

CELEBRATING COEDUCATION

✿ **In September 1975,** Groton's first female students passed through the Schoolhouse doors. The matriculation of young women was the culmination of intense consideration, planning, and hard work by trustees, school leaders, and many in the Groton School community. The long-term success of coeducation was a result of the bravery and pioneering spirit brought to the Circle by Groton's first female students and the commitment to success embraced by the community. Groton approached coeducation with the same ethos of inclusion that has been a hallmark of the school since its founding, and we look forward to celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in the same spirit.

The question of coeducation had been raised well before the 1970s. In fact, in a letter written in October 1937, Rector Peabody expressed the hope that Groton would one day be a coeducational institution. Headmaster Crocker first considered setting up a sister school (across the road on the old golf course) in 1957, and by the late 1960s, Headmaster Honea contemplated finding an all-girls school with which to merge. Finally, in 1970, Headmaster Wright set up the Committee on Coeducation to fully consider the question, and in 1971, the Board of Trustees formally approved the committee's recommendation that Groton should become coeducational. (In response to significant alumni pushback, the board unanimously reaffirmed its approval a year later in 1972.)

Without a neighboring girl's school with which to merge, the process of preparing to welcome female students was complex. The board approved a multimillion-dollar fundraising plan to address new facility needs in preparation for the arrival of girls. The school also focused on hiring a cohort of female faculty and administrators, who brought expertise and new energy to the Circle. The subsequent evolution of coeducation at Groton is a continuum that has had its fits and starts, but it has always been driven by the pursuit of excellence, inclusion, and relevance.



As we mark the fiftieth anniversary of coeducation, we are filled with gratitude for our predecessors. Not satisfied with the tradition of a boarding school exclusively for boys, school trustees and leaders endeavored to improve the Circle in a dynamic and deliberate sense through coeducation. In parallel, Groton's first female students, faculty, and administrators arrived on the Circle with energy, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to the success of the endeavor. Collectively, these architects and pioneers ushered in coeducation at Groton. And the school got better!

Temba T. Maqubela
Headmaster