Kent School Community,

As I write, underformers are taking the last of their exams. Later this afternoon and tomorrow morning the campus will empty out, and with the departure of the students much of the School's energy will go too. Earlier in my career it seemed easier to describe the school year in seasons; summer would be the season of reflection and planning, particularly in June and July. August has an Advent-like energy (of sometimes frantic) preparation, anticipation, and hope. Perhaps because we have become more intentional about using feedback to inform our programming throughout the year, reflection and planning are no longer confined to the summer.

This year more than any other I have been reflecting on our mission:

We are guided by our motto—Simplicity of Life, Directness of Purpose, Self-Reliance—to educate our students intellectually, socially, ethically, and spiritually so that they will be prepared to contribute to the common good in the world beyond Kent.

Specifically, I have been thinking a lot about our mission's charge "to contribute to the common good." Are we doing all that we can to prepare our students for this work?

Truth be told, my focus on our mission was motivated by thinking about the interface between the School and the apparent chaos of the larger world, and by the discovery of an expression of anti-Semitism in the form of a swastika at Kent in the spring.

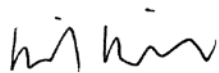
This may not surprise you, but I am frequently asked for "the School's position" on whatever the national political or geopolitical crisis is of the moment. My response is not always this glib, but I usually say something to the effect of—we are not in the business of politics, we are in the business of values. I often add a paraphrasing of the last question of the Episcopal Church's baptismal covenant—that we strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being. Not commenting on every crisis does not represent institutional neutrality; these values are our position.

Earlier this spring I had a conversation with a head of school who had a similar experience with a swastika at his school. We talked about our successes and failures in supporting our communities. When I mentioned that our values informed our response in the same way they inform our response to tragedy and unrest in the world, he said, "You are lucky to be an Episcopal school."

As we look ahead to the Fall, my colleagues and I are thinking hard about the learning opportunities the Presidential election will provide our students this coming year. Our modest learning outcomes are threefold: first, our students should know how democracy works in the United States; second, they should be able to critically parse the information that relentlessly bombards them; and third, our students should know how to disagree without being disagreeable. In recent weeks I have thought much about the last goal, and I have concluded that it is really a goal befitting a finishing school (if such a thing still exists): teaching our students how to be polite. Kent School should be more ambitious than that.

While there appears to be a burgeoning industry in books and opinion pieces that provide solutions to all that divides us, I have asked the faculty to read Arthur Brooks' book *Love Your Enemies* to provide a construct for us to help dismantle what he terms "the culture of contempt." At the heart of Brooks' short argument is empathy in its basest form, recognizing and respecting the dignity of every human being (though he does not use the phrase). Whether or not my colleagues find the book as instructive as I did, I am sure it will provoke meaningful conversations as we head into next year.

I am more confident that if we abide by our values, as we have in the past, we will be successful in sending graduates into the world well prepared to contribute to the common good.



Michael G. Hirschfeld
Head of School

Active Empathy

MISSION

We are guided by our motto-Simplicity of Life, Directness of Purpose, Self-Reliance-to educate our students intellectually, socially, ethically, and spiritually so that they will be prepared to contribute to the common good in the world beyond Kent School.

Servant Leadership

KENT SCHOOL CORE COMPETENCIES

Critical & Creative
Thinking

Effective
Communications

Engaged
Citizenship

Between the Hills and River Shore

ATHLETICS

Equestrian Program Continues Excellence Under New Leadership

The Kent School Equestrian Team (KSET) has seen significant changes under the guidance of head trainer Lyman T. Whitehead. With a focus on personalized instruction, Whitehead has reduced group sizes to give riders more individual attention, emphasizing technical skills and horse welfare.

The program now includes regular shows and clinics to provide real-world challenges and learning opportunities. Recent events at Fox Crossing and Old Salem Farm showcased the riders' talents, with a clinic featuring Olympian Bernie Traurig adding to their experiences.

Behind the scenes, KSET has made improvements in horse care and facilities. New hires and upgraded services ensure top-notch care for the horses, while renovations to the barn and grounds enhance the overall environment.

Under Whitehead's leadership, KSET continues to uphold its reputation for excellence and support an enriching experience for riders as they pursue their equestrian goals.



CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Successful Completion of Boardwalk Enhancement Project

The campus boardwalk overhaul is now officially complete! The rebuilding endeavors have culminated in an impressive upgrade, ensuring improved accessibility, safety, and weather resistance for the Administrative Building. This achievement promises a smooth and secure journey for all community members and visitors alike while preserving its historical appearance.



ARTS

Student-Artist Earns Top Recognition in Local Art Competition

Sophia Cherniavsky '24 claimed first prize in the “Places of Kent” art competition, sponsored by the town of Kent’s art galleries. Her artistic journey, unique style, and future aspirations provide insight into her creative world.

Cherniavsky describes her artistic style as “mixed media.” She explains, “I love finding ways in which I can combine mediums in a natural and beautiful way in which both mediums get complemented by the other; the work I submitted is a combination of watercolor and acrylics.” She also shares her artistic influences, stating, “I am inspired by artists such as Roberta Boffo, Kelogsloops on Instagram, and MP Gautheron.”

For the “Places of Kent” competition, Cherniavsky chose to capture Kent’s sunset clouds. She expresses, “I felt it was a direct reflection of Kent’s beauty, both its physical location and its community.”

Cherniavsky provides insight into her creative process, sharing, “In terms of making the actual artwork, the mindset I use for the creative process is first dividing the image into layers, and then into colors. After the main colors and shapes are drawn, it’s the details that bring life to the piece. This is when I ask myself ‘What kind of mood do I want this piece to have? How do I show it? Where do I want the viewer’s attention?’ Details are, in most cases, the answer.”

She elaborates on her theme choice, saying, “I chose to do this theme because I believe it brings a whole new meaning to my art; I can make efforts to reach the viewer’s mind and make them think more than any of my single detailed artworks can.” Cherniavsky’s ultimate goal is to create interactive artworks that encourage deeper exploration and provide valuable insights.

IN THE WORLD

Kent’s Collaboration with Squared Network Expands Educational Opportunities

Kent School’s collaboration with the education non-profit Squared Network to introduce the STEM-focused college access program, Squared x Kent, marks a significant step toward providing exceptional educational opportunities for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Set to commence in the summer of 2024 on Kent’s campus, the program specifically targets first-generation and/or low-income high school students.

“After a yearlong national search that considered over 40 independent boarding schools across the country, Kent School rose to the top of our list. We were drawn to the mission-driven leadership, top-notch facilities, enthusiastic faculty, and fantastic STEM programs,” says Nick Favaloro, CEO of Squared Network. “From the outset of our conversations with Kent School leadership, we recognized there was immediate alignment in what we were trying to accomplish: provide exceptional opportunities for students from all backgrounds. We’re thrilled for this summer. Our alignment has energized every step of our collaboration.”

The Squared x Kent program aims to enroll 25 academically-driven high school students for its inaugural summer session. A key component of the program is its focus on STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), designed to equip students with essential skills and knowledge for future academic and professional success.

The collaboration between Kent School and the Squared Network highlights a shared commitment to expanding access to quality education, particularly in the critical fields of STEM. Reflecting on the broader impact, Favaloro notes, “The hope is that Kent School’s example will inspire additional independent schools across the country to follow this model, and explore adopting Squared programs of their own.”



ACADEMICS

Holy Solars Impress at Lime Rock Park

Steve Fog '70 hosted Kent's championship solar car team, the Holy Solars, at Lime Rock Park. "Although combustion engines are not a part of the solar car project, we all enjoyed seeing these cars and the engineering behind them that makes them so fast and safe to run," said Director of Engineering Carlos Bezerra.



CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Broadcasting Legend Gary Thorne Calls Kent Boys Varsity Hockey Game

Emmy Award winner Gary Thorne has called Stanley Cup finals and playoff games, 15 All Star Games, and served as the voice of the New York Mets, Baltimore Orioles, Chicago White Sox, and New Jersey Devils.

Gary visited Nadal Rink to call the Boys Varsity Hockey game against Canterbury.





CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Kent Hosts Governor Lamont and Ambassador Foley for Civility and Politics Discussion

Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont and former Ambassador to Ireland Tom Foley, member of Kent Class of 1970, visited Kent School for a discussion on civil discourse and the contemporary American political landscape. Lamont, a Democrat, and Foley, a 2010 and 2014 Republican nominee for Connecticut Governor, emphasized the significance of civil discourse during these politically divisive times during the event which was moderated by Senior Prefects Dymond Johnson '24 and Robby Ober '24.

Governor Lamont stressed the need for cooperation and a less ideological approach to governance, emphasizing the importance of working together for the common good. Ambassador Foley, addressing the current political climate as “a little messier and noisier,” suggested it is not necessarily worse than past turbulent periods.

A significant point of discussion during the event included the Israel and Palestine conflict and the U.S.'s role in global conflicts. Senator Lamont shared his experiences visiting synagogues and schools, highlighting the importance of providing solace and public safety in times of crisis. He stressed the need for empathy and understanding, extending to all those affected by such conflicts.

Kent School's core values, encompassing active empathy, servant leadership, critical and creative thinking, effective communication, and engaged citizenship, were also addressed. Ambassador Foley emphasized that these values extend beyond education to encompass understanding others and their differing viewpoints.

When asked for advice for those aspiring to pursue careers in public service or politics, Governor Lamont encouraged early community involvement, preparedness to run for office, and demonstrating a genuine passion for making a difference. He illustrated the transformative potential of education in his own journey, inspiring his commitment to public service.

Ambassador Foley stressed the need for a diverse skill set, gaining experience in fields such as law, teaching, business, or medicine before entering politics. He also advocated for readiness to step away from politics when necessary, noting that government is designed for citizens, not professional politicians.

Both speakers concurred that understanding diverse viewpoints, effective listening, and prioritizing the greater good of all are essential for successful democracy and governance. The visit by Governor Ned Lamont and Ambassador Tom Foley provided Kent School students with invaluable insights into the world of politics, the importance of civil discourse, and the role of empathy and engagement in fostering a healthier democracy.





SPIRITUAL LIFE

Kent Community's Annual Lessons & Carols Celebration

Every year, the Lessons & Carols service carries on a tradition from King's College, Cambridge, stretching back a hundred years. Through readings and music, it shares stories of enduring faithfulness. This holiday tradition brings warmth and peace to our Kent community, offering solace, inspiration, and connection to all who join.

WELLNESS

Kent Implements Cellphone Policy and Introduces First Digital Cleanse Day

Kent School's implementation of a comprehensive cellphone policy emphasizes its commitment to maintaining a balanced and healthy academic environment.

The policy aims to address the negative impacts associated with excessive cellphone and social media use on students' learning and mental health. Recognizing the importance of communication in emergencies, the policy ensures students have a means of contact while regulating cellphone use in classrooms, afternoon activities, health center, and during standardized tests.

In addition to these guidelines, the school emphasizes responsible cellphone use in specific situations. When students are walking on campus footpaths or in building hallways, cellphones should be put away. If a student needs to use a phone, they should "pull over" off the walkway or stand aside in the hallway to avoid disruptions. Furthermore, in public spaces such as dorm common rooms, the Dining Hall, the Library, and in town, students are encouraged to be respectful of others.

To further reinforce the school's dedication to addressing screen time concerns, Kent introduced its inaugural "Cellphone Cleanse Day." This initiative, which saw the participation of 60 community members, received positive feedback. Director of Wellness Dr. Annie Kearney shared her insights on the event, stating, "It was enjoyable to do the day; anytime you can make wellness fun, it motivates the behavior change even more." Dr. Kearney highlighted the significance of the cleanse in promoting a healthy relationship with technology and encouraging students to be present in the community.

"As a school, we are still stressing the importance of a healthy



relationship with one's phone but also being present in the community—a cleanse allows students to see all of the benefits of limiting screen time and being more present," she explained. The cleanse provided students with valuable experiences, such as leaving class without immediately checking their phones and gaining awareness of their phone-checking habits. Dr. Kearney even drew a personal connection, saying, "I kept telling students this was exactly what my first day of high school was like—paper schedules and lanyards!"

Reflecting on her participation in Digital Cleanse Day, Gianna Espinosa '24 shared insightful observations about the impact of the initiative. "The digital cleanse was a good reminder of the importance of being offline," she said. "I have learned that so much blue light can dim your focus and engagement, but it's hard to always remember that. Having a day to remind myself how much more engaged I am without the feeling of missing out on something, or needing to get on my phone, was a good reset."



WELLNESS

Promoting Digital Balance: Kent and The Social Institute's Initiative for Students and Parents

In response to the growing challenges students face in the digital age, Kent School has partnered with The Social Institute (TSI), an online learning platform known for its gamified approach to developing curricula that prioritize well-being, positive social media usage, and technology navigation skills.

Recognizing the extensive time students spend on digital devices and the prevalent issues of cyberbullying and reputation-damaging posts, Kent School is dedicated to equipping both students and parents with the essential tools for making positive and healthy choices.

Director of Wellness Dr. Annie Kearney emphasizes the pivotal role of parental involvement. "It's crucial to have parents reinforcing the same messaging about making smart choices," she says. "It truly takes a village." TSI provides comprehensive parent resources, ensuring families stay ahead of the curve and can effectively guide their children in making positive choices in the digital realm.

Among The Social Institute's offerings is the #WinAtSocial LIVE program, a student-led, social-emotional advisory initiative designed for both remote and in-person engagement. This program addresses timely topics each week, complemented by a gamified curriculum spanning grades three through 12. This full-year program focuses on social-emotional learning, social media literacy, and technology awareness.

As this impactful partnership unfolds, Kent School envisions fostering a culture defined by positive choices and enhanced well-being, positioning its students for success in navigating the ever-evolving landscape of the digital age.

IN THE WORLD

International Alumni and Community Gatherings with Head of School and Advancement Team

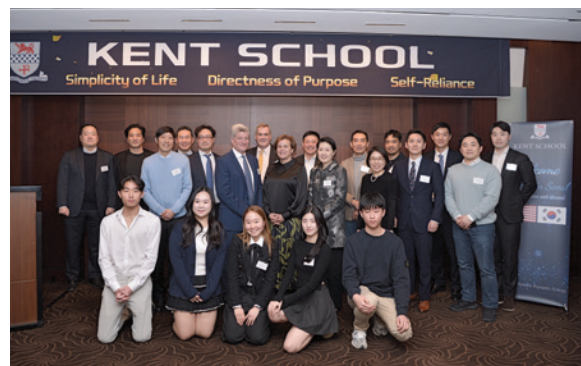
Head of School Mike Hirschfeld, his wife Liesbeth, Chief Advancement Officer Bill Kissick, and Director of Advancement Greg Carter '95 enjoyed great company with alumni, parents, and current students in Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong during the spring break.



SHANGHAI



BEIJING



SEOUL



HONG KONG

ARTS

A Vibrant Array of Artistry

A diverse lineup of performances during the fall and winter terms unfolded in the world of performing arts. From the gripping drama of *Trap* to the elegance of dance recitals, along with melodious concerts and captivating One Acts, the stage buzzed with a wide range of entertainment.





Reflections on Transformative Experiences at the NAIS People of Color Conference

Kent School representatives attended the 2025 National Association of Independent Schools People of Color Conference (PoCC), a significant gathering focused on fairness and justice. Hosted by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) for over 55 years, this conference serves as a catalyst for professional development, networking, and leadership for educators of color and their allies in independent schools.

The theme of this year's conference, "Gateways to Freedom: A Confluence of Truth, Knowledge, Joy, and Power," inspired attendees to explore the intersections of personal and professional experiences. This theme aimed to nurture a collective journey toward truth, knowledge, joy, and power, drawing inspiration from the strength of ancestors and envisioning possibilities for the future.

Among the Kent School attendees were Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (EID) Torrey Hall; Photography and Media Specialist Kay Bermudez-Pires; and Assistant Director of EID Olivia Pena. Each offered unique insights into their experiences at PoCC and its impact on the Kent School community.

Torrey Hall reflected on how the conference theme deeply connected with both his personal and professional journey at Kent School. "This year's theme echoed our ongoing commitment to cultivating an inclusive and empowering educational environment. The focus on truth and knowledge aligns with our educational goals, while joy and power reflect our community's vibrant spirit and the strength found in our diversity."

The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Gholnecsar (Gholdy) Muhammad, an Associate Professor of Literacy, Language, and Culture. She has previously served as a classroom teacher, literacy specialist, school district administrator, curriculum director, and school board president. She studies Black historical excellence in education, intending to reframe curriculum and instruction today. Centered around the concept of "Our students are already geniuses," the speech left a lasting impression on Hall. He shared, "She defines genius in students as 'the brilliance, intellect, ability, cleverness, and artistry that have been flowing through their minds and spirits across generations.' This expression of what students innately possess deeply connected with me and others, serving as a call to action to bring that experience to students at Kent."

Kay Bermudez-Pires emphasized how the theme deeply connected with her on multiple levels, saying, "As an immigrant, a Latina, a woman, and part of the LGBTQ+ community, the theme spoke to the challenges of finding freedom when placed in different boxes. One major lesson I learned from PoCC was to never apologize for who I am and where I come from."

She also highlighted a valuable lesson learned about supporting students of color, stating, "Attending PoCC has taught me much about diversity and how our students of color might struggle differently. I have learned how to support our diverse student body in a more mindful way."

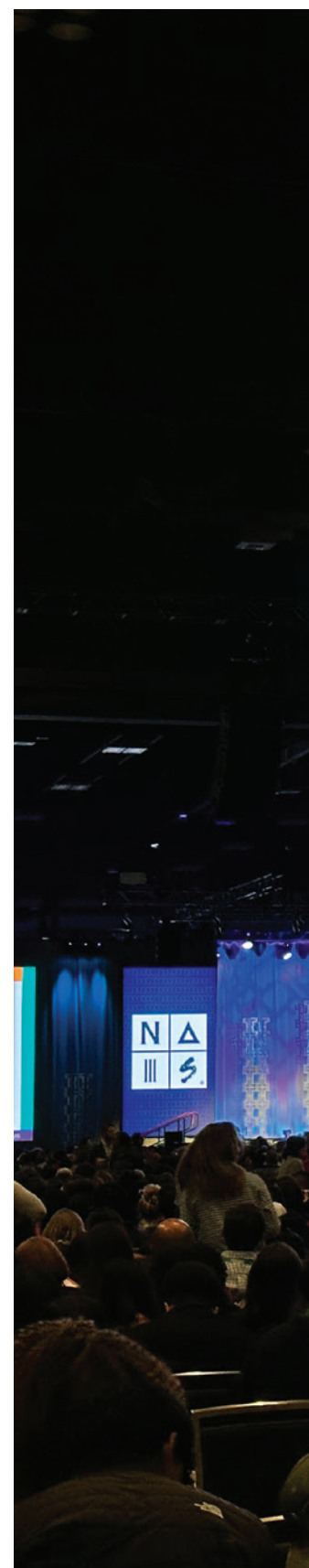
Olivia Pena, a new member of the Kent School community, found the conference exceptionally powerful in providing a space to investigate and digest how she experiences truth, knowledge, joy, and power in her new role and within her new community.

"I attended a workshop titled 'Modalities for Supporting LGBTQIA+ Identities,' which focused on equipping attendees with models, skills, and resources for supporting students with LGBTQIA+ identities both within and adjacent to the upper school humanities classroom. I left this workshop with more than just ways to support LGBTQIA+ students but with notes and materials that can help instruct and support faculty of all disciplines regarding the preparation and implementation of trauma-informed pedagogy," Pena shared.

In terms of aligning with Kent School's commitment to nurturing a diverse and inclusive learning environment, Pena emphasized how attending PoCC energizes and empowers her to continue the important work in the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity.

"Each time I attend PoCC, it energizes and empowers me to continue the important work that we do in the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity," she said. "I left the conference with new materials, new understandings, and a fresh network of people and community that I am excited to incorporate into Kent School."

The energized perspectives of Kent's representatives, along with the valuable lessons and experiences gained from PoCC, significantly strengthen the School's ongoing commitment to creating a rich and inclusive educational atmosphere at Kent School.



ACADEMICS

Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Medical Advances

Driven by his interest in artificial intelligence (AI) and computer vision, Leo Huang '24 received recognition for his innovative work in dementia prediction. Collaborating with a doctoral student from Cambridge University, Huang incorporated metadata into his approach, achieving significant results.

Huang connected with the doctoral student through the Horizon Inspires Program. Horizon Academic (HARP), as described on their website, is a trimester-long online research program for extraordinary high school students aimed at refining their interest in an academic subject. Within this program, students have the opportunity to develop a college-level research project under the individualized guidance of a professor from a globally renowned university.

Their joint project focused on predicting dementia using MRI brain scans as input data, a vital step in early detection and intervention for a condition with no known cure. What sets Huang's research apart is his application of "self-supervised" learning, a novel training method in the field of AI. Unlike conventional approaches that rely heavily on labeled data, self-supervised neural networks do not require explicit labels for input data. Instead, they identify patterns, differences, and similarities within the data. Huang's innovation was to use "weak labels" derived from metadata associated with MRI scans, such as age, sex, dominant hand, and mini dementia test scores, to train the model. This approach allows the AI to learn from a wealth of information and bridges the gap between AI and classical diagnosis methods.

The integration of metadata into his research was not without its challenges. Traditionally, medical datasets have struggled to effectively utilize metadata during the training process. However, Huang's method has shown promise in harnessing this valuable information to enhance prediction accuracy.

When asked about his future plans, Huang expressed a strong commitment to continuing his exploration of AI and computer vision. He intends to pursue undergraduate research in AI during college and further expand his understanding of the field by taking relevant courses. With a clear vision of improvement opportunities for his research, including applying it to larger datasets and other data-rich medical fields, Huang's dedication to advancing AI-driven healthcare solutions is apparent.

Reflecting on his experience, Huang shared, "In this project, I gained a much deeper understanding of AI and computer vision. Now I am truly drawn to the beauty of AI."





ATHLETICS

Athletics Achievements and Championship Spirit

Congratulations to all our fall and winter coaches, our athletic teams and co-curricular programs for the incredible achievements that inspire us all! Not all seasons ended with a New England Championship like Boys Varsity Hockey or New England Champion runner-up like Girls Varsity Basketball, but many team and personal accomplishments are being measured by the *championship culture* being driven into our athletic programs. *Respect, sportsmanship, competitiveness, attitude, effort and appreciation* are these leading pillars. Our teams continue to demonstrate characteristics of true competitors without losing sight of the real value in sportsmanship and respect for the game. Until next season, I hope the legacy of sportsmanship, teamwork, and commitment continues to inspire the entire Kent School athletic community!

JOHN BARRETT, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR





EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY

Diverse Minds, Inclusive Future: Kent School's Neurodiversity Initiative in Action

Comprising members from various departments, including Admissions, EID (Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity), Wellness, and academic disciplines, Kent School's Neurodiversity Committee stands as a collective force with a shared mission: to redefine the educational experience for neurodivergent individuals at Kent. Rooted in personal connections to neurodiversity and a wealth of experience within educational environments, the committee is actively working to weave neurodiversity into the overall culture of Kent.

The term "neurodivergent" refers to individuals whose brain functioning is influenced by differences, resulting in unique strengths and challenges compared to those without such variations, according to Harvard Health Publishing. These differences may encompass medical disorders, learning disabilities, and other conditions. Potential strengths associated with neurodivergence include enhanced memory, ease in mentally visualizing three-dimensional objects, and proficiency in solving complex mathematical calculations mentally. Neurodivergent is not a medical designation; rather, it serves as a descriptive term, avoiding the use of normal and abnormal.

The goal of Kent's Neurodiversity Committee is to provide space for interdepartmental perspectives to consider the many ways students can demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and skills. It aims to deepen the shared understanding of neurodiversity through common vocabulary and examination of the cognitive processes contributing to student success. Additionally, the committee strives to identify and build on student strengths, aligning them with curricular goals. The ongoing negotiation of the tension between equality and equity,

particularly concerning Kent's student population and their diverse cognitive strengths and needs, is a critical aspect of the committee's mission. Ultimately, the objective is to share these understandings with the wider Kent community.

Accommodations Coordinator for the Academic Resource Center (ARC) April Pendergast stresses the necessity for a collaborative space for teachers. "What we need is a space for teachers to come together to troubleshoot, to triage, to celebrate," she asserts. This space acknowledges the evolving nature of the initiative, with different voices contributing to its formation.

Acknowledging this sentiment, Modern Languages faculty member Gonzalo Del Real expresses the importance of educators sharing their learning journeys. "We often teach what we love and what we do well, so to kids, it may seem like learning comes easily to us," he explains. "The reality is that we have learning struggles, and it is good for us to share them so that students and colleagues can connect with us as learners." Del Real further addresses the ongoing process of shaping the committee based on teachers' needs. To create an environment where teachers are not only aware of neurodiversity but equipped to tailor their teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles.

"Touching on the importance of translating accommodation plans into practical, day-to-day lesson planning, Pendergast says, 'We want to make sure that teachers are able to see an accommodation plan and know how to build not just their course, but also their day-to-day lessons appropriately for those kids.'"

This approach, as highlighted by Del Real, ensures that

“Trust your instincts and be honest with yourself and others about how you learn best.”

GONZALO DEL REAL, MODERN LANGUAGES FACULTY MEMBER

neurodivergent students don't feel like they're consistently struggling or failing in the learning process. “Trust your instincts and be honest with yourself and others about how you learn best,” he advises neurodivergent students, “You have amazing and caring classroom and ARC teachers here that can help you reach your learning goals; being open with them about how you learn will help them to help you.”

The committee's aim is to help teachers recognize and make the most of students' capabilities. “We're providing a platform for exchanging ideas and determining how to capitalize on those strengths,” Del Real explains. This approach shifts the focus from potential obstacles to celebrating and effectively using the abilities of neurodivergent students.

Del Real and Dance Program Director and Voice Instructor Heather Holohan-Guarnieri shared their personal stories of how neurodiversity has impacted their lives during a recent Chapel Talk.

Del Real offered a glimpse into the intricacies of his cognitive processes. He revealed, “I have something of a photographic memory. If I stare at something long enough, I remember most of what I see, and where it is.” Del Real's unconventional approach to learning, relying on visual memory rather than traditional study methods, powered him through high school and college. However, he candidly acknowledged the challenges this unique cognitive style presents in everyday tasks, recounting his tendency to over-purchase when sent to the store. Despite such challenges, Del Real's journey has shaped his teaching philosophy, based on the belief that diverse learning styles should

be celebrated. “The brain is wired for language. The thing is, how do we tap into your strengths and the unique way that you learn, so that we can help you to be successful?” he questions, emphasizing the committee's goal of understanding and leveraging individual strengths.

Heather Holohan-Guarnieri shared her struggles with numbers and math-related concepts. She recalled her efforts to memorize multiplication tables and complete math problems, eventually leading to her placement in “remedial math.” Despite her high expectations, Holohan-Guarnieri found herself in an internal battle with the subject. This struggle persisted into high school, where she experienced imposter syndrome when placed in an advanced math course. Her journey took a turn in college when cast as the “Mathemagician” in a play, leading her to adopt creative strategies for memorization. It wasn't until years later that she discovered dyscalculia, a learning challenge impacting one's ability to understand number-based information and math. Reflecting on this revelation, Holohan-Guarnieri shared, “It was as if a weight was lifted from me; oh my gosh, I'm not just terrible at math! My brain is just different.”

Through these personal narratives, the Neurodiversity Committee's initiatives gain a human dimension. These stories show the importance of acknowledging and celebrating neurodiversity, ensuring that every student's unique learning journey is not just recognized but embraced. By supporting a welcoming atmosphere of inclusion, the committee strives to create an educational environment that celebrates diversity and values the strengths of each individual.



ON CAMPUS

Fall Family Weekend

Kent School hosted its annual Fall Family Weekend in October. Parents joined their children on campus for a weekend filled with class attendance, sports events, and student performances. The weekend provided families with a firsthand glimpse into the vibrant life at Kent and offered valuable time to bond with their students.

EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY

The Class of 1971 Prize for Multicultural Equity

The first Class of 1971 Prize for Multicultural Equity at Kent School has been awarded to Nancy McLaughlin '24, whose outstanding dedication to supporting empathy, inclusion, and respect among her peers embodies the essence of the award. As a Community Life Steward, McLaughlin has demonstrated exemplary leadership, earning praise for her creative approach and unwavering commitment to social justice. Her thought-provoking workshop during Social Justice Week, titled "The History and Politics of Gossip," showcased her ability to analyze societal issues through a feminist lens. McLaughlin's proactive engagement in promoting equity and justice both within the Kent community and beyond has earned her well-deserved recognition. The award, which recognizes students who embody the values of multiculturalism and equity, is a testament to McLaughlin's remarkable contributions to her community.

Robin Bodell '71, a member of the committee responsible for establishing the prize in commemoration of the Class of 1971's 50th Reunion, joined Torrey Hall, Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity, in presenting the Prize.

"Whether through her diligent preparations for community discussions or her proactive engagement in promoting social justice, Nancy's actions echo the essence of this award," said Hall.





ARTS

Congratulations to the Winners of the Scholastic Art Awards

Kent School artists and designers were being honored for their impressive accomplishments at the Connecticut Regional Scholastic Art Awards showcasing their exceptional talent and creativity.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, founded in 1923, have served as a source of inspiration for creative teens nationwide for over a century. Recognized as the nation's longest-running and most prestigious program for young artists, this competition draws submissions from across the country.

Entries for these awards undergo a rigorous selection process, with judges unaware of the student's gender, age, ethnicity, or hometown. Leaders in the visual and literary arts conduct the judging, and evaluate works based on core values such as originality, skill, and the emergence of a personal voice or vision.

The students showcased not only artistic talent but also an understanding of fundamental values. Their exceptional works set them apart, reflecting dedication and passion in their art.

ATHLETICS

Welcome Back, Steve Gladstone '60

The start of the 2024-2025 school year will mark an emotional homecoming for Steve Gladstone '60, who is returning to Kent to coach Boys Rowing alongside Eric Houston '80.

Coach Gladstone's 50 plus year coaching career has resulted in 14 Intercollegiate Rowing Association (IRA) National Championships—six with Cal, five with Brown, and three with Yale. His career includes nine Pac-10 Championships and 15 Eastern Sprints titles. Gladstone has also received the U.S. Rowing Medal and earned a trifecta of Coach of the Year honors from the IRA, Ivy League, and the Eastern Association of Rowing Colleges (EARC). He is the winningest coach in collegiate rowing history.

During a break from working with the Northeastern University rowing team in Florida, Gladstone reflected on his return to Kent, the value of rowing, and his boundless love of coaching.



"My rowing coaching journey began years ago on the Housatonic. So many of the values that informed my life were learned under the guidance of Thomas Dixon Walker. To return to the same place, that has the same sounds, the same sights, and the same smells touches me deeply. Of course, coaching has been the center piece of my life and the opportunity to use the boats and the oars to affect the lives of young men and women is enormously compelling.

My years at Kent had as much darkness as light. I struggled, not due to the deficiency of the School, but what was transpiring with my family. I learned to endure, and more importantly, I learned compassion. Those two virtues have had a significant impact on my coaching.

The founder of our school, Fr. Sill, who was a coxswain at Columbia, put it on the Housatonic River for a reason. He loved rowing. We will keep his passion in the sport at the forefront of our minds as we move forward.

I am eager to become a part of the Kent community in the fall and to contribute to the people and culture that exist in that wonderful place."

- STEVE GLADSTONE



ON CAMPUS

Kent School's Commitment to Responsible AI Integration

In a world where technology continues to reshape every aspect of our lives, how are educational institutions adapting? Kent School stands at the forefront of this challenge with its newly established AI Task Force, a dedicated group focused on integrating cutting-edge technology into its traditional educational framework. This initiative shows Kent's commitment to evolving with the times and its dedication to equipping students with the skills needed to thrive in a digitally-driven future.

Artificial intelligence, commonly known as AI, represents a significant component of this technological evolution. At Kent School, the AI Task Force is not just about embracing AI for the sake of novelty; it's about ensuring that its integration is responsible, ethical, and ultimately serves the overarching educational objectives of the institution.

"One of the most notable aspects of Kent School's AI Task Force is its multidisciplinary approach," notes Academic Technology Integrator Rachel Sopko. Drawing upon the expertise of varied members of the Kent School community, the Task Force navigates the complexities of AI integration with a comprehensive perspective.

"AI is not new," Sopko continues, emphasizing that AI's journey is both long and storied. "When we talk about the timeline of AI, we can go back to 1950 when Alan Turing tricked humans into thinking that a machine was a human." Turing was an English mathematician and computer scientist, who is now recognized as the pioneer of both theoretical computer science and AI.

Sopko emphasizes the necessity for a multifaceted approach to AI integration, encompassing both handbook policies and friendly, accessible language. She delves into the implications of AI on educational practices, particularly regarding academic integrity and assessment. "What does academic integrity in the age of AI look like? What's okay to do? What's not?" Sopko asks, emphasizing the role of AI as a co-collaborator

in enhancing critical and creative thinking skills among students.

In addition to policy formulation, Sopko discusses ongoing efforts to educate teachers and students about AI and its implications. She outlines plans to engage students in discussions about AI and solicit their perspectives to inform further developments. Sopko emphasizes the need for clear guidelines and processes to vet AI tools endorsed by the school, ensuring their safety and suitability for educational purposes.

Central to the Task Force's mandate is the establishment of comprehensive guidelines governing AI usage within the Kent community. Sopko's emphasis on policy development underscores the Task Force's commitment to safeguarding data privacy and ensuring community safety in an era where AI's workings often remain opaque.

"The possibilities generative AI make available to a community like Kent's are nearly limitless," remarks Director of Marketing and Communications Martin Voss. "It's clear we are in an extremely nascent phase of our understanding and usage of these tools, which is why the diversity of voices, perspectives, and experiences present in the AI Task Force has been so valuable."

Voss emphasizes the importance of collaboration within the Task Force, highlighting how their collective efforts have resulted in the formulation of guidelines that prioritize Kent's humanist roots while leveraging the advancements in productivity and efficiency facilitated by generative AI. "The Task Force's rigorous intellectual and academic debates help crystallize that, no matter how exciting a generative AI tool might be, we need to continue to emphasize the relationships and community dynamics that



Krystyn Gutu '15 spoke to the Kent community about pervasive issue of bias in artificial intelligence.

have animated Kent since its founding," Voss explains.

Krystyn Gutu '15, an alumna deeply entrenched in ethical technology applications, brings a unique perspective to the conversation. Her insights on addressing bias in AI and the delicate balance between leveraging technology and preserving critical thinking skills highlight the broader ethical considerations inherent in AI integration. Gutu remarks, "AI can play a very useful role in education, but its role can easily be misused. Students are abusing tools like ChatGPT, and professors are having a hard time integrating such resources into their curriculums. We need to make space for technology and teach our students how to properly use it, without sacrificing their critical thinking skills."

Given her background in data science and experience in the tech industry, Gutu sees the integration of AI aligning with the goals of educational institutions. "The integration of AI can and often does align with the goals of educational institutions. Coding is becoming a lot easier for people to learn and implement and it's making research both quicker and a lot more accessible," she notes.

Noting the positive impacts of AI on

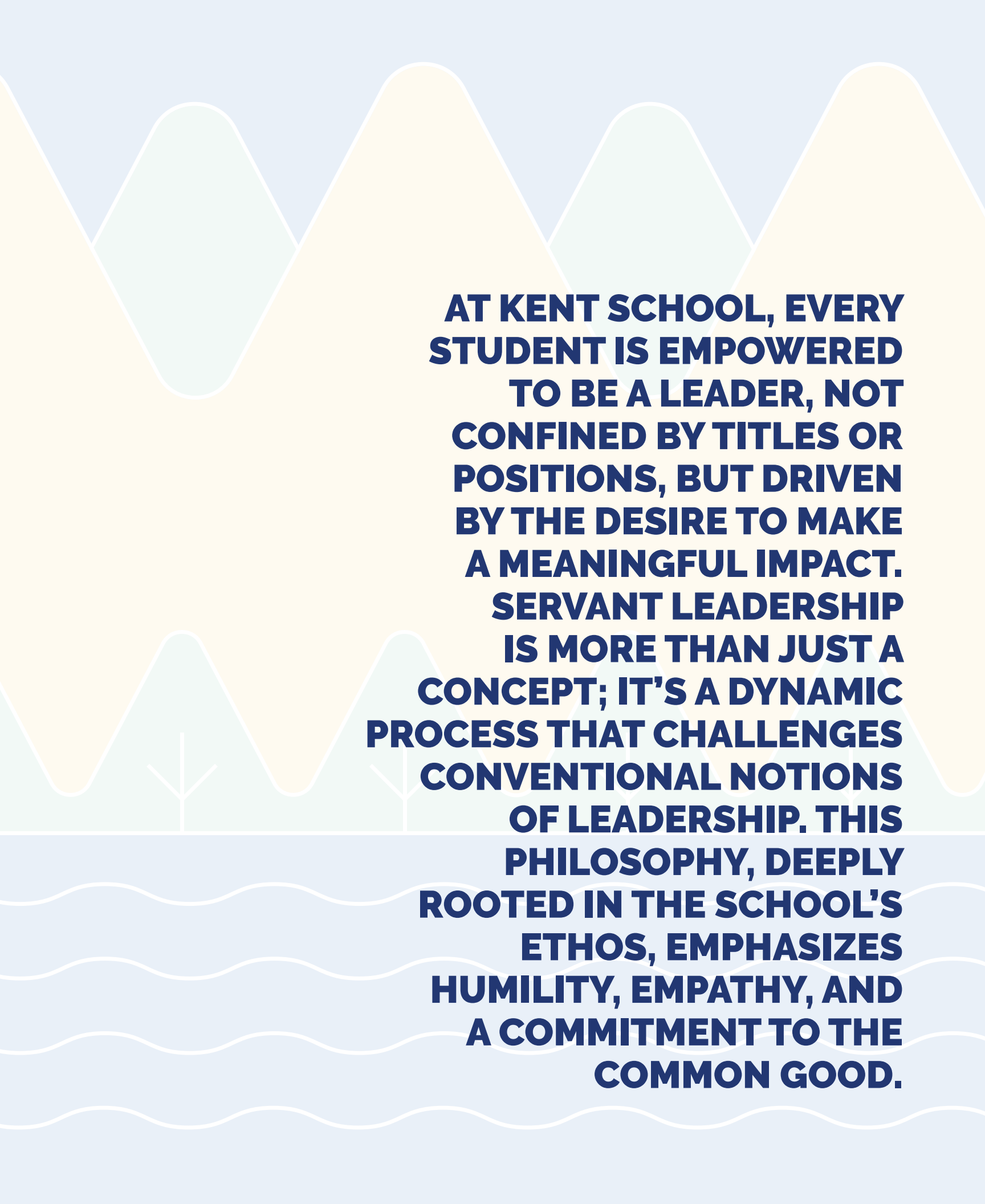
education, Gutu points out, "Students have access to so much valuable information within seconds. They have access to the way people think and live on the other side of the world. This is amazing. But they also have access to misinformation."

Regarding the collaboration between educational institutions and the tech industry, Gutu emphasizes, "It's very important for educational institutions to collaborate with the tech industry to stay abreast of AI advancements."

As AI becomes more integrated into education, Gutu foresees both challenges and opportunities. "Without the risk of sounding like a cliché, all challenges are an opportunity to do better and improve. So it's all about asking the right questions and inviting more people into the conversation," she suggests. Ultimately, the collaborative efforts of the AI Task Force are shaping a forward-looking approach to AI integration at Kent School. By supporting an environment where open discussions about AI can thrive, the Task Force ensures that students and staff alike are equipped with the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate a world increasingly shaped by digital technologies.



THE HEART OF KENT SCHOOL'S PHILOSOPHY



AT KENT SCHOOL, EVERY STUDENT IS EMPOWERED TO BE A LEADER, NOT CONFINED BY TITLES OR POSITIONS, BUT DRIVEN BY THE DESIRE TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL IMPACT. SERVANT LEADERSHIP IS MORE THAN JUST A CONCEPT; IT'S A DYNAMIC PROCESS THAT CHALLENGES CONVENTIONAL NOTIONS OF LEADERSHIP. THIS PHILOSOPHY, DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE SCHOOL'S ETHOS, EMPHASIZES HUMILITY, EMPATHY, AND A COMMITMENT TO THE COMMON GOOD.

As students navigate this path, they encounter challenges that require resilience, adaptability, and a deeper understanding of leadership through service. The Kent School community nurtures future generations of servant leaders through a comprehensive approach encompassing academic instruction, experiential learning, character development, and community engagement; a clear demonstration of the power of leadership when it is of service to others.

Director of Community Life Jason Coulombe explains that a servant leader focuses on helping individuals reach their full potential, which in turn enables the entire group to thrive. While articulating a vision is essential, the servant leadership mindset prioritizes developing relationships and supporting those under the leader's care. He believes this intentional focus on character sets Kent apart, contributing to a unique spirit of peer support. "It's intentional. It's about character, first and foremost," he says. "There is something about the way that the kids support one another here that I just have not seen in other schools."

PLANTING THE SEEDS: INSTILLING SERVANT LEADERSHIP VALUES EARLY

The journey begins early with the Community Life curriculum acting as a fertile ground for developing servant leadership traits. As Coulombe states, "The ultimate objective is to help young people identify who they are and develop a sense of what paths they want to follow."

This philosophy is deeply ingrained in the student experience at Kent. "Integrating servant leadership into our curriculum prepares our students to lead in a diverse and interconnected world," says Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Torrey Hall. "It's about understanding different perspectives, engaging with challenges with an open heart and mind, all while maintaining a spirit of service."

CULTIVATING SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN THE DAILY EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS

From academic pursuits to extracurricular activities, students are encouraged to embrace the values of service, empathy, and selflessness.

Hall shares, "One of the things that we do is connect with kids from every corner of the campus; for example, when I first came into this office, we formalized our affinity spaces. And we did that for many reasons, one of them is around this idea of servant leadership."

Hall notes that leadership roles within affinity groups, such as SOBU (Students of Black and Hispanic Union), serve an important purpose. "There's a president, there's a vice president, and there's a treasurer. Students understand that the rationale for these roles is to serve the needs of SOBU and the other members within SOBU," he explains. "They're not getting anything out of it; they are the chief workers of SOBU. And so they do it because they want to ensure that others have a great experience."

Hall emphasizes that the idea behind these leadership roles is for students who have been part of an affinity group for a few years to give back and serve. "These are, for the most part, fifth formers; this is their third year at Kent, and they've gotten so much out of it. Now it's time to give back."

Director of Community Service Megan Sokolnicki explains the importance of exposing students to diverse experiences and communities through service. "Most everything that we do with community service is not about fundraising," she explains. "Instead, we make community connections. Students interact with people who are different than they are. And sometimes that might not seem like it's service, but it exposes the kids to different perspectives."

Sokolnicki highlights the variety of service opportunities available to students, from working with children and the elderly to supporting the unhoused and those who are food insecure. "We're having engaging conversations with people all across the spectrum."

At Kent, students have a say in making service meaningful to them. "They can come up with their own ideas of what matters to them," Sokolnicki explains. "This approach lets students explore what they care about and find ways to help that feel true to who they are."

One example is the fourth form community life classes, where students can create and complete their own service projects between Thanksgiving and Christmas. "It's their idea, and they get to see it through from start to finish," continues Sokolnicki. This approach helps them feel more inspired and connected to the work.

A key program that promotes servant leadership values within the community is the Senior Council. As Director of Residential Life Cara Clarke explains, "Every Senior Council member is elected to their position through a vote from the entire community including students, faculty, and staff. These students choose to be on the Senior Council solely to give back," she explains. "Through initiatives such as cultural fairs, speaker series, community activities, wellness and nutrition, and enhancement of our clubs program, the Senior Council actively participates in the decision-making processes that contribute to the positive and supportive living environment at Kent School."

The Discipline Committee is another example within the School that embodies the servant leadership philosophy, focusing on the betterment of the community and providing equal opportunities for all students. "One of the reasons why there are students on that committee is it provides an opportunity for them to serve in a way that supports their peers," Hall says. "If you have a Disciplinary Committee case, form representatives have to support you in that they have to represent you. And so part of that is to advocate on your behalf. They are serving the purpose of their role. These are times when students need support. And it's great to see their form leader or their form rep be there for them."

SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

At Kent, the philosophy of servant leadership shapes the way teachers approach their roles as educators and mentors. Dean of Faculty Cate O'Dwyer emphasizes the importance of servant leadership in developing and mentoring teachers, embracing a sense of

responsibility and service within the academic community. “Teaching and servant leadership go hand-in-hand. Teachers want to work hard to help their students achieve success, not to dictate or control. I focus on helping teachers achieve their own goals and become the best versions of themselves,” she explains.

This commitment to servant leadership is evident in the various initiatives and support systems designed to foster growth and development among faculty members. O'Dwyer highlights the practical ways in which servant leadership is integrated into the academic community, stating, “At Kent, we prioritize supporting faculty members’ professional development ambitions. We pair all new teachers with experienced mentors who see themselves as serving our new faculty. Additionally, our robust professional growth program involves a team of faculty members working together to help each teacher in the program achieve their individual professional learning goals. All of these initiatives demonstrate our desire to serve our faculty and support their growth.”

By prioritizing the growth and well-being of teachers, Kent creates an environment where educators feel supported and empowered to serve their students more effectively. This, in turn, fosters a culture of servant leadership that permeates the classroom and beyond.

Teachers are encouraged to embody servant leadership in their interactions with students, colleagues, and the broader school community. “First and foremost, this is a community in which we treat one another with respect and want the best for one another,”

O'Dwyer explains. “In the teacher and student relationship, that’s quite a natural fit; there is of course a power imbalance between those two roles, one that we pay close attention to and consider carefully in all our work, but when the ultimate goal is student success, the teacher naturally works to serve the student.”

The spirit of servant leadership also extends to the relationships among faculty members, promoting a sense of collaboration, support, and interconnectedness. “Between adults, the same sense of selflessness and interconnectedness is crucial; when colleagues need help, whether it’s something big, like spending a year accomplishing a teaching goal, or something small, like getting coverage when they have a sick kid, we step up for one another. We work for one another, regardless of any institutional hierarchy,” O'Dwyer explains.

The School ensures that the principles of empathy, selflessness, and growth are not only taught but also modeled by the faculty. This holistic educational experience prepares students to become compassionate leaders

who prioritize the needs of others and work toward the betterment of their communities.

BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY

In the close-knit community of a boarding school, servant leadership takes on a particularly significant role. The unique challenges and opportunities presented by living and learning together in a residential setting highlight the need for leaders who prioritize the well-being of others and offer a sense of family among students and staff alike.

Coulombe emphasizes the significance of servant leadership in a boarding school setting, noting that it involves looking out for one another, which is crucial in a boarding school where students become like family.

O'Dwyer highlights the critical role of servant leadership in small communities like boarding schools: “Servant leadership is important everywhere! But particularly so in small communities, where the success of every individual member depends upon any



number of others. In environments like this, we succeed when we support one another; leaders who view themselves as serving those they lead are critical to the success of an interconnected community like ours," she explains.

Within the residential community, servant leadership takes on particular significance. As Clarke asserts, "Servant leadership means leading with the primary focus on serving others. Our community, which is filled with young people from all over the world, will only be able to thrive and grow if our student leaders display this mindset."

Clarke emphasizes the crucial role of dorm parents in ensuring the growth, safety, and well-being of students living away from home. "All dorm parents at Kent know and understand that they are an integral part of every student's growth, safety, and well-being while here at Kent," she explains. "Dorm parents work to get to know all the students in their dorms to understand their needs and backgrounds. This happens through their weekly duty, advisor meetings, dorm activities, and meaningful connections in their shared living space."

TEAMWORK AND SERVICE ON THE FIELD

In the realm of athletics, servant leadership takes center stage, challenging conventional notions of individual success and competitive drive. Girls Varsity Soccer Coach and Assistant Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Olivia Pena emphasizes the importance of servant leadership in building teams.

"A high-performing, collaborative, and trusting team cannot function without servant leaders, who empower their teammates," Pena explains. "By prioritizing the needs of the team, servant leaders communicate transparently

and collaborate fluidly with their peers, fostering a strong sense of belonging and trust."

Pena highlights how servant leaders create a culture of empathy through their actions and attitudes: "Honesty, transparency, and the knowledge that every member has your best interest in mind are hallmarks of servant leadership. When present on a team, servant leadership enables every member to contribute more fully, streamlining coaching, accountability, and overall team dynamics."

Athletic Director John Barrett also advocates for this philosophy, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing the team over personal goals: "Servant leadership is about leaving your personal goals behind and focusing strictly on the team."

The School emphasizes the importance of nurturing relationships and creating a culture that reflects its values, according to Barrett. "It's crucial to connect with others to ensure the locker room atmosphere aligns with the school's mission and values," he says. "By fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported, they encourage good team dynamics."

Barrett also stresses the need for a culture where students and coaches are great teammates both on and off the field. He expects everyone to support each other in every aspect of school life. This approach encourages responsibility and caring for others, putting teamwork above personal success.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Owen Maher '24, captain of the Boys Varsity Ice Hockey team, embodies the principles of servant leadership both on and off the ice. He defines servant leadership as "putting

your peers' needs in front of your own and motivating them to reach their full potential."

Mahe's commitment to supporting his fellow students is evident in his participation in the Kent Peer Orientation Program (KPOP), designed to help new students transition into boarding school life. "As a new student my junior year, I felt as though I had a good understanding as to what these incoming third formers were feeling and could be a strong helping hand," he explains.

As a team captain, Maher acknowledges the challenges that come with leading his peers. "Maintaining the energy and willingness to motivate your peers while keeping yourself in check can be extremely hard to balance," he admits. However, he emphasizes the importance of staying strong as a leader, noting, "Your peers are looking to you for guidance and selflessness. One principle I try to play by is putting my body on the line for the betterment of the team."

Mahe's experience as a leader has taught him valuable lessons about prioritizing the needs of the group over individual desires. His belief in the transformative power of serving others is captured in his statement, "I think an important rule of thumb to live by is that your life is only as good as how you treat others." He advises aspiring leaders to "first gain an understanding of what their team or community needs, then assist them in reaching their goals."

Mahe's dedication to servant leadership serves as an inspiration to his peers and a testament to the values instilled by Kent School.

Amenaide Brown '24 exemplifies the spirit of servant leadership through her involvement in various service projects and initiatives at



Kent. She provides insight into the School's commitment to community and altruism, highlighting the "weekend bag" project, which aims to support local food pantries.

"Every week, we have a group of students come together to prepare bags for people facing food insecurity," Brown explains. She emphasizes the dual impact of such projects, noting, "Not only are you giving back to those communities, but it's a way to meet other people doing the same thing, which is a great way to engage in service."

Brown's understanding of servant leadership has evolved through her experiences at Kent, particularly through interactions with older students who have served as role models in service leadership. She highlights the egalitarian approach to service at Kent, where everyone is treated equally, regardless of status. Brown notes the importance of humility and giving back to the community as fundamental aspects of servant leadership.

Through her actions and reflections, Brown demonstrates the impact of Kent's servant leadership philosophy on its students.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Despite the impact of Kent's servant leadership philosophy, challenges remain in promoting and sustaining this ethos. Coulombe acknowledges the need to combat societal norms and misconceptions about leadership that may conflict with the school's values. "Quite often our young people enter our community with a definition of leadership that we don't subscribe to," he explains. "Getting young people to really think about what leadership actually means helps them access our approach to servant leadership."

Clarke highlights the developmental journey involved in instilling servant leadership qualities among teenagers, stressing the importance of patient teaching, positive role modeling, and ongoing learning. "Teenagers are still learning to consider the needs of others alongside their own. Empathy and selflessness are skills that need to be nurtured and developed over time," she explains. "As

dorm parents, advisors, and student leaders, our role is to guide students in understanding the value of putting the well-being of others before oneself. We can only do this effectively by taking the time to get to know each student as an individual and meeting them where they are in their growth journey."

Clarke emphasizes the importance of making students feel valued and heard: "To meet community needs, students need to feel as if there is at least one adult on campus who knows them well and understands what they are bringing to the community. Once they feel this sense of connection and support, the community can begin to help them see the value in giving back to others and how this can help to strengthen the overall community and enhance their experience as a Kent student."

Kent is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students to contribute to the community's well-being, regardless of background or status. Coulombe explains, "Everybody can and should eventually provide meaningful servant leadership here at the school." By offering a wide range of avenues for student involvement, Kent ensures that every student has the chance to develop and demonstrate their servant leadership skills.

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Kent School's commitment to servant leadership extends far beyond the school's walls, shaping the lives of alumni who continue to embody these values in their personal and professional endeavors. The supportive environment helps them navigate obstacles and emerge as confident, caring leaders. As alumni exemplify the values of servant leadership in their personal and professional endeavors, they carry forward a legacy of selflessness, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to the greater good.

Adwoa Baffoe-Bonnie '17, currently pursuing a career in medicine with a focus on regional differences in healthcare delivery, reflects on her journey at Kent and the impact of servant leadership. "Kent instilled in me the values of servant leadership first through

fostering my independence and self-discipline," she shares. "I remember feeling so amazed at what I could accomplish as a student at that time. Kent was my first real venture into what I call 'the grind' as I juggled the rigorous curriculum, extracurricular activities, community engagement, and social life all at once."

Baffoe-Bonnie highlights the importance of her roles and responsibilities at Kent in nurturing her understanding of servant leadership. "Serving as the North Dorm Prefect during sixth form year, I was entrusted by both my peers and faculty with the task of fostering a supportive and inclusive community within the dormitory," she explains. "In this role, I served as a mentor and a friend to younger students, providing guidance and support as they navigated their own challenges."

Beyond her medical studies, Baffoe-Bonnie actively engages in volunteer work and mentorship. "I'm currently involved with volunteer work to promote sustainability in the hospital system," she shares. "Recently, I contributed to collecting and sorting medical supplies that were sent out to Ukraine and another shipment that was sent to Gaza for medical relief in these areas."

Baffoe-Bonnie's passion for servant leadership shines through her role as a mentor and co-director for the Duke Health Professions Recruitment and Exposure Program (HPREP). "HPREP is a mentorship initiative for underrepresented minority high school students aspiring to pursue healthcare careers," she explains. "I coordinate research and writing workshops, career panels, and hands-on clinical skills labs for our bright cohort of students from predominantly African-American, Hispanic/Latino, or Native American backgrounds."

When asked about her advice for current students on incorporating servant leadership into their lives, Baffoe-Bonnie emphasizes the importance of authenticity. "My advice would be to seek out experiences that you are truly interested in and passionate about," she says. "It makes it a lot easier to devote your time to something that you actually enjoy rather than

something you feel forced to do.”

Baffoe-Bonnie’s journey represents the lasting impact of Kent’s servant leadership philosophy, as she continues to make a difference in the lives of others through her chosen career path and dedication to mentorship.

Jess Dannhauser ’96, New York City Administration for Children’s Services Commissioner, credits his Kent education and early experiences for shaping his understanding and practice of servant leadership.

Dannhauser’s time as a counselor after his first year at Kent at New York’s Boys and Girls Harbor Camp was a defining moment that set him on the path to a career dedicated to serving others. He vividly remembers the immersive experience, where he was entrusted with the care of young campers. “The kids were the best. I ended up spending six summers there, made great friends, had amazing mentors, and knew then that working with children and families would be my life’s work.”

While Kent provided service opportunities like volunteering at a nursing facility, Dannhauser found the most profound examples of selfless service through the actions of his coaches “We had extraordinary models of service, in particular for me, Mr. Gowan and Mr. Walters. Our basketball team’s record my junior year, when I rarely played, was 18-5, if I recall correctly. As a senior and team captain, our record was something like 5-18. We couldn’t have been more different in our level of success, but the coaches remained the same; focused on the fundamentals, interested in our development as players and people, and always joyous in their service. No job was too big or too small.”

The commitment and joy that Mr. Gowan and Mr. Walters displayed in their roles, regardless of the team’s success, exemplified the essence of servant leadership for Dannhauser. “I’ve endeavored to emulate that steadiness, servanthood, and joy in my leadership,” he says. This experience taught

him the importance of remaining dedicated to one’s values and purpose, even in the face of challenges or setbacks.

Dannhauser’s approach to servant leadership is deeply rooted in his belief that true service requires a genuine connection and understanding of the communities and individuals being served. He stresses the importance of listening to those with different experiences and allowing their perspectives to guide decision-making and leadership. “Too often, in my opinion, service is synonymous with volunteerism or doing something good in the world in addition to our core career or life responsibilities,” he explains. “I’ve learned that servant leadership requires a mutuality—walking alongside— and willingness to be vulnerable and open.”

As Commissioner, Dannhauser prioritizes the well-being and growth of those he serves.

His commitment to servant leadership is evident in his efforts to promote evidence-based approaches, amplify the voices of parents, and create programs that provide long-term support for youth in foster care. However, Dannhauser also acknowledges the challenges of practicing servant leadership in his field. “For the last nearly 20 years, I have worked in the field of child welfare which is situated at the convergence of some of society’s most important priorities and values: the need to ensure the protection of our children and the need to ensure the sanctity and integrity of family. Our decisions, no matter our intent, always have the potential to do harm,” he explains, highlighting the complex nature of his work and the importance of remaining aware, honest, and humble in his leadership.

In his opinion, educational institutions like Kent play a crucial role in nurturing servant



leaders who can drive positive social impact. "Kent and other educational institutions are at their best when finding opportunities to have students 'jump in' and immerse themselves in a community or issue and stay in it awhile," Dannhauser says. "It certainly changed my life."

Dannhauser's advice for current Kent students and future leaders in cultivating a mindset of servant leadership: "Find a place where you can get involved. Stay open. Too many of us believe we've got the world figured out but life is a lot more meaningful when we are part of something bigger than ourselves that requires us to be vulnerable and continuously evolve."

Ted Bassett '41 shows how much a Kent education and the lasting impact of servant leadership can shape a person's life. Bassett's early years at Kent, especially under the guidance of Fr. Sill, taught him the importance of discipline, respect, and self-reliance. "Those weren't just words at Kent; they were

a way of life. We all had our parts to play and it taught us the importance of contributing to something bigger than ourselves," he remembers. "Fr. Sill created a culture of hard work, discipline, contribution, study, and community."

Bassett's time at Kent set the stage for his impressive career, which spans military service, law enforcement, and the thoroughbred racing industry. As a Marine officer in World War II, Bassett's resilience and leadership were put to the test, earning him the Purple Heart and the Presidential Unit Citation. His later roles as Kentucky's Deputy Director of Public Safety and Director of the Kentucky State Police showcase his commitment to serving others and driving positive change.

During his long tenure at the Keeneland Association, Bassett's servant leadership philosophy was instrumental in guiding the organization through a period of significant growth. His dedication to the racing community extended to numerous leadership positions, including president of Breeders' Cup Ltd. and chairman of the World Series Racing Championship.

"Kent prepared me for what would come next," Bassett reflects. "The discipline, the respect, the work ethic that we lived by under Fr. Sill and Fr. Chalmers, prepared me for my time in the Marine Corps and everything that would follow."

Bassett's journey serves as proof of the lasting impact of Kent School and the life-

changing power of servant leadership. His message to the next generation is simple but meaningful: "Be disciplined, be focused, and take care of one another. That's what Kent taught me, and it's a lesson I carry with me to this day."

Bassett's life and achievements show how the ideas of servant leadership, cultivated during his time at Kent, have guided him through a remarkable career dedicated to serving others and driving positive change. His story is a powerful example of the lifelong impact of a Kent education and the lasting influence of mentors like Fr. Sill, who lived out the spirit of servant leadership and inspired generations of students to follow in their footsteps.

Servant leadership at Kent School is a transformative experience that shapes students' lives, empowering them to become compassionate leaders who prioritize the needs of others. Through a carefully curated curriculum, vibrant residential life, and myriad service opportunities, Kent cultivates a generation of humble, empathetic leaders committed to making a positive impact on their communities and the world.

In a world that often prioritizes individual success and personal gain, Kent School's unwavering dedication to servant leadership offers a refreshing and much-needed alternative. By nurturing a generation of leaders who understand the value of empathy, compassion, and service to others, Kent is not only shaping the lives of its students but also contributing to the creation of a more just and equitable society.

As we all face increasingly complex challenges, the need for servant leaders has never been greater. Kent's dedication to nurturing these leaders serves as an inspiration and a call to action for educational institutions worldwide. By embracing the principles of servant leadership and integrating them into the fabric of their communities, schools have the power to shape a generation of change-makers who will make a lasting impact on the world.





Memory Lane

Inspired to learn about Kent's traditions, practices and customs—some long lost, some still beloved—Larry Gile '73 mined the School's archives and interviewed dozens of alumni to unearth a treasure trove of history and memories.



Dams and Water

This article looks at the school's early water supply and its evolution as the school grew. In fact, a glass of water may well have played a key role in determining the school's current location.

The school spent its first academic year, 1906-07, in an old farmhouse rented from Clarence Fuller, several miles down River Road. According to the *Kent News* of Sept. 28, 1926, what little indoor plumbing there was failed during several freezing weeks leaving the pioneer scholars to "wash in the barn, using a horse trough and buckets." In a *Kent News* interview with Clarence Fuller from Feb. 28, 1928, he described running water on the home's third floor as "available, but not reliable."

To remedy this and other shortcomings, Fr. Sill set out to find a property in Kent to locate the growing school. In his memoirs from 1907, he mentions stopping in at Miss (Lizzie) Fuller's farm for a glass of water and a visit. This encounter ended with Fr. Sill offering to buy Miss Fuller's farm and his hurriedly heading into town to secure the needed \$50.00 down payment. The *Kent News* of Dec. 12, 1928 says "there was no plumbing in the house, just the spring water pipe in the kitchen" which, according to the *Kent News* of Oct. 9, 1955 came from a spring on the slopes of Algo south of the Boat House (at the time located on the Algo side of River Road about 300 yards south of the school's back entrance). Fr. Sill notes in his memoirs the spring water supplied a new 750-gallon tank in the attic which in turn supplied drinking fountains on each floor of the farmhouse as well as lavatories.

The *Kent Quarterly* of March 1914 reported the spring had given out during dry Septembers in three of the past seven years, necessitating the importation of water in milk cans. This article also said that water for "other purposes" was now pumped from Macedonia Creek (dammed in 1913 by the



school's facilities manager, George Baker) to a 35,000-gallon reservoir on the hill back of the Form House – present day Chapel Hill. The original pumphouse was thought to be located near where Mattison Auditorium stands.

Pumping required operation of a gas-powered pump an average of 10 hours a day and when it failed for two days the school “barely escaped a water famine in bitterly cold weather.” Another drawback to the system was the risk of a catastrophic fire on a campus populated mainly by wooden structures.

Plans for a new water system were first discussed in the March 1914 *Kent Quarterly* in which Fr. Sill described plans for a system quite like that eventually built in 1927. He described the proposed system as “the most essential improvement required at the present time.”

Progress toward a reliable drinking water supply was reported in the Sept. 25, 1924 *Kent News* with the purchase of 170 acres of timber land on Skiff Mountain which the Choggam Brook runs through. The school planned to

dam the brook and pipe water to the school at 65 pounds of pressure, a decided improvement over the then current rate of 30 pounds. Fr. Sill's sense of urgency was heightened by results of a physician-lead study presented to the school's Fathers' Association meeting in the spring of 1926 which suggested “that the water supply was not satisfactory.”

The *Kent News* of Sept. 28, 1926 reported a gift of \$20,000 from the Hartley Corporation for the “establishment and maintenance of a water works system.” The *Kent News* of Oct. 26, 1926 reported that excavation of the dam and reservoir has been started by Taylor & Buckingham in New Milford. The dam was made of poured concrete connecting to “twelve-foot lengths of six-inch bell and spigot cast iron pipe.” The pipe was buried in a five-foot deep trench (requiring blasting) that ran 9,000 feet paralleling Skiff Mountain Road to the large tank on Chapel Hill. Since the reservoir was 180 feet above the Chapel Hill tank, the system would be pump-less, with gravity doing the work. The *Kent News*

of May 8, 1929 reports the project's successful conclusion as well as Fr. Sill's pledge to “place a slab on the reservoir giving a permanent tribute to Mrs. Hartley Jenkins (owner of the Hartley Corp.) for making this most important factor in our daily life possible.” A recent search of the dam yielded no such memorial. It appears this new system supplied both the school's drinking and non-drinking water needs.

The Sept. 30, 1956 *Kent News* explained the presence of a drilling rig on what was then the “Midget Field,” which lies on the campus side of the Faculty Village. The well was designed to serve as back up for what was hoped would be a never-dry reservoir on Skiff Mountain. Contrary to these hopes, the reservoir had briefly run dry in the fall of 1955.

Following completion of the new system, Fr. Sill wrote in his memoirs: “I rejoice to have a pure water supply that the boys can drink without any doctoring it up with chemicals. It is a source of great satisfaction to me to have this supply.”



Nowadays

- The Choggam Brook dam and reservoir still exist, although it is heavily silted and no longer serves as the school's water supply. The pipeline predates and runs under the Skiff Mountain home built by beloved faculty member Bill Armstrong. The property's deed memorializes water rights allowing the home's owner to take water from the still-functioning section of pipeline. The picture shows what is likely a shut-off valve from the original system located on the Armstrong property.
- The artesian well of 1936 no longer exists and today is a flower bed.
- Science Department Chair Jesse Klingebiel, as seen below, is standing on Chapel Hill by the ruins of what was likely the 55,000 cistern/tank previously mentioned that was torn down about 10 years ago. He holds a section of rusted pipe that likely once routed water to one of the school's buildings.
- In 1991, when the Boys' and Girls' campuses were consolidated, a much larger, state of the art system replaced the older system. The system features underground 80,000-gallon tanks with backup generators.



Opposite page, top left:
Boys cutting ice in 1919

Opposite page/This page:
Completed dam in 1927

This page, top, center right:
The dam's current state, 2024

This page, top right:
Old shut off valve for the reservoir

This page, bottom:
Jesse Klingebiel at Chapel Hill

The Bequest Which Secured Our School



By Robert F. Ober Jr. '54

A Preface

For those attracted to history, the paragraphs which follow introduce an individual less known, but perhaps more important, in ensuring the school's success than anyone but its Founder, Fr. Frederick Herbert Sill OHC, namely, Mrs. Sylvia Ann Howland Wilks, the daughter of the once-described "richest woman in America," Hetty Green. Having married Matthew Astor Wilks in 1909, Sylvia left a bequest of \$2 million dollars to the school in 1951, at a time when it was struggling with an endowment of less than \$100,000. But among the individuals and institutions benefiting from Sylvia's largesse, why Kent, when neither she nor her mother had any discernible interest in or connection to the school. This was a mystery which neither Pater nor Fr. John Oliver Patterson, the Headmaster at the time, nor anyone else since has managed to unravel. In this article, I offer a solution. In a subsequent *Kent Quarterly*, I will describe how Fr. Patterson deployed Sylvia's gift to dramatically improve the school, including by setting the stage for the campus on the Hill.

Sylvia (right) on her wedding day with her mother Hetty Green (left) and her husband Matthew Astor Wilks (center). Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

e of Marriage.

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Part I

By the end of World War II, Fr. Sill was acutely aware that his school was encountering financial difficulties. In an article published in the October 3, 1945, issue of the *Kent News* entitled "Pater Recalls," he wrote: "Way back then in 1914, I said we ought to have an endowment fund-\$200,000. We have half of that now (1945). I do not know why the other half doesn't come in—but it is not here in the treasury." He added that, in the 1914 report, he had noted that Loomis School, which later became one of the school's main competitors, had an endowment fund of \$2 million at its very founding.

In 1946, Kent School was in midst of constructing the Administration Building, with its Boardwalk facing the Housatonic River. After I had returned to Kent in 1987 following a Foreign Service career, I recall William H. Armstrong, the legendary History teacher and one-time "hours board" administrator, describing the school's plight in 1946. "I was working with the boys to reseed the courtyard [in front of the Boardwalk] essentially largely filled with gravel, and I went to Chalmers [then Headmaster] and said, 'We need lots of grass seed.' Chalmers replied, 'Bill, we have no money, not even for grass seed.'" Bill Armstrong then related how he took several "hours" boys to the school's barn, swept up chaff from the bales feeding the school's cows, and filled several burlap bags to get the needed seed.

A comment from Fr. William Chalmers' short autobiography (which the Head of Harvard Westlake School, the successor of the school for which Chalmers left Kent in 1949 to become its Headmaster, recently provided), summarized the situation he had encountered at Kent: "these were largely the 'war years', he wrote, "presenting the myriad of problems of sustaining a school during these trying times."

Of course, Pater's own vision of a school catering to boys from families of modest

means (including some recommended by his clerical friends from families without any means at all) accounted mainly for the absence of a robust endowment. In a profile of him appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly* in October 1941, Pater is asked whether his jobs and self-help requirements would be transferable to schools for boys "from luxurious homes." Certainly, Pater replied, "and they will all have to come to it for necessary economy, if for no other reason. Endowments bring less and less, and there are fewer and fewer well-off people able to pay fat fees."

The school's endowment figures during the 1940s and early '50s are not easily found, either at the Business Office or the archive, yet \$89,000 appears on one document from 1951, about the time the Wilks bequest became public.

Hetty Green, Sylvia's mother, was born in Vermont in 1855. Her parents, Quaker by faith, were Edward Robinson and Abby Howland. Abby was the granddaughter of Isaac Howland who, as a mariner and sea captain, founded a firm in New Bedford that developed "the greatest whaling fleet in America." The first Howland had arrived on the Mayflower. With Isaac's death in 1854, control of the firm passed to Edward Robinson who then married Abby Howland.

Edward Green, a 46-year-old native of Vermont who had lived abroad representing trading firms in China and Manila, and was longing to retire, married Hetty, 32 years old, in New York in 1867. After a brief stay in his Manhattan apartment, the couple decided to move to London. There Hetty gave birth to a son, also Edward, in 1868, then to daughter Sylvia Ann Howland in 1871.

Young Edward would become a major political figure in Texas, having settled in Midland, on Hetty's instruction, to run the Midland Railroad which she had acquired

in 1892. He subsequently rose to the top of the Texas Republican Party, acquiring the honorific title "Colonel Green." He is cited in biographies of Hetty as confirmation of her penury and her legal acumen. As an adolescent, the Colonel received a cork leg to replace one amputated due to Hetty's alleged reluctance to secure timely medical care. Despite the handicap, a burden for a two-hundred-pound adult, he took on whatever tasks his mother dictated, be they in Boston, Chicago (where her real estate holdings were extensive), Midland or New York. Hetty also imposed restrictive agreements on her children, preventing the alienation of the family's capital to their potential heirs. When Colonel Green died in 1936, he left behind a wife (a mistress from many years earlier) who had to settle, after a legal battle, for the Colonel's own substantial holdings. Hetty later imposed a prenuptial agreement on Sylvia's spouse, on the eve of their wedding, without informing her daughter.

On returning from London in 1885, Hetty resided initially with Mr. Green in Vermont, their native state, where the two children were placed in a school associated with an Episcopal parish. She had a family plot at that parish where she intended herself to be buried, according to her son. Her husband, dying in 1902, would in fact be buried there.

Resettled in New York City after London and Vermont, a separation occurred, Mr. Green choosing to live alone in a hotel, or at one of his many clubs (though primarily at the Union Cub on the upper East Side); and Hetty, in turn, deciding to reside with her children in boarding houses, in Brooklyn or Hoboken, avoiding taxes being her abiding objective... this becoming more challenging, obviously, with the enactment of a Federal income tax in 1914.

Living later in a rented apartment on Manhattan's 95th Street, Hetty developed a

close friendship with a wealthy Manhattan woman, Annie Leary, whose philanthropy to Catholic causes, especially in Manhattan's lower East Side, had gained her the title "Papal Countess," bestowed by Pope Leo XIII. Residing in Manhattan, or at her brother's "cottage" in Newport during the summer "season," Annie encouraged Hetty to put her two children in Catholic schools, initially in Brooklyn, later in others, sending Edward to St. John's College at Fordham, and Sylvia to the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Annie's own father had been "the fashionable hatter of Old New York...his Store in Astor House was the resort of the beaux and merchants," according to a press report from Ontario, which added that he had bought his furs and pelts from the original Astors (*Saturday Blade*, February 20, 1909).

Annie had entertained Sylvia, then 36 years old, at one of her dinner parties. She soon found a 65-year-old bachelor, Matthew Astor Wilks, a Manhattanite who also enjoyed the "season" in Newport, for Hetty's then somewhat awkward daughter. Matthew's mother Eliza, born in Manhattan in 1818, was the daughter of Dorothea Astor who had married a Langdon; Matthew's father, also a Matthew, born in London, had emigrated with Eliza to a small town west of Toronto, Canada, where he began accumulating, with her resources, extensive tracts of land and, ultimately, property in Manhattan, including an office building at 30 Wall Street. His grandfather, yet another Matthew, had been active as a cleric in the London Missionary Society, and, according to one source, was one of its founders.

The longtime bachelor and Sylvia married two years later, in February 1909, their wedding occurring at an Episcopal Church in Morristown, New Jersey, a special train delivering Hetty and their guests from Manhattan.

With Sylvia settled, Hetty maintained her focus on her burgeoning investments (then publicly assumed to be on the order of \$100,000,000) from offices she borrowed in downtown Manhattan, near Wall Street's

Trinity Church, which had sponsored and funded St. Chrysostom's Chapel, largely serving lower Manhattan's poor, and which had been founded by Pater's father, the Reverend Thomas Sill, who had presided over it until his death in 1910.

Searching the materials published on both Hetty and her daughter, I was surprised to find no indication during their lifetimes of support for educational institutions, apart from the support Hetty had provided for her own children. Their gifts, generally small, were made mainly to relatives or friends in difficulty. Yet there is some evidence of what might be deemed a progressive mindset, at least by the standards of their era. Although Hetty gave few interviews, and perhaps Sylvia but one, Hetty had voiced strong support for President Theodore Roosevelt and his administration, expressing her belief, in a Boston Herald interview, that "the poor have no chance in this country... No wonder Anarchists and Socialists are so numerous." And references to both Hetty and Sylvia frequently mention Annie Leary's influence and her own philanthropy in lower Manhattan.

Hetty died in 1910, stricken first at Annie Leary's Manhattan place. Regarding her burial, Colonel Edward let it be known that "once, ten years ago, Mother had us take her to Jersey City where she was baptized in the Episcopal faith...because my father was an Episcopalian." She was buried in her family's plot in Vermont. A local observer noted, after the burial, that the plot had been fully paid for, perhaps not unimportant to Hetty.

Sylvia Wilks nee Green became a widow herself in 1926 and, like her mother, never remarried. Her own wealth grew with an inheritance from her husband Matthew of \$1,500,000. Thanks to her mother's close friend, Countess Annie, Sylvia found that she had cast her lot with a man steeped in Anglican culture, such as was beginning to circulate about Pater himself, not only due to his Anglo-Catholic faith but also to his commitment to building a school drawing on English models, featuring rowing, too, having

himself been the coxswain of winning crews at Columbia University before entering seminary.

At his death, Matthew Astor Wilks was described in one obituary as the member of eight Manhattan private clubs. His address was given as West 81st Street, which may have been Sylvia's residence acquired after her mother's death. Sylvia had intended to bury Mr. Wilks in her family's Vermont cemetery plot, yet that didn't occur. During their years together, she had learned that her spouse had built a Wilks family mausoleum at the Episcopal St. James Church in Hyde Park, New York. In an online report issued by a service in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, where Wilks' parents had settled (his mother Manhattan-born, his father in London), it called the mausoleum the "Astor Vault" and noted that Sylvia had left \$20,000 to St. James in her "next to last will for the upkeep and maintenance of the burial vault of Matthew Wilks and of the plot in which it is located."

Fr. Sill's closest ally among the OHC monks, when starting Kent, turned out to be the Hyde Park-born Fr. Sturges Allen OHC who had grown up with the St. James Church. After Fr. Allen died in Africa in 1929 administering the Order's school, Fr. Sill established a side-altar in his friend's memory in St. Joseph's Chapel, which was unveiled with the Chapel's consecration in 1935. St. James Church also honored Fr. Allen with an inscribed stone memorial. Could Fr. Sill have visited the Hyde Park cemetery for the inauguration of that memorial? This we haven't been able to confirm.

Fr. Patterson succeeded Fr. Chalmers as Headmaster and Rector in 1949. After an introductory visit to the campus in September to meet Pater, he and his family returned in November to settle permanently at the school.

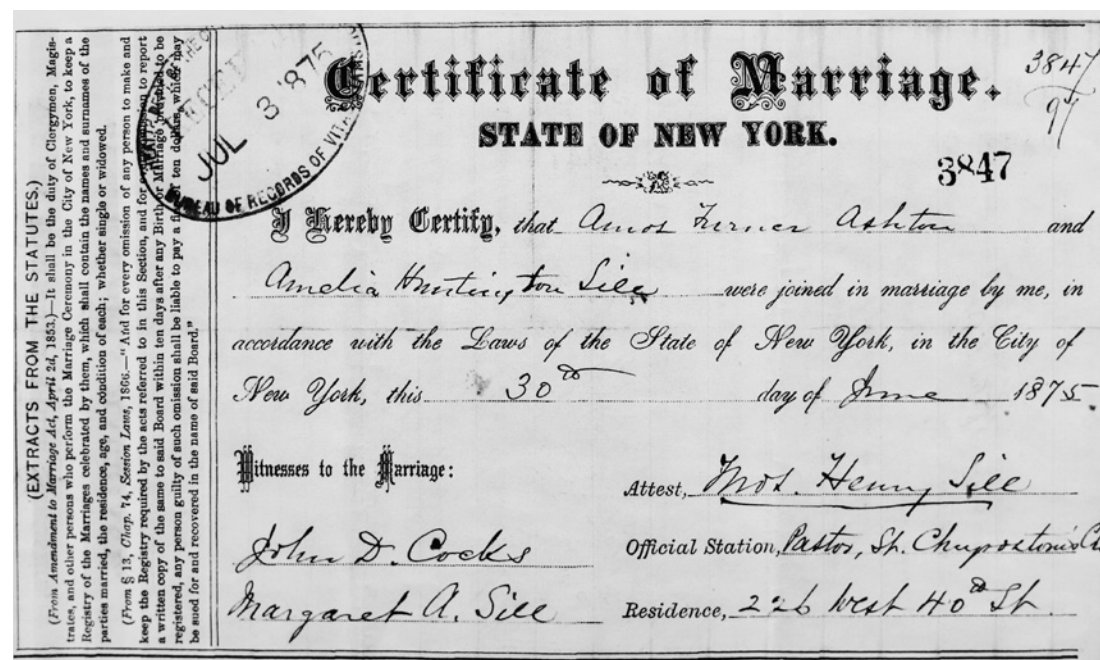
Sylvia Wilks nee Green died in February 1951. In April that year, the Kent community was first apprised of the Wilks bequest, by an article containing Fr. Patterson's reaction in the then-weekly *Kent News*. While applauding "this generous act on the part of Mrs. Wilks," Fr. Patterson cautioned that her "will has not been settled, the money is

not at hand,” and that “the use of the gift will be very carefully considered.” A disaffected relative was challenging the 1951 will because a more generous legacy had evidently been promised her in an earlier will dated in 1939 and uncovered during the probate process; significantly, Kent was also included in that will.

In June 1951, the trustees were already pondering the need for a capital campaign because, in the opinion of its chairman, “inflation and because we do more for the boys [under Patterson], we are running behind.” But the *Kent News*, on November 21, 1951, then delivered, under a celebratory headline, the outcome which the school badly needed, “Wilk’s Will Settled, School Given 2 Million.”

Fr. Patterson proceeded to launch a search for a connection between Sylvia and Kent. He first went to Pater, ailing and largely confined to the RAD House; then to Tote Walker ’19, the longstanding Alumni Secretary and crew coach (addressing his memorandum of Jun. 25, 1951, with curious formality, to “Mr. Walker”) and listing several persons involved in the probate process who might have connected Sylvia to Kent. Finally, on the same day, he signed off a letter to Fr. Chalmers, then at his school in Los Angeles, with an opening statement that “Neither Pater nor the Trustees have any idea to Mrs. Wilks connection with Kent...”

I began my own search without much success, but the school’s archivists soon uncovered a “Mrs. Wilks” file. It not only contained the copies of Fr Patterson’s abortive approaches to Pater, Tote, Fr. Chalmers, and the trustees, but also a stray clipping of an obituary which had landed, almost capriciously it seemed, in the same file. It reported the death of The Reverend of Amos Turner Ashton, D.D., 1849-1911. And the obituary (the source not clear) reported that Fr. Ashton had married an Amelia Huntington Sill, identified as the younger daughter of Reverend Frederick Sill, whom we knew as Pater’s grandfather, and of course as the father of Fr. Thomas Sill who had founded lower



Manhattan’s St. Chrysostom’s Chapel. The marriage had occurred on June 30, 1875. Fr. Ashton, the obituary explained, had been the Rector of St. James Church, Hyde Park, New York, from 1891 until his death in 1911. He had graduated from the General Theological Seminary (GTS) in 1875, shortly before the marriage.

The school’s archivists found that another Sill had graduated from the GTS in 1872, but he did not belong to the family line to which Pater and his kin belong. The first Sill who left England to cross the Atlantic in 1657 yielded a number of Episcopalian priests, including four mentioned in this article.

Believing that the Ashton marriage had likely occurred at St. Chrysostom’s Chapel, I approached Trinity Church under whose auspices Pater’s father had founded the Chapel, mentioning also the Green and Wilks names as possible St. Chrysostom members. The Trinity archivist, confirming the marriage at St. Chrysostom’s, forwarded a copy of the Church’s official certificate signed by Fr. Thomas Sill, as well as a copy of the completed form dispatched as required to the City of New York. The archivist also noted that Trinity’s records revealed that two Greens were listed in Fr. Sill’s “congregation visit book” of 1865,

Above:
Certificate of Marriage for
Amos Ashton and Amelia Sill.

To the Bureau of Vital Statistics,

Health Department of the City of New York.

RETURN OF A MARRIAGE.

1. Full Name of HUSBAND, *Amos Turner Ashton*
2. Place of Residence, *General Theo. Army. N.Y.*
3. Age next Birthday, *27* years,
4. *White*
5. Occupation, *Clergyman*
6. Place of Birth, *Providence R.I.*
7. Father's Name, *Job Ashton*
8. Mother's Maiden Name, *Abby Stacy Turner*
9. No. of Husband's Marriage, *First*
10. Full Name of WIFE, *Amelia Huntington Sill*
- Maiden Name, if a Widow,
11. Place of Residence, *25 Vandana St. N.Y.*
12. Age next Birthday, *28* years,
13. *White*
14. Place of Birth, *Brooklyn L.I.*
15. Father's Name, *Frederick Sill*
16. Mother's Maiden Name, *Margaret Ann. Cochrane*
17. No. of Wife's Marriage, *First*

N. B.—At Nos. 4 and 13 state if Colored: If of other races, specify what. At Nos. 9 and 17 state whether 1st, 2d, 3d, &c., Marriage of each.

New York, *June 30th* 1875

We, the Husband and Wife named in the above Certificate, hereby Certify that the information given is correct, to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Amos Turner Ashton (Husband.)

Amelia Huntington Sill (Wife.)

Signed in presence of

W. R. Boorman
and *Lenora E. Rice*

but without their first names and addresses. Hetty's marriage had occurred in New York City, but only in 1867; and because she was generally living with her children in successive boarding houses from the 1870s, shielding herself from taxes, tracking down her precise location proved impossible.

We found that Fr. Ashton and his wife had begun their clerical Odyssey at a Church in Amenia Union, only nine miles from Kent, though the school itself had not yet been established. But they soon embarked upon a lengthy career at St. James Church, serving that community until their own deaths, he in 1911 after twenty years of service, and she in 1914. Fr. Ashton's death had in fact accounted for a deferred of the church's Centennial celebration from 1911 to 1912. His and Amelia's son, Frederick Turner Ashton, an Episcopal priest too, participated in that service, and among many important dignitaries attending was Fr. Sturges Allen, then the OHC Superior. In the Centennial "Historical Notes" of St. James published in 1915, where this is all recounted, Mrs. Ashton nee Sill is singled out with two other wives as "a large factor in Parish life," as of course those acquainted with the Sills would have expected. A daughter of Mrs. Ashton, Leonora Sill Ashton, is also mentioned for having assembled her late father's notes in advance of the celebration. The Church evidently had a close relationship with the Order of the Holy Cross; Brother Sevensky of the Order sent me a copy of its November 1912 report of the Centennial in which it describes its own parish, "Ascension Parish, West Park," as "a daughter of St. James," located as it is "on the east bank of the Hudson directly across the river from our monastery."

It emerged that the cemetery associated with the St. James Church indeed included a "Matthews Wilks Vault." Eight Wilks are buried at the cemetery, some in the vault, others in separate plots. Sylvia's husband, undoubtedly working closely with Fr. Alston, had undertaken the project (likely initially at the request of his father who may have funded it) to provide a resting place for his parents. They had died at their home in Ontario, his

Above:
Return of a Marriage certificate
for Amos Ashton and Amelia Sill.

father Matthew in 1899, his mother Eliza in 1896. Eliza's father, Walter Langdon, of a branch of the Astor family, had also belonged to the St. James Church, having been elected a vestryman in 1847. Could Sylvia's husband have worked with the Ashtons, with conversations involving the "siting" and the character of the mausoleum, and not learned of, or be reminded of, our Fr. Sill and his project on the Housatonic? Most unlikely: Fr. Ashton, after all, had married a Sill at St. Chrysostom's Chapel, and it seems likely that Mrs. Ashton, as active as she reputedly was, may have also become acquainted herself with Sylvia's husband.

The precise dates of the Mausoleum's construction and of the transfer of the Wilks' remains from Ontario to the cemetery are not known; the only date which appears on the vault's façade is that of Wilks' mother's death "1896."

The office manager of St. James confirmed to me that Sylvia had in fact telephoned the Church about the Mausoleum's condition in 1947, having already included St. James

Church in her first will (which an Ontario source later reported was a bequest for \$20,000). She said she would pay "the Church whatever was needed for its repair." In fact, the Rector then, after investigating, assured her that it was in good shape. The St. James community was then amazed when it received \$1.2 million in 1951. The gift was ultimately used for major renovations, the construction of a parish hall and new rectory, and the creation of a scholarship fund.

Perhaps outsiders underestimated the relationship between the two Wilks. Sylvia's closest friend from her childhood, when informed of the totally puzzled reaction ("most whimsical") of Newport's Trinity Church upon its receipt of a Wilks bequest, recalled, as reported by one biographer, that Sylvia had once told her that "she and Matty had once walked through Trinity's churchyard on a moonlight (sic) night."

Sylvia obviously looked after her late husband's interests with care, with real affection, I'd judge, her own interests always being rather modest like her mother's.

At the demolition of St. Chrysostom's in 1924, its membership list, according to a source I noted in my Spring 2020 *Kent Quarterly* article on Pater, was forwarded to Manhattan's nearby St. Clements Church. Pater's sister Florence Sill, having been a St. Chrysostom member, and the president of the St. Chrysostom Association, had held the Chapel's community together at St. Clements by hosting meetings and dinner parties for 46 years, before her own death in 1971. Unfortunately, in several recent exchanges with the Church's vestry seeking access to that list, I was informed that it simply could not be found, a century having passed.

I believe that a Wilks and a Sill might have crossed paths in Manhattan, but so far that evidence is lacking.

Had Pater been healthy, I believe he would have figured out the Wilks and Sill "connection" himself. Still, he had the satisfaction of knowing, when breathing his last in July 1952, that his school's future had indeed been secured.

Acknowledgments

The School's Library and Archive, directed by Amy Voorhees, provided important support, with Joe Russo helping me at the former with online searches, and Katy Armstrong (Hon) '71 finding the critical Wilks file at the latter. Louisa LaFontan, the long-retired Dean of Girls from the Hill campus, who often helps at the Archive, and is the great niece of Pater, was indispensable by guiding me through the extensive genealogy of the Sill family (Pater's first American forbear, John Sill, having crossed the Atlantic to settle in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1637) and otherwise identifying pertinent Sill correspondence. Larry Gile '67, a regular *Kent Quarterly* contributor, found the two *Kent News* columns I cited. In my search I encountered several "false trails." A published reminiscence I encountered, from an early '50s alumnus, now deceased, had suggested that Fr. Chalmer's fiancée Grace Griswold had once worked with Sylvia Wilks; this led me to open correspondence with Chalmers' California school, as Fr. Patterson had in vain done with Chalmers himself (as the Wilks file would later disclose). And when I suggested to Larry that the Wilks probate papers might help us answer, "Why Kent," he went to the New York County Surrogates Court in Manhattan and found that a search of its thousands of documents would not be productive. Denny Mantegani (Hon) '58, '62, '67, '72, in the Alumni & Development office, perhaps aware of my failure to secure insights about the bequest in a conversation I had with a Kent alumnus whose father had been a '50s trustee, alerted me that the Greenwich, Connecticut Historical Society held a trove of Wilks/Green papers collected by one of their real estate moguls; Larry immediately checked those holdings, but found that a full search there would also be fruitless. It was the archivist at Trinity Church Wall Street, Kathryn Hurwitz, who opened the door for a break-through by confirming that the Ashton-Sill marriage had occurred at St. Chrysostom's. Soon thereafter, I connected with Ms. Dyan Wapnick of the staff at the Hyde Park Church, who confirmed the existence and background of the Wilks Mausoleum and disclosed the widow's 1947 telephone call; she also provided the script of an imagined statement of the deceased Wilks himself to those who tour the cemetery in order to listen to similarly imputed statements from other famous or near-famous individuals interred there. Isabel Livingston, of Livingston, New York, a friend, briefed me on St. James Church with which some of her forbears were associated; two of her children from a previous marriage, it turned out, are related to the Howland family to which Sylvia was related as Hetty's daughter. I consulted three books: "Hetty Green, A Woman Who Loved Money," Boydan Sparkes and Samuel Taylor Moore (New York: Doubleday, 1930); "The Richest Woman in America, Hetty Green in Gilded America," Janet Wallach (New York: Doubleday, 2012); and "The Day They Shook the Money Tree," Arthur H. Lewis (Cutchogue, New York: Buccaneer Books, 1963). The last book ends with Sylvia's piquant comment about "Matty" and the Moonlight at the Church in Newport, Rhode Island, a moment she evidently cherished, and accounted for another of her "mysterious" bequests. There is a substantial literature on the Astors but Matthew Wilks is underrepresented. With difficulty I acquired from London "The Astors, The Story of a Transatlantic Family" by Virginia Cowles (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1979), only to find that an introductory note to a family tree states "the progeny of female Astors by birth" is not listed. And the most recent publication, "Astor, the Rise and Fall of an American Fortune" by Anderson Cooper and Katherine Howe (New York: Harper Collins, 2023) also omits the Wilks name.

Alumni News

KENT

Celebrating 50 years of Girls Rowing

Last November, Kent School proudly celebrated 50 Years of Girls Rowing and the women who shaped the rowing program.

The event included a reception at the Partridge Rowing Center, an alumnae row, a brunch, and remarks from Board of Trustees member Dr. Heidi M. Stultz Brooks '86, Tiz Sutherland Mulligan '76, Elizabeth Courtney '86, Dana Peirce '97, Elizabeth Guernsey '02, two-time Olympian Christine F. Roper '07, Gabby Sullivan '21, and current student Ellie Dial '24. Each of the speakers reflected on the impact rowing has had on their lives and the lasting bonds forged with their teammates.

The girls' new racing eight was christened the Christine F. Roper '07 and Tiz Sutherland Mulligan's family honored her with the gift of a single for the girls' sculling fleet.





LOVE KENT

By the Numbers

FARTHEST DONATION

Australia

FARTHEST U.S. DONATION

Hawaii

NUMBER OF STATES

38

NUMBER OF COUNTRIES

13

AVERAGE DOLLAR
DONATION

\$465

TOP
AMBASSADORBarbara Vaughn Hoimes,
Class of 1978 with
38 donationsINTERNATIONAL
DONATION WITH
MOST DONORSHong Kong
With 50 DonorsTOP 3 ALUMNI
CLASS YEARS

1978, 1965, 1966

TOTAL DONORS

748

ALUMNI: 370
PARENTS: 226
FACULTY/STAFF: 102

Total Dollars

\$603,814

ALUMNI
LEADERBOARD
CLASS OF

1978

43
DONORSPARENT
LEADERBOARD
CLASS OF

2026

50
DONORSREUNION
LEADERBOARD
CLASS OF

1984

10
DONORS



KENT

Alumni Hockey Game

On Saturday, February 24, Kent welcomed 30 alumni and their families home for the 2024 Alumni Hockey Game. The Manuel D. Nadal Hockey Rink was full of good cheer and great memories over the weekend.

A Leader in Whole Student Education

Athletic Director John Barrett spoke to Kent alumni and parents at the Round Hill Country Club in Greenwich in the fall and at Smoke and Mirrors in Washington, D.C. this spring.

He expressed Kent's commitment to building a sense of belonging and a culture where our students bring their energy to the room with their "controlables" including attitude, effort, passion, and spirit. Barrett said, "Character development is the cornerstone of any athletic leadership program. It's something we firmly believe in. It's not mainly about winning or losing. It's about the journey, the lessons learned, and the growth experienced."

Kent's student athletic leadership development program runs parallel to our coaching leadership program and supports the School's plan to strengthen Kent as a leader in whole student education.



GREENWICH



WASHINGTON, D.C.





KENTUCKY

Ted Bassett '41 Shares Kent Memories

During a recent visit from the Alumni & Development Office's Michael Ganchegui '95, Ted Bassett '41 shared poignant memories and insights from his time at Kent School. Reminiscing about his formative years, Ted spoke of the school's rigorous academic program and the profound influence of mentors like Fr. Sill and Fr. Chalmers. He recounted moments of challenge and camaraderie on the sports fields and in the dormitories, highlighting the values of discipline, community, and service that defined his Kent experience.

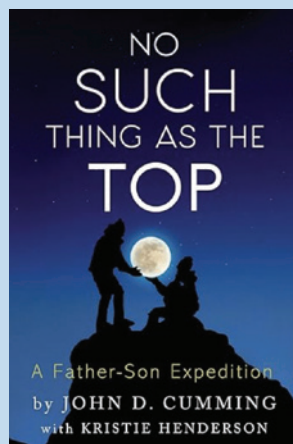
NEW YORK CITY

Save the Date!



Mark Your Calendar for Kent School's New York Holiday Reception at the New York Yacht Club! Join us on Monday, December 9, 2024, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. ET. Last year's event sold out quickly, so reserve your spot now to ensure you don't miss out. Register at: <https://kentyachtclub2024.rsvpify.com>

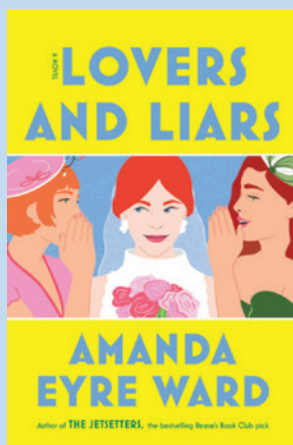
KENT AUTHORS



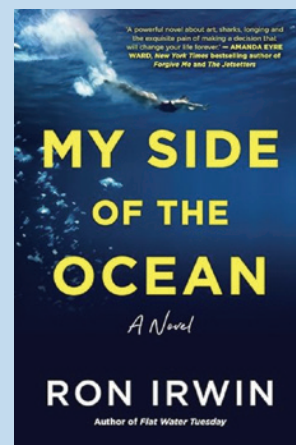
John D. Cumming '85
No Such Thing as the Top
GLASS SPIDER PUBLISHING (2024)



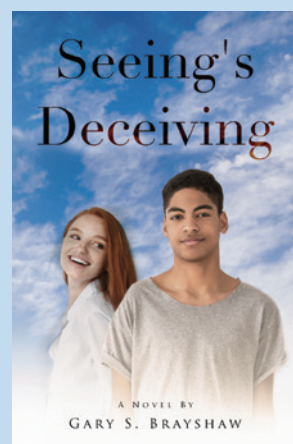
Janet Stroup Fox '69
Wintergarden
PICADOR AFRICA (2023)



Amanda Eyre Ward '90
Lovers and Liars
BALLANTINE BOOKS (2023)



Ron Irwin '88
My Side of the Ocean
NEAL PORTER BOOKS (2023)



Gary Brayshaw '58
Seeing's Deceiving
GARY BRAYSHAW (2022)

Los Angeles Lucid Dreaming Gathering

Mandy Stein '94 hosted British-American film director and consciousness author Sebastian Siegel '92 and alumni at her home in Los Angeles on Wednesday, April 10.

Siegel offered an immersive meditative experience, Lucid Dreaming, where he guided everyone into a state of elation, rejuvenation, and profound subconscious awareness through the use of binaural sound waves, orchestral music, and live storytelling.



Beverly Hills Gathering

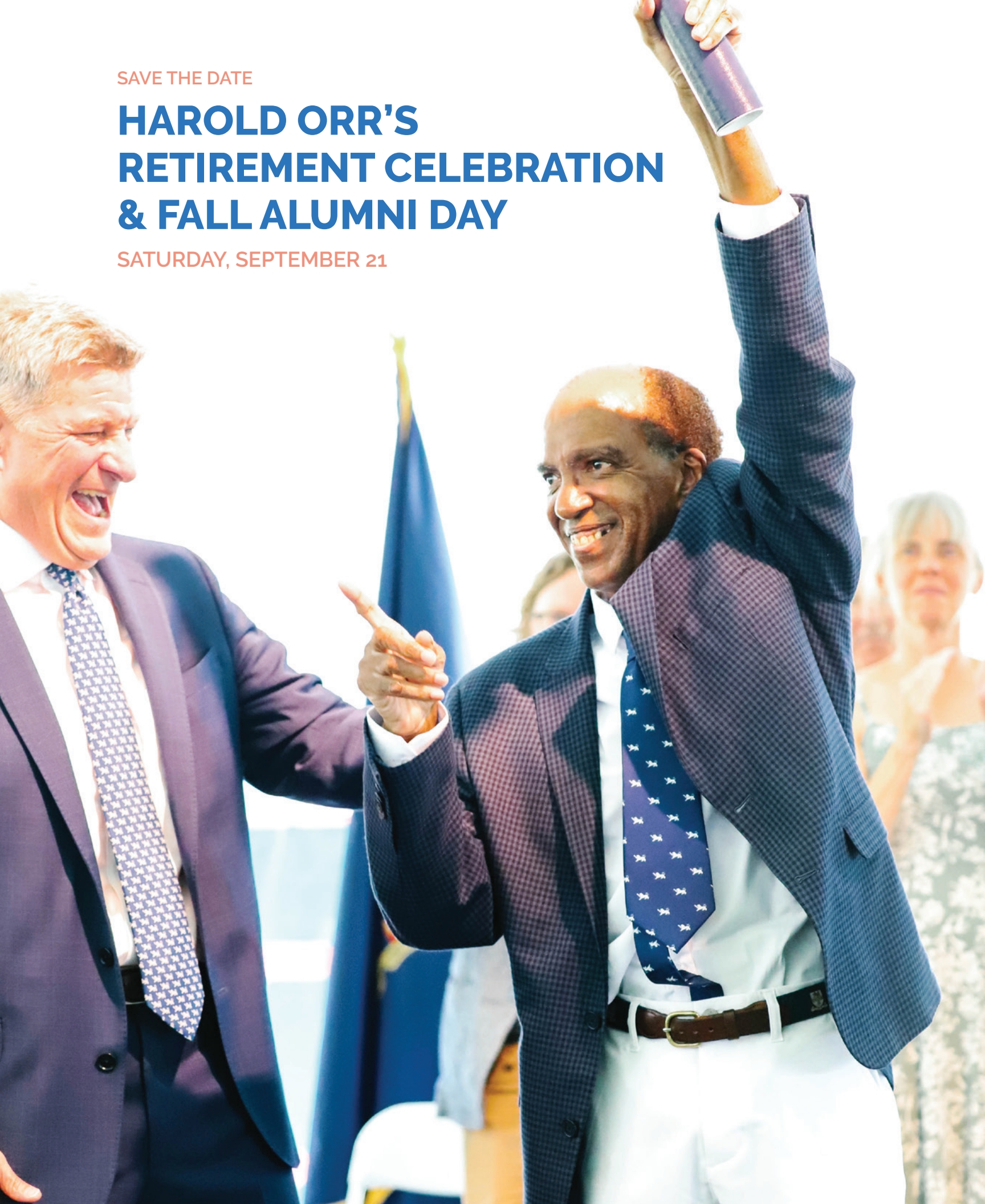
On Tuesday, April 9, Kent Trustee Adam Peck '82 hosted a Reception and Wine Tasting at the Beverly Hills Tennis Club featuring Pahlmeyer wines from the Napa Valley presented by Ana Scofield '82. Over sixty alumni and parents attended the event.



SAVE THE DATE

HAROLD ORR'S RETIREMENT CELEBRATION & FALL ALUMNI DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21



Eight%



KENT
ANNUAL
FUND



The 8% Campaign. **Show Your Pride.**

As the season changes at Kent School, we celebrate not just growth but the unity that makes it possible. With 8% of the student experience covered by the Kent Annual Fund, we see the strength of a community committed to education.

Together, we're not just dreaming about the future; we're actively building it. Be part of the movement that empowers our students today.

Your support is more than a gift; it's a legacy that resonates. Let's keep the momentum alive and invest in a brighter future.



Give today! www.kent-school.edu/give

For more information please contact:

Alumni > Michael Ganchegui: ganchegui@kent-school.edu / 860-927-6268

Parents > Elizabeth Vitek: viteke@kent-school.edu / 860-927-6269

CALIFORNIA

Bay Area Reception

Kent alumni and parents enjoyed great company and conversation at Sens Restaurant in San Francisco on Thursday, April 11.



CALIFORNIA

A Visit with New Sill Society Inductee, Dick Ahlborn '59

Members of the Alumni and Development team Greg Carter '95, Michael Ganchegui '95, and Candie Fredritz (not pictured) met up with recent Sill Society Recipient Dick Ahlborn Jr. '59 during their recent trip to California.



Class Volunteers

Email your class notes to a class volunteer from your year or send your notes to alumni@kent-school.edu

1951

Peter Hurd
pkhurd@optonline.net

1952

Bob Heidenreich
robt.heiden@gmail.com

1953

John Moore
Jcmoore3@msn.com

1955

Dick Sanford
SaraCHS@aol.com

1956

Bart Bates
bartb8s@aol.com

Jay Banker
jaybanker@aol.com

1957

Peter Fairchild
pwf@sbcglobal.net

1959

Wink Bangs
Wdbangsjr@aol.com

1960

Dave Kepner
djkepner47@gmail.com

Jim Mell
stepaheadcounseling@gmail.com

1961

Bill Quayle
Quayle@houstoneye.com

1962

Sam Watkins
samwatkins184@gmail.com

1963

Hap Allen
hap.allen@mac.com

1964

Trudy Ashcroft Smith
bbtsmith@aol.com

1965

Ginny Martin Amsler
useppagin@aol.com

Peter Lewine
Plewine@gmail.com

Margo Ayres Smith
mayressmith@gmail.com

Bill Williams
briobrio33@gmail.com

Judy Kapp Winder
Jkappwinder@gmail.com

1966

Doug Henry
ddhenry1@gmail.com

Leslie Gleason Smith
Lsmith5893@aol.com

Pebbles Wadsworth
pebbles@utexas.edu

1967

Muffy Mallory
mmallory10@comcast.net

Peter Patch
PeterPatch@aol.com

1968

Libby Koponen
libby.koponen@gmail.com

Stuart Niemtzow
stuartnlaw@gmail.com

1969

Barbi Kingsbury
barbkingsbury@gmail.com

Peter Malin
peter@themalingroup.com

1970

Adele Eissler Young
adele.e.young@gmail.com

1971

Robin Bodell
rabodell220@gmail.com

Staige Davis
staige.davis@fourseasonssir.com

1972

Ric Burwell
ucsb1977@comcast.net

1973

Bev Cole Costello
bevcozi1@gmail.com

Marguerite Heilman
mar67855@gmail.com

Andy HYPERS
aphypers53@gmail.com

1974

Anne Hyde Dunsmore
adunsmore@cap-camp.com

1975

Beth Danielson
elizabeth@edanielson.com

Mark Vollmer
mvollmer@inspirepro.com.au

1976

Dave Andrews
revdup1@comcast.net

Michael Perry
mdp06897@mac.com

1978

Suzy Bird Gulliver
suzybird@aol.com

1979

Catherine Ericson
cericson@gmail.com

1981

Tracy Greene Craighead
tracycraighead@hotmail.com

1982

Mary Carroll Goodsir
megoodsir@gmail.com

Rohan Goodsir
rgoodsir@gmail.com

1983

Sayre Coombs
sayrecoombs@gmail.com

Robin Insley
robin@robininsleyassociates.com

1984

Victor Przedpelski
przed84@gmail.com

1987

Jim McKeown
boilerhit@hotmail.com

Holly Comer Zapf
sonnenschein2@me.com

1989

Derek Krein
dkrein1@gmail.com

1990

Andrew Bogle
andrewabogle@gmail.com

1991

Tex Duncan
texd@texd.com

1994

Alicia Pokoik Deters
apdeets@gmail.com

1995

Michael Ganchegui
gancheguim@kent-school.edu

Robyn Holt
robynholt@gmail.com

1996

Sally Smith Betz
ssbetz@hotmail.com

1997

Kristine Palmero
palmatina@gmail.com

1998

Giff Foley
GiffFoley@hotmail.com

1999

Pat Buckley
prbuckley@gmail.com

Carrie Flickinger Diana
carriefdiana@gmail.com

Brian McKenna
bpmckenna11@gmail.com

2001

Heather Cocce Leins
heatherleins@gmail.com

2002

Carrie Schenk
carrie.schenk@gmail.com

2004

Meg Dodge
medodge@gmail.com

2006

Kathleen Hearn
hearn.kathleen@gmail.com

2007

Becca Andreoli
rjtandreoli@gmail.com

Anna Sanders
AnnaESanders@gmail.com

2008

Kara Ruskin Billington
kara.ruskin@gmail.com

Hilary Higgins
flack.hilary@gmail.com

Amanda Ward Marshall
amandawardmarshall@gmail.com

2009

Mark Cheong
markacheong@gmail.com

2011

Lauren Sweitzer
sweitzerla93@gmail.com

Morgan Weaver
morganbweaver@gmail.com

2014

Andrew Liddle
aliddle33@gmail.com

Meghan McSharry
mamcsharry@gmail.com

2015

Andy Provost
andy.provist@gmail.com

2016

Blair Stratman
blair@moreira.com

2017

Katie Voulgaris
kavoulgaris@aol.com

2018

Tina Paolillo
Tina_paolillo@alumni.brown.edu

2019

Savannah Adamo
savannahadamoz0@gmail.com

2020

Katherine Herrema
katherine@herrema.com

2022

Yuanqin Dai
AlbertDaiz003@gmail.com

Benjamin Michaud Bang
benjamin.mbang@gmail.com

In Memoriam

1946

Robert Y. Larsen

December 27, 2023

1948

Norman Hull-Ryde

July 5, 2023

1950

Isaac D. Russell

February 27, 2024

1952

David B. Morgan

February 11, 2024

Robert F. Zimmerman Jr.

March 16, 2024

1954

John M. McAvity

May 20, 2022

William L. Balfour

March 26, 2024

Clyde D. Barbour

October 17, 2023

Theron T. Colby

September 7, 2023

Frederick W. Kroll Jr.

January 6, 2024

1956

Bertram G. Waters III

September 7, 2023

1960

W. Blakeslee Smith

November 20, 2023

1962

Jonathan C. Brown

April 12, 2016

Alexander T. Taft Jr.

February 1, 2024

1963

Stanley Bright III

November 1, 2023

Charles E. Countee

February 20, 2024

Alexander L. Taylor III

February 8, 2024

1964

John C. Artz

November 22, 2023

Lloyd J. Buzzell

August 30, 2023

Caroline E. Willets

December 28, 2023

1966

Peter L. Brown

April 1, 2024

Thomas S. Walker

January 20, 2024

1968

Kate Wilford Carraher

January 20, 2024

Aline J. Henderson

May 12, 2023

1971

Nigel H. Keogh

March 2, 2018

1974

Gordon G. Glidden

October 6, 2021

John B. McGuire

April 20, 2023

Valerie G. McKesson

March 8, 2023

1978

Leslie Johnston Grayson

October 21, 2023

1980

Michael S. Wyatt

September 24, 2023

1990

Tyler A. Mongerson

May 28, 2023

Keith A. Skilling

February 11, 2024

FACULTY/STAFF

Thomas L. Cracas

April 25, 2024

James C. MacLeod

November 23, 2023

Thomas K. Roney

March 4, 2024

FRIEND OF KENT

Dr. Henry Kissinger

November 9, 2023



Thomas L. Cracas

Retired faculty member Thomas L. Cracas passed away on March 4, 2024 in Staunton, Virginia. Tom was a member of the Classics Department and taught Latin at Kent for 52 years, retiring in 1999. During his Kent career, he also coached Thirds Football and JV Basketball. Tom and his wife, Kay, who passed away in 2015, raised their three sons in Kent. Their son Tod is a member of the Class of '81.

"Armed with a B.A. in Greek and Latin from Brown University, an M.A. in Latin and Linguistics from the University of Michigan, and an M.B.A. from the University of Connecticut, Tom was in his academic and pedagogical prime when he arrived at Kent School in 1967, following earlier years teaching at Brooks School in North Andover, Massachusetts and at Blair Academy in Blairstown, New Jersey.

"The Classics Department chair, Joel Kelly, and I traveled to the Hill for part three of my interview for the job in March of 1989 where I had a chance to meet successfully, too, (apparently) with Tom, as I was hired to begin in September. That summer, on an early August afternoon, I returned to Kent to see my living quarters in Middle Dorm South and stopped-by the Cracas' home on the Hill to say hello (Joel was at his camp in Maine at the time). Not only did he and his wife, Kay warmly welcome me, they invited me to stay for dinner, where he set a precedent of our relationship—one marked by mentoring and hospitality. Over dinner that evening, we really got down to brass

tacks and I—a product of public high school—was feeling much more confident about embarking on a career as a boarding school teacher.

After initially teaching both languages, Tom became the introductory and honors-level teacher for Latin, so he was in just the right place to mentor me as a newly-minted Latin 1, regular Latin 2 and 3, and Advanced Placement Latin teacher. It was only years later that I realized that he may have been somewhat put out that Joel had designated me as the AP teacher during my first year at the School. If it bothered Tom, it never showed. At all turns, he was nothing less than supportive and nurturing, and this was especially true when it came to guiding me in Latin 1. Over the course of my 34 years or so at the School, I realized that teaching Latin 1 was a major undertaking and his guidance and advice on all things Latin proved to be instrumental in my success in that subject. Having spent some time as a master of a girls' dorm on the Hill, Tom's advice regarding living in and managing a dormitory proved to be invaluable as I cut my teeth in MDS as an assistant and later, master there for 11 years. And when things went sideways, there were always evening get-aways spent on the Hill with him and Kay, where we would wine, dine, and laugh about the occasional absurdity presented by life in a boarding school.

Whatever I am here today as a teacher at the School, I owe Tom Cracas a debt of gratitude for his advice, splendid sense of humor, and hospitality that all helped to shape me into the teacher I myself am today.
AVE ATQUE VALE."

R.E. DesMarais Jr. '01, '99 (Hon.)
Chair, Department of Classical Studies



James C. MacLeod

Retired faculty member James Carlisle MacLeod passed away on November 25, 2025 in Florida. From his arrival at Kent in 1982 until his retirement in 2018, Jim touched the lives of many students as a devoted math teacher, coach of football, basketball, and tennis, advisor, and dean. He was known by students and colleagues alike for his sense of humor, compassion, and understanding. We extend our deepest condolences to Jim's wife, Carolyn, his daughters Carrie '95 and Jaime '95, and their families.

"After watching a Kent team take part in an away contest (I recall neither the sport nor destination as this was one of many such excursions with Jim), I recall stopping at a sporting goods store. Following a lengthy conversation with the store manager, Jim walked out with several hundred dollars of sports paraphernalia—none of which he had any need for walking into the store. In this snippet one can learn much about the man so many loved and admired in his days gracing the Lovely Valley. Jim NEVER turned down an opportunity to assist a student—be that supporting a team at a distant venue, a late-night McDonalds run, or by providing a shoulder to cry (or laugh) on. Having played poker with Jim, one quickly learned that you could never anticipate his next move. In the most genuine and refreshing of ways, he acted on what he felt was right for the moment. His outlook never perceived anything but a positive outcome. He enjoyed getting to

know people, and anyone encountering Jim would immediately let down his guard and open up, as they understood that Jim actively listened and cared (valuable traits for any prep school educator). The words pretense, selfish, and indifferent would never find their way into any sentence describing this unique individual.

I hope Jim had an opportunity to enjoy the sporting goods he acquired on that trip, yet my hunch is that they found their way into the hands of someone (perhaps a total stranger) for whom they held greater value. Jim made his mark on Kent and all who were fortunate enough to cross paths with him will forever be grateful."

Todd Marble, Director of Planned Giving,
Former Athletics Director

"Jim was a paragon of the whole-person educator. He celebrated his students' strengths and helped them overcome their weaknesses with empathy and care. The world was his classroom as he taught lessons from the whiteboard, the courts, and his living room, molding his young charges into men and women of integrity and intellect. The medium might have been a textbook lesson or a game, but the end goal was to boost confidence, inspire passion, pique curiosity, and to challenge the mind and body. Jim's impact similarly reached his colleagues. He was a mentor who staunchly advocated for newer teachers. He stood his ground on any issue to protect the best interests of students and colleagues. Jim embodied the best in education."

Kevin Saxton, Math Teacher

"December 14: the students had left for the holidays, the faculty and staff had enjoyed our annual Champagne Stroll through Faculty Village, and a dozen or so of us gathered around a firepit on Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin's patio. "Give me your best Jim MacLeod story," someone said. One after another we shared tales. Tall tales—perhaps—but Jim was a tall guy, so no tale seemed too tall to fit. Stories spanning decades, of working together and of relaxing together, stories both ludicrous and sublime. Stories that only make sense to those who knew

Jim, and stories that bestow wisdom on those who'd never had the privilege. Plenty of the stories shouldn't see print, but share a fire on a cold night with a seasoned employee and I'm sure you can pry loose one or two. They'll vary in the telling, but they all tell of a man dedicated to students' well-being above all else, of a man always up for an adventure, of a man who'd give you the shirt from his back because "if someone asks you for help, you just give it."

Matt Austin, Math Teacher



Thomas K. Roney

Retired faculty member Tom Roney passed away on February 6, 2024, at the age of 81. He died in Burlington, MA, surrounded by his family—his wife, Loretto, daughter Jennifer '87, and son Alex '90. Tom and Loretto Roney came to Kent in 1971 after completing graduate work at the University of Vermont. During his 40-year Kent career, Tom taught math, coached, served as Chair of the Math Department from 1985-2007 and as Academic Dean from 2007 until his retirement in 2011. He was the holder of The Judith B. and Howard B. Wentz, Jr. Teaching Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies. Tom was also a tremendous supporter of the performing arts at Kent, and rarely missed a concert, recital, or play over the course of 40 years.

"I first met Tom Roney when I arrived at Kent School in December 1976. I worked with him initially when he was a Math instructor, then when he was Math Department Chairman and eventually the Academic Dean.

On the academic side, Tom was completely devoted to his students and teaching them mathematics. It did not matter whether a student was in AP Calculus or if he was someone for whom math was not the easiest of subjects. Tom always gave 100% of his time, energy and expertise to all of his students. And later on, as Math Chairman and Academic Dean he shared his commitment to mathematics with all Kent students since almost everyone was enrolled in a Math class. It did not matter who your math teacher was. Tom kept track of everyone. If my memory serves me correctly, Tom once told me that his first love was English and words. In the end math won out, but his excellent writing skills and play on words shone through at every opportunity.

Tom was a mentor to the students whom he taught as well as the advisees who were assigned to him each year. Whatever an advisee needed, Tom was right there to assist in any way he could. He treated his advisees like family. Long after graduating from Kent School, his advisees would stay in touch with him for many years after, not wanting to break the bond they had formed with their advisor.

Tom was a strong supporter of the arts at Kent. Whether putting brush to canvas or playing violin in the orchestra, Tom was always sure to bring attention to those students for their accomplishments. Did he ever miss a band or choir concert? I think not.

It was an honor and a privilege knowing and working with Tom and his wife, Loretto, all those many years. They were quite the dynamic duo!"

Diana Yammin, Retired Assistant Head of School for Academics

"In his role as Academic Dean, I always appreciated how hard Tom worked to uphold and support the academic mission of the school while also looking to the future. He is to be credited for his role in our adoption of the school-wide laptop program and always had an

eye on big-picture curricular goals while also embracing his role as a classroom teacher.”

Kristin Benjamin, Chair, Modern Languages Department

“Tom Roney was my department chair and dear friend. He took a chance and hired me even though I hadn’t taught math in ten years while I was home raising my children. Tom always took the time to listen when I was struggling with some personal matters. He was generous with his advisees and took good care of them, especially the international students. I learned how to be a good advisor from him.

In my second year of teaching, Tom asked me to observe his class and give him some tips. I think he was flattering me, but I did it anyway. I don’t remember the lesson, but I do recall his incredible rapport with his students. During his long career at Kent, he taught hundreds of students problem-solving skills, but more importantly, he showed them that he cared. I will miss Tom dearly.”

Cathy You, Math Teacher



Henry Kissinger

When prominent scholar and diplomat Dr. Henry Kissinger passed away in November 2025, tributes and obituaries told stories of his accomplishments in and out of office, his position as an advisor to a dozen U.S. presidents, and his powerful intellect. Less told was his long relationship with Kent School, which began with a serendipitous encounter.

“I met Dr. Kissinger on June 10, 1981,” recalls Fr. Richardson W. Schell, former Kent School headmaster. “I learned that the board would be naming me the next headmaster of the School, and my parents were visiting me from Chicago. My father suggested we go out for a celebratory dinner, so we went to The Hopkins Inn at Lake Waramug.” Dr. Kissinger and his wife happened to be dining there, too, with former Connecticut governor, congressman, and senator Abe Ribicoff and his wife Casey.

With the encouragement of his father, Fr. Schell introduced himself to Kissinger. Schell recalls that a warm greeting ensued, and “Henry said he’d call me for lunch, which he did two days later. That began a relationship that lasted for the rest of his life.”

“We began having lunch together on weekends, and it was through Henry that I met all sorts of important leaders—many of whom took an interest in Kent School,” says Schell. “Meeting Senator John McCain, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, various German statesman officials, Latin Americans, and many others was quite a thrill.”

Kissinger’s roots in academia informed his positive feelings about Kent. “I asked him once why he was so interested in Kent, and in schools,” says Schell. “He said because his father was a schoolmaster. He was always pleased that we were a serious academic institution, and that we took seriously the preparation of postgraduate students who were on their way to the Naval Academy and the Air Force Academy,” recalls Schell. “Henry identified with Kent and wanted to make sure that any resources he had, he could lend to us. He helped arrange for visiting lecturers and, himself gave the Prize Day address in 1987.” Kissinger also provided guidance to Schell that proved crucial in establishing Kent School in China.

“He was a frequent guest at Cumming House, and wherever he went, because he lived in Kent and Kent is a small town, people would ask him how Kent School is doing. He took a lot of pride in telling the Kent story wherever he went.”

Fr. Richardson W. Schell
Former Kent School Headmaster



Grace Note

Spring's vibrant embrace on campus.



Kent School
P.O. Box 2006
Kent, Connecticut 06757

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Hartford, CT
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Highlighted 2024-2025 Events

September 7, 2024

Alumni Soccer Game

September 15, 2024

Kent at Yankee Stadium

Yankees vs. Red Sox

September 21, 2024

Harold Orr's Retirement Celebration
& Fall Alumni Day

October 25-26, 2024

Family Weekend

November 9, 2024

Loomis Day

December 9, 2024

New York Holiday Reception

June 20-22, 2025

Reunion Weekend

Classes ending in 0 and 5

For more information:
www.kent-school.edu/alumni/alumni-events