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FROM THE

# Head of School

Dear Members of the Pingry Community,



As a lifelong runner, I've always appreciated the importance of momentum. Often unnoticeable at first, it can build both gradually and then suddenly. And when your efforts are successful — as accurately described by singer Annie Lennox — “you can't really tell

whether you have created the momentum or it's creating you.”

We can all be proud of the tremendous momentum we're creating for Pingry. On the enrollment front, our attrition rate (number of students not returning for the following year) just reached an all-time low of 0.85% compared to the national independent school average of 13%. This marks the first time in over a decade that our attrition has dropped below 2.4%. We received an unprecedented number of applications for admission, and I'm excited to share that 96% of accepted students have enrolled for September. We also closed out record-breaking results for The Pingry Fund, our top fundraising priority each year. Thanks to your generosity, we received \$3.34 million dollars of support — the largest amount ever raised. Parent and alumni giving both reached new highs, and The Pingry Fund surpassed its fundraising goal for the fourth consecutive year.

This momentum is carrying us into what promises to be a very exciting 2024-25 year. We're releasing our new strategic plan. We're embarking on the extensive self-study component of our scheduled re-accreditation with the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools. And we're celebrating a milestone in Pingry history: 50 years of coeducation.

In September of 1974, we welcomed 101 young women across Forms I-V to the Hillside Campus. As one former faculty member remarked, the noticeable improvement in the tone and tenor of campus life “was like the dawn of civilization.” Pingry had

turned the page after 113 years as an all-boys school, and these brave new students had arrived to write the next chapter. They had knowingly traded in the familiar for the unfamiliar. They recognized countless obstacles and opportunities were waiting. They knew being the first would be difficult, but they embraced the risk and the challenge and forged ahead anyway.

As a child, I got some small sense of what their experience must have been like by watching my own mom. While studying in her native Belgium to become an interpreter, she came to the United States halfway through her undergraduate program to pursue an internship. She thankfully stayed here, ultimately deciding to leave Belgium because she valued education (along with love) and was inspired to challenge herself to pursue bigger opportunities than she found at home. After subsequently meeting a dashing young Gene Lear in a Manhattan restaurant, mom then went on to juggle the demands of raising three young children while in business school. She always found creative solutions for somehow making it all work — just as the women of Pingry have been doing for 50 years.

Just like my mom, those first young women who came to Pingry were confident, driven, and determined. They hadn't come to Pingry looking to find those character traits. They had them before even arriving on campus. And the challenges of being “the first” didn't stop for those women after just one year. Instead, their generation continued to shoulder that level of responsibility for decades — both at Pingry and in their personal and professional lives after graduation. They indeed met the challenge of their time. They met the moment of coeducation, and for doing so they each deserve our continued and greatest respect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Lear', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tim Lear