

A PUBLICATION OF MARSHALL SCHOOL

THE HILLTOPPER

EXPLORE.

LEARN.

LEAD.

Transform.

FALL 2025

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

ANTHONY PISAPIA



Outside of Philadelphia, there is a nature reserve whose shining star is a *giant sequoia* tree. Signs throughout the reserve point the way to the tree and, with great anticipation, buses full of children, who are there for class trips, approach it.

What they find, however, is quite disappointing. The *giant sequoia* tree is not, in fact, giant. It stands alone, only twenty-feet tall, despite being hundreds of years old.

What they learn is that in order for a *giant sequoia* to grow tall, it needs help. Its roots, rarely more than 10-foot deep, despite growing as much as 300-feet tall, must spread out and interconnect with the roots of other giant sequoias to provide stability and nutrients. It is the interconnectedness of the roots, of an entire grove of giant sequoias, that allows each individual tree to grow tall.

If students are like *giant sequoias*, the Marshall community is their grove. I was reminded of this during homecoming, when I had the honor of awarding four well-deserving and impressive alumni with Marshall alumni achievement awards. By their own account, none of these alumni arrived at that stage alone. All spoke about how the Marshall School community made them what they are today: their teachers, their fellow classmates, their connectedness to Marshall alumni and Marshall parents around the world. Every piece of the root system that is Marshall helped them become who they are.

As our students take root and Learn to Explore, Learn to Learn, and Learn to Lead, I am mindful that they cannot do it alone. You make the difference. Your philanthropy, your steadfast support of this school, and your ability to recognize your role in their future set Marshall School apart. Thank you for taking that responsibility seriously and for your commitment to Marshall School.

I am excited about what our students are learning every day. Most of all, I am excited about who they are becoming. Their connection to the Marshall School community, to all of us, will help them throughout life. We are *One Marshall*. Together, we all grow “taller.” Together we Transform.

Sincerely,

Anthony Pisapia M.S.Ed.

Anthony Pisapia, M.S. Ed.
Head of School

Marshall Parent '25, '27, '31

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THE HILLTOPPER

Marshall School
Fall 2025

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SNAP SHOTS

01

The Class of 2026 started the year with paintbrushes in hand—they gathered in the school parking lot to paint their parking spots.



02

Marshall School art faculty member **Ashley Hise** showcased her ceramics work in Paris, France. Ashley's vases were displayed during the prestigious *1000 Vases* exhibit during Paris Design Week in September.



03

Adia Nygaard '25, **Stella Lozano '25**, and **Luke Weis '25**, follow in the footsteps of their alumni parents, continuing a proud Hilltopper tradition.



04

Middle school faculty **Lisa Swenson** and **Jill Torres** were named Climate Literacy Teacher Leader Fellows by the University of Minnesota. This three-year training will allow them to bring new tools, stories, and strategies to help students understand climate change and take action.



05

Our Marshall House residential students and their ambassadors bravely tackled the Class 3 rapids of the St. Louis River during an epic whitewater rafting trip before school began.



06

In June, our Hilltopper baseball team qualified for the quarterfinal round of the MSHSL Class AA State Baseball Tournament. They were sent off in style by cheering fans and families.



07

Our ninth graders spent four days and three nights on the trails at Camp Menogyn, continuing a beloved tradition of camping, canoeing, and connecting with nature.



08

Siblings **Vyla Morton '29** and **Cora Morton '32** joined us back on the Hilltop for the first day of school August 27th.



09

For the third straight year, we hosted Marshall's Outdoor Summer camp, a weekly day camp for K-5 students throughout the community. Intern **Mariah Lucero '26** worked for the camp all summer long.



10

Basecamp gets an upgrade! Marshall volunteers, in partnership with North House Folk School and students from Cook County Schools, spent hours building and erecting this 16x20 foot timber frame structure. While located in prime Forest School territory, students from all divisions will benefit from having this structure on campus.

EXPLORE

IN THE FOREST SCHOOL



◀ During their outdoor play block, our K-4 students explore, create, and connect—with nature and with one another.

question, wonder sets the stage for deeper learning. In science, students are taught how to follow the scientific method. In design, they iterate prototypes. In English, they weave through the writing process. And in social-emotional learning, curiosity opens the door to empathy and the ability to see another perspective beyond their own.

SKILL-BUILDING

As the students explore, they encounter the need for new skills to pursue their interests, conceptions, and imaginations. Forest School provides hands-on experiences across a wide range of modalities, giving students the tools to pursue their ideas and imaginations. These early exposures become anchors for future learning in Marshall's Middle and Upper Schools and after graduation.

Victor Riparbelli, CEO and co-founder of the AI educational video platform Synthesia, told NPR's TED Radio Hour, "Your grandchildren will be the last generation to read and write." In his conversation with host Manoush Zomorodi, Riparbelli described a future shaped by immersive AI tutors. These "tutors" are basically personalized avatars modeled after students' favorite celebrities, capable of delivering lessons, assessing comprehension, and assigning grades in real time. Sounds good... right?

"It's a compelling vision at first thought," says Forest School Principal, Matt Whittaker. "AI could

offer the kind of tailored instruction typically reserved for classrooms with low student-to-teacher ratios. But it's also just one facet of how children learn." At Marshall School, Matt and his fellow educators believe that learning is far more than just delivering content. It's sensory, relational, and deeply rooted in community. That's why learning to explore in Forest School serves as the foundation for every student's journey.

INQUIRY

Learning to explore begins with both curiosity and wonder. And at the Forest School, there's no shortage of either. Whether it's sparked by a breathtaking view or a puzzling



▲ Forest School families came together for a community campout featuring games, picnics, and s'mores by the campfire.



“JOY IS AT THE HEART OF LEARNING. THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE ENLIVENS AND SHARPENS ATTENTION, ESPECIALLY WHEN STUDENTS ARE APPLYING THEIR SKILLS IN NEW AND UNFAMILIAR CONTEXTS.”

- MATT WHITTAKER

As students grow, these foundational experiences are revisited, refined, and expanded to support deeper exploration and skill development.

NAVIGATION

Community is central to the Forest School learning experience. For many students, it's their first opportunity to co-create shared learning spaces. They learn to balance personal values with collective needs, build relationships with the land, and understand the systems that shape their world. Navigation means defining problems and designing solutions that honor the complexity of community.

ADVENTURE

“Joy is at the heart of learning,” Matt proclaims. “The spirit of adventure enlivens and sharpens attention, especially when students are applying their skills in new and unfamiliar contexts.” At Forest School, adventure is built into the rhythm of the year. Forest Schoolers venture off campus twice a month on expeditions that challenge them physically, mentally, and emotionally. These experiences allow students to connect classroom learning with the land through hiking, snowshoeing, nordic and alpine skiing, and biking. As they explore, they encounter moments of discomfort that stretch their capacity and grow their confidence. They build the muscles to do hard things. Over time, these adventures foster resilience, determination, and a greater comfort with uncertainty. They also offer new and unique ways for the kids to engage with the natural

world. On every expedition, students learn how to navigate challenges with this sense of joy.

STORYTELLING

Reflection transforms experience into understanding. It is a crucial part of Learning to Explore, where students engage in meaning making and the communication of experience. At Marshall, storytelling becomes a foundational skill; one that students build through daily read-alouds, exposure to great writers' craft and style, and immersion in stories of the land. These moments of listening and learning spark inspiration and help students develop a relationship with narrative. Over time, they compose their own pieces across genres: persuasive, informative, reflective, narrative, and creative writing where they learn to shape ideas with clarity and voice. They present their work to audiences, formalizing their thinking and deepening their understanding. Through the creation of story, students solidify experiences into learning and understanding.



A MARSHALL FOUNDATION

Learning to explore begins in the earliest grades, but its impact is part of a Marshall student's transformation. The habits of inquiry, skill-building, navigation, adventure, and storytelling are woven into every stage of a Marshall education. In a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, Forest School reminds us that learning is more than personal—it's human.

▲ Forest School Principal Matt Whittaker takes a trail ride with students during the Forest School Bike Rodeo event on the Marshall School campus.

Visiting Bagley Pond on UMD's campus, Forest School students learn to navigate canoes by playing a game in the water with a soccer ball. ▼



LEARN

IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

When used in an educational context, the word “learn” might sound a bit redundant. But for Karen Snyder, Head of Middle School at Marshall School, it represents something much deeper: a mission that both builds on students’ previous explorations at Forest School and prepares them for their future lessons in leadership at the Upper School. In short, Karen wants her students to learn how to learn.

This philosophy is woven into the very structure of Marshall School. The Forest School encourages elementary-aged students to explore, while the Upper School challenges them to lead with purpose. And in between? The Middle School’s guiding directive is simple: *Learn*. Under Karen’s leadership, learning becomes more than an academic endeavor; it’s a transformative journey shaped by curiosity, courage, and growth. “Of course, learning happens in all divisions,” Karen explains, “but Middle School is where we focus deeply on building the academic habits and skills that students will

carry with them.” The goal is to take students beyond their comfort zones, building on the foundations laid in the Forest School and preparing them for the leadership opportunities ahead in Upper School.

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

When students enter Middle School, they bring with them a healthy attitude toward learning—curiosity, a willingness to take risks, and the courage to make mistakes. Building on the foundational skills developed in Forest School, grades five through eight mark a steady progression in the student experience. In fifth grade, students begin learning about responsibility: managing their belongings, organizing their time, and navigating independence. Academically, they dive into writing, note-taking, and critical thinking through hands-on labs and collaborative projects.

As they progress through their Middle School years, the students begin to uncover how they learn best. Every child has a unique learning style, and it’s the job of the faculty to help them discover and refine it.

Some are revealed to be visual learners who retain information well with the help of flashcards. Others process ideas more effectively by writing things down and sketching concept maps. Some are auditory learners who thrive in a lecture format. There’s room for every individual style, and the Middle School teachers are adept at creating space for each student’s personalized approach to learning, ultimately helping set them up for long-term success.

“We want students to ask, ‘What are the possibilities?’ instead of ‘I’m stuck,’” Karen explains. “Whether it’s problem-solving or exploring interests, we encourage them to try things, take risks, and support each other. We’re lucky to be in a school that values that kind of exploration.”



TAKING NOTE

Karen wants students to leave Middle School equipped with a toolkit of skills, including writing, math, thinking, science observation, and

◀ It’s an annual tradition for area fifth graders to participate in Forestry Field Day. Students hike to Chester Bowl and work their way through stations about Minnesota fish, wildlife, invasive species, forest soils, forest products, and wildfires.





“WHEN I HEAR FROM ALUMNI, THEY TALK ABOUT HOW THEIR WRITING, COMMUNICATION, AND THINKING SKILLS SET THEM APART IN COLLEGE AND THE WORK FORCE. THEY’RE OFTEN SURPRISED BY HOW READY THEY ARE, AND THAT TELLS ME WE’RE STILL DOING A GOOD JOB.”

- KAREN SNYDER

speaking skills so they aren’t worried about how to learn; they’re focused instead on what they’re learning. Note-taking is among the most important tools in the kit. “We teach note-taking explicitly,” says Karen. “A writing framework is introduced and used consistently across disciplines, so science, English, and social studies aren’t asking for wildly different formats.” This consistency has proven successful and has given scores of students the practice they need to absorb, apply, and retain information. Another successful approach is the graphic organizers teachers use to help students organize their thoughts before they write. There’s an emphasis that thinking comes first, before any words hit the page.

In fifth grade, note-taking often begins with teacher-provided notes displayed on the screen, allowing students to compare and identify

◀ Catching sixth grade scholar, Tabitha Hurley '32, taking notes. Learning today, leading tomorrow.

key information. As the year progresses, that support gradually tapers off and is replaced by guiding questions or headings. Students are encouraged to discern what’s truly worth writing down rather than simply copying content.

ASKING “WHY?”

In science, students conduct labs, form hypotheses, analyze data, and ask “why.” In math, they’re encouraged to explain their thinking, a process that helps them catch errors and deepen their understanding. The goal is for students to learn to articulate their reasoning, not just plug in answers, but engage thoughtfully with the material. According to Karen, this is a special time in the lives of these students. “Middle School is a time full of change, but also full of possibility. Their mindset is still open and they’re more likely to think in terms of possibilities than limitations. And that’s something we really try to nurture.”

Eventually, Middle School students will face more complex content in Upper School and beyond. That’s why Middle School is so critical; it’s where they are equipped with the tools, habits, and confidence to meet new challenges head-on.

LOOKING AHEAD

Wondering if these skills really translate into the real world? “When I hear from alumni, they talk about how their writing, communication, and thinking skills set them apart in college and the work force. They’re often surprised by how ready they are, and that tells me we’re still doing a good job.”



▲ Sixth graders visit Voyageur Village at Lester Park to learn how early settlers of Minnesota lived and played, including activities such as dipping candles.

◀ Genius Hour is back! Seventh and eighth graders will use part of each week to work on independent projects they are passionate about. Here, they’re in the library learning about all of the resources that are available to them.



LEAD

IN THE UPPER SCHOOL



Students come to Marshall School's Upper School with a strong foundation. They've explored their way through Forest School and learned to learn in Middle School. Now it's time they learn to lead, by developing critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills that prepare them for deeper academic and personal growth. Megan Perry-Spears, Head of the Upper School, explains how this final stage completes the "Marshall Way," a culture that transforms kids into confident, purposeful leaders.



▲ The seniors cheer together during the pep rally to mark the end of the first week of school.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In Upper School, students are challenged to transform themselves and the community around them.

Through service learning, coursework, and real-world problem solving, Marshall students embrace challenges and are equipped and empowered to lead to create positive change.

Marshall's mission exists in every step of this journey: *inspiring lifelong learners to embrace challenge and create positive change.* According to Megan, leadership at Marshall is about transforming communities and problems. And transformation is twofold: external and internal. "Externally, it's about transforming the communities we're in for good," she explains. "Internally, it's about kids figuring out who they are, what they stand for, what matters to them, and how they want to be in the world. That internal and external transformation comes from learning to lead."

LEADING, BY THE GRADE

The school has introduced a course called Foundations. Designed for ninth graders, Foundations is focused on communication and another key area. This foundational course emphasizes writing, speaking, and analyzing sources, which are all critical communication skills. It's a one-semester class required for all ninth graders.

There's also a strong emphasis on community building that focuses on learning how to live together and thrive in a diverse environment.

▲ Working together in class helps build understanding and confidence. Less homework, more teamwork, and deeper learning.

Ninth grade, then, is centered on skill development and cultivating a sense of community.

In tenth grade, students engage in solutionary service learning. The entire grade collaborates with a local church (usually St. Andrew's Episcopal) which has agreed to fund student-led service learning initiatives. Bettina Keppers, in a role focused on DEI and social justice, has partnered with several community organizations.

Much of this work is done with Life House, a youth organization addressing homelessness. These partners present real-world challenges related to homeless youth, and students work in teams to develop actionable solutions. They then pitch their ideas to both the funders and the organizations. Selected proposals receive funding and are implemented by the students themselves. There's real money, real action, and real-world impact.

Not every student will feel a personal connection to the issue, but all are encouraged to explore. It's collaborative work wherein they discover individual strengths, learn to understand others' skills, and learn how to work together to solve complex problems.



“EXTERNALLY, IT’S ABOUT TRANSFORMING THE COMMUNITIES WE’RE IN FOR GOOD. INTERNALLY, IT’S ABOUT KIDS FIGURING OUT WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY STAND FOR, WHAT MATTERS TO THEM, AND HOW THEY WANT TO BE IN THE WORLD. THAT INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TRANSFORMATION COMES FROM LEARNING TO LEAD.”

- MEGAN PERRY-SPEARS

By eleventh grade, students are offered greater curricular choices, like Advanced Placement (AP) courses, College in the Schools (CITS), STEM, and art. This is when they begin to explore their interests more deeply: what they want to study, what their purpose might be, what skills they bring, and how they hope to make a meaningful impact.

The college search begins here too: Where will they thrive? Where can they begin to shape their future? It’s a dual journey: internal (Who am I?) and external (What do I want to do?).

Many students enter the Scholars Program, which allows them to dive deeper into a subject area—almost like declaring a minor—refining their focus and expertise.

Senior year culminates in a program called *Let Your Life Speak*. Students choose colleges, write personal essays, and deliver “This I Believe” speeches to the entire school. Each senior has the option to finish their final year with a senior capstone, a two-week project focused on a topic that reflects their passions and talents. “It’s their moment to declare, “this is who I am, and this is how I want to show up in the world,” explains Megan.

LEADERSHIP IN PLAY

In Upper School, students are encouraged to get involved. “Education isn’t just about classes,” points out Megan. “It’s also about community. There are plenty of sports teams, student clubs, music groups, and other activities for the student to choose from.”

The general recommendation is that students participate in at least three extracurricular activities. That could be music, a club, a sport; whatever fits their interests. It’s a delicate balance, Megan explains. “If a student is doing more than five, there’s concern they might be overwhelmed. Fewer than two, and there’s a worry they’re not engaged enough.”

The culture at Marshall is all about involvement. The “Marshall Way” means practicing your skills and interests in different venues. The school wants every student on a sports team, involved in clubs, doing music and art. There’s a curricular requirement, but it’s especially meaningful when students stick with music or art for all four years. That’s the goal; nurturing heart, mind, and soul. There are also opportunities to volunteer at the Forest School or the after-school program to nurture the transformation of Marshall’s next wave of leaders.



“It’s about being well-rounded,” says Megan. “Exploring and developing leadership skills in different areas helps students become happier, healthier people.”

▲ Physics faculty Thomas Adams uses motion carts and sensors to help students see how position, velocity, and acceleration relate.

Seniors kicked off the year with team-building and leadership adventures at Camp Miller. ▼



FORGING *the* FUTURE

As the newest addition to Marshall School's staff, Dr. Johanna Wagner is hardly a stranger to the Midwest. With roots in Manitoba, Wisconsin, and North Dakota, she's thrilled to be back in America's heartland as Marshall's new Director of Development. Just months into her first year, the school's culture has already struck a chord with her. Among the things she most appreciates are how gifted and committed the students, faculty, and staff are. Johanna has also found a deep connection with the school's mission to "inspire lifelong learners to embrace challenges and create positive change."

PLANS for the PRESENT

Among Johanna's immediate priorities is a steadfast commitment to sustaining the Marshall experience—one rooted in excellence, accessibility, and transformation. "I want students to leave Marshall School with confidence in themselves, equipped to meet life's challenges, and a sense of this place as a true alma mater: a home, a lodestar," she explains. Johanna is keenly aware that philanthropy is ultimately the engine behind the kind of growth and programming needed to sustain Marshall's strong reputation. Her goal is to ensure the school remains a destination for families seeking a transformative educational journey for their children. And she has already begun turning that vision into reality through her outreach efforts.

A VISION for the FUTURE

"I want this to be a place that inspires in its students an aspiration to change the world. When students walk on campus, I want them to sense that they are part of something special." It's easy for Johanna to identify Marshall's many strengths; it boasts a faculty and coaching staff who are masters of their respective crafts, a beautiful campus environment, and state-of-the-art facilities. It's also a culture wherein peers are encouraged to challenge and support one another, backed by a dedicated alumni network eager to help students make a meaningful impact.

LONG-TERM PLANS

When it comes to the future, Johanna's philanthropic strategy is simple: to increase giving across the board to the Annual Fund. She'll accomplish this by playing up existing relationships and forging new ones. Johanna plans to partner with alumni, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, and community members to solidify Marshall's distinguished standing in Duluth and throughout the midwest. Johanna envisions that these transformative gifts will enable Marshall to remain a force for good in its students' lives for generations to come.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Johanna is actively building relationships with area nonprofits and foundations, keeping her ear to the ground as she sees firsthand how people uplift one another and work together to promote the common good. In her outreach, she's discovered a generous network of supporters eager to help Marshall fulfill its mission of changing lives. What makes the biggest impression are the personal stories—real accounts of transformation at Marshall and the heartfelt reasons people choose to give back to a place that has given, and continues to give, so much.

ALUMNI RELATIONS

Part of Johanna's role is to keep alumni of all ages in the loop. She is actively starting Marshall Clubs in some of Marshall's alumni hot spots (Duluth, the Twin Cities, Denver, and online). These gatherings are designed to bring alumni together for updates on the school and how they can be a part of its mission as mentors, donors, and sources of inspiration. Marshall Club Duluth met October 11, 2025 at Ursa Minor Brewing for drinks and conversation. More gatherings are in the works, so stay tuned for information about future meetups near you.



More on Johanna

A self-described Labrador Retriever aficionado, Johanna is a former Latin major and an avid medievalist. She is also a pastor and a lover of Nordic Noir, a genre of Scandinavian crime fiction. Want to know more? Look up the next Marshall Club meeting taking place in your area and come out to say hello!



Chico, Dr. Nygaard, Senorita O'Brien, Mr. DJ, Mr. Pearson, Sister Cecilia, Mr. Napoli, Msgr. Hogan, Mr. Sippel...

These are just some of the names past students consistently mention when telling their Marshall stories.

What are *your* names? What are *your* stories?

Alumni talk about how well this place prepared them for college—and for a transformative life.

How did it equip you or someone you love?

This year's fall appeal asks us to slow down for a moment to consider...

- The gift this school has been in each of our lives.
- The gift it continues to be in the lives of its students.
- The gift that is ours to give back to Marshall.

Give the Gift of a Marshall Story Today:

marshallschool.org/donate



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

ANNUAL GALA | MARCH 14, 2026

An evening featuring food, music, and community, plus the opportunity to bid on unique items and experiences, this annual event brings us together to support a lifetime of learning for every Hilltopper. *Save the date for this special night!*

TRANSFORM

AT MARSHALL

Now in his second year at the helm of Marshall School, Head of School Anthony Pisipia has transformation on his mind. But fear not; his idea of transformation has nothing to do with sweeping overhauls or dramatic reinventions. Instead, it's an inspired vision grounded in the school's 120-year legacy of impact on students, faculty, and the Twin Ports community.



TRANSFORMING TRADITION INTO TOMORROW

Marshall has undergone multiple transformations since its inception, yet many foundational truths remain unchanged: a deep love for children and a steadfast mission to empower them to become strong, capable citizens with opportunities within reach upon graduation.

"I want to leave Marshall more like itself, not reshape it into something it's not. There's so much here that's good and unique. I want to build on Marshall's strengths and use those strengths to transform students' lives."

▲ Learning starts with curiosity— one book, one question at a time.

Dr. Greg Rohde works in the lab with student chemists as they learn how reactions work. ▶

Equally enduring is the spirit of community support—both from Marshall and for Marshall—an ongoing partnership that continues to shape the school's success. After all, it was the tireless efforts of people across the Twin Ports area (many of whom weren't even Marshall parents!) that ensured Marshall's survival when its future was in jeopardy in 1976. In turn, Marshall students strive to transform the community through community service, environmental stewardship, and other initiatives that foster habits of good citizenship.

PERSONAL CHANGE

Leading Marshall School has also been a journey of personal transformation for Anthony Pisipia. The opportunity brought him from Delaware's esteemed Tower Hill School to his new home in Minnesota. This was a bold move that his entire family has come to embrace. With one Marshall graduate (Class of '25) and two more children currently enrolled as eleventh and seventh graders, the transition has

proven to be a rewarding one. "It's been incredibly meaningful to bring my family to a school I truly believe is excellent, and to ensure they have access to that excellence."

The sentiments from the school are mutual. "Getting to know this community has been a gift," Anthony shares. "It's a uniquely joyful place." Throughout the current school year, he has been working diligently alongside faculty, staff, and leadership to shape a clear and compelling vision for what education at Marshall School can and should be. The ultimate goal: to imagine and deliver the highest, most authentic form of education the school can offer. Luckily, he has a strong team behind him with expertise to draw from.

TEACHING TO TRANSFORM

Marshall's commitment to attracting and retaining a highly accomplished faculty is foundational. The school is proud to employ teachers who





“I LOVE THE WORD TRANSFORM BECAUSE IT SPEAKS TO EVOLUTION AND GROWTH. A FACULTY THAT’S GROWING AND LEARNING IS THE BEST KIND. AND OUR STUDENTS? WE GET TO WATCH THEM GROW EVERY DAY—IN THEIR CAPABILITIES, IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING.”

- ANTHONY PISAPIA



▲ Katie Voller-Berdan works with Aaden Westerbur '26 during the summer college application workshops for seniors, part of our robust college counseling program at Marshall School.

understand kids not just as learners, but as problem solvers; whole people with their own strengths and potential. “Our teachers are incredibly gifted,” says Anthony. “They deeply understand their subjects, and we have a high bar. If you’re teaching at Marshall, you could be teaching at a college level.” That depth of knowledge is crucial for shaping the student experience because it takes them beyond worksheets and textbooks and into lessons that are applicable in the real world. Marshall’s faculty aren’t just instructors—they’re guides who help students make real connections between what they’re learning and how it applies to life.

ONE MARSHALL

At the center of Anthony’s current direction is *One Marshall*: a unifying framework for the school across each division. From Forest School to Middle School to Upper School, each stage builds on the last, creating one seamless experience for students and families. The ultimate outcome? Students who are prepared for the world that awaits them, armed with experiences through exploration, learning, and leading.

“I love the word *transform* because it speaks to evolution and growth,” says Anthony. And what better place to evolve and grow than a place like Marshall School? Schools are inherently places of growth, and Marshall is set up to help students, faculty, and the institution itself as they transform. Anthony enjoys watching this growth happen in real time. “A faculty that’s growing and learning is the best kind. And our students? We get to

watch them grow every day—in their capabilities, in their understanding.” This steadfast commitment is one that preceded Anthony’s tenure, and it’s one he intends to carry on to bolster its future.

Anthony believes Marshall School is uniquely positioned to become one of the best educational options in Minnesota. Its size, community, and faculty are the assets that can make it a standout school. With him, he brings the knowledge of how to work athletics, art, and a liberal arts education into a curriculum to elevate Marshall’s excellence.

“*One Marshall* has unified our internal organization and our external support,” Anthony explains. “It’s helped us realize we can’t do this alone. We are a community, and that community is vital to transforming students’ lives. And when we work together, we’re unstoppable.”



▲ On the shore of Lake Superior, Melissa Ellis meets with her students to talk about the Chief Buffalo Memorial Mural project.

HILLTOPPER HONORS

Each year, the Hilltopper Honors Awards celebrate alumni who have excelled in their personal achievements, professional lives, or in service to society, and whose accomplishments have brought credit to the legacy of Marshall School and Duluth Cathedral. The award committee was pleased to induct the following four alumni into our Hall of Fame at the 2025 Hilltopper Honors Awards Ceremony on September 25 in Marshall's Fregeau Auditorium.

2025 AWARDEES

LARRY SMITH '80 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI



The **Distinguished Alumni Award** honors an alum who has had a positive influence on their community and who has been a steward of the school's mission following graduation, embodying its core values of respect, compassion, integrity, self-discipline, and intellectual curiosity.

Larry Smith is a senior advisor to the President and CEO of Tokyo Electron Limited. He recently retired as Chairman of the Board for Tokyo Electron America, Inc. (TEA) and Tokyo Electron US Holdings (TEH), which has regional revenues over \$2 billion annually and over 2,500 employees. He joined the company in June 2000 and has more than 35 years of management experience in the semiconductor industry. He was recently appointed to the Executive Committee for the Texas Semiconductor Innovation Consortium responsible for allocating grants to companies focused on the semiconductor ecosystem. Mr. Smith also served in the U.S. Army as an Armor Officer for five years.

Larry has a BS in Engineering from the United States Military Academy, West Point. He also serves his community as Chairman of the Board for Mobile Loaves and Fishes (mlf.org), which has fed nearly 7 million meals to the Austin, TX homeless population over the last

25 years and currently houses more than 400 people in a community of tiny homes. Larry and his wife lived in the Community First! Village for more than five years, choosing to leave their comfortable home to share life with their neighbors who were formerly unhoused. He also serves on the North American Advisory Board of SEMI.org and has held leadership roles with Austin Habitat for Humanity.

Outside of his professional and civic commitments, Larry enjoys golf, ice hockey, cycling, and spending time with his three granddaughters. His philosophy of life is to lead by example, make no excuses, and live differently—guided by faith.

Larry feels honored and humbled to be nominated for this award and grateful to be included among such a distinguished list of past recipients.

MARTHA (LANGAGER) KLOPP '02

DISTINGUISHED YOUNG ALUMNI



The **Distinguished Young Alumni Award** honors an alum who has received recognition as an emerging leader, has had a positive influence on their community, and shows clear potential for continued success.

Martha Klopp is a graduate of the University of Colorado, Boulder, and St. Olaf College, where she studied exercise science and competed in cross country and track and field at both institutions. After college, Martha embraced her passions for family, writing, and running. Today, she is both a stay-at-home mother of four and an author.

Martha has published two books: *Milly and the Tale from Across the Street* (2019), inspired by a mysterious house in Duluth, and *Up North: A Milly Tale* (2020), which explores themes of the environment and takes place at a cabin near Ely. She is currently working on her third book, written for middle school and high school readers, about a young runner who learns resilience through life's obstacles. Martha also chronicled her family's journey of raising spontaneous quadruplets on her blog, *The Klopp Quads*, which reached a wide audience beyond friends and family.

Running has remained an important part of Martha's life, from coaching track and field to competing in road races. She has also been active in her community, serving on church council and on the board of her local soccer club. At Marshall, she was awarded the Laverne Fryberger Award, and she credits her teachers—particularly in English and Creative Writing—for instilling a deep appreciation for writing as a life skill. She also credits Marshall with nurturing her love and respect for the outdoors and her awareness of environmental responsibility, influences that continue to shape both her personal life and her writing.

Martha lives by the philosophy of staying true to yourself while always striving for growth: "If you want to get something done, just do it! Write that book! Sign up for that race! Chip away at it knowing it won't be a linear growth." She feels both surprised and honored to be nominated for this award and is grateful for the foundation Marshall gave her in academics, creativity, and environmental stewardship.

NOMINATE AN EXCEPTIONAL ALUM FOR 2026!

Help us shine a spotlight on Hilltopper achievements while inspiring our next generation of learners toward excellence. Your nominations play a central role in helping us honor and celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments of our alumni.

To nominate an individual, please visit the alumni section of the Marshall website, email alumni@marshallschool.org, or call 218-727-7266, ext. 136.



JONATHAN BALL '99 GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP



The **Global Citizenship Award** honors an alum who has made a distinct and recognizable effort to contribute to global society while carrying out the core Hilltopper tenets of respect, compassion, and integrity. Nominees' accomplishments and contributions are considered equally whether they are made domestically or abroad.

Jonathan Ball graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Superior with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, earning magna cum laude honors.

For the past 13 years, Jonathan has dedicated his career to teaching in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), where he has taught elementary, middle, and high school students. He is currently a high school chemistry teacher at Kagman High School in Saipan, bringing energy, dedication, and a commitment to helping a diverse population of students embrace learning and treat others well. Known for his engaging lessons and care for his students, Jonathan has made a lasting impact on the educational community of Saipan.

Outside of the classroom, Jonathan enjoys scuba diving, sailing, and traveling—hobbies that allow him to explore new environments and challenge himself both physically and mentally.

He believes the purpose of life is to enjoy its experiences, continue learning and growing, and contribute positively to the lives of others.

Jonathan is honored and humbled to be nominated for this recognition and credits his education and experiences at Marshall for providing a foundation of values and a love of learning that continue to guide his life and career.

MIKE CARLSON '09 ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME



The **Athletic Hall of Fame Award** honors an alum, coach, or athletic director who has excelled in their athletic and community achievements.

Mike Carlson graduated from Hope College and Truman State University with a B.A. in English. While at Truman, he excelled on the basketball court and was named an NCAA Division II All-American in 2014.

Following college, Mike built an extraordinary ten-year professional basketball career in Europe, competing in Spain, Italy, and Holland before returning to Spain, where he reached the top-tier ACB league with Gipuzkoa Basket. Over the course of his career, he won two championships—first in 2017 with Gipuzkoa Basket and again in 2022 with Heroes Den Bosch in Holland—and earned multiple First and Second Team honors.

In addition to his professional success, Mike has remained dedicated to giving back to his community. He has

run basketball camps and worked with local teams in Spain, using the sport to connect with young people and even help them improve their English.

Mike lives in San Sebastián, Spain, with his wife, Danae, and their son, Raffa. He enjoys golf and teaching basketball to younger players. Reflecting on his journey, he points to his experience as part of Marshall's GAPP program in 2007 as one of the best memories of high school and a pivotal influence on his willingness to travel and embrace new cultures.

His life philosophy is summed up in two words: *“Can Do.”* Mike feels honored and humbled to be nominated for this award and grateful for the foundation Marshall provided in shaping his openness to new opportunities on and off the court.

ALUMNI



FACEBOOK

Duluth Cathedral/Marshall Hilltopper Alumni @hilltopperalumni



INSTAGRAM

@hilltopperalumni



ALUMNI WEBSITE

marshallschool.org/alumni

SAVE THE DATE!

REUNION

**JULY 17 & 18, 2026
MARSHALL CAMPUS**

We're already looking forward to our next All-Class Mixer and Golden Topper Luncheon! Join us as we celebrate all of our alumni, especially our Milestone Classes...

**1956 1966 1976 1986
1996 2006 2016**

Interested in helping organize additional reunion events for your class? Email us: alumni@marshallschool.org

HILLTOPPERS REUNITED!

What a weekend to remember! Reunion Celebration Weekend brought Hilltoppers from every generation together to reconnect, reminisce, and celebrate the ties that make our community so special. Alumni enjoyed building tours highlighting decades of growth and change, shared laughter and stories from their days on the Hill, and joined in a heartfelt toast to honor the Class of 1975—our newest Golden Toppers.

From Friday's All-Class Reunion to Saturday's Golden Topper Luncheon filled with friendship, cake, and Cathedral pride, Hilltopper spirit was alive and strong. Thank you to everyone who joined us in celebrating 50 years of memories and milestones—we're already looking forward to the next one!



SWEET CONNECTIONS!

Last spring, we welcomed back members of the Class of 2024 for our annual *What's the Scoop?* ice cream social! More than 30 of our newest alumni returned to campus to reconnect with classmates and faculty, enjoy sweet treats and games, and share stories from their first year beyond the Hill.

It was wonderful to hear how their journeys are unfolding and to celebrate the start of their lifelong connection as Hilltopper alumni.



HILLTOPPERS ON TAP!

In October, Marshall Club Duluth gathered at Ursa Minor Brewing for an afternoon of easy conversation, new connections, and good company. Alumni caught up with fellow Hilltoppers, met some of Marshall's new faculty members, and enjoyed a relaxed local get-together.

We're already planning a Minneapolis gathering and hope to branch into other cities soon! Interested in hosting a Hilltopper meetup near you? Email us at alumni@marshallschool.org—we'd love to help make it happen.



ALUMNI TOPPER

SHOP

Show your Hilltopper pride! Visit the Hilltop Alumni Stop—our online store featuring Cathedral and Marshall alumni gear to help you wear and share your Hilltopper memories.

Shop now at:
bonfire.com/store/hilltoppers



ASK ALUMNI POLL

EVERY HILLTOPPER HAS A UNIQUE STORY. WE WANT TO HEAR YOURS!

Connecting the past with the present, and celebrating milestones, enhances every Hilltopper's experience. In our Ask Alumni series, we periodically poll alumni about topics regarding their Marshall and Cathedral memories, what you all are up to now, and advice for up and coming Hilltoppers.

Last Spring and recently on our social media channels, we asked: *What was your favorite class in all of high school was and why?*

We couldn't include every contribution but here's what some of you had to share:

"Anything Chico was teaching."
– **Jaron Snoeyenbos '04**

"Wow, I don't know that I could pick a favorite. I had so many incredible teachers at Marshall."
– **Allie Cartwright '01**

"Band. Mr. A was the best!"
– **Jessica Befera '10**

"So many! Mrs. Sandstrom (band), Mr. Weber (7th grade web walks and biology), Mr. Homstad, Señorita O'Brien, Mr. Diener, Chico, Mrs. Rolle, Dr. Blackburn, and many others!"
– **Kari Loken '94**

"Señorita O'Brien's Spanish classes. She taught with love and respect while showing her passion for Spanish speakers throughout the world."
– **Erin Potter '91**

"I think we had the most fun in Mr. Carlson's computer class. There was always entertainment."
– **Brandon Anderson '96**

"Chico, Mr. Homstad, Mr. Weber. I learned that education could be FUN."
– **Candace Thompson '66**

"Anatomy with Mr. Weber!!!!"
– **Patty Bergl Gaertner '88**

"Ken Hanson for art and photography, along with Chico teaching Religions of the World."
– **Emily Miller '05**

"History with Mr. Sipple, particularly WWII. He had all those propaganda posters."
– **John Buchanan '90**

NOW, WE'RE EXCITED TO HEAR FROM YOU AGAIN!

For the Spring 2026 Hilltopper Magazine, we'd love to know:
What song instantly takes you back to high school?

Share your thoughts by emailing alumni@marshallschool.org or answering online.



YOUR STORY, YOUR VOICES

Spotlighting the experiences and wisdom of Hilltopper alumni

In this issue of Topper Talk, we hear from **Tim Radke '03**, **Jessica Befera '10**, and **John “Jack” Coons '47**, who reflect on life after Marshall and share advice for today’s students and alumni.



TIM RADKE '03

Q: What was a favorite moment from your time here?

A: *Stealing a full-mounted bear and incorporating it into an orchestra concert.*

Q: What piece of advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

A: *Good lord man, calm down.*



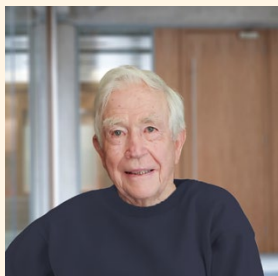
JESSICA BEFERA '10

Q: Where was your favorite spot on campus to spend time with friends?

A: *My friends and I used to have lunch at ‘the corner,’ the entrance to the art rooms across from the Lower School office. Lots of good times sitting on the floor, being silly, and eating blueberry Pop-Tarts.*

Q: What piece of advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

A: *Your weird passions and offbeat things are the most important things to hold on to. It truly does not matter what anyone else thinks of you—you don’t have to fit in to be awesome exactly the way you are.*



JOHN “JACK” COONS '47

Q: What piece of advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

A: *Ever look up...but don’t forget to watch your feet!*

Q: Name three things that make you happy.

A: *Wild ducks. Sister Mary Agnus (my grade school principal). And finding—and fixing—my mistakes (at least the deliberate ones).*

Join the conversation! Explore responses or submit your own at:
marshallschool.org/alumni/toppertalk



NEWS & NOTES

'60s

Kirby Sollom '66 shares that he retired in 2016 and now resides in sunny California with his daughter. He fondly recalls Latin classes, uniforms, and the mentorship of Father Pat McDowell, whom he considers a lifelong friend and saint. Kirby also cherishes his time at Cathedral High, particularly his roles in several memorable musicals. Despite claiming to have walked uphill in the snow (much to his children's disbelief!), he continues to support his alma mater as "a beacon on the hill."

'70s

Julie (Bakken) Johnson '75 shares that in 2018, they moved to their retirement house on the lake and that they have four adult boys as well as ten grandchildren from the ages of 15 months to 14 years.

Carol (Minette) Miller '75 writes, "We moved back to Duluth three years ago after being away for 42. Glad to be home!"

Kyle Seaman '75 writes, "Systems Analyst for 35 years at Orange County. Two kids. Retired and traveling as much as possible."

'80s

Michelle Buria '89 writes, "I'm honored to share that I have been recognized in the Forbes Best-in-State Top Women Wealth Advisors list. Cathedral/Marshall's core values of *respect, compassion, integrity, self-discipline, intellectual curiosity, and strong (academic) habits* have helped guide me to the top of my profession."

WE LOVE HEARING FROM YOU!

With more than 5,000 alumni scattered around the world, it's hard to keep track of the incredible things everyone is up to. We're always looking for story ideas and updates from alumni to celebrate!

You can call or email the Alumni Office with ideas for Hilltopper articles and profiles, or visit our website to submit an update at: marshallschool.org/alumni

IN MEMORIAM

James Gherna '53
 Virginia (Johnson) Kramnic '53
 Frances Louise (Zuponic) Reed '54
 Susan (Shean) Johnson '54
 Geraldine "Pat" (Wallace) Hanson '55
 Joel Lowney '56
 Ronald Hughes '57
 John Susnik '57
 Margaret (Gaskill) Riggio '58
 Timothy Peters '63
 Claudia (Karger) Greenwood '64
 Timothy Beaupre '64
 Denise "Denni" A. Dunphy '65
 Kenneth Puglisi '65
 David Hughes '67
 Kathleen (Kishel) Ciochetto '67
 Marcyan (Johns) Eggen '68
 Marcus Dale Snow '68
 Margaret "Peggy" (Haburt) Ihde '68
 Patrick James Connell '68
 Stephen Joseph Tomeck '68
 Gerald "Jerry" Cartier '69
 John Michelizzi '79
 Doyle Brown '80
 David Shirley '81
 Hilary (Oakes) Anderson '11

Jim Gross
 Former Coach

Mark Johnson
 Former Trustee and Marshall Parent

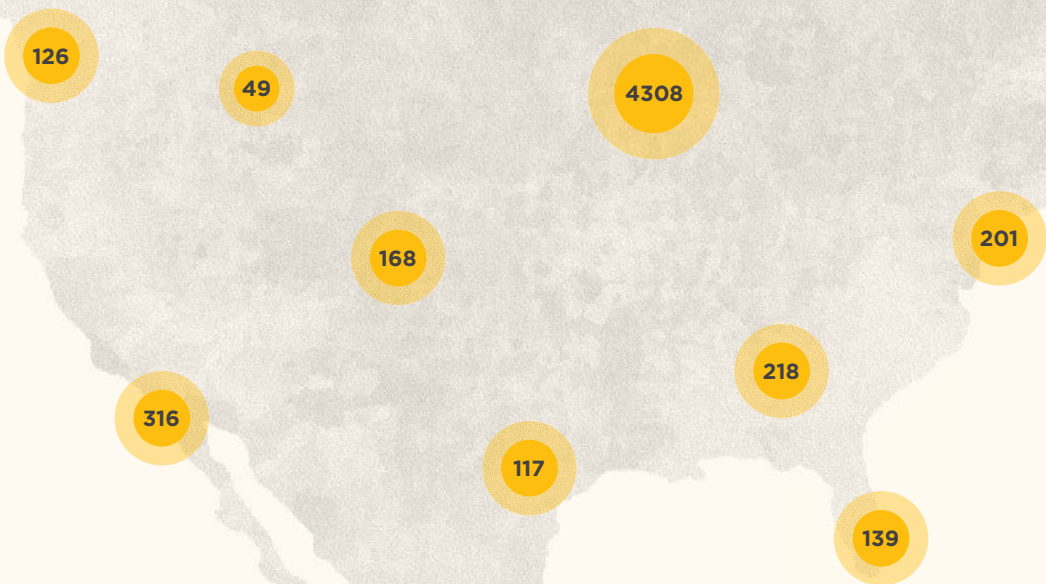
Joseph Angelo Legueri
 Former Faculty

Sister Judine Mayerle
 Former Faculty



HILLOPPERS

ACROSS *the* MAP



Have you moved recently? Updated your information since graduation? We'd love to know where you're at!

Share your current city and stay connected with us:
marshallschool.org/alumni/update-information

From the North Shore to the coasts—and far beyond—Hilltoppers are making their mark around the world. This map highlights where many of our alumni are located across the United States, offering just one glimpse of the global Hilltopper community that stretches across continents. No matter the distance, our alumni remain connected.



Planning a special event? Let Marshall host.

Our aptly named Lakeview Dining Hall seats 250 and boasts expansive views of Lake Superior. Beautiful Fregeau Auditorium seats 750 and is a fully equipped performance space. Our gymnasium is perfect for large events, festivals, and athletic activities, and the Fred and Mary Lewis Library, many classrooms, and other indoor and outdoor spaces suit a variety of needs. Visit our website or reach out to **rentals@marshallschool.org**.



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