



ALUMNI NEWS

JUNE 2024

at the
Governor's School

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About the Cover

In May, the Visual Arts Department presented its annual End of Year Exhibition featuring works from each member of the junior and senior classes. This exhibit was free and open to the public weekdays from 1:30 to 4:30pm. The department celebrated with friends and family at an End of Year Show Reception on May 11.



FROM the PRESIDENT

It's an exciting time at the Governor's School and I'm pleased to bring you greetings from Greenville. The 2023-2024 school year has been one for the record books in so many ways and you'll be pleased to know of all the great work on the campus and throughout the state.

We were pleased to graduate 109 Govies in May and, in true Governor's School fashion, their awards and accolades are representative of the outstanding artists and scholars that they have been all year. The Class of 2024 included over 70 Scholastic regional award winners, 11 All-State musicians, 4 published authors, 3 Young Arts winners, and a Steinway Scholarship winner. With two-thirds of the graduates earnings Dean's List and President's List honors, we are really proud of the artistic and academic achievements of the graduating class.

Collaborations throughout the state have further extended the impact of the Governor's School as we fully engage our mission with the students and teachers of South Carolina. In the Office of Outreach, our multi-district Spark program effectively grew a summer artist-in-residency experience into a year-round arts-integrated program using drama techniques as a catalyst for literacy. Statistically significant results have determined the outcomes to be cutting-edge not only for arts education, but for reading at the elementary level, and this revolutionary effort has the potential for being one of the most significant learning initiatives in ensuring substantial academic progress in the history of our state's public education system.

If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to make a special effort to stay connected with us for the next several months, as our 25th Anniversary is just around the corner. A full calendar of performances and events will comprise our year-long celebration featuring many special guests and partners who have been instrumental in the success of the Governor's School over the years. We look forward to all of the festivities on the campus as well as in several locations throughout South Carolina all year long and certainly hope you can join us for the culminating gala in Greenville next April. Please be on the lookout for details!

As always, you have an open invitation to join us for a performance or event in Greenville or throughout the state as your schedule permits. It's always a pleasure to reconnect with our alumni and I look forward to continued interaction with those of you who visit often. Thank you for your continued support of the Governor's School and I hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

Cedric L. Adderley, DMA
President

CAMPUS & DEPARTMENTAL NEWS



In March the Governor's School Drama Department presented **"The Last of the Showmen,"** an original devised production written and produced by Studio IV!

The story follows a struggling circus that has bitten off more than they can chew. Although they put on the best show they can, backstage drama and outside forces threaten the troupe as they navigate a world of wonder, beauty, and brutality.

This event was free and open to the public.



Wind Ensemble and Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra Director **Dr. Nsé Ekpo** was one of eight conductors from around the world who was selected to attend The St Andrews Advanced Conducting Course in Scotland this year! Dr. Ekpo will study with Sian Edwards who is the professor of conducting at the Royal Academy of

Music in London. Read more about the course here:

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/music/all/short-courses/conducting-course/



Connecting Arts Through Service Club (C.A.T.S.), gives our Govies the opportunity and resources to support their

community through arts-based initiatives and service projects. This school year, our C.A.T.S. members completed a staggering 650 hours of service with projects supporting the Salvation Army, Mental Health America, The Daffodil Holocaust Memorial Project, The Children's Museum of the Upstate, and more. Music senior Erin Semple also received this year's Outstanding Service Award for completing over 50 hours of service!

The Governor's School was well represented during **Artisphere's 25th Anniversary** festival in May. Our musicians performed and creative writers read their works on the Furman Artists on the Rise Stage on Main Street. Our pianists gave a recital in Smith Recital Hall, and our visual artists showed off their work in the Lipscomb Gallery. Our C.A.T.S. students assisted kids with crafts in the Kidsphere tent. In the center of everything on Saturday, Music instructor Dr. Nsé Ekpo conducted the Greenville Symphony Orchestra's flash-mob performance of Ravel's "Bolero." View more photos of these special events at flic.kr/s/aHBqjBqvvm.





Essayist, poet, and short story writer **Rebecca McClanahan** visited the Creative Writing Department and gave every student a free copy of her latest book, "In the Key of New York City!" McClanahan is no stranger to the Governor's

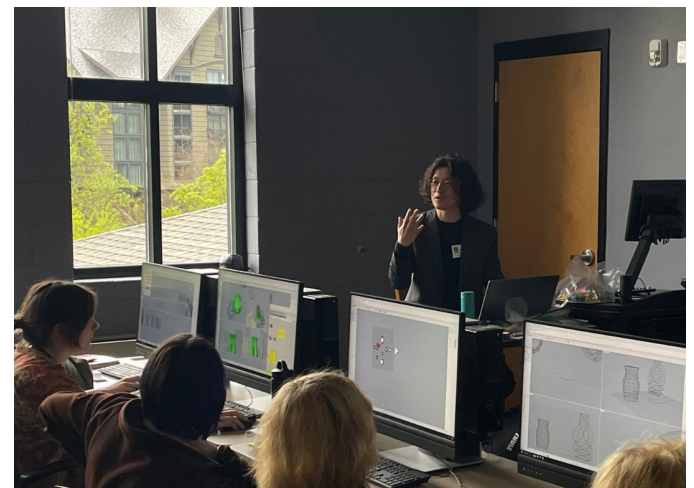
School. Her work is covered annually in Scott Gould's nonfiction class, where she has joined our Govie writers several times over the years to share her storytelling process, character creation, and the value of curiosity.

Testing season arrived in April, so we gave our Govies a special study break with the help of **Paws 2 Care Therapy Dogs!**

Paws 2 Care is a local volunteer organization that works to spread joy and smiles through therapy dog visits to schools, retirement homes, hospitals, and more! Our students were so happy to let off some steam with the help of their new furry friends!

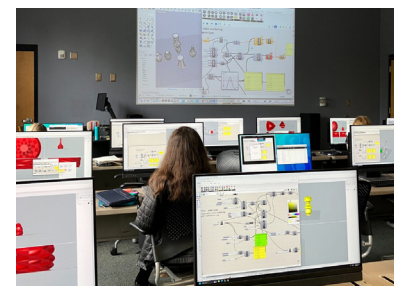


In May, the Office of School Counseling hosted a Senior **Decision Day Party** in the courtyard where we celebrated our seniors' next steps! Students sported their college gear, enjoyed some games and music, decorated graduation caps, and even won some sweet prizes in a raffle!



In April, interdisciplinary artist **Taekyeom Lee** visited the Visual Arts Department for a day of workshops and an artist talk!

Lee's work uses unconventional materials and techniques to create tangible typography, graphics, and even designed objects using digital fabrication and 3D printing. He gave our students a look into his process with a workshop on the digital design tools he uses to create his art. Lee currently serves as an assistant professor of graphic design at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has exhibited work, led workshops, and given lectures across the country and abroad.



NEW ALUMNI ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS



Bella Bishara (*Visual Arts, '23*) is an artist and illustrator living in Greenville, SC. She graduated from SCGSAH as a visual artist in 2023 and is now working on her own business and independent art career. During her time at SCGSAH, she

participated in many opportunities both in and outside of the school, such as Artfields Jr., Scholastics, YoungArts, and more, winning multiple awards and cash prizes. She also had works exhibited at several of those places as well as at SCGSAH. Now, she is working at the Greenville Center for Creative Arts and is also participating in many local art markets and events, such as Downtown Alive, the Southeast Punk Flea Market, the Weirdo Market, Prolific First Fridays, and Keipi Restaurant.



Brian Clement (*Creative Writing, Summer Honors Program*) A member of the Founding Alumni, was the first student from Dixie High School in Due West, SC, to attend the Summer Honors Program for Creative Writing

way back in 1989. After graduating from high school, Brian attended Winthrop University for English and later earned his certification in Advanced Technical Writing at Kennesaw State University. Currently, Brian can be found in the suburbs of Atlanta, GA, where he is married and the father of four daughters and three cats (also girls), works in logistics management, and seeks out time to create and encourage other writers and artists whenever possible.



Sasha Doster (*Music, '16*) is a blossoming historical musicologist and curator who is currently a Ph.D. student in historical musicology at Columbia University in New York City. Her research focuses on music as a cultural product, expressions

of Blackness in classical music during the early 20th century, historiography, and Black experimentalism. She incorporates these into public history spaces and museum curation. Much of her work focuses on the composer H. Lawrence Freeman and his operatic world during the New Negro Movement. She holds a B.A. in Music and Anthropology from Furman University.



Raekwon Fuller (*Drama, '19*) is a SC native and a 2019 Drama Graduate of SCGSAH. He is an actor and an aspiring theatre founder, preparing to continue his studies at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale in the fall. Raekwon says SCGSAH has

been an incredible blessing to his artistry and laid a firm foundation for his collegiate and post-collegiate journey as a New York-based actor. He thanks God for ordering his steps and letting him cross paths with SCGSAH.



Knox Martin (*Music, '10*) is a versatile fundraiser who brings a mission-driven approach to his work. Throughout his career, he has been an advocate for arts education and has worked to secure funding for initiatives from the City of

New York and New York State. He has also lobbied for arts education on Capitol Hill and recently served as a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. Currently, Knox is the Major Gifts Officer at amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research.

Martin graduated from the University of South Carolina in 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts in Music with a concentration in horn and a minor in Music Entrepreneurship. Based in New York City, Knox enjoys reading memoirs, wandering the city, long park hangs, and has been working to perfect his fried chicken.



Daquise Montgomery (*Music, '07*) currently serves as the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources at M&T Bank in the Greater Washington DC Area. Daquise has cultivated a wealth of expertise and progressive growth in

various domains, including Human Resources, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Retail and Business Banking, Leadership Development, and Training. They have a dedicated commitment to fostering DEI, Leadership Development, Financial Literacy, and sustainability, impacting not just the local community but extending their influence more widely. At M&T they serve as the President of the Greater Washington PRIDE Resource Group, National Co-Chair for PRIDE serving all the charters for the bank's enterprise, Professional Development Chair for the African American Employee Resource Group, and leader on the DEI Connect Leadership team.

Daquise has embraced multiple leadership and service roles throughout their tenure in their professional career. They currently serve as the President-Elect for the DC Equality Chamber Foundation, Membership Steering committee with Alexander Chamber of Commerce where they were a recipient of the 2023 40 under 40 class and a graduate of their Leadership Development class of 2024, the DC Chamber of Commerce, and a board of director for Journey to Josiah, a nonprofit organization.

Hailing from Greenville, South Carolina, Daquise's academic background includes studies in music from the SC Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, Liberal Arts and Music at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, as well as Music and English at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. They are currently completing their master's degree in human resource strategic management, and they are also gearing up to pursue a Doctor of Business Administration at Bellevue University in the spring of 2024.

Beyond their corporate role, Daquise is passionate about music, singing, a professional flutist with the Capital City Symphony (DC) and Loudon Symphony Orchestra (VA), as well as imparting their musical knowledge as a flute instructor.



Kristen Murdaugh (*Music, '12*) mezzo-soprano, is a voice pedagogue, voice scientist, singer, and activist. An evidence-based, identity-affirming, student-centered voice teacher, she believes in helping her students find

their most authentic voices through the intersection of cutting-edge voice science and tried-and-true voice pedagogy. Kristen's notable publications and presentations include: *Correlating Perceptual and Spectral Aspects of Chiaroscuro in Singing*; *In-Person or Virtual: Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on the Teaching Habits of Voice Pedagogues*; *That's What He Said: Gender Bias in the Fundamental Models of Sound Perception*; and in 2017, she presented a TEDx Talk titled, *Talking about Talking: The Science of the Voice*. Kristen has a particular research interest in the intersectionality of gender studies and voice science, and through her work, she hopes to foster a more equitable, transparent, and diverse world of singing. With a passion for contemporary repertoire, her notable solo performances include the role of Estelle in Musto's opera *Later the Same Evening*, and the contralto solos in the world premiere of LaRosa's oratorio *Joshua*. Kristen's affinity for musical collaboration has led her to performances in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Washington National Cathedral, and Duke Chapel, and she is particularly honored to be a founding member of the service-oriented vocal ensemble *Servire*.

Kristen is a doctoral researcher and PhD candidate in voice science at the University for Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria. She holds a Master of Music degree in vocal pedagogy from the New England Conservatory of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance and German studies from Furman University. She is an active member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), Pan American Vocology Association (PAVA), and Voice Foundation, and serves on the NATS Boston Board as Vice President where she continues to advocate for inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in the field of singing. Through her work with *Servire*, community organizations, and her own research and teaching, she aims to facilitate constructive dialogue and work alongside her community to foster social change.



Vicki Nooe (*Music, '04*) is a music director and collaborative pianist in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and currently Lecturer at University of Texas Arlington. She is a proud alumna of the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and

Humanities, Southern Methodist University, and Boston University. She has worked with Dallas Theater Center,

Theatre Arlington, WaterTower Theatre, Lyric Stage, and other local theatres. She teaches courses in musical theatre musicianship and musical theatre history at UTA. Vicky is passionate about equipping theatre artists with the practical music skills needed to succeed as musical theatre artists. She has previously taught in music departments at Dallas Baptist University and Southern Methodist University and worked as a vocal coach at Boston University's Tanglewood Institute. She has been a staff pianist at Boston Conservatory, Texas Christian University, Hebrew College, and the Upper Valley Music Center. She is a member of the American Federation of Musicians, Pi Kappa Lambda, Music Theatre Educators' Alliance, and the College Music Society.



Tammy Adams Westafer (*Dance, Summer Honors Program*) originally from Jackson, SC attended the SC Governor's School as a dancer in the summer of 1987. She attributes the Governor's School with making a massive impact on

her young life! After attending, she continued studying ballet under Ron and Zanne Colton at the Augusta Ballet (now Colton Ballet Company) in Augusta, GA. She later attended Brenau University in Gainesville, GA, where she majored in Ballet Pedagogy and danced with the Gainesville Ballet. She then danced professionally for the Augusta Ballet Company and taught dance at Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School in Augusta, GA. Tammy later went on to become a freelance choreographer and had several of her works commissioned by regional ballet companies across the Southeast.

After retiring as a dancer, Tammy completed a Masters degree in Nonprofit Management and worked as Executive Director of the Gainesville Ballet Company for three years. In 2019, she completed a Masters degree in Education and now works as a School Counselor for the Aiken County Public School District in Graniteville, SC.



Andrea Elizabeth White (*Music, '05*) is a full time Music educator in Charleston, South Carolina. She currently teaches Middle school Music and Music Theatre at the Porter-Gaud School and is an Adjunct Professor of Voice

at Charleston Southern University. She holds an Artist Diploma from the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, a BFA in Vocal Performance and a Masters in Performing Arts from the College of Charleston and is a Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership at Charleston Southern University. Mrs. White regularly presents in both local and National Conferences in the field of Vocal Pedagogy for teachers, and is a sought after Early Music musician both locally and internationally, having recently completed a residency at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, England as a Staff Soloist with St. Philip's Anglican Church. This July she will be presenting at the PAMA International Conference on a panel of Voice Specialists in the field of Cambiata/Changing voices.

Been there. Done that.

The SCGSAH Class of 2024 recently walked across the stage to accept their diplomas - a feeling you remember well!

As the time since your graduation grows, we hope so too has your appreciation for everything that made your Govie experience "above and beyond." Take a look below at a few ways you can give back to the place that gave so much to you!



Engage Your Employer

Whether through corporate sponsorship or giving matches, check out your employer's giving options.



Leave a Legacy

It's never too early to consider estate planning! Consider including the Foundation to support future Govies!



Give Now!

Make a gift to support meal plans, Guest Artists, Outreach, or even your former department!



Tell Us More About Your Experience

Give the Foundation insight into your Govie experience to help us better tell the Governor's School story!



Attend Performances & Events

Grow the Govie audience by coming back for student performances and alumni events.



Scan here to donate, tell us your story, or connect with campus!



**SC Governor's School
for the Arts and Humanities
FOUNDATION**

864-282-1570

jared.martin@gsafoundation.net

www.scgsah.org/give



DEAR CLASS OF 2024,

I would like to extend my congratulations to each of you for completing your studies at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. You all should feel incredibly accomplished and proud. You've conquered some of the most rigorous academic and artistic coursework in the country. Each of you have put on a performance, exhibition, production, or public reading. And yes, you've moved away from home before turning 18. None of that is a small feat.

There are many values that each of you can take away from your time at SCGSAH. Community. Hard work. Perseverance. Kindness. Respect. The list is likely endless and personal to each of you. But I hope that you all can harness those ideals. Employ them wherever you end up next. The tools you have gained at SCGSAH are priceless, and they will undoubtedly serve you well on your next adventure.

Many of you are probably excited, fearful, or nervous about the future. You have nothing to worry about. Whether you pursue the arts or go in another direction, it will be okay. Life has many interesting twists and turns, and you will land where you should be. My passion for service was nurtured at SCGSAH through CATS. But I never dreamed that experience would catapult me to roles in the federal government, nonprofit sector, and now as an attorney in private practice. Be open to where your creativity may ultimately lead you.

After you walk across the stage on Graduation Day, you will officially become an alumnus of SCGSAH. SCGSAH's alumni span the country. They are throughout South Carolina but are also in New York City, Atlanta, Charlotte, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, and everywhere in between. I encourage each of you to reach out to alumni that live in your next destination. SCGSAH alumni are more than willing to connect with you, provide mentorship, or simply be a friend. Being an alumnus of SCGSAH means something, and I am happy to welcome you all to our circle of alumni.

As an alumnus, please stay involved in SCGSAH. Share your career and life updates with Anna King of the Alumni Office. Stay connected with your former teachers. Maintain the enduring friendships that you have created. And as you progress, do not forget to give back to the next class of students who will walk through the halls of SCGSAH.

Again, congratulations on becoming a graduate of SCGSAH. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors and in the journey ahead.



Very truly yours,

Christian "Josh" Myers, Esq.
Cello Performance, Class of 2011
Alumni Advisory Council Chair

CONGRATULATIONS,



CLASS of 2024!



CLASS OF 2024

DESTINATIONS

Isaiah Nijagé Allen | University of South Carolina

Trilby Rose Allen | Gap Year

Kris Barrick | College of Charleston

Nigel Rose Baucom | Tri-County Technical College

Bella Raine Bausano | SUNY Purchase

Lauren Emerson Baxter | Undecided

Ava Grace Beasley | Clemson University

Madison Shelby Beseda | University of South Carolina Honors College

Hannah Lauren Brusch | Undecided

Norah Moss Byers | Sarah Lawrence College

Anna Chen | University of South Carolina

Babs Carol Cobb | School of Visual Arts

Alexandra Paige Coley | Swarthmore University

Liam Patrick Conway | Chapman University, Dodge College of Film and Media Arts

Veronica Evelyn Cooker | Shenandoah Conservatory

Ollie Marie Cooper | College of Charleston

Grace Collins Cope | Converse University

Richard George Corn | Rochester Institute of Technology

Emily Whitlow Cox | Undecided

Paige Nicole Dayton | Kansas City Art Institute

Anna Kathryn Dennis | College of Charleston

Olivia Laine Dermody | University of South Carolina

Aiden Robert Devers | Undecided

Piper Leona Dunn | College of Charleston

Teigan Bright Edwards | Sewanee: The University of the South

Connor Wayne Fanny | Undecided

Skye Flodder | Undecided

Elena Lee Ford | Virginia Commonwealth University

Meredith McKenzie Foster | Francis Marion University

Larissa Anne Fowler | University of Padua, Cesare Pollini Conservatory of Music

Sabrina-Michelle Francis | Pace University

Michelangelo Funfrock | University of South Carolina

Xavier Mason Galloway | University of South Carolina

Sanjay Desikan Govindarajan | New York University, Tisch School of the Arts

Piper Nicole Greene | Emerson College

Samantha Kae Greenman | College of Charleston

Arielle Faith Greer | Coastal Carolina University

Claire Marie Harvey | Minnesota College of Art and Design

Juno Elise Hayes | Gap Year

Hannah Elizabeth Hebert | Western Carolina University

Anthony Hodges | University of South Carolina, Aiken

Daniel James Howard | Southern Methodist University

Anna Christina Ilie | College of Charleston

Corbon Elisha Irons | Lawrence University

Andrew Gibson Jones | Carnegie Mellon University

Richmond Savannah Dunn Joyce | Warren Wilson College

Lainey Belle Keefauver | University of California, Los Angeles

Aubrie Michelle Kidd | University of South Carolina

Sophie Elise Kutcher | Ontario College of Art and Design University

Clara Nicole Lanning | New York University

Jane Laurence | Gap Year

Parker Grace Leshner | Washington University in St. Louis

Alexia Singi Liu | Oberlin College

Peyton Walker Mann | Undecided

Addy Rose McClure | University of South Carolina

Jacob Finn Merritt | Converse University

Jake Montroy | Brevard College

Adlai Vassy Moore | University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Catherine Bethea Munn | Clemson University

Jasmine Elizabeth Myers | Johnson C. Smith University

Nolin Dennis Nichols | Coastal Carolina University

Lucas Charles Nichter | Undecided

Jakai Nyasia Norfleet | Carnegie Mellon University

Molly Oldstrom | College of Charleston

Ella Patterson | Gap Year

Wolfgang Alexandra Perrett | University of South Carolina

Kyra Jean Pichardo | Rider University

Gracie Lynn Pifer | Winthrop University

Rue Danae Pinto | Warren Wilson College

Emma Jean Marie Pool | Savannah College of Art and Design

Teagan Marie Prickett | Fordham University, The Ailey School

Ethan Nichole Ratchford | Lander University

Teagan Marie Rauch | Winthrop University

Lillian Brooke Rees | University of Hartford

Charlie Alfredo Rojas | Clemson University

Hayden C. Rucker | College of Charleston

Tyler William Russell | Coastal Carolina University

Erin Shelby Semple | Converse University

Natalie Lauren Sevel | Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre

Anna Lynn Sherfinski | University of South Carolina

Olivia Joan Shoemaker | University of North Carolina School of the Arts

Saige Leigh Shoup | Bard College

Ky'Asia Ariana Tiara Sims | Gap Year

Jordion Nathaniel Slater | College of Charleston

Khairsa "K'amor" Smith | University of Michigan

Cayden Joseph Starnes | Reed College

Seneca Rain Steele | Western Iowa Tech

Rynn Grace Stephenson | Marymount Manhattan College

Benjamin A. Stickney, Jr. | University of South Carolina

Ellie Sofie Strom | Clemson University

Sarah Rachelle Swoope | Boston Conservatory at Berklee

Meredith Taylor | Gap Year

Madeleine Elizabeth Thompson | Emerson College

Rachel Hannah Thompson | Greenville Technical College

Kate Tolchinsky | Northwestern University

Brooke Lindsey Turner | University of Hartford

Sofia Alessandra Valverde | AIL Madrid

Isabella Rachel Varquez-Paulk | Undecided

Ryan Ariel Vasquez | University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music

Sebastian Visser | University of South Carolina

Liv Waller | Duke University

Scout Michelle Ware | Converse University

Spencer Watson | Bard College

Emily Savannah Wham | Converse University

Owen Carter Whitehead | Appalachian State University

Haley Fair Whitelaw | Shenandoah Conservatory

Reese Charlene Wiggins | University of Massachusetts

Freeman Paul Williams | The Citadel

Jacob Alexander Zwiernikowski | University of Puget Sound



SENIOR SEND OFF

The Alumni Office hosted the annual Senior Send Off dinner on Wednesday, May 24th. The event was held in Sakas and was the product of the collaboration of several departments across campus. The featured alumni speaker was 2019 Music alumnus Gage Banks. During his remarks, he encouraged seniors to claim their own versions of what success means for them.



Gage Banks (Music '19)

Gage is a performer and educator based out of Lexington, South Carolina. As a performer, Gage has dedicated his time to the promotion and premier of new works, focusing primarily on works of young, often student, composers. He has commissioned and premiered

works by notable composers David Skidmore and John Psathas. Gage has performed in the United States and Europe, most recently performing at the

Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC) as a featured winner of the International Percussion Ensemble Competition (IPEC).

As an educator, Gage has taught as a solo instructor as well as a teacher in the marching arts. He has frequently had students place in the top seats at SCBDA region and all state bands. He also has taught two groups placing top 10 in SCBDA 4A and 5A state marching band finals.

Gage spent 3 years studying with Mr. Everett Beale and Dr. David Hamilton at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. He holds a Bachelor degree in Music Performance from Furman University, and is currently pursuing his Masters of Music in Percussion Performance at the University of South Carolina.

Gage is engaged to 2018 SCGSAH Drama alumna, Emily Enlow. They plan to marry in the summer of 2024.





20 QUESTIONS WITH CHESLEY POLK

1. **Where were you born?** I was born and raised in Rock Hill, SC.
2. **What one thing really makes your day?** It's always a great day when I am able to talk with my family.
3. **What three words would you use to describe yourself?** Life Long Learner
4. **Are you an introvert or an extrovert?** Introverted Extrovert all the way
5. **What is your pet peeve?** Dishonesty and manipulation
6. **What is your favorite thing about Greenville?** Aside from SCGSAH, it'd have to be Reedy River/Falls Park
7. **What was your major in college?** Drama at UNCSA
8. **What is your favorite comfort food?** Macaroni and Cheese
9. **What is your idea of a dream vacation?** a zipline excursion through Costa Rica
10. **If money were no object, what's the first thing you would buy?** Barbra Streisand's Malibu Mansion
11. **What's a skill you've always wanted to learn?** Carpentry & Woodworking
12. **If you were trying out for a singing reality show, what song would you sing?** I'm Still Standing by Elton John
13. **What advice would you give to a current Govie?** Move with Love toward Understanding and never compare yourself to others.
14. **What was the first concert you ever went to?** Either Britney Spears or The Spice Girls - either way, #GirlPower
15. **Are you a good dancer?** I am - I almost left the drama department to transfer into the dance department at SCGSAH and then again at UNCSA.
16. **What was your last vacation?** My last vacation was to Key West, FL with my partner. Or my permanent vacation was moving to a place that others vacation so I get it all year!
17. **What hashtag best describes you?** I think #QueerJoy would be my choice.
18. **If you could have any superpower which would it be?** I'd definitely choose the ability to fly.
19. **What would the title of your autobiography be?** Going back for seconds: Anecdotes from a glutton for life.
20. **How did your Governor's School experience and education impact you?** Governor's School is a rare place of quality and excellence. It requires the same of the students attending. No place is without its flaws, of course,

but the Governor's School offers a specific sense of safety at an otherwise precarious age for students - especially for those with artistic inclinations. The staff at Governor's School provided me with examples of dedication, curiosity, and authenticity which helped shape the path I'd choose to walk in life and the adult I'd become. The Governor's School helped elevate, strengthen, and solidify my abilities, boundaries, and standards.

SCGSAH strengthened my skills as an actor and performer, of course, but more than this, it strengthened my character as a human being. Many of the gifts Governor's School gave me weren't fully clear until I peered back in retrospect. Among those gifts would be an understanding of self-love and self-respect. I gained an early understanding of the power there is in being true to yourself. I also gained an early understanding of human nature and how to trust my instincts which has undoubtedly made portions of my life easier to manage. I do not believe I would have ever taken a path in life that led to opening my own business, Polkadot Entertainment, without what I learned at Governor's School.

Governor's School instilled in me a desire for excellence and lit the fires of curiosity within me. I thank Governor's School for making me into a life-long learner with an understanding that there will always be more that is unknown than known. This nurtured in me a desire to understand rather than judge which has been immeasurably valuable in relationships of all kinds. It helped me form a motto I try to live my life by, which is, "Move with Love toward Understanding".

As a student, our time at the Governor's School is brief, yet profound. Each experience is so specific to each student. The faculty and staff are really the spine. I am forever grateful for the faculty and staff, our educators and caretakers, that go above and beyond each day to nurture the student as an entire being; not just their talents and skills but their hearts and minds - their being.

Chesley Polk is the Founder & CEO of Polkadot Entertainment in Pensacola, FL. A graduate of the SC Governor's School for the Arts & Humanities with a BFA from the UNC School of the Arts, Chesley has been seen performing from NY to California in stage productions, film & television, and stand-up. Now focused on providing inclusive entertainment opportunities on the gulf coast and working with organizations to elevate how they celebrate, Chesley maintains a focus on the younger generation working with schools and community organizations to provide quality training to underserved youth.

DEAR GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL ALUMNI COMMUNITY,

My name is Kevin Human, the new Film Instructor here at SCGSAH. This is a role that I take on with extreme gratitude and respect. Because I know how high the bar is – it was set by you! And I thank you for that; it's part of my motivation to ensure I'm doing everything I can to make the new Film program worthy.

Growing up, I always knew I was a filmmaker (or more precisely, a sequentially linear visual storyteller), but being from the small town of Pelzer, SC, I had no idea how to make that into a life, and I didn't have the resources to guide me. I figured it out, but it took a long time. A very... Long... Time. Today, I am an active screenwriter and producer, with a feature out now and two projects filming this year, along with a script under option that is being packaged. I take great honor in the opportunity to build a program that will provide young filmmakers of our home state with opportunities and resources that I wish I'd had.

The Film program will focus on narrative filmmaking. The curriculum will start with a foundational understanding of the cinematic arts before students progress to advanced techniques in audio, cinematography, directing, editing, and screenwriting. We'll do a deep dive into all phases (development, pre-production, production, and post), and we'll explore future-facing techniques like virtual production. But the core of it all is storytelling.

With today's cameras and tech, it doesn't take too much to make a film look good. But it takes an immense amount of work, along with a deep understanding of oneself and the world around us, for something to be good – or at least, worthy of an audience's attention. We'll ask ourselves what stories we are telling and why. We'll analyze those stories, beat them, break them, love them, and repeat. We'll discover how those stories can best be told through the cinematic arts. And then we'll make some cool* stuff.

Starting a program from scratch is daunting to be sure. We will need gear (cameras, lights, grip, computers, and more). Additional faculty. And there are space considerations. We're sharing space until Film can find a permanent home, and -- plot twist -- this is creating opportunities for collaboration with other departments which I am excited to develop. We do have some precedent with the short film collaboration between Drama and Creative Writing, currently in its third year. Historically, students in those departments have collaborated on an accelerated timeline to produce two short films in the Spring under the mentorship of guest director (and Drama graduate) Liza Bennett with support from local production crews. Film is excited to continue this tradition and extend the process to fully encompass an authentic production experience for our students.

It's no secret that professional film and TV production is no longer limited to Los Angeles. Atlanta is one of the top five cities by soundstage square footage in the world. North Carolina has seen a resurgence in its film industry. And perhaps most importantly, the industry is growing right here in South Carolina. I've been busy meeting with local filmmakers and other stakeholders to make sure that SCGSAH is right in the thick of things as the local industry continues to develop. When students graduate from our Film program, they will be competitive applicants at the country's top film schools, but they will also have the skills and network needed to crew on a set right here in SC if they so choose.

I'd love to connect with any of our alumni in the industry who are interested in supporting our new program and its students. They're a diverse group with a wide variety of backgrounds and a shared love for film. It's my privilege to be developing an innovative cinematic arts curriculum that will serve them and many other young filmmakers of South Carolina for years to come.



See you at the movies,

Kevin Human

**epic, intimate, profound, ridiculous, insightful, bombastic,
hilarious, dramatic, personal, broad, artistic, authentic*

THERE AND BACK AGAIN: *A GOVIE'S JOURNEY*

BY ZAC PELICANO



In April, something really exciting and wonderful happened. I was offered and accepted a job with the Governor's School for the Arts & Humanities. I joked to my family that, after attending the Summer Program in 2002 and then the Residential Program from 2003-2005, this was the third time I'd been accepted to the Governor's School. I was shocked to find that it still left me feeling as excited and full of possibility as it did when I was a teenager.

My Governor's School journey began well before my first Summer Program audition, way back in 1999. I had to write a persuasive paper for my 7th grade English class and I chose to write about why I wanted to attend the newly opened, arts-centered residential high school that I had seen on the news. I don't remember how I did on the paper, but I do remember the seed being planted that there was a place where kids like me could learn to hone their talents and that place was just a stone's throw from my middle school. It was a seed that took deep root and flourished.

Time at the Summer Program (back when it was still at Converse College) only served to strengthen my resolve. Before I knew it, I was preparing for an audition for the Residential program and shortly after, packing a trunk full of black clothes and diction books and a mammoth-sized Riverside Shakespeare. The next two years proved to be a rollercoaster of learning how to be serious about theatre and performance. I learned to speak like I was from nowhere. I learned to take criticism and use it to implement change in my performance. Maybe most importantly, I learned that sometimes people are just plain wrong about you and you have to listen and thank them for their input, and then just do what feels right. It was all hard work but, to quote *A League of Their Own*, "the hard is what makes it great."

After graduation, I moved to New York City to attend the Stella Adler Studio of Acting as part of their evening conservatory program. My full load of academic and arts work at Governor's School left me well prepared to spend my days working my 9-to-5 as a copywriter for an arts nonprofit and my evenings back in studio blacks rehearsing scenes and doing text analysis. It was here that I realized that not all arts schools are created equal. I found myself scratching my head at how my Govie drama studio had been head-and-shoulders more advanced than my adult conservatory courses.

Though the big name alumni and teaching philosophy were what had lured me to the Adler Studio, I wound up falling back on my Shakespeare and voice and speech work from Governor's School more often than not. Even this far from home at a renowned conservatory program, nothing could really hold a candle to the education I received at SCGSAH.

In 2009, I moved back to the Upstate and by 2011, I was directing theatre full time. Now at the reigns of a theatre company operating out of a converted Depression-era school building in Fountain Inn, I spent the next 5 years directing mostly classic musicals, but I took some risks and exposed our little town to Thornton Wilder and Kaufman & Hart and even Shakespeare when I could (ask me about fascist, heavy metal Julius Caesar sometime). I watched a generation of kids come up through our company and helped them prep for college auditions and wound up serving as the Artistic Director of the venue by the end of my time there. It took this portion of my life to make me realize that I'd been through all those years of acting school, not because I was supposed to be an actor, but because I needed to know how to communicate with them. I was supposed to be a director.

Then, in 2016, something else exciting and wonderful happened. My wife, Mackensie, and I welcomed not one, but two babies into our family. My priorities came into focus with stunning clarity and suddenly, I was struggling to find my work fulfilling. With these newborn twin daughters at home, the prospect of working tech week for a show suddenly seemed unimaginable. It quickly became obvious to me that something had resoundingly replaced the theatre and the "love of the show." Now, all I wanted was to spend all the time in the world with them.

After bowing out of the theatre in 2017 (pun absolutely intended) and seeking the home life security of a 9-5 schedule, I wound up fixing iPhones, first for an authorized repair center, then for Apple itself. I tried on the "hat" of corporate work and...I did not like it. Coming from such a community-driven background, a cultivated corporate sense of belonging ultimately rang false for me. Despite the extensive company culture training provided, the unshakable feeling of being a cog in a giant, multinational machine just wasn't my style.

I searched around for a while for something that fit, then discovered something that very much did:

Governor's School was hiring for a public relations position. Not once had I considered working in a school, much less the one I'd graduated from, but the job description was seeking someone with the eclectic skillset I'd acquired over my career as a copywriter, creative lead, and administrator, and revolved around telling the story of a place that meant the world to me. Returning to the school for interviews was an emotional awakening of memories I had taken for granted. I was reminded of a simple truth: I loved this place. I met my best friend here. I learned how to take responsibility for myself here. Around every corner of the campus, I was flooded with fond memories. It felt like coming home.

I'm now about a month into my third stint at SCGSAH and my favorite thing about being back is the sense of belonging. Currently, my creative endeavors are all in the non-professional realm (writing, practicing my saxophone, sweating it out in my blacksmith shop) and I haven't been near a stage in quite some time, but I'm beyond thrilled to be working in the arts again in a support capacity. I am fortunate enough to be behind the scenes, bolstering the efforts of a place that nurtured me so well and supplied me with not only an education, but a sense of who I am, what's important to me, and what I am capable of.

If you had told a 17-year old Zac that in 20 years, he'd be back at SCGSAH with a "staff" badge around his neck, he'd have laughed you out of the room. Now, on the other side of two-decades of change and growth, I can't imagine myself anywhere else. •

ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS & UPDATES



Kedrick Armstrong was selected as Music Director for the Oakland Symphony after a two-year nationwide search and will relocate to Oakland, CA, from Illinois where he currently serves as the Knox-Galesburg Symphony's creative partner and principal conductor. As Music Director, Kedrick will conduct the orchestra's public concerts in and around the Bay Area, actively participate in the organization's active education and community engagement programs, and will be the organization's cultural ambassador and connector with Bay Area artists and community organizations. Kedrick becomes the 9th Music Director in the Oakland Symphony's almost 100-year-history.

Alum **David Hunt** (*Viola*, '07) performed with the NC Baroque Orchestra at Grace Church Cathedral in Charleston on March 13 as part of the Music at Grace Concert Series!

Founded in 2016, the Music at Grace Concert Series presents high quality music featuring local, national and international artists and ensembles. Past performers include the Harvard University Choir, Yale University's Béla Quartet, The King's Counterpoint, The Choir of New College, Oxford, and more! For their performance, Hunt and the NC Baroque Orchestra will showcase Buxtehude's "Membra Jesu Nostri." Learn more: <https://trst.in/vGee6W>



Starting In the fall of 2024, **Javian Brabham**, will be joining the faculty of New York University (NYU) as Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Brass Studies.

2009 CW alumnus **Michael Pruitt** has been awarded the University of Virginia School of Law's 23rd Powell Fellowship in Legal Services to work with Housing Opportunities Made Equal Inc. in Richmond, Virginia. Read more about Michael's service, work, and his path to advocacy [here](#).



Saxophonist **Robert Young** (*High School Music-Saxophone* '02) has been performing with orchestras across the country, most recently with the Berkeley Symphony in his first professional collaboration with his brother, **Joseph Young**, Conductor (*Summer Honors-Music* '99). Robert is currently on faculty at University of North Carolina School of the Arts.



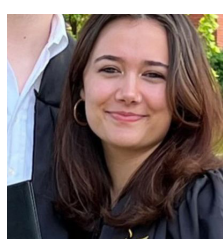
Amber Magnuson (*High School Creative Writing '19*) is Harvard Law School bound! Congratulations to Amber on this awesome educational development.



Congratulations to **Logan Martin** (*High School Drama '20*) for graduating from Coastal Carolina University with a B.F.A. in Physical Theater! Logan is currently in Myrtle Beach and will soon move to Atlanta.



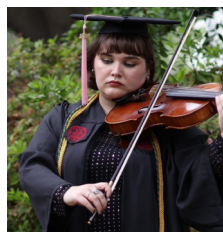
Congratulations to **Hope Zinkann** (*High School Music-Violin '20*) for graduating from the University of South Carolina School of Music with a B.M. in Music Education! She will be going into real estate and opening her own private studio.



Congratulations to **Hailey Pfeiffer** (*High School Music-Trombone '20*) for graduating from Vanderbilt University with a B.A. in English Literature and a Mediterranean Studies minor. In the fall, she will pursue her master's in Modern and Contemporary Literature at Trinity College Dublin in Ireland.



Congratulations to **Connor Gregory** (*High School Music-Trumpet '20*) for graduating from Furman University where he studied earth sciences and music! Connor will begin his pursuit of an M.S. in Geology from the University of Alabama this fall.



Congratulations to **Mia Bailey** (*High School Music-Viola '20*) for graduating from the University of South Carolina with a B.M. in Music Education - Instrumental! This fall, Mia will be joining Summit Parkway Middle School as their new Orchestra Director and starting her own private studio.



Congratulations to **Abril Castillo-Acosta** (*High School Drama '20*) for graduating from Coastal Carolina University where she earned a B.F.A. in Theater Arts with a concentration in Physical Theater and a minor in Film Studies!



Congratulations to **Jonathan Gragg** (*High School Music-Voice '20*) for graduating from the College of Charleston (CofC) with a B.A. in Music with an emphasis in Vocal Performance. He will continue at CofC this fall as an Artist in Residence.



Congratulations to **Sarah Delanuez** (*High School Music-Voice '20*) for graduating from North Greenville University Magna Cum Laude with a B.A. in Music-Voice and a Theatre Minor! Sarah plans to do lots of traveling and performing, including studying abroad in Spain

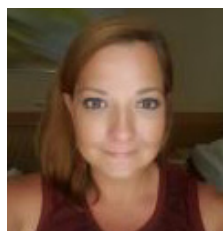
for a month, pursuing an acting opportunity with FC Filmz (a Christian film company), participating in the Disney College Program, and getting involved with the Lexington Children's Theatre in Kentucky.



Congratulations to **Rowan Brown** (*High School Creative Writing '19*) for being accepted to the UMass Chan Medical School on track to becoming a physician!



Congratulations to **Wynter McCray** (*High School Music-Double Bass '19*) for graduating from the Eastman School of Music with a B.M. in Double Bass Performance! She plans to pursue an M.M. in Double Bass Performance at The Juilliard School in the fall.



Congratulations to **Abby Gantt** (*High School Music '01*) on her May marriage to Steven Houghton.

ALUMNI NEWS

JUNE 2024

at the
Governor's School



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