BLAIR

BULLETIN

A MAGAZINE CELEBRATING COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

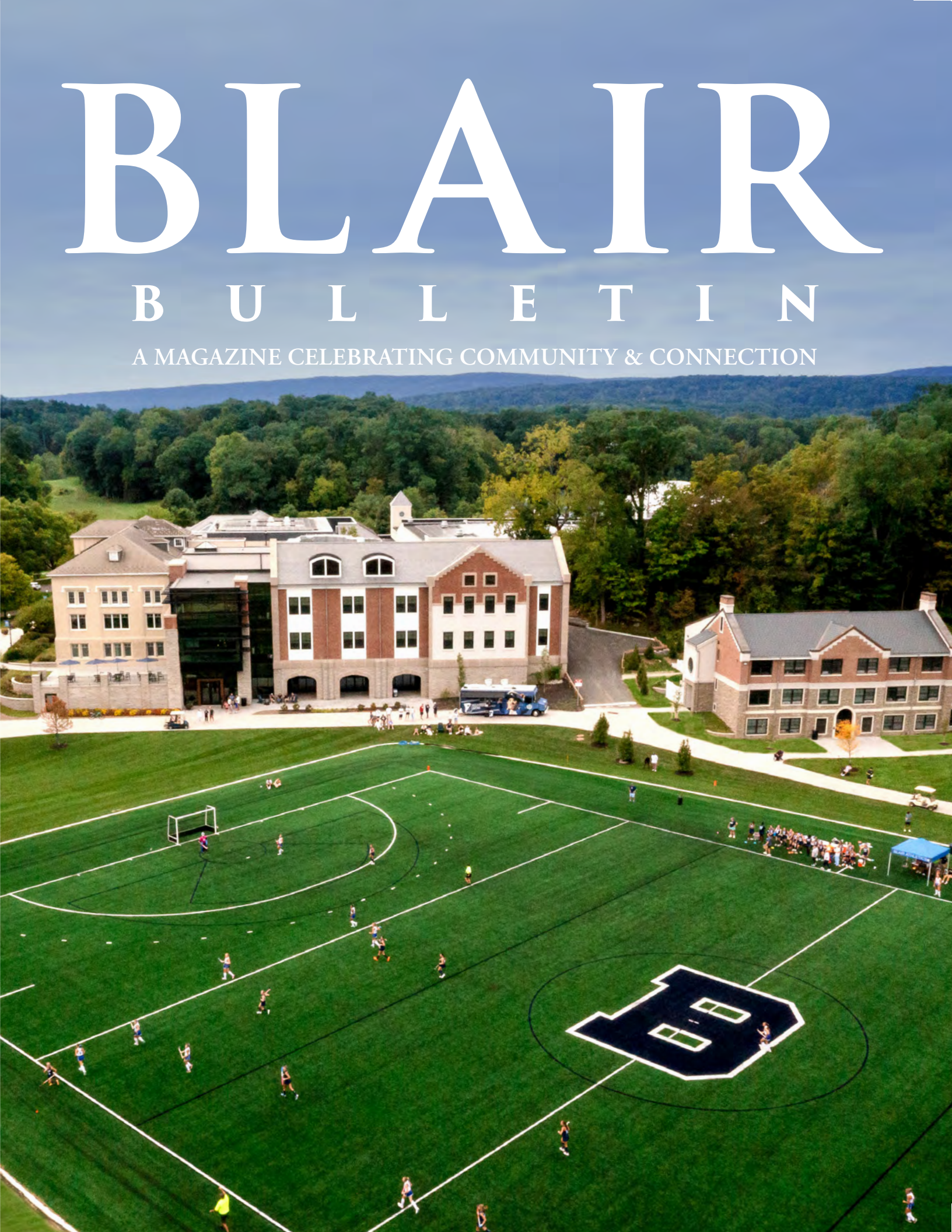






Photo by Director of School Photography Tyson Trish.

Blair's varsity boys' lacrosse team celebrates its 2026 NJISAA prep "A" state championship, capping an outstanding season with the program's first state title.

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Contents

FEATURES

06 A SECOND LIFE FOR MASON, FREEMAN & THE BOWL

10 PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE JOBS OF TOMORROW

19 CLASS OF 2026 EMBRACES FUTURE AT 178TH COMMENCEMENT

23 THE POWER OF STUDYING ABROAD

28 STATE OF ADMISSION

30 ALUMNI WEEKEND: THE GOOD THAT BRINGS US BACK

34 MARC MURPHY VISITS 'THE BUC STOPS HERE'

41 LIVES OF SERVICE: PART 2

61 TRUSTEE SPOTLIGHT

ON THE COVER



Blair's comprehensive dormitory renovations and the transformation of Marcial Field join the beautiful new Center for Health and Well-Being in marking a new era for the heart of campus.

IN EVERY ISSUE

03 FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

04 STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

16 IN THE NEWS

36 AROUND THE ARCH

48 OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

52 ACADEMICS

54 ARTS

58 ATHLETICS

63 ADVANCEMENT

71 GIFT PLANNING

72 ANNUAL REPORT

78 CLASS NOTES

106 IN MEMORIAM

Submit a letter to the editor: What do you think about the stories in this issue? Send your comments to bulletin@blair.edu.

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



This summer marked the completion of several construction projects that have reshaped the heart of campus and are already enriching the student experience—and nowhere is the impact more evident than in Mason and Freeman Halls. I've spoken to many alums who have called these dorms home since they opened in 1966 and heard their fond memories of residing in the central-atrium-style dorms (and their love of "easy access" communication as they would shout between floors). They also have less nostalgic recollections of the lime green tiled bathrooms, linoleum floors and painted cinder-block walls.

Over the last two summers, both buildings have undergone a complete transformation. We replaced every window, renovated every bathroom and modernized the interiors. New ground-floor bathrooms were added, split-faced masonry exteriors gave way to limestone, stone and brick, and drywall replaced painted concrete walls throughout. Removing the drop ceilings has made dorm rooms feel larger, while redesigned common spaces encourage students to gather, study and build community; however, the foundation of Mason and Freeman, along with its spirit, will always live on.

Beyond updating the buildings to better reflect the look and feel of the rest of campus, we set out to make living in Mason and Freeman more comfortable, inviting and social. To that end, we added outdoor recreational spaces where students can relax and spend time with one another between campus obligations and in the evenings. Already, these patios are favorite gathering places where residents share stories, unwind after busy days and build lasting friendships.

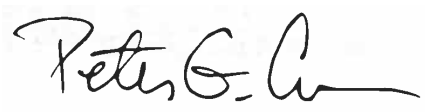
The Bowl, too, has a new look; long gone is the overgrown brush I have heard so much about from the 1970s that only the bravest students traversed. Unused as an athletic field in recent years as teams increasingly prefer playing on turf, the Bowl is once again a vibrant venue for sports practices and competition. The energy surrounding our field hockey team this fall was electric, and it was wonderful to see this once-quiet corner of campus come alive as a hub of student activity. Parents and alums who remember Marcial Field as synonymous with Blair lacrosse will also be excited to see those teams practice and play there this spring.

The Center for Health and Well-Being, which opened last fall, overlooks the newly turfed Bowl and helped inspire this broader revitalization. Together, these projects have created a more cohesive and modern environment while strengthening the sense of connection that has always defined the Blair experience. As our Board of Trustees envisioned when they approved these projects, the Center is tangible evidence of Blair's commitment to graduating students with the tools to live successful, happy and fulfilling lives, reinforcing health and well-being as an essential part of our educational mission.

The J. Brooks Hoffman '36 Health Center, built in 1956, has also entered a new era as a two-story dorm. After converting the top floor to residential space several years ago, we completed its repurposing this summer by turning the first floor into housing for 15 students and a faculty apartment.

None of these improvements, and the extraordinary experiences they create for our students, would be possible without your generosity. We are deeply grateful for the Blair community's support of these campus projects, as well as the expansion of scholarship aid, which will be a targeted focus in the months and years ahead. Thank you for your continued partnership and I hope your travels bring you back to campus soon so we can share these exciting changes with you in person. Until then, cheers from the hilltop!





Peter G. Curran P'27 '27
Head of School

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Zayden Mirchandani ’27 Makes a Difference One Haircut at a Time

If you want to become an entrepreneur, Harvard Business School suggests a viable business idea is the first step. “It’s not enough for your idea to be interesting—it should also fill a market need in an innovative way,” Catherine Cote writes. With that simple philosophy, Zayden Mirchandani ’27 has excelled.

In a boarding school environment like Blair, he has found a strong unmet demand for hair care services. Students need haircuts, and sometimes coordinating a trip off campus with an advisor or waiting until the next break to go home isn’t practical.

So, Zayden decided to bring the barbershop to campus.

Founded during the second semester of his sophomore year, Blair Academy Cuts began as a small idea between friends. With a suggested donation of $15 per haircut, the group offered students a convenient and affordable option without the hassle of traveling off campus or paying high salon prices. But from the beginning, the goal was never profit.

“We don’t need the money. We’re not trying to run a business,” Zayden says. “We wanted to donate to a powerful cause.”

The club committed to doing research and chose the St. Baldrick’s Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to funding pediatric cancer research, as the recipient of its proceeds. For Zayden, the connection between hair and confidence made the partnership especially meaningful.

“Hair is tied to identity and confidence,” he explains. “People get haircuts before big events because it helps them feel like themselves. Kids with cancer lose their hair, and that can take away part of their confidence and identity. If we can use haircuts to raise money for research and help create a better future for these children, it’s the perfect cause to support.”

The idea quickly gained momentum. What began with four student barbers—Zayden, Liam Green ’26, Niklas Chadha ’28 and Non Jurangkool ’28—has evolved into a highly organized club that has already raised more than $3,000 for the foundation.

As advisor to both Zayden and the club, Dean of Faculty Life Leucretia Shaw has watched the organization grow from its earliest stages and has been impressed not only by the club’s success, but also by the maturity with which students approached the responsibility.

“They took it seriously enough to take classes and train to cut hair,” Mrs. Shaw says. “They saw a need on campus and found a way to meet needs on both sides of the endeavor. That’s pretty remarkable.”

As the club developed, students expanded both their services and their reach. Ryan Kim ’28, known among students for his expertise with perms, helped introduce new styling options that broadened interest within the community. Lohgan Shepherd ’28 brought experience with hair coloring, helping attract more female clients and expanding the club’s audience beyond its original scope. During the summer, Zayden tasked himself and other members to enroll in women’s haircutting courses as they continue to grow the organization and offer more inclusive services to the Blair community.

Despite the club’s growing popularity, he intentionally keeps the group small. Unlike many student organizations, Blair Academy Cuts has only a handful of members, each selected not only for technical ability, but also for personality and professionalism. “We want people who are passionate, outgoing and community leaders,” Zayden shares. “It should be someone you’d feel comfortable going to to get your hair done.”

That trust, Mrs. Shaw notes, is not easily earned.

“They gained the faith of the community with something as important as their appearance,” she shares. “They understand they’re helping people present themselves the way they want to be seen.”

The experience has also become an unexpected lesson in leadership and communication. Haircuts, perms and color appointments can last anywhere

from 30 minutes to more than an hour, giving students the opportunity to connect with classmates they may never have otherwise met.

"You end up talking to people you normally wouldn't," Zayden notes. "You make new friends and branch out of your normal groups."

Like any service-oriented endeavor, the work also comes with challenges. Students have learned how to navigate difficult conversations and understand differing perspectives between barbers and clients.

"It teaches patience," Zayden admits. "Hair is important to people and part of their identity, so understanding what they want matters."

Through it all, Mrs. Shaw says Zayden's leadership has remained steady and genuine.

"He's organized and dependable," she remarks. "He doesn't do things in a pushy way. He's the kind of person where you want to match his effort because he cares so much."

Beginning his senior year filled with college application stresses, Zayden is still focused on building Blair Academy Cuts to continue its legacy beyond his time on the hilltop. Looking ahead, he envisions additional fundraising through products like combs and scrunchies and offering services to a wider audience at the School. For a club that began with a simple observation about student life, the impact has already extended far beyond the barber chair.

"These students are doing all of this for a worthy cause," Mrs. Shaw concludes. "It's genuinely selfless of them to give their time and talent for the greater good. To accomplish so much in the first full year is highly commendable."





A SECOND LIFE FOR MASON, FREEMAN & THE BOWL



This summer, Marcial Field, better known on campus as "the Bowl," got a long-awaited second life. Home to Blair's lacrosse and field hockey teams in the 1980s and 1990s, the field continued to see regular use through the late 2010s before divots and years of wear and tear gradually made it more difficult for athletes to play on safely. Over time, Blair's teams migrated to other fields, and the Bowl quietly slipped out of regular use for athletics. Now, after being regraded and transformed with a FieldTurf surface, it's ready to welcome Buccaneers back.

Director of Athletics Paul Clavel explains that the idea to resurface the Bowl began with the desire to bring energy back to that part of campus. A proud member of the Class of 1988, he remembers the afternoons when students and parents gathered on the hillsides, stretching out blankets and grabbing a snack to watch games. "Now, they'll be able to do that again," he says.

The move to turf also supports a broader trend in national athletics. "At the college level," Mr. Clavel explains, "we're seeing a preference for turf in lacrosse and field hockey, especially. When the ball hits the ground on a turf field, it rolls true," he says. "That's why most field hockey competition now takes place on turf."

With the new surface, Blair's field hockey and lacrosse teams will have a new home. Should it be needed, "It'll be large enough for soccer games as well," notes Mr. Clavel. The new turf field joins Hampshire Field and Blair's premier natural-grass soccer field, Underwood, along with several lower-level grass fields.

The Bowl's central location on campus makes it an easy place for students to stop by and cheer on their friends in games. Flanked by Mason, Freeman and Annie Halls, the field is adjacent to the inviting outdoor patio at the Center for Health and Well-Being. A new courtyard with a firepit between Mason and Freeman further enhances the space, which is designed to bring the community together. Students will once again be able to meet up with friends

and take in the action from the sides. "It's the perfect place to watch games," Mr. Clavel says.

Importantly, while the playing field is now expanded and level, the Bowl itself retains its signature shape. The tree-lined hillsides will continue to provide an excellent vantage point for spectators and, as Director of Facilities Dave Schmitt confirms, "The Soap Slide will still be held in the Bowl!"

The renovations to the Bowl join a series of other campus improvements. Alongside the field, Phase II of renovations to Mason and Freeman dorms took place this summer. Built in 1966, the dorms received exterior renovations last year, including new windows, bathrooms and modernized facades of limestone, stone and brick. This summer, the work continued inside. Drop ceilings have been replaced with sheetrock, all new trim, warm wood accents and bright lighting. With complementary decor, the two dorms have preserved all the best parts of the original structure—the open floor plan and central atrium that naturally bring students together.

Another project completed this summer was the transformation of Brooks and Hoffman House into residential space, just in time to welcome a new class of students. The site of Blair's former Health Center now features eight new dorm rooms and a faculty apartment.

To Mr. Clavel, who lived in Mason as a dorm head in the early 2000s, these are welcome changes. "Oh, who can forget that cinder block," he laughs, recalling the look and feel of Mason Hall. But, beyond the cosmetic improvements, he sees projects like these as a balance between honoring the traditions that define Blair and improving spaces for today's students. "We always think about balancing tradition while trying to move our facilities forward," Mr. Clavel notes. "I'm grateful for the people who have supported this project and for always keeping the needs of all of our teams in mind." And, with the Bowl back in use, one of campus' most recognizable spaces is once again at the center of student life.





A look at the newly renovated Bowl and Brooks and Hoffman House.

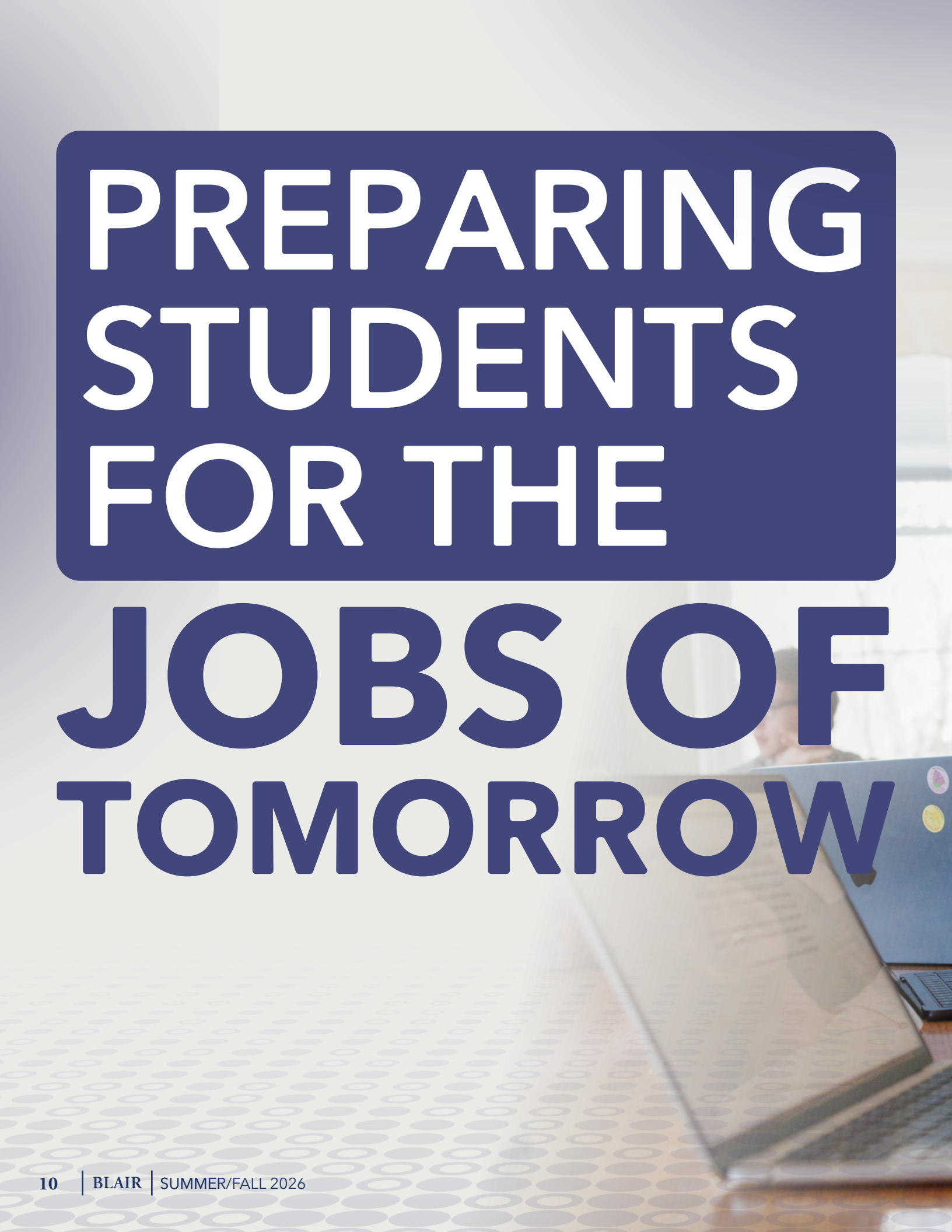


Students relax with friends over a game of pool in Mason Hall's new common area.



Though Mason has been newly renovated, a familiar piece of Blair history remains: The vintage scoreboard still hangs on the wall.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE JOBS OF TOMORROW



What does it mean to educate students for a future no one can fully predict? Blair faculty have long been dedicated to ensuring that students are equipped to live healthy and productive lives once they graduate from Blair—and that they are well prepared to create and sustain the world they want to inhabit as adults. According to an oft-cited report from the Institute for the Future, "85% of the jobs that today's learners will be doing in 2030 haven't been invented yet." Preparing students for a job that doesn't exist yet has always been a challenge, but artificial intelligence (AI) has made it even more complex.

While gauging how AI will shape and impact the future workforce is an ever-moving target, Blair is focused on helping students engage with large language models (LLMs) thoughtfully and responsibly as they prepare for the next chapter in their educational journeys. The Blair experience has always included leveraging emerging technologies strategically while also delivering on the core of Blair's mission. That is, of course, teaching students to make



meaning of what they learn and experience, connect with and serve others, lead and communicate effectively, take smart risks and work collaboratively.

We sat down to learn more with Dean of Pedagogy & Innovation Joe Wagner, a veteran member of Blair's science faculty, who is leading the School's first advanced course on AI Foundations & Frontiers in 2026-2027. The course challenges learners to deeply consider the educational, moral, environmental and economic impacts of this rapidly evolving technology.

Read on for more about how Blair is rethinking what it means for students to be truly prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.

> **Instructors at all levels are navigating a fast-evolving landscape, and the University has a duty of care to ensure that the education offered to you is responsive to these technological developments by teaching you how to think with machines, how to think without them and how to think about them.**
>
> **—University of Chicago President Paul Alivisatos**

Q: How has the rise of AI changed the way you think about what students need to learn to be ready for jobs that may not yet exist?

A: In many ways, the rise of AI has reinforced what we already know about what students need to learn. It's pushed us to double down on the first principles of education and the science of learning rather than rethink them totally. The processes by which people learn haven't fundamentally changed because AI exists. Learning will always happen at the speed of carbon, not silicon (credit to Peter Nilsson on the language here). We have to keep pace with how students actually learn and grow, ensuring they can think critically while also learning to leverage AI tools that may, at times, take critical thinking out of their process.



Blair students dive into discussion during English class, where critical thinking, communication and collaboration, skills that remain essential in an age of artificial intelligence, are cultivated every day.

AI also hasn't changed what we value or measure. Leveraging AI requires domain expertise in order to discern what's true. Skills like reading comprehension, writing, analyzing trends in data and problem-solving are still essential. If anything, the pedagogies we use to teach those skills matter more than ever. Collaboration, communication and relationship-building are central. For example, in a Blair math classroom, students are often at whiteboards working in small groups, thinking through problems together. That kind of collaborative, human-centered learning—figuring out how to engage with others and work effectively as a team—is irreplaceable.

What AI does change is how we support that learning. It gives both students and teachers—as well as employees supporting school operations more generally—more powerful tools. A teacher who notices patterns in a student's understanding can now quickly tailor support in ways that would have taken much longer before. Students can access resources and explanations more easily than ever, too.

Q: What should students be learning in an age where AI can do so much?

A: One question we want students to ask is not just what AI can do, but what should it do? How can we be intentional about what we ask it to do? Experts have said that AI will win a Nobel Prize before it wins a Pulitzer Prize, meaning that AI is good at many things, but any kind of high-end artistic and creative work will still belong to humans. Subject matter expertise and discernment within areas of expertise will be vital moving forward.

If you're delivering anything to humans, the ability to take the other person's perspective and deliver the highest quality product with that is something only people can do, because we have genuine empathy.

Those human-centered skills will remain essential no matter how the job landscape changes. As my class begins to explore AI foundations and frontiers, I look forward to learning alongside students and discovering the ways in which our faculty and staff can amplify their human-centered work with our students, inside and outside of class.



Two students collaborate on a classroom assignment, strengthening the critical thinking and teamwork that will serve them throughout their lives and careers.



Dean of Pedagogy & Innovation Joe Wagner works with students in his Bogle Science Center laboratory.

American Constitutional Law

Conversations like this one are already shaping classroom experiences across disciplines at Blair. In history teacher Quint Clarke '87's advanced course in American Constitutional Law, students are learning firsthand how AI can deepen critical thinking rather than replace it.

Mr. Clarke's American Constitutional Law course often feels strikingly close to a courtroom. Though the judicial bench may be missing, students debate landmark Supreme Court cases, challenge one another's reasoning and defend constitutional arguments with the intensity of litigators.

Mr. Clarke is one of the many teachers at Blair tackling the challenge of incorporating AI into classroom learning head-on. In his Advanced Seminar in Constitutional Law, Mr. Clarke endeavors to make students think for themselves while also building AI literacy. His course, which asks students to assess and analyze landmark Supreme Court decisions and their foundations, aims to deepen students' understanding of the American legal system through thoughtful questioning and discussion. At the heart of the course is a simple but increasingly important goal: teaching students how to think independently in a world where AI can so easily think for them.

"It's especially a challenge for homework, where we want to push students to think independently," he says. "I am trying to teach them to use AI to deepen and challenge their thinking, rather than using it as a shortcut for thinking itself."

To do that, Mr. Clarke employs AI in his classroom in a way that specifically requires more cognition, rather than less. After reading a Supreme Court case, for instance, students will use an AI tool designed to question their interpretations, push back on their arguments and probe how deeply they understand the material. Rather than supplying answers, AI acts more like a relentless debate partner. "It's a dialogue that mimics what good teachers do, pulling out how well they understand the discussion," Mr. Clarke says.

"You won't be able to be employed in accounting, law, engineering–almost any field–without being fluent in AI."

—History teacher Quint Clarke '87

A student considering *Roe v. Wade*, for instance, might be prompted by AI to consider how the Court's reasoning could apply in other legal contexts or where the logic of the decision begins to break down, without giving them the answer directly. It expands the dialogue, challenges the student's reasoning and serves as a jumping-off point for even deeper thought.

That is the whole point: finding ways to employ AI to grow student understanding without detracting from their organic thought processes. That is how Blair teachers prepare students for the future. "Our job is to educate students on how to use AI. You won't be able to be employed in accounting, law, engineering—almost any field—without being fluent in AI," Mr. Clarke believes. "So, we have an obligation to teach kids both the moral issues and the practical realities of how to use it. It's a very powerful tool, but we also have to think carefully and control how it's used."

U.S. History

Controlling the powerful tool is history department chair Jason Beck's mission. His motto is "Thinking First." In his Advanced Survey: U.S. History course, students are not passively feeding prompts into chatbots and accepting whatever appears on the screen. Instead, as they dive into the movements and advancements that shaped the United States over the course of centuries, Mr. Beck encourages them to use a five-step process to guide how they use AI to approach their essays and assignments. He describes it as "a cowriting process, where students think first, develop some possible answers and put together a structure before AI ever enters the conversation." The result, he has found, is often stronger arguments and sharper thesis statements.

The first phase begins without technology at all. Students are asked to be curious, wrestle independently with historical issues and generate questions. In the second phase, they begin drafting, working through their own imperfect arguments and embracing all of the challenges, gaps in reasoning and difficulties in writing that arise. To Mr. Beck, that mental struggle is essential; it is what pushes students to be better writers and better thinkers.

Only after students have developed their own ideas does AI get involved. In phase three, students use AI to sharpen their arguments, identify weaknesses in their reasoning and ask hard questions or offer counterarguments that will prompt more complex thought. Rewriting students' work is specifically prohibited. In phase four, students revise using the questions and critiques generated through their AI conversation. The final phase focuses on refinement and polish.

The beauty of the five-step process is that it teaches AI familiarity while student thought is still the driving force. "The five-phase process doesn't pretend AI doesn't exist," Mr. Beck notes. "It doesn't moralize about it. It simply puts AI in its proper place in the intellectual sequence: after thinking, after drafting and after the student has something worth interrogating."



Students in Mr. Beck's classroom engaging in a thoughtful discussion.

(Continued from page 13)

Blair is teaching students, in short, that AI amplifies their learning, knowledge and impact. "A lot of things we can do, AI can do better," Mr. Clarke reflects. "But creative thinking, critical thinking, leadership and discussion-based learning—those are still deeply human skills. We can cultivate those abilities in ways that allow students to stand out in a world shaped and amplified by AI."

Mr. Beck shares that perspective. "It's not just about the final essay," he says. "It's about encouraging students to understand why it matters to think for themselves first—and then learning how technology can help take that thinking even further using the technology thoughtfully and responsibly."



in the *News*

THE RACE ISN'T OVER FOR MORGAN CELLEY '25

Morgan Celley '25 watched the winter Olympics intently this past February, wishing, somewhat ruefully, that she was carving down the slopes alongside her Singaporean teammate, Faiz Basha, rather than cheering from afar. Faiz finished 35th in the men's slalom, and his debut made history, marking him as only the second winter Olympian from Singapore.



For Morgan, the moment felt a little wistful. A few months earlier, she had been on track to become the first female skier to compete for Singapore at a winter Olympics. That dream was put on hold when she suffered an anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus tear in her knee during a training session in New Zealand, forcing her into recuperation as the Games unfolded without her.

But, as a March 2026 article in *The Straits Times* makes clear, Morgan is well on her way back. Now a first-year student at Columbia University, she is catching up on her studies and setting her sights on the 2030 Winter Olympics in the French Alps.

"I'm only 19," Morgan told *The Straits Times*. "I feel like I've plenty more good years left in me, and four years from now, hopefully I will get bigger, stronger, better, more skilled."

Morgan and Faiz have also made headlines as subjects of a new documentary, *Ski Dreams*, which chronicles Singapore's growing passion for skiing and the pair's journey, as well as that of their mentor, Marco Bardelli. As president of the Singapore Ski and Snowboard Association, he plans to have five Singaporean athletes at the 2030 Winter Olympics, including Morgan and Faiz.

"I think it's only a start," Morgan said. "Faiz has done such a good job…bringing Singapore into this world of winter sports. In the future, we're going to get more and more athletes. We're going to try our best to spread the word about it."



Singapore's alpine skiers Morgan Celley (*left*) and Faiz Basha (*right*) attend a screening of *Ski Dreams* with Snowboard Association president Marco Bardelli (*center*) on March 16, 2026. Credit: Photographer Rupin Sharma.

TRUSTEE CARINA DAVIDSON '86 TAKES HELM OF H/ADVISORS U.S.

In June, *GlobeNewswire* announced that Blair Trustee Carina Davidson '86 has been tapped as the next Chief Executive Officer to lead H/Advisors United States, a strategic communications firm with offices in New York, Los Angeles, Houston, San Francisco, Chicago and Washington, D.C. The firm, formerly known as H/Advisors Abernathy, specializes in advising CEOs, board directors and senior executives on stakeholder communications and engagement. It was ranked number three globally as a leading mergers and acquisitions (M&A) communications advisor in the Mergermarket M&A Advisory League Table.



Carina brings to the role more than 30 years of experience in corporate communications, investor relations, crisis management and M&A. "I am excited to officially take the helm at H/Advisors United States, at a time when the strategic communications landscape is more dynamic than ever," she shared. "I look forward to building on our 40-year legacy of excellence and working with my global colleagues to help steer H/Advisors in the United States through its next phase of growth while bringing best-in-class fully integrated communications and public affairs capabilities to our clients."

DERON RIPPEY JR. '26 IS THE LATEST BUC TO BECOME A BLUE DEVIL

When Blair senior Deron Rippey Jr. '26 committed to Duke this past winter, he became the latest in a long line of Buccaneers to become a Blue Devil. The five-star point guard made his announcement live on CBS Sports, and later told *The Duke Chronicle*, "The Brotherhood was the spot for me because I want to play at the highest of levels. I want to go to a school that has a chance to compete for a national title and I want to have an immediate impact as part of that."



Deron becomes the seventh Buc in recent history to continue their basketball career at Duke, joining Luol Deng '03, Patrick Davidson '03, Jordan Davidson '05, Keenan Worthington '19 and Jaylen Blakes '21, who all went on to play in the NCAA Final Four, as well as Onome Akinbode-James '18, who played for the Duke Blue Devils women's basketball team from 2018 to 2022.

CLASS OF 2026 EMBRACES FUTURE AT 178th COMMENCEMENT



178th COMMENCEMENT



Head of School Peter G. Curran high-fives graduate Margaret Swift ’26 on the way to Commencement.

On the eve of graduation, Baccalaureate speaker, Associate Dean of College Counseling and boys’ basketball coach Joe Mantegna addressed the seniors gathered together in DuBois Theatre for the last time.

“Tomorrow, when you walk across that stage—after you take that final picture, shed that final tear, you have that final laugh…When you leave Blair in the rearview mirror, you literally have the world at your fingertips.”

Mr. Mantegna’s advice echoed in the ears of the Class of 2026 as they celebrated the momentous occasion of Blair’s 178th Commencement. They hugged their classmates a little tighter, lingered in conversations a little longer and took an extra moment to look around the hilltop and take it all in one final time. Nothing could dull the excitement they shared with their family and friends—not even a little rain.

As they processed across campus and through the Arch under dappled skies, they followed in the footsteps of countless Blair classes before them. Once everyone settled in the field house, Senior Class Council members Edwin Asencio ’26 and Sophia DaBell ’26 welcomed the audience, encouraging their fellow graduates to remain present in their lives and embrace the unexpected as they venture off on new paths.

In his address to the senior class, Head of School Peter G. Curran built upon their message. “Over the next four

FACULTY AWARDS

John C. & Eve S. Bogle Teaching Prize
Fine arts teacher & Director of School Photography Tyson Trish

Riether Residential Life Award
History teacher & dorm head Anna Raley

Lillian & Samuel Tedlow Teaching Prize
Director of Instrumental Music & performing arts department chair Jennifer Pagotto

Head’s Faculty Prize
History department chair & Director of Society of Skeptics Jason Beck

STUDENT AWARDS

Head’s Prize
Cat Zhang & Val Rosario

Blair Academy Trophy
Ella Eldridge & Edwin Asencio

George P. Jenkins ’32 Prize
Khang Nguyen

Appointments to the United States Service Academies & ROTC Commitments
Mikey Antonelli, Simon Davis, Ella Eldridge, Henry Gibson, Isa Grant, Cole Pangborn, Kenzie Quigley & Val Rosario



Arturo Lopez ’26 commemorates Commencement with his family, despite the rain.

years, I hope college becomes not only a place where you prove yourself, but also where you rediscover yourself,” he shared. “I hope you’ll take the deeply human lessons you learned at Blair to develop many new relationships.”

During his speech, Mr. Curran reflected on his message from Convocation in September when he encouraged the School—led by the seniors—to “see the good.” Across all aspects of campus life, the Class of 2026 rose to the challenge. They embraced empathy and humility, seeing the good in others through moments both big and small, building relationships that will last long after the last diploma was received.

“Perhaps the reason all of this hurts so profoundly is because Blair gave us something truly worth grieving over,” said Khang Nguyen ’26, class speaker and recipient of the George P. Jenkins ’32 Prize. “Impermanence made us realize the sacredness of all the memories, and I think there’s something utterly sublime about that—about seeing a special glow emanating from even the ordinary moments that we once took for granted. I think it’s evidence that the value of these four years will never diminish just because it’s going to be over soon.”

The entire Blair community extends heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2026!



Josie Tetteh ’26 carries the class flag after graduating.



Selina Liu ’26 (*left*) and Maia Frank ’26 (*right*) smile through the tears with diplomas in hand.



Khang Nguyen ’26 addresses the Class of 2026 as the George P. Jenkins ’32 Prize recipient.

Class of 2026 Matriculation List

Amherst College (3)
Barnard College
Bocconi University
Boston College (2)
Boston University (3)
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
Bucknell University (3)
California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo
Carnegie Mellon University
Christopher Newport University
Chulalongkorn University
Clemson University (2)
Colgate University
Colorado College
Columbia University (2)
Cornell University (2)
Davidson College
Drexel University
Duke University
Elon University
Emory University (2)
Franklin & Marshall College
Georgetown University
Grinnell College
Hamilton College
Harvard University (2)
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Ithaca College
Johns Hopkins University
Lehigh University (4)
Loyola Marymount University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Montana State University
Muhlenberg College (2)
New York University (5)
Northeastern University
Northwestern University (3)
Penn State University
Princeton University (2)
Rice University
Rutgers University
Saint Joseph’s University
Santa Monica College
Stanford University (2)
Syracuse University
Texas Christian University (2)
The College of New Jersey
Trinity College (2)
Tufts University
Tulane University (3)
United States Military Academy
United States Naval Academy (5)
University of Arizona
University of California Berkeley
University of California Los Angeles (2)
University of Chicago (4)
University of Delaware
University of Leeds
University of Maryland (2)
University of Miami (3)
University of Mississippi
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill (4)
University of Notre Dame (2)
University of Oxford
University of Pennsylvania (3)
University of Rhode Island
University of Richmond
University of Southern California
University of St Andrews
University of Tampa (2)
University of Texas
University of Virginia (2)
University of Wisconsin (2)
Ursinus College
Vanderbilt University (2)
Vassar College
Villanova University (2)
Wake Forest University (2)
Washington University in St. Louis
Western University (2)
Williams College
Winthrop University
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

The Power of Studying Abroad

"I was nervous about being in a foreign country, but thanks to Blair, I felt more at ease than many of my classmates and approached the semester with confidence."
—Ellie Hyder '23





For his architecture course, Michael studied Rome's architecture through sketches and detailed renderings, including a proposed revitalization along San Michele a Ripa in Trastevere and a study of an ornate Roman baldachin.

From Englewood to Rome

Michael Diaco '23 had never been to Italy before, and he had never lived abroad. Home for him is Englewood, Florida, a laid-back Gulf Coast town filled with bays and palm trees, where residents recline on the beach with cold drinks while manatees drift through the canals nearby. It felt worlds away from Rome, where the University of Notre Dame senior arrived last year. Michael was beginning a year abroad to study Roman architecture, and his apartment sat just steps from the Colosseum. Michael knew the experience would push him out of his comfort zone, but it would be an adventure for which he felt prepared.

Throughout his time at Blair, Michael shared dorms, classrooms, meals and friendships with students from around the globe. Life on campus fostered his curiosity about other cultures and sprouted an eagerness to experience them firsthand. At Blair, history lessons could sprawl into discussions of international traditions, while meals with friends became opportunities to swap stories about home and family recipes. Clubs and celebrations, like Blair International Awareness Community (BIAC), International Weekend, Moon Festival and Diwali brought those traditions to life on campus.

"Some of my best friends were from Hong Kong, Russia and Spain, and that helped me realize, in high school, that not everyone gets to experience that introduction to different cultures so early. It's less so in college. That definitely helps you, hearing the different languages. It's clear to me that being exposed to different perspectives and ways of life is crucial," Michael notes.

Growing up in classrooms with students from nearly 30 different countries made the world beyond campus feel accessible instead of intimidating. Blair even introduced Michael to his first ever trip abroad, when he traveled to Cambridge, England, with the Blair Symphony Orchestra. On that trip, students' minds were opened to a whole new world of music, people and culture. It not only made Michael comfortable navigating unfamiliar environments, but also grew his confidence to set out on his own adventures abroad.

Michael built the skills he needed to live abroad successfully right on Blair's campus. When asked how Blair prepared him for his semester in Rome, Michael explains that "Blair teaches you to be independent. It teaches you how to live and do your laundry, make your bed, get your work done." The independence he developed also gave him the confidence to immerse himself more fully in Italian culture, whether using his interpersonal and language skills to order a coffee in Italian or to be a good house guest in a host family's home, as many of Michael's friends experienced. "I had friends who had a host family, and who stayed with people from different colleges. Learning to get along with someone new was awesome….My friend, Joseph, was taken in by a Roman family. Romans are extremely welcoming and learning to get along with someone completely new, that was one of the best parts."

In addition to connecting with locals, the global community of students in his program became a family to Michael. Collaborating with people from varied backgrounds already felt natural to him. Despite coming from a variety of different colleges, the students built strong connections over their shared love of Roman architecture and found joy in uncovering the unique differences between their personal backgrounds.

Being a musician, student and athlete at Blair taught Michael how to balance a competing schedule, so he was prepared to manage his time in Rome—a skill that helped him make the most of every opportunity abroad that came his way. He will never forget his first boarding experience in Insley Hall, which instilled structure into his life and helped him when he moved to Rome. His first year at Blair he was living, he says, "under the strict rule of Coach [Dean of Enrollment & Communications Teddy] Wenner '96. He put us on a schedule. Study hall would roll around at 8 p.m., and he would make sure you set aside two to three hours in the evening to do work. That habit has stuck with me in college. I still use my evenings to get work done."

In Rome, Michael's time management allowed him to get the most out of both his work and his exploration of the city. "Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays I sketched the structures of Rome. *(See the illustrations on page 24.)* We'd stop by a church in a neighborhood of Rome and learn how they are constructed. We would go to history class or sketching class. Then we would work in the studio from 2 to 6 p.m. on design projects, designing a historic villa to build in the countryside." After an afternoon of hard, focused work, he still found time to sit in the piazza, eat dinner at a local restaurant and enjoy the city sights.

From North Carolina to Madrid

A thousand miles away in Madrid, Ellie Hyder '23 was finding out the same thing. A senior at Bucknell University, Ellie was studying abroad in Madrid when she took a flight to see her sister, a cellist in Blair's Symphony Orchestra, perform in Rome. There, she caught up with Michael, Head of School Peter G. Curran and Associate Head of School Ryan M. Pagotto '97 for her sister's concert. And these two



Ellie and Michael, pictured here celebrating after the Blair pep rally and bonfire, became fast friends during their ninth-grade year.



A Blair reunion in Rome: Head of School Peter G. Curran, left, and Associate Head of School Ryan Pagotto '97, right, joined Michael and Ellie before the Blair Orchestra and Singers' performance in spring 2026 at the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels and Martyrs.

would not be the only Blair connections Ellie rekindled abroad. While in Europe for her semester studying abroad, she reconnected with numerous Blair peers and alumni, including Maya Ciminello '23, Paige Folli '23 and Sam Junkermann '22. For Ellie, this was proof that Blair teaches its students to be world explorers.

When she first flew to Madrid, Ellie recounts, "I was nervous about being in a foreign country, but thanks to Blair, I felt more at ease than many of my classmates and approached the semester with confidence."

Like Michael, Ellie felt that "At Blair, being around different languages, traditions and perspectives became normal pretty quickly." From her first moments on campus, she immediately formed relationships and made connections with a diverse array of people. "I had a lot of international friends, including through my role as Locke prefect and on Senior and Junior Class Council," she remembers. "Being at Blair and being able to incorporate their perspectives made it easier to be open-minded. Some friends who were with me when I studied abroad hadn't had that experience. It is important to spend time with others and learn their cultures."

International Weekend, Ellie says, was always one of her favorites—not for any single event, but for the vibe: students rotating in and out, conversations spilling across tables, the feeling that the world had come to campus. It was there, she recalls, that going abroad stopped feeling like a distant goal and started feeling like something she could actually do. One of Ellie's closest friends at Blair inspired her interest in travel and living abroad. She recalls that Katie Robinson '23 taught her a lot about what international life looks like. "Her life was so different from mine. It made me so curious and is definitely one of the reasons I've traveled more." Unlike Ellie, who grew up in North Carolina, Katie "grew up in this huge city in Hong Kong, getting on a metro and walking home from school alone. She lived in an apartment, not a house. Her experiences were so foreign to me." It was her memory of Katie's life that gave Ellie confidence when she first stepped into the urban grid of Madrid.

On one of her first days in the city, Ellie and some friends caught a cab, but she was having a tough time relaying where to go in Spanish. "The driver actually helped us improve our Spanish. All the people in Madrid were so kind. I remember getting on the metro and getting confused, but people were so quick to help. The Spanish just want to see people making an effort." And Ellie was happy to make that effort, emboldened by her curiosity and encouraged by the friends she made at Blair who taught her how to be comfortable and confident building cross-cultural relationships.

It was always a challenge taking the train places. "I went to the South of Spain by myself for a weekend, and I was

excited to go alone. I got on the train. It was delayed. The track ended and we had to get on a bus. Learning how to live in that environment, when you are unprepared and not completely fluent, is a real challenge. But, by the end of my time abroad, I didn't even need my GPS." Those months in Madrid taught her something valuable. "I learned that I'm very independent," she says, "and I can advocate for myself." That lesson was less about knowing exactly where to go and more about trusting that she could figure things out along the way.

The immersion extended beyond the daily grind of trains and taxis. "We went to a Real Madrid soccer game, and the energy was electric," Ellie remembers. "We were the only Americans in our section. People surrounding us became so excited when they learned we were rooting for their team." Ellie was not the only one embracing a new culture—the Spaniards were embracing her back.

Roots & Routes

Despite venturing into different cities, Ellie and Michael's message is the same—everyone should take the leap and study abroad. "It was an incredibly formative experience," Michael recounts. "It gave me a lot of perspective, not just in architecture, but also with people and culture. A lot of my friends had never really left home. I am glad to say I have."

Both Ellie and Michael landed abroad feeling excited but apprehensive. Both found that Blair had prepared them better than they realized—for missed trains, language barriers and friendships built across differences. "You can never learn at home the things you learn abroad," Michael says. "It was incredible for my growth as a student and human. And it was so fun! To every student at Blair, I advocate for studying abroad. The lessons you learn will stay with you your whole life."

Months earlier, Rome and Madrid had felt impossibly far from home. By the end of their semesters, those cities had become places they could navigate with confidence. They ordered coffee in another language, found their way through unfamiliar streets and forged lasting connections. For Blair students, the global education begins long before the plane takes off. It starts in the dorms, classrooms and dining hall conversations, where students learn that the world is far bigger—and far more connected—than they once imagined.



Blair connections made a morning in Rome even sweeter. From left, Head of School Peter G. Curran joined Mikey Antonelli '27, Mayan Muchugia '27, Andrew Lee '27 and Michael Diaco '23 for a run through the city, complete with a tour of its history, in March 2026.



STATE OF ADMISSION

BY DEAN OF ENROLLMENT & COMMUNICATIONS TEDDY WENNER '96



As we closed the chapter on the admission cycle for 2026–2027, I am happy to share that Blair is in a very strong position as we look toward the new year. Our positive momentum from the fall and winter continued through our Revisit Days, which were the largest we have ever hosted, with more than 140 accepted students returning to campus to take a deeper look at our academic, athletic and student life experience. Our community rose to the occasion, highlighting what makes Blair, Blair, through warm welcomes and friendly conversations. It is a pleasure to see students who were just visiting the hilltop themselves take on the role of guide, ushering the next generation of students to find their place here.

Families are more discerning than ever in their decision-making, and Blair's balance of academic rigor and warmth of community continues to distinguish the School in an increasingly competitive landscape. The School's mission to know our students well in order to challenge and support them as individuals resonates with so many prospective families at a time when personal connection is paramount, and that translates into a consistent uptick in applications. Receiving more than 1,550 applications for just 160 openings, our admission team has the difficult task of ensuring the right candidates join the community in September.

In the classroom, on the fields and stages, and in the dorm, Blair faculty commit to seeing our students and meeting them where they are. With the introduction of our advanced curriculum,

teachers challenge students with new ideas and skills and encourage creative expression while ensuring that students learn how to learn, preparing them to confidently address the demands of college and the 21st-century world. For years, the Integrated Science Research program has been a focal point, where students have the opportunity to engage in original scientific inquiry. I am so pleased we've incorporated the equivalent on the humanities side with the Advanced Literary Writing program, showcasing our robust commitment to providing deep dives into various disciplines.

In general, the feedback from our advanced curriculum has been overwhelmingly positive as we offer a breadth and depth to our families and kids while still maintaining the warmth and connection of a student-centered community. As we look ahead, ensuring access to these opportunities remains a central priority. Financial aid will play an increasingly important role in helping us fulfill our mission and attract the talented, high-character students who define the Blair experience. We know that some of the most promising young people may not otherwise have access to a Blair education, and we are committed to ensuring that financial circumstances never stand in the way of extraordinary potential. We seek applicants who are curious and eager to contribute to a community larger than themselves. Looking ahead, it is clear that a sustained and significant strategic commitment to financial aid will be essential to enrolling the caliber of students we seek to attract.

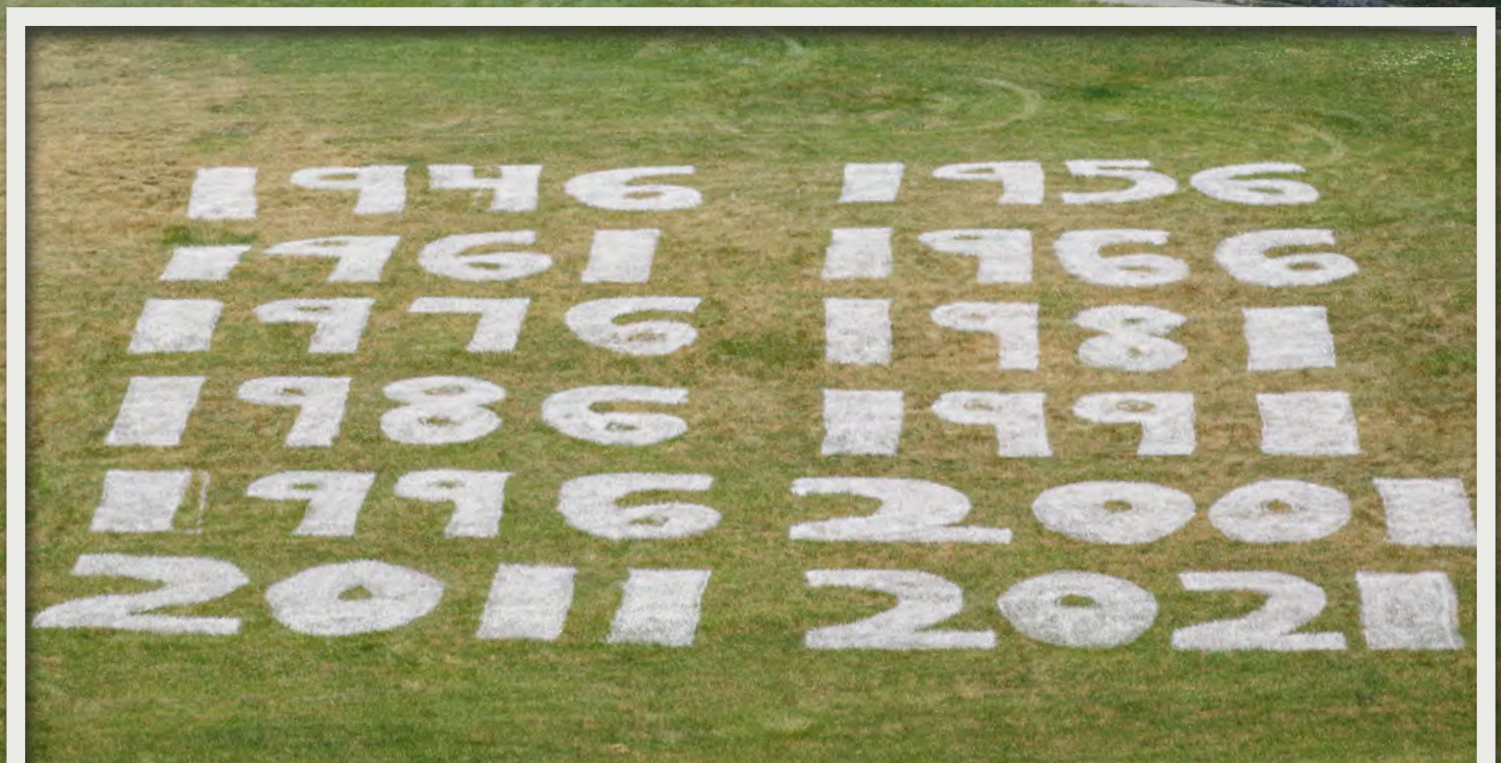
Over the past year, we have seen amazing transformation in our campus spaces with the opening of the Center for Health and Well-Being, as well as the turfing of the Bowl to return it to a central hub of campus life. These spaces are both impressive and enriching, but they are nothing without the people who inhabit them. The admission team is already back to work, canvassing schools and meeting with prospective families to bring the next generation of leaders to the School. It is a privilege to represent this community and to seek out students who will contribute to the culture, character and commitment to excellence that define a Blair education, and I am thankful to the parents, alumni, friends and extended families who support us in this mission.

BLAIR WELCOMES STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE



ALUMNI *Weekend*

THE GOOD THAT BRINGS US BACK



At the beginning of the 2025–2026 academic school year, Head of School Peter G. Curran tasked the Blair community to "see the good," one of the Five Fundamentals of the School. He connected the lesson with the story of two Blair alums, the late Vanguard founder and former Blair Board of Trustees Chair Jack Bogle '47 and U.S. Military Academy West Point cadet Libby Russell '25. When facing difficult circumstances in life, both Jack and Libby rose to the occasion, saw the good and encouraged others to do the same. It is a value instilled during day-to-day life on the hilltop—a common thread tying members of the Blair community together across generations.

Looking around at Alumni Weekend festivities in June, those who returned to their alma mater could "see the good" playing out in every space across campus. Old friends reconnected over shared memories, new relationships formed over exciting activities, and bonds were strengthened through laughter and joy. Despite the time that passed, alums slipped into old ways and found the good in being together once more.





Friday's itinerary was packed with good-natured competition as the Blair Cup Golf Scramble and pickleball tournament got underway. Elsewhere, alums stepped back in the classroom for lessons on academics at the School today and tried their hand at some of the state-of-the-art technology in the maker space. The good times rolled at milestone reunion gatherings in the evening, and the day concluded with a festive Welcome Back, Bucs! Party on Blair Commons, featuring delicious catering by Emily Downs '02 and Tom Kehoe '83, while the Class of 1976 partook in a 50th Reunion celebration—complete with karaoke.

"Blair shaped the course of my life by challenging me, encouraging me, and helping me better understand myself and the world. Volunteering is my way of giving back, both out of gratitude for all that Blair gave me and a commitment to supporting the community that will continue to provide future generations of students with that same transformative experience."

—Director of Alumni Relations Nicole (Nicusanti) Tipton '93

The next morning began with the newest inductees of the Athletic Hall of Fame reflecting on the good Blair brought to their lives. This year's class included Colin Kilrain '77, Nicole Helmstetter '89, Zack Esposito '02, Paula Hong '16, and former Assistant Athletic Director and Coach Rick Stowell Sr. (*read more on page 60*).



"Being back on campus and being recognized for my sports career has allowed me to take a walk down memory lane, and I have truly enjoyed reflecting on my time here at Blair," Nicole, who rejoined Blair's staff as Director of Alumni Relations at the start of the new school year, said during her acceptance speech. "I didn't know it then, but my time on the field and court was really shaping me in ways that have proven so impactful in my life: learning how to be a teammate, win or lose, shapes and teaches us how to show up for ourselves and others. That lesson guided me through many life experiences, and that's a core lesson I learned here at Blair."

It was sunny skies for the traditional Alumni Parade, led by bagpipers as well as Blair Trustee and 2026 Citation of Merit recipient Hoby Van Deusen '54 and his wife, Nancy. The classes proceeded, in order, to Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts for the Head of School Assembly, where Mr. Curran shared not only where Blair has been, but also where the School is headed thanks to the support of so many alums.

Announcing the Peachey Awards, associate director of annual giving Kristine Scialla remarked on their tremendous support. "Blair would not be the School it is today without such a wonderful community of people—those who remain on the hilltop and the alumni and parents who take Blair with them into the world."

After the assembly, alums and their families spilled onto Blair Commons for an old-fashioned picnic, complete with the rhythms of DJ Jeremy Duncan '01 and a magic show by Andy Peters '00. Before long, festivities moved back to Armstrong-Hipkins for the Arts Guild, where John Cassavetes '47, Anthony D'Amato '06, James Hinton '06, Cass Gardiner '07 and former faculty Wayne "Razz" Rasmussen were inducted (*read more on page 57)*.

"When I got here, nobody asked me to pick a lane," James Hinton '06 reflected. "I loved music and math, and the teachers treated that as a gift, not as a problem to solve. Thank you for being the kind of place that hands a young person permission and then trusts them to use it."

For all the Bucs looking to "see the good" in Blair as they returned for Alumni Weekend, it was not hard to find. Between shared hugs and smiles, the good was found in the simplest places, reminding everyone why they stay connected to dear old Blair.



Andy "Magic Andy" Peters '00 performed a magic show at Alumni Weekend to the delight of children and adults alike.

Peachey Award Recipients

Alumni Volunteer of the Year: Nicole (Nicusanti) Tipton '93

Class Correspondent of the Year: Pete Fritts '56

Class Representative of the Year: Frank Briggs Jr. '61

Outstanding Reunion Committees: Class of 2001 & 2006



2026 Alumni of the Year: Lauren (Makar) Haley ’93

Two things, it turns out, distinguish Lauren (Makar) Haley ’93 from the rank and file of her class at Blair: a rare discernment combined with an unwavering care for others. English teacher Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79 first recognized these qualities clearly when she was the Locke Hall dorm head and Lauren was a senior prefect. Lauren had, Ms. Conforti-Browse wrote, “a maturity well beyond her years in dealing with the many problems that arise. She is like having another faculty member on the floor.” That same calming presence and willingness to step in wherever she is needed has defined Lauren ever since.

At Blair, those qualities showed themselves across every aspect of campus life. Lauren earned a strong academic record, winning the U.S. History Book Prize, while serving as a Locke prefect, assistant editor of the *ACTA*, a Blair tutor and a leader in the community service club. Even on the varsity swimming and field hockey teams, Lauren’s instinct was to support the whole community: When field hockey advanced to the state semifinals, she mobilized students to cheer on the team, a small but telling example of how she always brings people together.





After Blair, Lauren continued to shine. She earned her BA from the University of Rochester and her JD from Seton Hall Law School. She received the National Association of Women Lawyers’ Outstanding Law Student Award and now serves as the general counsel and corporate secretary for Spring Health. She sits on the Board of Directors for the Women’s Resource Center in Newport, Rhode Island, a nonprofit dedicated to ending domestic violence—work that speaks directly to Lauren’s commitment to using her education and talent in service of others.

Lauren’s dedication to Blair has been equally remarkable. Elected to the Blair Board of Governors in 2022, she was instrumental in establishing the Locke Society, participating in focus groups and many one-on-one conversations to bring it to life. She has volunteered as a resource during Intersession, served on reunion committees, shared her expertise with the next generation at Alumni Roundtables, and, through both financial leadership and sustained collaboration with classmates, played a key role in establishing the Class of 1993 Scholarship.

Regardless of professional demands, personal commitments, distance and responsibilities with her own two young children, Lauren has consistently answered Blair’s call. True to the qualities that first distinguished her as a student, she leads with purpose, generosity and an unwavering investment in people. For all of these reasons, and for her steadfast three decades of service to Blair, we are proud to recognize Lauren (Makar) Haley as the 2026 Alumni of the Year.





Marc Murphy Visits *The Buc Stops Here*







Before he became one of the Food Network's most recognizable personalities, Marc Murphy P'26 was cooking dinner each night while living with his brother in New York City. Marc—Blair parent, acclaimed chef, restaurateur and longtime *Chopped* judge—stopped by *The Buc Stops Here* podcast in May for a conversation with Head of School Peter G. Curran.

Marc found his way into the restaurant world almost by accident. After moving to New York City and crashing on his brother's couch, he began cooking dinner each night for the household. "And, after a couple months," Marc recalled, "my brother said, 'You seem to like this cooking thing. Why don't you think about cooking school?'"

Before long, he enrolled at the Institute of Culinary Education, where the palate he developed during summers with family in the south of France gave him a distinct advantage.

Even after culinary school, Marc at one point imagined leaving New York behind. Riding through the city on his Ducati ST2 motorcycle, he remembers thinking, "I knew I could cross the country on it. I was going to pack it up, all my stuff and anything I had left. And I was going to go and maybe start over in San Diego."

Instead, he accepted a short-term job, one that led to meeting his future wife and the launch of his first restaurant.

In the podcast, Marc also touches on issues important to him beyond the restaurant world. He reflects honestly on the challenges dyslexia created during his boarding school experience, contrasting it with the positive experience his son has had at Blair. He talks about his involvement with nonprofits devoted to ending hunger, such as City Harvest and Share Our Strength. "We feed people in our restaurants and our customers all the time," he says. "We should worry about feeding the people that are in need of food as well." He also speaks about writing cookbooks, including his 2015 release, *Season with Authority*, and what it has been like watching his son prepare to graduate from Blair.

> **"For me, it was always like you had to keep learning."**
>
> **—Chef Marc Murphy P'26**

Today, Marc balances media appearances and writing another cookbook with hosting a pop-up restaurant three days a month with a prix fixe menu. Throughout the conversation, he reflects on the twists and turns his life has taken, from restaurateur and celebrity judge to advocate and Blair parent.

Catch the full conversation on Apple Podcasts or Spotify.


around the
Arch



Quint Clarke ’87 (*left*) and Brad Strauss (*right*) celebrate 25 years working at Blair. Not pictured: Jason Beck.



Left to right: Randy Waters, Ryan Manni-Brennan and Chris Thatcher were recognized for 10 years of service. Not pictured: Jennifer Lusardi and Phillip Nylander.

Celebrating Service at the Start of a New Year

As a rejuvenating summer came to a close, Blair employees gathered to celebrate the start of the 179th school year. They welcomed the newest members of the community while celebrating those who have reached milestone tenures in their careers. The festive occasion, filled with reconnections and excitement, was a fitting tribute to the year ahead.

Recognized for 25 dedicated years of service to the community, enriching the lives of students in and out of the classroom, are history department chair and Director of Society of Skeptics Jason Beck, history teacher Quint Clarke ’87 and head athletic trainer Brad Strauss. Mr. Beck has served many roles on campus, including Director of Financial Aid, Assistant Dean of College Counseling, class monitor, chair of the Accreditation Committee and co-chair of the Faculty Professional Development Committee. Over his years at Blair, Mr. Clarke has been the international monitor, taught in the English and religion departments, and coached a number of sports, including girls’ varsity basketball and varsity girls’ cross country. Mr. Strauss has been a critical member of the athletics department, ensuring that Blair athletes are well-equipped to perform at the highest level. All three were gifted campus paintings for their contributions to the School.

After 10 years at Blair, five members of the faculty and staff received chairs for their commitment to the community. Registered nurse Jennifer Lusardi; Director of Vocal Music, Director of Intersession and performing arts teacher Ryan Manni-Brennan; heating plant operator Phillip Nylander; science teacher Chris Thatcher; and maintenance team member Randy Waters were all recognized.

The celebration served as a reminder of the dedication and care that sustain the Blair community year after year. As the 179th school year began, faculty and staff looked ahead with enthusiasm to another year of learning and connection.

Welcome, New Faculty & Staff



Every year, Blair welcomes new educators and staff members to the hilltop. Behind each new face is a professional who chooses to spend their days alongside young people—shaping, challenging and championing them. With fresh ideas and wide-ranging interests and experiences, each brings a distinct mix of talent and insight that will enrich the lives of students and the community. Get to know each of them here.



Head of School Peter G. Curran congratulates new faculty member Kate Swann, the 2026-2027 Hardwick Teaching Fellow.

Faculty



Giulia Beccarelli
French Teacher

Education: 2005 BA in foreign languages and literature from the University of Parma; 2022 MA in teaching foreign language from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies.
Before Blair: A language educator with more than 15 years of teaching experience across independent schools in the United States and abroad, Ms. Beccarelli most recently taught French and Spanish at The John Carroll School in Maryland.
Coaching: JV volleyball and JV girls' lacrosse.

Faculty



Cameron Bentley '20
Admission Associate

Education: 2024 BA in environmental thought and practice from the University of Virginia.
Before Blair: After graduating from UVA, Ms. Bentley worked at Guy Carpenter, where she analyzed client exposure to natural disasters and collaborated with peril experts to develop underwriting, reinsurance and climate risk strategies.
Coaching: Rowing.

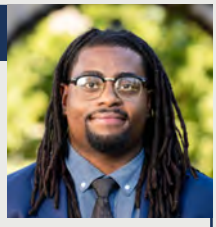
Faculty



Kathleen Carroll
English Teacher

Education: 2017 BA in English and classics from Colby College; 2023 PhD in English and American Literature from the University of South Carolina.
Before Blair: Most recently, Dr. Carroll taught English and mythology at North Broward Preparatory School in Coconut Creek, Florida, while also serving as a faculty dorm parent, JV volleyball assistant coach and theatre assistant.
Coaching: JV girls' squash and JV volleyball.

Faculty



Isaiah Chery
Mathematics Teacher

Education: 2022 BA in economics and government from Franklin & Marshall College.
Before Blair: Mr. Chery joins Blair following his work as an Algebra II instructor at Wilbraham & Monson Academy in Massachusetts, where he also served as a football, basketball, and track-and-field coach, a head dorm parent, student advisor and advisor to the school's Black Student Union.
Coaching: Football and JV boys' basketball.

Faculty



Emma Fleming
Assistant Director of Athletics for Sports Information & Facilities

Education: 2026 BS in public relations from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University.
Before Blair: In addition to completing her studies at Syracuse University, Ms. Fleming brings experience in sports communications through her roles as a digital content intern for Firecracker Sports, a marketing assistant for the National Fastpitch Coaches Association and a communications resident for Little League International.
Coaching: JV boys' basketball and softball.

Staff



Lauren Ingenito
Director of Parent Philanthropy

Education: Studied fashion merchandising at the Laboratory Institute of Merchandising.
Before Blair: Mrs. Ingenito comes to Blair with more than 14 years of experience in independent school advancement, most recently serving in parent engagement and advancement leadership at Far Hills Country Day School. She has also served as volunteer coordinator and administrator for Turn the Towns Teal, where she oversees volunteer engagement, communications, fundraising and community outreach in support of ovarian cancer awareness.

Faculty



Willy Kaiser '18
Director of Student Activities

Education: 2022 BA in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania.
Before Blair: A longtime champion on the mat, Mr. Kaiser returns to the hilltop as Director of Student Activities after serving as a first-grade teacher in Alexandria, Virginia, where he helped establish the girls' wrestling program at Alexandria City High School, and as district coordinator at Edia, an AI platform for K-12 school districts, where he managed 50 education programs and stakeholder relationships.
Coaching: Wrestling and football.

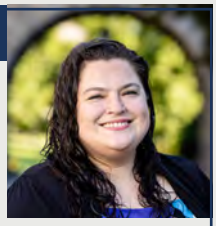
Staff



Mia Macaluso
Head Girls' Wrestling Coach

Education: 2024 BS in health and physical education and 2025 MS in sports administration, both from East Stroudsburg University.
Before Blair: Ms. Macaluso joins Blair as the program's first-ever head coach of girls' wrestling. She arrives with a distinguished record as both a competitor and coach. A World Team Member and five-time USA National Team Member, she was a three-time NCAA All-American at East Stroudsburg University, where she helped guide the program into the national top 10 as head assistant coach.

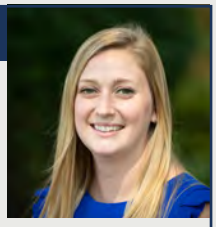
Faculty



Lila Manstein
Science Teacher

Education: 2018 BA in both chemistry and mathematics from Amherst College; 2020 master's in education from the Teach-Now Graduate School of Education.
Before Blair: Ms. Manstein comes to Blair from Ivy Collegiate Academy in Taiwan, where she taught advanced courses in chemistry and biology and served as the head of the science department and the school's activities coordinator.
Coaching: JV girls' soccer and swimming.

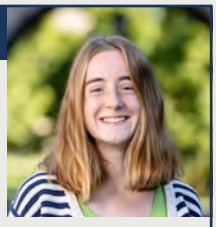
Staff



Kristan Pearson
Assistant Director of Advancement Information Services

Education: Pursued general studies at Northampton Community College and East Stroudsburg University.
Before Blair: Ms. Pearson, who had worked in Blair's advancement office for seven years in an administrative role, returned to the hilltop in 2026 as assistant director of advancement information services after working for the East Stroudsburg University Foundation as a staff accountant and executive administrative assistant.

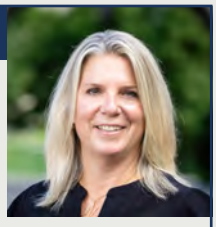
Faculty



Kate Swann
Mathematics Teacher

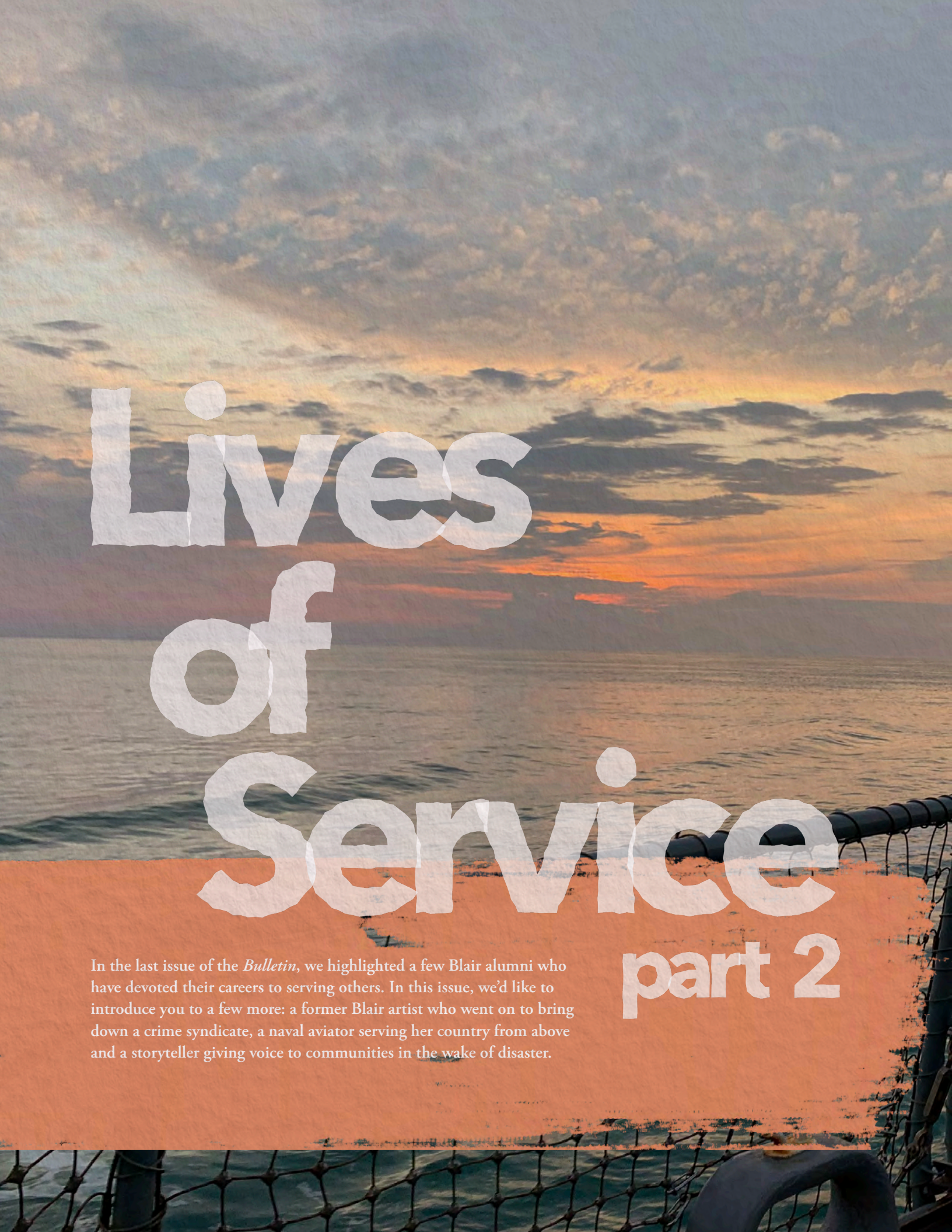
Education: 2026 BA in quantitative environmental science from Williams College.
Before Blair: Ms. Swann joins Blair from Williams College, where, in addition to completing her studies, she served as a varsity cross country and track-and-field captain and four-time All-American in addition to working as a mathematics teaching assistant and a biology research assistant. She is Blair's 2026-2027 Hardwick Teaching Fellow.
Coaching: Girls' cross country and spring track.

Staff



Nicole (Nicusanti) Tipton '93
Director of Alumni Relations

Education: 1997 BA in political science from Columbia University; 2003 MA in instructional technology and media from Columbia University.
Before Blair: Mrs. Tipton comes to Blair after serving as Associate Director of Alumni Engagement at Lafayette College. She is already a familiar face on campus, having worked in a number of roles in Blair's advancement office between 2019 and 2022, including as interim Director of Alumni Relations.



Lives of Service

part 2

In the last issue of the *Bulletin*, we highlighted a few Blair alumni who have devoted their careers to serving others. In this issue, we'd like to introduce you to a few more: a former Blair artist who went on to bring down a crime syndicate, a naval aviator serving her country from above and a storyteller giving voice to communities in the wake of disaster.



Mike Gallant, Class of 2002, with his daughter, Hazel.

Detective Sergeant Michael Gallant '02

It was a Christmas Eve Detective Sergeant Michael Gallant '02 won't soon forget. He was at home with his wife, Jenna, as their four-year-old daughter, Hazel, played on the floor surrounded by toys as the family got ready for Santa's big visit. Then the phone rang. Mike wasn't expecting the Colonel, and, for a second, he wondered if something was wrong. "I was very surprised," he recalls.

Mike, it turns out, had just been named the 2025 New Jersey Trooper of the Year, the highest distinction awarded to Troopers in the state. Every year on Christmas Eve, the Colonel personally calls the recipient. It wasn't the kind of call you expect, and it wasn't one Mike thought would come to him. "I thought everything we had done paled in comparison to other Troopers," he says. "I didn't have the words to express my gratitude."

For Mike, the moment had been 10 years in the making. After graduating from the NJ State Police Academy in 2015, he spent several years on road duty, but he had his heart set on criminal investigations. "I really wanted to work homicides," he explains. When the opportunity presented itself, he began working criminal and homicide investigations in Newark. A few years later, he was selected for assignment to the Intelligence Section and began cultivating more complicated, long-term cases.

One of those cases began as a corruption investigation into an elected official in Northern New Jersey, who was alleged to have ties to the Lucchese crime family. Mike still remembers his initial disbelief at the official's actions. "To hear an elected official threatening people's lives blew my mind," he says.

That was just the tip of the iceberg. "The family had their hooks in just about everything they could," he says, and in no time, the investigation expanded. According to prosecutors, the councilman was running illegal poker games and an online sportsbook tied to the sprawling crime organization, and the case soon evolved into a sweeping operation.

"It turned into a wiretap investigation, the longest one in state history," Mike says. Over 286 days, he and his team listened to calls across 15 separate lines, a task that involved long hours of methodically piecing together fragments of conversations. In the end, it resulted in 42 indictments, including the alleged underboss and other high-ranking members of the Lucchese family.

Despite the scale of the operation and the recognition that followed, Mike is quick to deflect credit for the takedown. He points instead to some early lessons he learned at Blair. "I first learned how teams operate at Blair," he says. "How



At a ceremonial event held in Trenton in February 2026, Mike received his award for Trooper of the Year from New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill.

to work with others and prioritize others." That mindset, he believes, is essential in his line of work.

"While I am flattered and humbled by the recognition, this was not an individual effort. There were 200 to 300 law enforcement officers, attorneys and Division of Criminal Justice partners working to bring these indictments. There's no way this happens without them."

It may come as a surprise, but Mike's path to a life of public service in law enforcement wasn't always a sure thing. His father served as a NJ State Trooper before becoming sheriff in Warren County, New Jersey, and his grandfather was also a State Trooper. Both, he says, tried to steer him in a different direction. "It was in my DNA," he jokes, laughing.

At Blair, Mike wasn't convinced that law enforcement would be his future. In high school, he wasn't sure what he wanted to do. A prominent wrestler and an avid art student, Mike thought he wanted to pursue graphic arts in college. He enrolled at The College of New Jersey to study it, but by his sophomore year, he found himself having what he calls a "crisis of faith." After switching majors, he eventually graduated with a degree in business.

But that pull toward a career in public law enforcement just kept nudging him.

"I grew up watching old police TV shows with my father," he says. "I love a good mystery—putting those puzzle pieces together, bringing closure to families and taking bad actors off the streets." He held on to that feeling. "I saw, in my family, the effect that good policing can have on communities. I wanted to carry that torch forward. I took this job to help people."

Today, as he thinks about the years he has devoted to public service, he hopes that other Blair students considering a career in public service will stick with it. "Continue your education and hold yourself to a higher standard than others. Commitment to integrity is paramount. You have a direct effect on other people's lives."

Back in his living room that Christmas Eve, as Hazel and Jenna got ready for the next day, the meaning of the call began to sink in. He had, he thought, spent the better part of two years on the phone, working the case. His family had borne that burden beside him. In that moment, he felt only gratitude—for his team, for his family and for the opportunity to serve.



August, Class of 2016, on the flight deck while serving on her nine-month deployment.

LT August Will '16

LT August Will '16 looked out over the horizon, scanning the sea that stretched endlessly ahead. Light sparkled across the water, and the sun's glare was sharp enough that she had to squint. It was a beautiful day, but the brightness made everything harder to see, and the surface below August's MH-60R Seahawk kept shifting and catching the light.

She kept the helicopter high and steady, where she could cover the most ground and avoid disturbing the water below. She had done the calculations. She knew when the sailor had gone overboard, knew the carrier's speed and heading at the time. That part was clear. But everything else was unknown. Had they slipped? Jumped? Had the fall knocked them unconscious?

August and her copilot had been searching for about 10 minutes when a soft white splashing caught their eye. August's heart leaped. "We found them!" she thought. But, as she drew closer, the distinct shape of fins came into view along with another spurt of water. It was a whale. Her heart sank again, and she thought, ironically, that she might be the only person looking at the ocean that day to be disappointed by a whale sighting.

A few minutes later, a call came over the radio. Another helicopter had located the sailor, retrieved them and was en route back to their carrier. August and her copilot changed course, heading back to their ship. They wouldn't get to meet the sailor they had been trying to rescue, but August was okay with that. It was all part of a day's work.

On that morning, like every one that follows, August is part of a bigger mission: service to her country. That mission takes different forms depending on the day. As a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Navy, August's work has taken her from the Fifth Fleet in the Middle East to the Seventh Fleet in the South China Sea, and now she is part of the Carl Vinson Strike Group, based out of Naval Air Station North Island in Southern California. That day was spent on a search-and-rescue mission, but more often, her work involves transporting fellow sailors, delivering critical equipment or sitting behind the radar, watching for anything that doesn't belong. There always has to be a helicopter in the air, 24/7, she explains, to protect her fellow servicemen and women.

"We use helicopters for many missions, one of which is keeping a watchful eye on the horizon," she says. From above, she sees what those at sea level can't. "At 10,000 feet, our radar can see a lot more than the ship's."

That desire to pitch in and help others didn't start in the cockpit. It goes back to lessons she first learned at home and, later, at Blair. "Blair was super important in my journey to get to where I am," she explains. She entered Blair through the Naval Academy's Foundation Prep Program, a one-year post-graduate program designed to prepare students for entry



August takes off in an MH-60 Romeo from a destroyer during her 2025 deployment to the Middle East.

into the United States Naval Academy. Students selected for the program are typically funded for a year of study at a military prep school or at specific civilian institutions.

She remembers sitting in class and wondering what it all added up to. "You take all these different classes—math, English, science—and you think, 'What's the point of me knowing all this? They don't have quizzes in the real world.'" Today, the connections make sense in ways she couldn't see when she was 17. From English, the writing comes in handy when she's putting together evaluations and awards for her sailors. The math is used in her pre-flight calculations. The communication skills shine every time she briefs, leads or gives a public speech. It all goes back to the basics.

"The effort you put into studying, and how you learn to get help—those lessons come back when you have a real job," she says. "I'm grateful for the work I put in."

At 29, August still has years of naval service ahead of her. Her commitment is substantial: eight years after flight school, with five still to go. "It's a long commitment," she says, but one that she is willing to undertake. There are parts of her job that are tough, like being away from family on deployment for long periods of time, living on a boat and conducting night operations for months, but she feels that it has been worth it. She doesn't always want to go wherever the Navy sends her, but she tells herself, "I am the most prepared to go, so I have to do it." She's not alone in that. Every flight is a group effort, with a copilot and ground crew who train together and depend on one another. "They all want to give back," she says. And, in that, she's found meaning.

"When you serve, you get back more than you give," she says. "You do things you never thought you could. You meet the best friends and coworkers you will ever find. I don't want to let them down."

Looking back, August would tell her 17-year-old self one thing: "YOU CAN DO IT! You can do hard things. Don't say no just because you haven't done it before."

"We've all been blessed with skills and abilities," she says. "Use them. It's good to worry about someone else's kids and family. Support a greater cause." For August, that's what it means to lead a life of service.



CORE Vice President of Communications and Marketing Jaya Vadlamudi '95.

Jaya Vadlamudi '95

The first thing Jaya Vadlamudi '95 notices when she arrives in the wake of a disaster is often not the destruction. It's the people. As vice president of communications and marketing for Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE), Jaya travels to communities devastated by earthquakes, hurricanes, war and famine, documenting their stories through photography and writing. Capturing the human side of humanitarian crises, she shares striking photography and personal narratives to help ensure the voices of those affected are heard by people thousands of miles away.

"I'm responsible for telling the stories that might otherwise go untold," she says. "Yes, I want people to understand what



Jaya often photographs the people she meets in the field, helping to tell their stories through images. Here she captures the Horn of Africa famine in 2011, where mothers learn simple steps they can take to keep their babies healthy at a village nutrition workshop in Ethiopia. Photo credit: J. Vadlamudi, International Medical Corps.

CORE does, but more importantly, I want them to see the people behind every disaster and lift up communities around the world."

Jaya joined CORE four years ago, long after its founding in the wake of Haiti's 2010 earthquake, when actor and filmmaker Sean Penn gathered up as many resources as he could and deployed to help. By the time Jaya came aboard, this effort had grown into an international nonprofit responding to crises around the world.

"My team's job is to ensure the public understands what the needs of disaster-stricken communities are and how their donations will impact them long-term," she says. In addition to sharing the organization's work through its digital channels, Jaya and her team also reach out to large-scale publications, including *The New York Times* and *60 Minutes*, in order to reach audiences across the globe.

With her background in photography and experience working with other nonprofits, communicating CORE's mission and impact was a natural fit. The realities of nonprofit work, however, were something she learned through experience. "Translating interviews and stories into talking points for the CEO to convince donors to support our mission is something I learned on the job," she says. "It has been a wonderful and meaningful way to use my skills."

Since the beginning of her work with CORE, Jaya has documented the full spectrum of crises, bearing witness



Ukraine War 2024: A village elder shares the working stove she's now able to use following CORE's restoration of fuel for residents. Photo credit: J. Vadlamudi, CORE.



Nepal Earthquake 2015: A young girl's smile offers a ray of hope amid the devastation and many aftershocks. Photo credit: J. Vadlamudi, International Medical Corps.

not only to disasters themselves but also to the grief and humanity that emerge in their wake. She's been to Ukraine, India, Nepal, Kenya, Ethiopia, Libya, Somaliland and Jamaica after major humanitarian disasters. Arriving in Jamaica after a Category 5 hurricane last year, she witnessed destruction unlike anything she had experienced before.

"It was devastation on a scale I'd never seen," she recalls. "I was in Nepal after the earthquake and Ethiopia after the famine, but this was truly staggering. To see the effect of Category 5 hurricane winds on communities that don't have the resources to rebuild and are constantly in the path of hurricanes was heartbreaking."

"We had to use boats to reach communities that hadn't seen aid in two weeks," she says. "It was a privilege to bring drinking water and food while they waited for longer-term help to arrive."

For Jaya, CORE's mission comes down to helping people get home and get their lives back. In Ukraine, that has meant building bomb shelters at schools, creating spaces where children can continue their education even as conflict reshapes nearly every aspect of daily life.

What stays with her, in every country she visits, is how resilient people are. "It can be extremely eye-opening and unnerving but also uplifting to see how resilient these communities are," she says.

While Jaya's deployments have been rewarding, they have also required sacrifice. Nonprofit work exacts a toll that's easy to overlook from the outside, Jaya says. Deployments mean weeks away from home, and the weight of that falls on her loved ones as much as on her. "It's a sacrifice, not just for yourself but for your loved ones," she says. Still, she wouldn't trade it, because despite the challenges associated with the job, she believes in what CORE is fighting for.

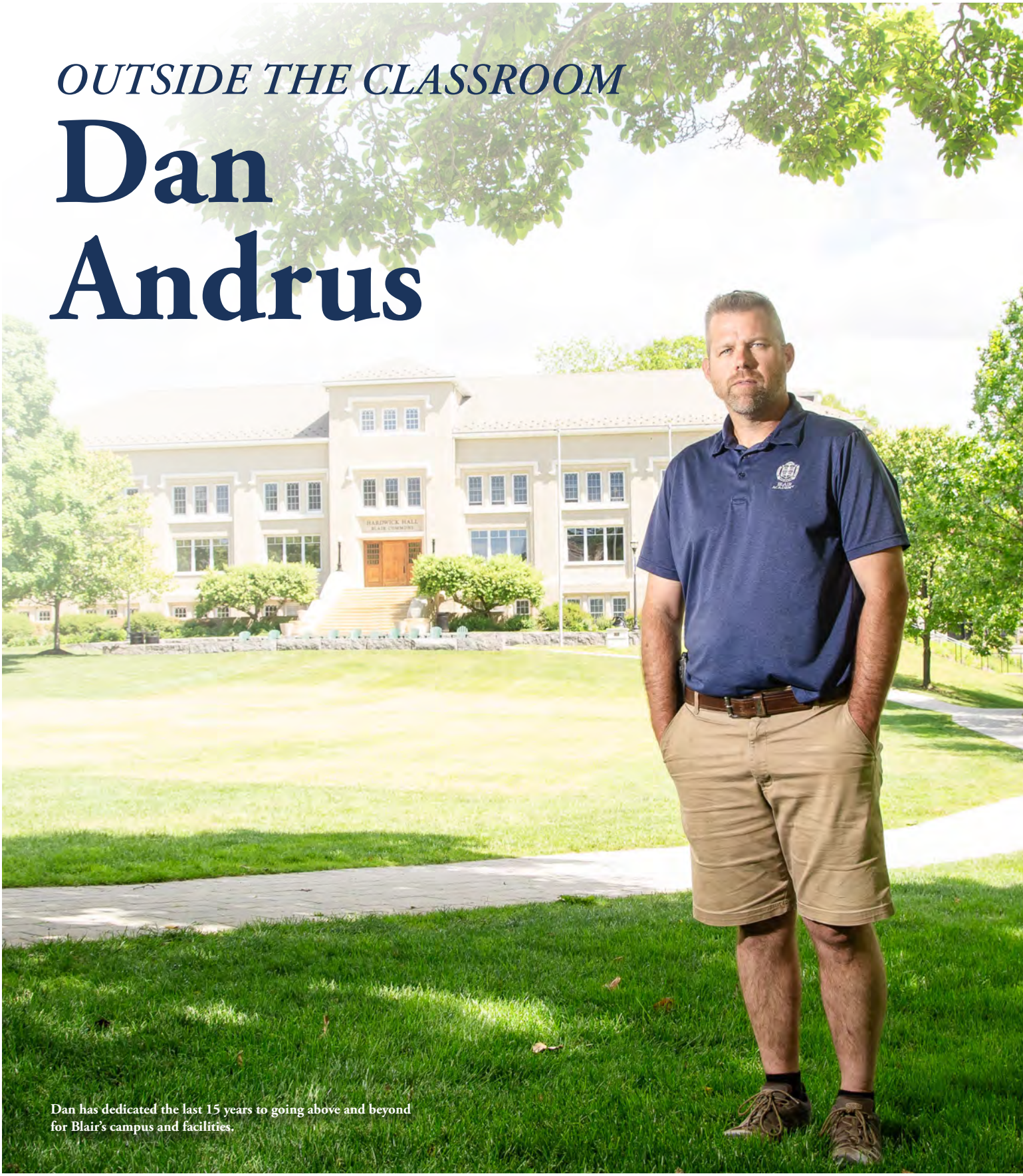
"Today, it's so prevalent for people to feel like things are out of their control, and that decisions are being made by billionaires and politicians, but we can impact change. Nonprofits are doing that work on the ground. They are a way that people can still get involved and actually be part of the solution."

Although she did not know it at the time, the seed of her interest in global communities was cultivated right on Blair's campus. "Blair had me in classes that discussed different global communities. I studied Russian literature. I took a class to learn more about Japan. We were always reading things that helped shape who I am today. My desire to really be connected to a bigger global purpose, I owe that to Blair."

Whether she is writing from her home office in Los Angeles or standing in the aftermath of a disaster halfway around the world, Jaya continues to lead a life in service of others, telling stories that remind people that every humanitarian crisis is, above all, a human one.

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Dan Andrus



Dan has dedicated the last 15 years to going above and beyond for Blair's campus and facilities.

Outside the Classroom



As the school year comes to an end, Blair presents several awards to members of the community whose work has distinguished them. Students are honored for academic achievement, athletic talent, leadership and personal growth throughout the year, while faculty, staff and students who quietly embody the School's Five Fundamentals are also celebrated. These individuals are the ones who best represent the culture of Blair: global citizens contributing to the greater good. In the spring, grounds supervisor Dan Andrus was anonymously nominated for such an award, demonstrating care in all spaces across the campus.

"Mr. Andrus demonstrates great care in all he does," the Five Fundamentals nomination reads. "This often includes a variety of areas on campus, such as immaculately raking the softball field daily, selflessly organizing a cleanup of the old hilltop outdoor gym, precisely placing the track-and-field jumping mats 'exactly' as needed and exquisitely setting up the many special items required for Blair to host the annual cross country state races in the fall. Mr. Andrus and his crew take great care of all our campus outdoor spaces, but on these and invariably several others, he has gone above and beyond our expectations. We are very grateful!"

For 15 years, Mr. Andrus has been working to maintain Blair's beautiful campus. While the grounds shop sits at the entrance of campus, you are more likely to find him canvassing the hilltop throughout the day, ensuring the bucolic atmosphere the School has become known for is precisely maintained.

When he isn't keeping the hilltop pristine, Mr. Andrus spends time with his wife, Stacey, and children, Jared, Reid '29 and Delanie, at their home in Bangor, Pennsylvania. To get to know more about the behind-the-scenes man responsible for 463 acres of campus, we sat down to chat with Mr. Andrus outside the classroom.

Outside the Classroom

What's the first thing you do when you arrive on campus in the morning and the last thing before you leave?

I usually arrive around 6 a.m. and will go check emails in my office and prepare a plan for the day. I always check the weather forecasts because so much of what we do revolves around that. During the summer, I will take a ride on the golf course and check the greens for moisture and condition first thing.

At the end of the day, I try to stay on top of any emails I missed from earlier and jot down any things I would like to try to accomplish the next day while they are fresh in my mind. Every day is a little different, but the more prepared we can be, the better.

What do you enjoy most about each season at Blair?

Spring is a new beginning and a new chance to do better than last year. It feels like a fresh start, and campus really comes alive. Summer is tough, with heat and drought. We have to stay on our toes and stick to our agronomic practices to keep things healthy. It is absolutely essential.

Fall is my favorite. It's the end of the season and a chance to wipe the slate clean. It's also soccer and football season, which I personally enjoy. Winter is my least favorite with snow and ice, but it is a great opportunity to re-energize between winter storms and work on equipment. We take the time to repair and clean machinery to best prepare for the next season and start the cycle over. It is also when the team audits how things went for the season and we are able to make adjustments where we may need it.



Dan and his wife, Stacey, love spending quality time with their three children (*left to right*): Reid '29, Delanie and Jared.



Dan's daughter, Delanie, is a force on the field hockey pitch.



Dan's son, Jared, is a standout student in their hometown of Bangor, PA.



During his first year at Blair, Dan's son, Reid, has found his passion on the stage.

In what ways do you see the community showing their appreciation for Blair's grounds?

We are always getting awesome feedback on how the campus looks. It is definitely great to hear from everyone, but it's also fulfilling when new people come onto campus for the first time and are impressed by the beauty of the hilltop.

What makes Blair's campus so special?

This place is like a big playground. There are so many activities at your fingertips: from playing golf to hiking the trails through the Siegel Property to fishing one of the lakes. There are so many things to do right outside your door, and I love seeing the Blair community taking advantage of all of it.

Where is your favorite place on campus?

The fifth tee box on the golf course, especially on an early morning. It is very peaceful back in there. Also, there is an area that overlooks the eighth hole that has a good view of the athletic complex that I check out occasionally.

What was your first job?

I tried many different things when I was young, but my first job was at Hillside Drive-In. It was a burger and ice-cream place right up the road from where I grew up. I cooked, cleaned, served ice cream and helped at the mini-golf course.

When you were in high school, what did you want to be when you grew up?

When I was young, I wanted to be a paleontologist. During my junior

and senior year, I decided to go to Delaware Valley University's School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences for ornamental horticulture but decided I liked the turf side better and switched to the agronomy major. I took an internship on a golf course my junior year, and after that, I was hooked.

How has Blair changed in your eyes since Reid '29 became a student?

I get to see the School from a parent perspective, which adds to the relationships and connections I've made during my time here. It's been an opportunity to see how much time and effort both the students and teachers commit to everything that goes on during the school year. Reid had the opportunity to travel with the performing arts department to Italy this spring and sing in some amazing places, so it has been great to see him take advantage of some of the things Blair has to offer.

This year, Reid has really taken to the Blair stage. Is that a talent he inherited from you?

Reid performed all through middle school and has always enjoyed getting on the stage. I am impressed with his stage presence and his ability to get up in front of people like that. He definitely did not get that from me, and I much prefer to stay behind the scenes and out of the spotlight.

Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?

If you ask my family, my talent is demolishing parts of the house and then taking forever to fix them back up again. It's a bit of an Achilles' heel. I wish there were more hours in a day to cross things off the list, but I'm sure I would just add more.



Dan finds beauty in all areas of Blair's campus, but the fifth tee box on the golf course is one of his favorite spots.



Members of the grounds and maintenance crew at Blair are responsible for the picturesque campus we all enjoy.

You have a full slate of jobs lined up for the day. What hype music are you listening to for motivation?

I don't usually listen to music during the day, unless I am running a machine. But, lately, I have been on a '90s alternative kick. It takes me back to my high school days.

Fill in the blank: "The beauty of Blair is found _____."

...in the members of this community that make this school the truly special place that it is!

Academics



Portfolio Symposiums Showcase Intellectual Growth

At Blair Academy, academic excellence is measured by more than just a transcript; it is defined by a student's ability to reflect on their journey and find their unique voice through intellectual growth. Last fall, the Blair community gathered to celebrate the latest cohort of Portfolio of Distinction winners, a signature academic recognition that challenges students in the advanced curriculum program to synthesize their learning into a compelling public presentation.



Following a successful inaugural launch, the program has evolved to offer students two distinct pathways: a narrative presentation focusing on the "learning journey" or an argumentative presentation designed to use portfolio assignments as evidence to their point.

"It was rewarding to see our participants tackle this challenge with greater maturity and depth of understanding than the previous spring," noted Nathan Molteni, Assistant Head of School for Academics. Mr. Molteni attributed this growth to the identity work tied to the college process. "We were glad to welcome five additional students to the inaugural group of Portfolio of Distinction winners, bringing our total for the Class of 2026 to 11."

The path to distinction is rooted in a student's consistent performance across the curriculum. Shelly Mantegna, Director of Advanced Curriculum, explains the criteria: "Students are invited based on their portfolio work across their classes and the accompanying reflection component. The panel of faculty judges votes on the presenters using a rubric and a round table-style discussion."

This format allows for deep engagement between students and faculty. "Students can either take a narrative or argumentative approach to their presentation, and there is space for the judges to ask questions," Ms. Mantegna added.

The symposium highlighted the diverse ways Blair students approach their education, ranging from creative self-discovery to complex philosophical framing.

Cat Zhang '26 centered her portfolio on the idea of "just try." She reflected on overcoming the fear of novelty: "I had to begin sewing somewhere. I've never done an intricate scientific research project, nor have I ever written a novel before, but I didn't let not knowing stop me from trying. Of course, I faced failures: bad grades, flopped outfits, etc. But then, I realized that my failures are not flaws. They give me the chance to make it my own."

Jenny Ke '26 explored the concept of "Frames" and how context changes interpretation. "My presentation last semester focused on the theme of frames and how different topics require different frames, where changing the frame meant changing the meaning," Jenny explained. "I talked about literal frames, narrative frames, frames of reference, linguistic frames and the framing effect, each of which corresponds to its own advanced course."

Tess Mella '26 stood out for taking the argumentative approach rather than the



narrative. Her presentation focused on grading systems and reflected on challenges she's experienced, her growth and the support system at Blair. "Every teacher I've had at Blair is amazing. The best part of Blair is the faculty," Tess shared. "The teachers and classes were foundational to where I am today, fully prepared to go to college."

Looking ahead, Portfolio Symposiums continue to grow as a cornerstone of the Blair experience. As the Class of 2026 celebrated its 11 winners, the School looked forward to the upcoming spring symposiums. As Mr. Molteni noted, "We will again host the senior and junior portfolio symposiums and members of the Class of 2027 will have their first chance at attempting this new signature Blair recognition."



Arts

Meet Director of Theatre L'Oreal Carter



Director of Theatre L'Oreal Carter joined Blair's faculty in fall 2025.

"Mrs. Carter, I have to show you something."

"Mrs. Carter, what are we doing in class today?"

"Mrs. Carter, can I lead this exercise?"

The calls are constant. Across the campus walkways, in the classroom, on the stage. Students gravitate to Blair's Director of Theatre and English teacher L'Oreal Carter. They celebrate her with a coveted Monday School Meeting "Good Morning!" Students run to share news with her about their latest grade in a different subject or an idea they have for today's scene. They even confide in her on the way to rehearsals about oversleeping accidentally and strategize about how to better utilize their time. In every act, she makes her students feel seen.

For many, it could be exhausting, but Mrs. Carter takes it in stride. The "triple-threat" philosophy—in the classroom, in the dorms and in extracurriculars—that shapes life as a Blair faculty member suits her personality. When her students need her, she is there. And when she finds a rare moment to herself, she is planning her upcoming class or rehearsal, with gospel music or show tunes providing the soundtrack for her next big idea.

Since joining Blair last year as Director of Theatre, Mrs. Carter has quickly become a trusted mentor, teacher and director for students across campus. They are also learning from a seasoned theatre professional. Certainly, the Blair Academy Players benefitted from Mrs. Carter's impressive training during last year's productions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Addams Family* and *The Story It Tells*. Holding an MFA in acting from Brown University/Trinity Repertory Consortium, she brings experience as a teaching artist, professor and acting coach to her work at Blair.

Mrs. Carter believes theatre teaches students far more than performance. Through the pillars of honesty and play, she helps students discover how to collaborate through practice, understanding and responsibility to others.

"Theatre teaches civic duty and honesty," Mrs. Carter explains. "They might not recognize they're learning these skills through play, but the value lies not in recognizing the lesson, but in carrying it forward."

The impact of Mrs. Carter's presence on campus isn't found only in the curriculum she teaches or the plays she directs. The difference comes in the small moments.



Students in Mrs. Carter's Theatre 1 class work together to act out prompts on the spot.

At the beginning of class or rehearsal, she checks in on the well-being of the group, gauging where they are so she can adjust her plans and meet students' needs. After an essay assignment is completed, an advisee hangs back in the classroom to benefit from a listening ear on a day that has been full to the brim. During dorm duty, Mrs. Carter is the surprise guest in a Theatre 1 video chat that students are still talking about the next day.

"Mrs. Carter believes in us even when we might not believe in ourselves yet," Ev Rutt '26 explains. That type of nurturing is rare, and it extends far beyond the responsibilities listed in a job description. Replacing longtime, beloved faculty members like Craig and Kaye Evans is never easy. Yet with every "Mrs. Carter…" called across a classroom, rehearsal space or campus walkway, students reveal something important: In just a year, she has become one of the people they trust most.

More about Mrs. Carter

A Newark, New Jersey, native, Mrs. Carter holds a BA in English from Franklin & Marshall College and an MFA in acting from Brown University/Trinity Repertory Consortium. A multidisciplinary artist, she believes theatre is among the most powerful agents of social change, and that conviction shapes everything she does. Her love of words and commitment to holding performance to its highest standard have allowed her to shift rooms, change breaths and plant seeds of introspection among audiences of the most eclectic backgrounds. Her work spans Off-Broadway, *For Colored Girls* (The Public Theater) and *Coriolanus* (Delacorte Theater), as well as regional productions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Flyin' West*, *Othello* and *The Tempest*. Her voiceover credits include TVOne, the Olympics, Nike and the WNBA. She is also a trained vocalist.


The Arts @ Blair
9/8 1st Day of Classes
9/17 Art Opening
Nightlights
David Winigrad
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
10/8 Art Opening
in the middle of it
Rob Yaskovic
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
10/23
Blair on Stage
Family Weekend Concert
5:30 p.m., DuBois Theatre
10/29-31
The Mousetrap
7:30 p.m., Wean Studio Theatre
11/13 Fall Concert
7 p.m., DuBois Theatre
11/19 Art Opening
A Passion for Portraits
Barbara Zilly
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
11/20-11/29 Break
12/4 Art Opening
Fall Student Art Exhibition
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
12/11 Holiday Vespers
4:30 & 7 p.m.,
Blairstown First Presbyterian Church
12/11 Winter Gathering
5:30 p.m., CECIC Forum
12/17-1/4 Break
1/28 Art Opening
In Bloom
Brielle "Sunshine" Wallace
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
1/29-2/3 Break
2/4 Art Opening
New Voices in Photography
The Rowan University
Photography Program
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
2/18-20
Bright Star
7:30 p.m., DuBois Theatre
2/25-3/5 Intersession
3/5-3/22 Break
4/14 Grandparents' Day Concert
10:30 a.m., DuBois Theatre
4/1 Art Opening
The Long Goodbye
Jenny Reinhardt
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
4/23 Art Opening
Advanced Student Art Exhibition
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
4/23 Spring Concert
7:30 p.m., DuBois Theatre
4/30 Digital Music Festival
7 p.m., CECIC Forum
5/7 Art Opening
Spring Student Art Exhibition
7 p.m., Romano Gallery
5/7 Film Festival
7:30 p.m., DuBois Theatre
5/13-15
The Learned Ladies
7:30 p.m., Robert J. Evans
Open Air Theatre
5/20 Commencement



Class of 2026 Arts Guild inductees pose with members of the Arts Guild steering committee (*from left to right*): Director of Instrumental Music and performing arts department chair Jennifer Pagotto, James Hinton '06, Wayne "Razz" Rasmussen, Cass Gardiner '07, Kaye Evans, fine arts department chair Kate Sykes, Craig Evans and Judith Kahan Kampmann. Not pictured: John Cassavetes '47 and Anthony D'Amato '06.

Arts Guild Class of 2026 Brings Creativity to Life

To celebrate the inspirational achievements of its performing and visual artists, Blair Academy established the Arts Guild in 2022. This past June, the School community gathered during Alumni Weekend to induct five remarkable individuals into the Class of 2026. From pioneering filmmakers to chart-topping musicians and a legendary stage craftsman, this year's inductees represent the very best of Blair's creative legacy.

"The range of mediums through which these artists have brought beauty into the world across disciplines and decades is truly inspiring," shared Head of School Peter G. Curran.

As our newest members of the Arts Guild were inducted, many members of their graduating classes—some celebrating milestone reunions—gathered to celebrate them alongside faculty members who were proud to consider themselves part of the journey.

Meet the Inductees

- **John Cassavetes '47** was a legendary Greek-American actor and three-time Academy Award nominee. He became a pioneer of American independent cinema, leaving an indelible mark on Hollywood as a groundbreaking director and screenwriter.
- **Anthony D'Amato '06** is an internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter praised by *Rolling Stone* and NPR for his "New Jersey grit." Anthony has released celebrated solo folk albums and achieved global tour success with his indie supergroup, Fantastic Cat.
- **James Hinton '06** performs professionally as "The Range," a critically acclaimed electronic musician and producer who uniquely fuses his background in math and physics with found YouTube vocal samples to create chart-topping electronic albums.
- Anishinaabe Algonquin filmmaker and writer **Cass Gardiner '07** is a curator for the Smithsonian who explores Indigenous identity through influential documentaries and cutting-edge augmented reality art exhibitions.
- Former faculty member **Wayne "Razz" Rasmussen** spent 43 years on the hilltop, transforming Blair's theatre productions with masterful stagecraft and lighting design while inspiring generations of students as a mentor and teacher.

Arts Guild Consideration

To be considered for the Arts Guild, nominees are evaluated not only on their artistic triumphs during and after their time on the hilltop, but also on their scholastic achievement and impact on the community. Alumni become eligible five years after graduation, while faculty members are eligible following retirement. The annual selection process is overseen by fine arts department chair Kate Sykes, performing arts department chair Jennifer Pagotto and our advancement team, alongside a dedicated steering committee.



With a steady eye, Mark Hu ’29 lines up his putt on the green.

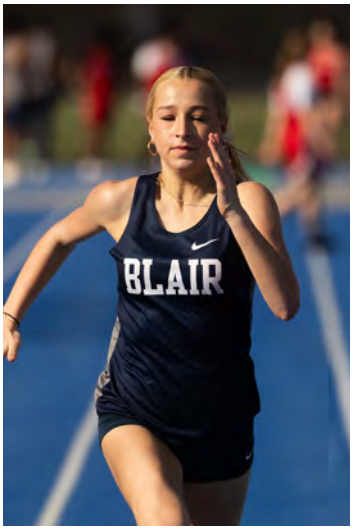
Athletics



Breck Eagle ’28 races hard for the varsity boys’ crew team on Paulinskill Lake.



Andy Lee ’26 led the varsity boys’ tennis team as the first singles player for the 2026 season.



Elizabeth Brown ’28 sprints toward the finish line while competing for Blair’s track-and-field team.



McKenna Osgood ’28 excelled as Blair softball’s starting pitcher.



Audrey Bai ’27 takes her shot on the course.



Lena Rodriguez ’26 celebrates after scoring for the varsity girls’ lacrosse team.



Danny DiCarlo ’27 looks for strikeouts as a pitcher for Blair’s baseball team.



Members of the Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2026 (*from left to right*): Nicole Helmstetter ’89, Randy Stowell ’79 (on behalf of his father, Rick Stowell Sr.), Paula Hong ’16, Zachary Esposito ’02 and Colin Kilrain ’77.

Meet the Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2026

To celebrate the outstanding athletic achievements of its alumni and coaches, Blair Academy established its Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016. During Alumni Weekend, the School proudly inducted five of its newest members into the Class of 2026 with a crowd of family, friends, classmates and teammates there to celebrate. These individuals not only brought national distinction to the hilltop through their competitive dominance but also embodied the highest standards of integrity and citizenship while maintaining a remarkable level of scholastic character.

“Each athlete honored today has left a lasting legacy on their respective teams, serving as an inspiration to future generations of Blair athletes,” Director of Athletics Paul Clavel ’88 shared. “They join an outstanding group that embodies the ethos of Blair athletics.”

Meet the Inductees

- **Vice Admiral Colin J. Kilrain ’77** A National Prep wrestling champion at Blair and a three-time All-American at Lehigh University, Colin balanced legendary athletic dominance with a highly distinguished career of service as a Naval Special Warfare SEAL officer.
- **Nicole Helmstetter ’89** A phenomenal three-sport athlete and winner of the William Zester Memorial Award, Nicole captained Blair’s perfect 15-0 state-champion softball team while earning all-state honors in basketball and field hockey.
- **Zachary Esposito ’02** One of the most decorated wrestlers in Blair history, Zack captured three individual national prep titles and an NCAA Championship at Oklahoma State University before transitioning into a role as a world-class collegiate and international coach.
- **Paula Hong ’16** A trailblazing powerhouse on the golf course, Paula is the only female golfer in program history to win multiple individual state championships, later carrying her passion for sports into a successful career as an LPGA media official.
- **Former Coach & Assistant Athletic Director Richard L. Stowell Sr.** Dedicating 23 years to Blair athletics, Rick led multiple sports to championships and undefeated seasons, leaving an enduring legacy as a beloved mentor to generations of student-athletes.

Looking Ahead to the Class of 2027

To be eligible for the Hall of Fame, alumni nominees must be in their 10th year following graduation, while coaches become eligible after their retirement from the hilltop.

The annual selection process is overseen by Director of Athletics Paul Clavel ’88, and members of the Blair community are invited to submit nominations for the upcoming Class of 2027.

Trustee Spotlight

"We are thrilled to welcome two alumni to the Board, both bringing unique insights shaped by Blair experiences that span generations. Their deep care for the institution, alongside their wide-ranging professional expertise, will strengthen our ability to move the School forward and deliver on our mission—graduating leaders and changemakers who have the tools to contribute meaningfully in college, in life and to the greater good."

— Board of Trustees Chair Maria Vinci Savettiere, Esq. P'17

Matthew Gallira '08

The Board welcomes Matt Gallira '08, founder of the New York-based food manufacturing company, Big Mozz. Matt is an entrepreneur who lives in Woodstock, New York, with his wife, Ali, and three children, and has long been an engaged and supportive Blair alum. He has served on the Board of Governors since 2022, returning regularly to Blair to share his professional path with students at roundtable events, and generously donating his company's products and food trucks to the delight of the Blair community at Peddie Days and Alumni Weekends.



From Blair, Matt went on to Dartmouth College, where he majored in English and was a four-year varsity rower. Entering the food and beverage industry was not Matt's original plan; after graduating, he moved to South Sudan to work in consulting, followed by a corporate sales role in Boston. A move to New York the following year led him to leave his job to start his first business and begin his journey in brand building. In 2015, he founded Big Mozz, and, that same year, he landed on *Zagat's* 30 Under 30 list and *Forbes*' "10 Innovators Under 30 Shaking Up the New York Food Scene." Big Mozz grew to become a hospitality brand with more than 150 employees; in 2020, the company pivoted to focus on scaling production of its clean-but-indulgent frozen foods. This year, Big Mozz will serve tens of millions via partnerships with restaurants and pro-sports venues, as well as thousands of retailers nationwide including Whole Foods and Target.

Michael McDonald ’97



Mike McDonald ’97 brings to the Board many years of experience in the finance sector, where he works as director of corporate development for leading global supply chain provider, Wesco. A member of Blair’s Alumni Board of Governors since 2020, he has remained connected to his alma mater over the years, attending Blair events in Chicago and New York and otherwise being a steady supporter of the Blair Fund, scholarship aid and the *All In* campaign. A 2001 graduate of New York University, where he studied accounting and finance, Mike became a certified public accountant and a CFA Charterholder. He spent the early part of his career on Wall Street, working in mergers, acquisitions, restructuring and strategy, serving across the globe in a number of industries including energy, aerospace, electronics and industrial manufacturing.

Seeking to deepen his expertise, Mike moved to Chicago in the early 2010s to pursue graduate study, and he earned his MBA from the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business in 2013. Prior to joining Wesco in 2025, Mike served as director of corporate development at Molex, director of strategy at Koch Engineered Solutions and vice president of corporate development at Federal Signal Corp. A longtime resident of the Chicago suburbs, where he lives with his wife, Lynda, Mike is a dad of three and proudly brings to his work as a Blair Trustee a business philosophy centered on relationship building and service to customers.

SHOW YOUR BLAIR PRIDE

by making a gift to the School today.

The Blair Fund provides the resources to ensure that Blair students feel known and supported and that Blair faculty and staff members have the tools to provide a rich and meaningful educational experience.

To make your Blair Fund gift, visit www.blair.edu/make-a-gift.

Questions?

Contact Emma Barnes O’Neill, Managing Director of Major Gifts and Annual Giving, at (908) 362-2045 or barnee@blair.edu.

Advancement





Few embody Blair's commitment to leadership and lifelong learning better than Dean of Campus Life, Director of Leadership Programs and 40-year English teacher Carolyn Conforti-Browse '79, who delivered the keynote address.

Blair Celebrates 55 Years of Coeducation with the Launch of the Locke Society

"The power belongs to the namers."

Carolyn Conforti-Browse '79 invoked Toni Morrison's words, and for a minute, the room in midtown Manhattan paused as the Blair community let them sink in. Around her, alumni, students and friends of Blair gathered not just to celebrate the School's past, but to take part in shaping what takes place next.

Fifty-five years after Blair returned to coeducation, the School marked the milestone with the launch of the Locke Society in April. Held at GH on the Park, the event brought together generations of Blair women, including Maria Vinci Savettiere, Esq., P'17, Blair's first female Board chair, for a day of reconnecting and sharing lessons as well as networks.

Ms. Conforti-Browse, Blair's Dean of Campus Life, Director of Leadership Programs and a veteran English teacher of 40 years, served as the keynote speaker and framed the day around reflection and agency—the idea that defining your own experience, and helping others do the same, is a form of power. The Locke Society, in many ways, is built on that principle.

Named for Nancy Ann Locke, the wife of Blair's founder and the namesake of one of campus' most iconic and largest girls' dorms, the Locke Society aims to build a network of Blair women committed to education, mentorship and philanthropy to expand opportunities for Blair female students through scholarship. It builds on Blair's Women's Symposium, which has served a similar role in recent years. As Blair honors its past, the Locke Society looks to the future, creating space for female graduates of every class to connect, support and learn from one another.

The afternoon moved between practical advice and bigger conversations. In small groups, attendees discussed everything from building a professional presence, including headshots, LinkedIn profiles and résumé development, to larger themes like mentorship, leadership, and laying strong personal and professional foundations.

The conversations continued with breakout sessions and a panel of alumni whose careers span healthcare, law, business and communications. Panelists and session leaders included Nicole (Nicusanti) Tipton '93, at that time associate director of alumni relations at



(*From left to right*) Representing four decades of Blair alumni, Dr. Brita Roy '98, Trustee Carina Davidson '86, Jenn Cable '03 and Marisa Snee '22 brought diverse perspectives to the Locke'd In event.



Dean of Faculty Life Leucretia Shaw and Selena Sanchez '22 took the opportunity to catch up and reconnect.



From alumni to current students, Blair women were active participants throughout the event. Here, Jess Young '05 and Priyanka Ponnam '26 engage in one of the afternoon's thought-provoking discussions.

Lafayette College; Diane Haviland P'93, organizational strategist; Dr. Brita Roy '98, MD, MPH, MHS of NYU Langone Hospital; Jenn Cable '03, president of Thorlabs; Marisa Snee '22, University of Richmond student and founder of Goal Side Media; Carina Davidson '86, CEO at H/Advisors Abernathy U.S.; New York-based attorney Aly Drazin '09; and Patty Gallagher Maillet '77, P'04 '06 '10, founder of PGM Business Consulting.

Carina spoke about a career that hasn't followed a straight line, noting that twists and turns are often the norm. Other panelists echoed the importance of adaptability, the lessons that come from failure and, above all, the value of community—the people who offer open doors and stay in your corner along the way.

Later in her remarks, Ms. Conforti-Browse returned to the idea of power—not as something fixed, but as something we define. "We need to stop chasing one view of power, start defining ourselves and connect to another," she said and reminded us that ultimately the naming doesn't matter. "It is the doing that matters."

By the end of the afternoon, the work that Ms. Conforti-Browse described was already happening. After 55 years of coeducation, Blair women are still showing up for one another.

To learn more about how you can participate in the Locke Society or scholarship, please contact Emma Barnes O'Neill, Managing Director of Major Gifts and Annual Giving, at barnee@blair.edu.

For more photos of the event, please visit Blair Academy on PhotoShelter at blair.photoshelter.com, where we regularly post images.



Trustee Hoby Van Deusen ’54 and his wife, Nancy, have given a lifetime of service to the School.



Eric Maine ’77 and his wife, former faculty member Jenny, were recognized for their enduring support at the Leadership Reception in the spring.



Chris and Kate Allen P’27 have championed health and wellness at Blair.

Honoring Those Making a Difference at Blair

On a quintessential boarding school spring evening, as students hopped from athletics commitments to art openings to the Spring Concert, members of the Blair community gathered for the annual Leadership Reception in the newly minted Center for Health and Well-Being. Distinguished guests—including parents, alums, faculty, friends, Trustees, and members from Blair’s alumni and international Board of Governors, as well as donors in the 1848 Leadership Society, many of whom support scholarships at the School—had the unique opportunity to hear from two graduating students, Josie Tetteh ’26 and Jack McCauley ’26. They touched on the amazing opportunities Blair has offered them, many made possible by the donors in the room, and how their time at the School has prepared them for the next stage in their lives.

Head of School Peter G. Curran took a moment during the evening to recognize two families whose support and deep care for the institution have made a tremendous impact. Chris and Kate Allen P’27 were honored for their lead support in bringing the Center for Health and Well-Being to life and championing wellness across all areas of campus life. The Maines, Eric ’77 and his wife, former faculty member Jenny, were also honored for their enduring support and work as true ambassadors of Blair that remind us all of the importance of the connections we make at and through the School.

The evening concluded with Board of Trustees Chair Maria Vinci Savettiere P’17 presenting the Citation of Merit, Blair’s highest honor, to Trustee Hoby Van Deusen ’54, who embodies true loyalty and dedication to his alma mater. “Hoby and his wife, Nancy, have done so much for our students, and we’re grateful for the care, generosity and many words of wisdom over the years,” she explained. “It is a true pleasure to know you both and see the impact of your dedication, because your enthusiasm is always infectious.”

> **Tonight we recognize and honor the leadership, care and generosity of the people in this room who make all that we do possible. Blair is fortunate to have such strong leadership and generous donors who are committed to providing an extraordinary educational experience for our students.**
>
> *—Head of School Peter G. Curran*

Blair Academy 2026 Citation of Merit Hobart "Hoby" Van Deusen '54

Behind every great school, there lies a committed alumni base working diligently to move it forward. At Blair, there is no finer example of that commitment than Trustee Hobart "Hoby" Van Deusen '54. For decades, Hoby and his wife, Nancy, have been fixtures during Alumni Weekend and Trustee meetings, bringing a rare blend of institutional wisdom, professional ingenuity and warmth to every occasion. While many alumni remain loyal, Hoby has redefined the term, transforming a family legacy into a lifetime of service that has quite literally reshaped the Academy over the past seven decades.

When Hoby arrived on campus in the fall of 1952, he was continuing the tradition begun by his father, Hobart M. Van Deusen '29, and his great-uncle, Franklin E. Van Ness, Class of 1868. At Blair, Hoby's teachers remarked, "In his quiet way, he has made a good record at Blair both in and out of the classroom." He was a poet for the *ACTA*, a contributor to *The Blair Breeze*, and a member of the international society, choir and dramatics club. When he wasn't in the darkroom with the camera club, he managed the varsity basketball and golf teams—a precursor to the multifaceted leadership he would later provide as a Trustee.

After graduating from Dartmouth in 1958 and earning an MBA from NYU, Hoby excelled in finance, eventually heading the estate department at JPMorgan Chase & Company. He later used his financial acumen in education, serving as the director of bequests and planned giving at Columbia University, honing an expertise that has helped steer Blair's investment in its financial future and physical plant.

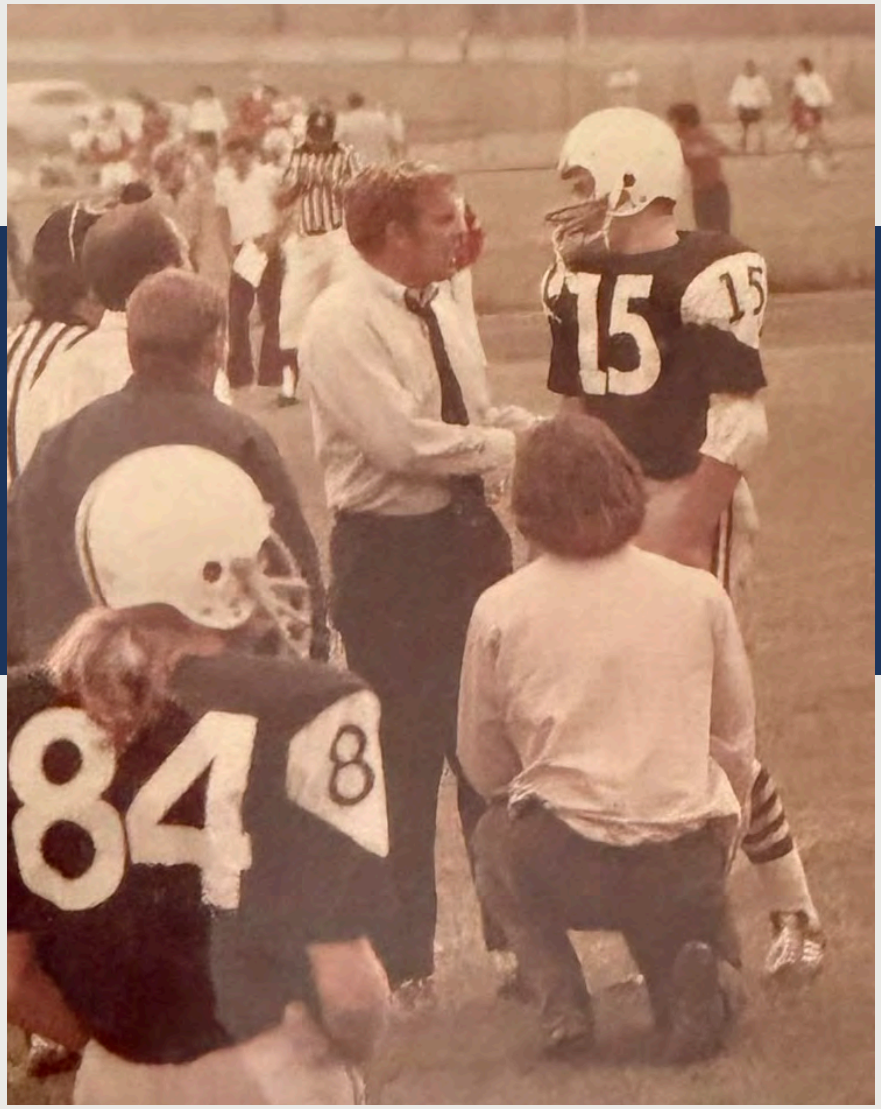
While Hoby was always a supporter, his 50th Reunion marked a turning point. Sensing that Blair's progress depended on deeper alumni engagement, he seized the opportunity, rallying the Class of 1954 to record-breaking attendance and giving. This surge of energy earned him the inaugural Alumni Volunteer of the Year award in 2004 and, subsequently, Alumnus of the Year in 2009. His increased involvement at Blair led to the Board of Governors, where he served as president, and to his appointment to the Board of Trustees in 2007. He has volunteered his time and expertise to the Education and School Life, Advancement, Buildings and Grounds, and Budget Committees and continues to serve the Class of 1954 as a rep, diligently sharing the latest news in each issue of the *Blair Bulletin*.

Hoby and Nancy's philanthropic support has helped transform many areas of campus, but none more so than the Class of 1954 New Horizons Scholarship, The Hobart and Nancy Van Deusen Tennis Fund, and faculty housing. Even while living in Watertown and Lakeville, Connecticut—within a stone's throw of Taft and Hotchkiss School—Hoby's heart never left Blairstown. With generous lead gifts, the Van Deusens' legacy is permanently etched into Blairstown's Main Street with the addition of Hoby House in 2022 and the soon-to-be Nancy House next door, two historic buildings that have been transformed into vital faculty residences.

For more than seven decades, Hoby's relationship with Blair has been defined by loyalty, leadership and love for his alma mater. As a student, Hoby embraced every opportunity Blair offered, and in the years since, he has ensured that the students who follow are offered those same advantages and more. For his lifetime of service and leadership, Blair Academy proudly bestows its highest honor—the Citation of Merit—upon Hobart Van Deusen.

The Lasting Influence & Legacy of A. Jon Frere, Hon. ’74

When Jon Frere arrived at Blair Academy in September 1966, he came with a master’s degree in Spanish from Middlebury College and an infectious enthusiasm that quickly became part of everyday life. Hired as a language teacher, dormitory advisor and assistant coach, Jon immediately stepped into the rhythm of campus, becoming both a trusted mentor to students and a friend to colleagues.



Alongside his wife, Penny, whom he met while studying abroad in Madrid and who became a cherished Blair faculty member in her own right, Jon built a life centered on a shared passion for learning and community. In 1970, when Jon was appointed head football coach and Director of Athletics and Physical Education, he did far more than manage schedules and facilities. He built the foundation for the culture of Blair athletics that still exists today.

“As a coach, he demanded the best of each player,” reflects Skip Waddell ’73. “Coach Frere knew when and how to motivate a player to raise his level of performance, without doing so in a demeaning manner, and when to praise the individual at the appropriate time. Even in the midst of a game, Coach Frere knew when to use levity to inspire the team to raise its level of performance.”

Jon was a visionary who saw the complete potential of every student. Under his leadership, Blair expanded its athletic footprint: He was instrumental in introducing female athletics to the School during a decade of pivotal change, ensuring young women had equal opportunity to compete and excel. Jon personally established Blair’s lacrosse program on campus, cementing a sport that remains a highlight of hilltop athletics today.

For those he coached and taught, Jon’s impact extended far beyond winning seasons at a consequential time in their young lives.

“When Jon had faith in you, it somehow made you believe in yourself in ways you never would have on your own,” remembers Laura Cochran Morris ’75. “His influence reached so far beyond athletics. The lessons he taught me, the confidence he gave me and the example he set have stayed with me throughout my life.”

When Jon left Blair in 1984 to serve as assistant head of school at St. Stephen’s

Episcopal School in Austin, Texas, and later as head of school at The Webb School in Tennessee from 1989 until his retirement in 2005, he carried Blair's values with him. And on the hilltop, Jon left behind a legacy that continued long after the Freres' departure.

"I think I'm one of the few athletes, if not the only one, to both play and work for Coach Frere," reflects John Finelli '74. "During my 41 years of teaching and coaching, I always felt that Blair Academy was in everything I did. As I got older, and somewhat wiser, I realized it was the lessons of Coach Frere in everything I did."

Adopted as an honorary member of the Class of 1974 and inducted into the Blair Academy Athletic Hall of Fame in 2023, Jon remained profoundly connected to the hilltop. He proudly supported the Blair Fund and returned regularly to visit old friends and speak to students at the Society of Skeptics.

His dedication to service extended well into his retirement. Jon continued mentoring educators across the globe and leading international faculty workshops. In his local Tennessee community, his deep empathy and fluency in Spanish led him to advocate for Spanish-speaking residents, helping many families gain essential healthcare access. Whether he was playing golf, creating pottery, listening to music or traveling the world with Penny, Jon lived with an open heart.

> **"The 18 years that Penny and I spent at Blair were some of the happiest of our lives. To think that I had some influence on your lives is one of the most flattering things that I could ever hear.**
>
> *–Coach A. Jon Frere, Hon. '74*

Endowing a Dream: The A. Jon Frere Scholarship

Following Jon's passing this spring, the outpouring of grief and gratitude from generations of alumni made one thing abundantly clear: Jon Frere's impact is enduring, but his story is not finished.

As longtime friend and Blair colleague, Mike Brennan P'94 '95 '99, noted: "I had the privilege of knowing Jon for more than 55 years, and his wisdom, kindness and counsel enriched my life in countless ways. Since his death, many members of the Blair community have reached out with one common question: How can we honor Jon and Penny's remarkable legacy?"

In 1994, Jon and Penny laid the foundation for that answer by establishing the A. Jon Frere Scholarship. Designed to support students in good academic standing whose broad involvement enriches Blair's academic, athletic and extracurricular programs, the scholarship embodies the qualities Jon spent his lifetime cultivating: character, effort, leadership and spirit.

To fulfill the vision Jon and Penny began more than 30 years ago, members of the Blair community—led by Mike, David Lieberman '74 and Harry Ullmann '74—have launched an initiative to fully endow the scholarship in perpetuity, ensuring that deserving students receive financial support to attend Blair for generations to come.

Jon and Penny devoted their lives to independent education and to those they served. Now, the Blair community has the opportunity to honor their legacy of teamwork by coming together to carry their dream to the finish line.

To support the A. Jon Frere Scholarship, visit **www.blair.edu/honoring-jon-frere** to donate or contact Kristine Scialla, associate director of annual giving, at (908) 362-2054 or scialk@blair.edu.

A Blair Welcome Abroad

They crossed five cities in 10 days, logged 54 hours in the air and traveled thousands of miles before arriving back on campus—but the relationships they strengthened along the way made every mile worth it.

Last spring, Head of School Peter G. Curran, his wife, Sarah, and Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall waved the Blair flag in Asia, reconnecting with current families, alumni and newly enrolled students in Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing, Seoul and Hong Kong.

"Blair is so grateful to everyone who welcomed us into their homes, shared their cultures and made each stop memorable," said Mr. Hall. "Their warmth and generosity reflected the school spirit that extends far beyond Blair's campus."

Throughout the journey, the group gathered with members of the Blair community at receptions and dinners in each city and met individually with 28 prospective and newly enrolled families. Along the way, the group deepened existing relationships, built new ones and strengthened the global community that continues to shape Blair's future.



Blair's global community was on display as alumni and friends gathered in Singapore for a luncheon generously hosted by the Eu family.



Nearly 2,300 miles away, the Blair community gathered once again—this time in Shanghai.



Good food and great company set the stage for a memorable dinner in Seoul.



From gorgeous floral displays to thoughtful details, the Shanghai reception showcased the extraordinary effort our hosts made to celebrate—and promote—the Blair community.



Melissa Guyre ’96’s Career Sparks Gift

On the “Journey into Imagination” ride at Epcot, a friendly voice reminds you: “One little spark of inspiration is at the heart of all creation.” The beauty of the catchy, upbeat anthem by the Sherman brothers is its universality. Most people can point to a moment when a passion first took hold.

For Melissa Guyre ’96, that spark came during her time at Blair. Thanks to scholarship support, the opportunity was possible in the first place. Arriving on campus in the fall of 1994, she was met with a world before the dot-com boom. The Internet had yet to become a feature of everyday life, and Blair represented a big new adventure as Melissa experienced living away from home for the first time.

“It was really exciting to taste independence before college,” Melissa remembers. “I was exposed to new people and new ways of thinking.”

One of those new ways of thinking was technology, and Melissa quickly dove into a fast-growing hobby at Blair: computers. At a time when there was only one computer on each floor of Locke Hall and everyone was vying for time to type papers, Melissa saved up and bought a desktop and modem of her very own.

Her love of fast-developing technology in the ’90s landed her a spot on Blair’s technology committee, where she created Blair’s first webpage, a pioneering design used by the School for several years. The committee also introduced her to Alex Rubenstein ’92, who founded Internet service provider Net Access Corporation in 1995. Through Alex’s connection, Melissa landed a summer internship at a local start-up, an experience that helped her in web development throughout college. At just 18 years old, Melissa was making webpages for major clients, including Exxon.

Today, Melissa works in Silicon Valley for Panasonic, a global leader in electronic manufacturing. As technology has evolved, she has stayed on the cutting edge. Melissa is the head of product management for Global Applied AI, leading Panasonic in how to use AI and apply it throughout the company.

“Everything I have in my career, and the success I have in technology all started at Blair,” Melissa explains. “It really set me up for where I am today and that’s one of the reasons I want to give back.”

At a time when Melissa’s family wasn’t in a position to afford a Blair education, scholarship aid made it possible. Through her planned gift, Melissa hopes future Blair students will have the same opportunity she did: the chance to discover and pursue a passion wholeheartedly, building a life around a single spark of inspiration.

JOHN C. SHARPE SOCIETY
BLAIR ACADEMY

To learn more and join Melissa and other members of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers, contact Director of Advancement Cara Mohlmann at (908) 362-2031 or mohlmc@blair.edu.

Annual Report

Thank-You from the Board Chair

Dear Blair Family,

2025–2026 was a year of both affirmation and progress. This winter, we concluded an 18-month process of engaging every Blair constituency to assess how we deliver on our mission and were reaccredited through the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools. It was gratifying to confirm through our own in-depth self-study and a detailed report from the visiting team of peer school educators and administrators that Blair does what it says it does: cultivate a deeply relational culture centered on offering students an exceptional education that prepares them well to thrive in college and beyond.

Reaccreditation identifies areas of strength and growth, so the timing of this particular cycle was especially meaningful because it naturally dovetailed with our efforts to begin charting Blair's next chapter. We are creating a rolling strategic plan that the Board of Trustees expects to vote on this fall. The goal is to identify critical priorities while remaining flexible as we refine the strategies that will move the School forward. This dynamic approach will allow us to pivot and evolve, moving initiatives on and off the plan as needed. As with everything we do, our plan will be focused on challenging students with rigorous academics while giving them the tools to lead successful, happy and fulfilling lives.

This student-centered focus, along with the strength of our curricular and cocurricular programs, continues to yield strong admission outcomes. We received more than 1,550 applications and enrolled 160 new students who join a diverse student body hailing from 29 countries and 27 states. Accessibility and affordability remain paramount, and we offered $10 million in financial aid to 36 percent of the student body to ensure students from all backgrounds and experiences can attend Blair. Seeking students who are academically strong and intellectually curious, but also kind, compassionate and of the highest character, admission officers visited 22 U.S. states and nine countries last year, growing the School's name and reputation across new and existing markets. Their impact is evident in our increasingly selective acceptance rate of just 16 percent, and we are proud to warmly welcome families during campus visits, at events on the road and in virtual interactions that have become a staple for prospective families.

Our exceptional facilities also continue to be a strong draw and greatly enhance daily life at Blair. The Center for Health and Well-Being, which opened its doors last October, quickly became a symbol of how committed we are to ensuring that students understand their happiness and resilience are equally important to academic success. We also continue to upgrade campus residential spaces, and we are thrilled to have completed a suite of four other construction projects this fall: renovations to Mason and Freeman Halls, turfing of the Bowl and the transformation of the first floor of Brooks and Hoffman House into the School's newest dorm.

That same philosophy guides how we think about adolescence in the digital age. Blair remains deeply committed to



teaching fundamental skills, regardless of how technology has changed our lives. Students leave the hilltop knowing how to manage their time, resolve conflict, communicate across lines of difference, work as part of a team and build enduring human connections. Ever mindful of technology's wide-ranging promises and pitfalls, we limit device use during the academic day to help our students develop healthy and responsible habits at and after Blair.

While relationship building and in-person interactions are at the heart of our work, we are innovative and thoughtful about the ways in which artificial intelligence (AI) is impacting education and the workforce. We help students understand how these technologies can both advance—and undermine—genuine learning. Our faculty are committed to cultivating students' ability to think critically while helping them recognize the importance of being present in their lives off-screen. This is a balance, always, but the results are clear in the intellectual curiosity of our community and what so many prospective families notice the moment

they set foot on campus: Our students aren't buried in their phones as they walk between buildings. They are looking up, greeting each other, smiling and building the kinds of relationships that last a lifetime.

None of this would be possible without the leadership and philanthropic support of so many. In 2025–2026, we raised more than $16.3 million, Blair's best fundraising year ever, with 77 percent of parents and 23 percent of alumni participating. This is remarkable, especially given the success of our last campaign, *All In*. We are especially grateful for an estate gift from the late John C. Bogle '47, Chairman Emeritus of our Board of Trustees, who spent his life paying forward his own time at Blair by providing scholarship aid for others. Hundreds of Bogle Scholars have benefited from Jack's generosity and his legacy continues to inspire us all.

Given that tuition alone doesn't fully cover the cost of a Blair education, our annual fund provides essential relief to our operating budget. We are thrilled to have surpassed $4 million for only the second time in school history, while capital support for our building projects totaled $5.2 million. Another $6.6 million went toward our endowment, which is now approaching $200 million, and an additional $350,000 supported donor-designated programs. Faculty housing will continue to be a priority in our next fundraising chapter, alongside investment in endowed scholarship support. We're thrilled to have already secured a significant lead gift of $2.5 million toward our $10-million minimum goal for endowed scholarship aid, building on the foundation Jack helped establish. Since May, we've raised an additional $700,000 and it will be exciting to see where this early momentum takes us.

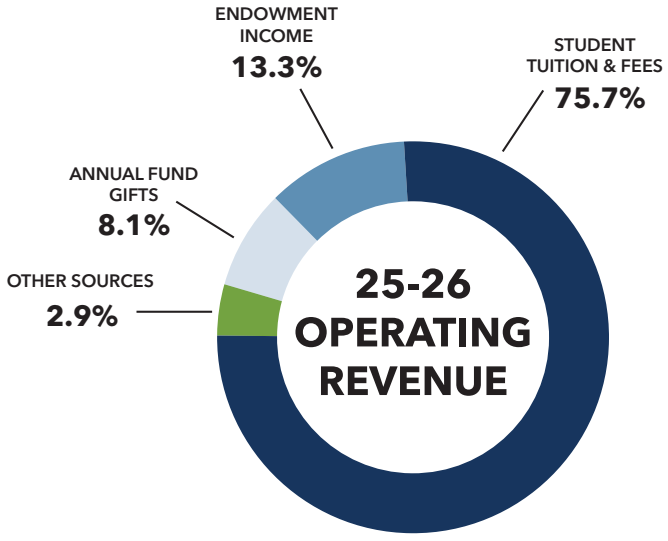
Connection and engagement—in person, on screen and everywhere in between—are key to all of our success. The School is purposeful about bringing members of the Blair family together and did so throughout 2025–2026 at a wide range of events and receptions around the world. I was proud to take part in the inaugural Locke Society event in New York City this spring and look forward to further building this compelling network of Blair women committed to education and philanthropy. Blair reminds us of the importance of coming together, supporting and learning from one another, as well as nurturing and mentoring our next generation of leaders.

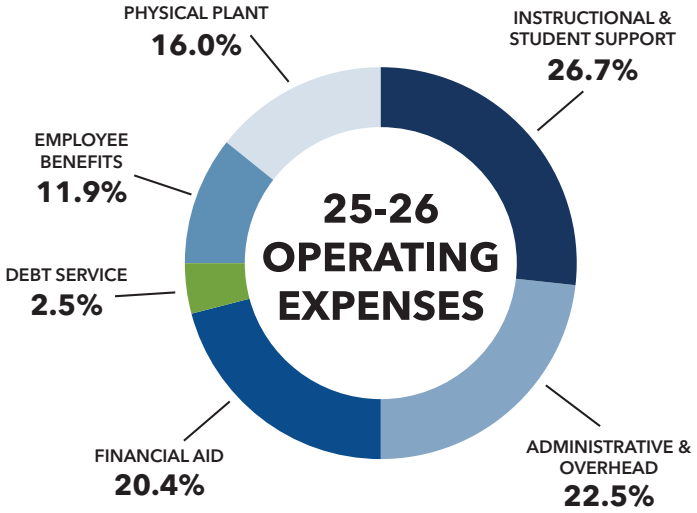
All that we have accomplished has been made possible through the partnership of our students, parents, alumni, employees and friends. We are especially grateful for a Board of Trustees whose commitment to our students and stewardship of the Blair community's generosity continue to strengthen the School for generations to come.

With thanks and excitement for the year ahead,



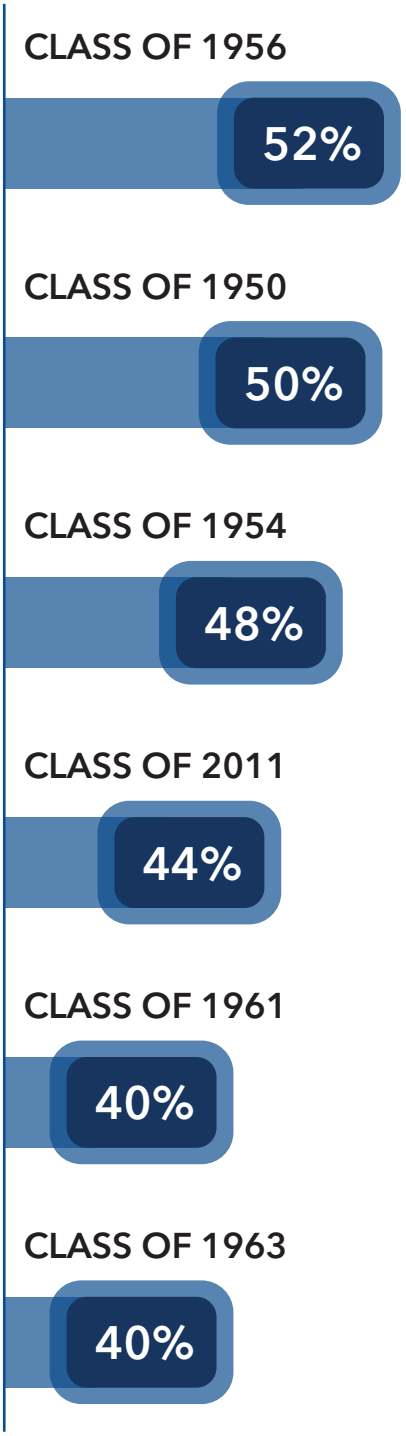
Maria Vinci Savettiere, Esq. P'17
Chair, Blair Academy Board of Trustees







LEADING CLASSES FOR PARTICIPATION



**Top-five list spans the classes of 1950-2025.*



"Blair created the foundation for a life of inspiration, connection and lifelong learning. It allowed me to explore parts of myself that were unique, awkward and soulful without judgment or criticism. I met friends for life and we continue to remain close today.

Now is the time to give back because one of my takeaways from Blair is the duty we have as human beings to help the person next to us reach higher and be our best selves together. Waiting to fulfill that duty is a waste of time."

—Corey Downey '20

ANNUAL & CAPITAL FUND TOTAL	NO. OF DONORS	%	TOTAL GIVING
Alumni	1,462	23%	$3,161,076
Current parent	349	77%	$7,401,806
Parents of alumni	159	15%	$1,147,573
Current students	55	11%	$3,112
Friend	186		$407,431
Estate	7		$4,556,248
Matching gift company	38		$60,499
Foundation	49		$2,928,170
Corporation	5		$126,900
TOTAL	2,310		$16,312,776

- Alumni and current parent totals include matching gift company giving.
- Current parents who are also alumni are recognized in both categories.
- Foundation giving has also been credited to the category of the donor who directed the gift.
- Friend totals include gifts from grandparents, as well as former and current faculty and staff.
- Note: *The numbers in this publication are not audited and are for recognition purposes only.*

ALUMNI WEEKEND REUNION ATTENDANCE RECORD

2026
Class of 2021
44%



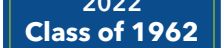
2025
Class of 2020
46%



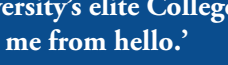
2024
Class of 1974
43%



2023
Class of 1973
42%



2022
Class of 1962
25%





"Blair Academy bridged the wide gap between my 1948 graduation from a modest, small town high school and my 1949 inclusion into Cornell University's elite College of Engineering Physics. Although it was only one year, Blair 'had me from hello.'

"Twenty years later, when I wanted to honor my friend, Captain August Martin, Blair helped me to launch a scholarship in his memory. It has been awarded annually since 1969 and has motivated me to fund two additional Blair scholarships. It is very satisfying to say 'thanks' to Blair proactively."

—Bob Neff '49

ALL-TIME REUNION CLASS GIFT RECORDS

REUNION YEAR	HIGHEST PARTICIPATION PERCENTAGE		HIGHEST DOLLARS RAISED	
60th Reunion	Class of 1956	74%	Class of 1962	$705,560
55th Reunion	Class of 1956	91%	Class of 1953	$1,094,448
50th Reunion	Class of 1945	100%	Class of 1974	$1,314,702
45th Reunion	Class of 1944	59%	Class of 1976	$746,391
40th Reunion	Class of 1961	60%	Class of 1976	$218,684
35th Reunion	Class of 1956	46%	Class of 1974	$80,040
30th Reunion	Class of 1977	55%	Class of 1974	$64,312
25th Reunion	Class of 1990	58%	Class of 1997	$91,006
20th Reunion	Class of 2003	38%	Class of 2003	$166,350
15th Reunion*	**Class of 2011**	**44%***	Class of 2008	$172,084
10th Reunion	Class of 2002	46%	Class of 2013	$101,877
5th Reunion	Class of 2008	75%	Class of 2006	$12,482

* denotes reunion record set this year Note: *Reunion records are cash donations only, except the 50th Reunion.*



"There is no other school where the faculty and administration are so engaged with every single student, every single day. We have witnessed the impact of the Blair experience as my wife and I have seen our son transform into an exceptionally capable young adult. Blair has made tremendous strides over the past decade and we are excited to help be a part of that growth."

—Chris & Kate Allen P'27

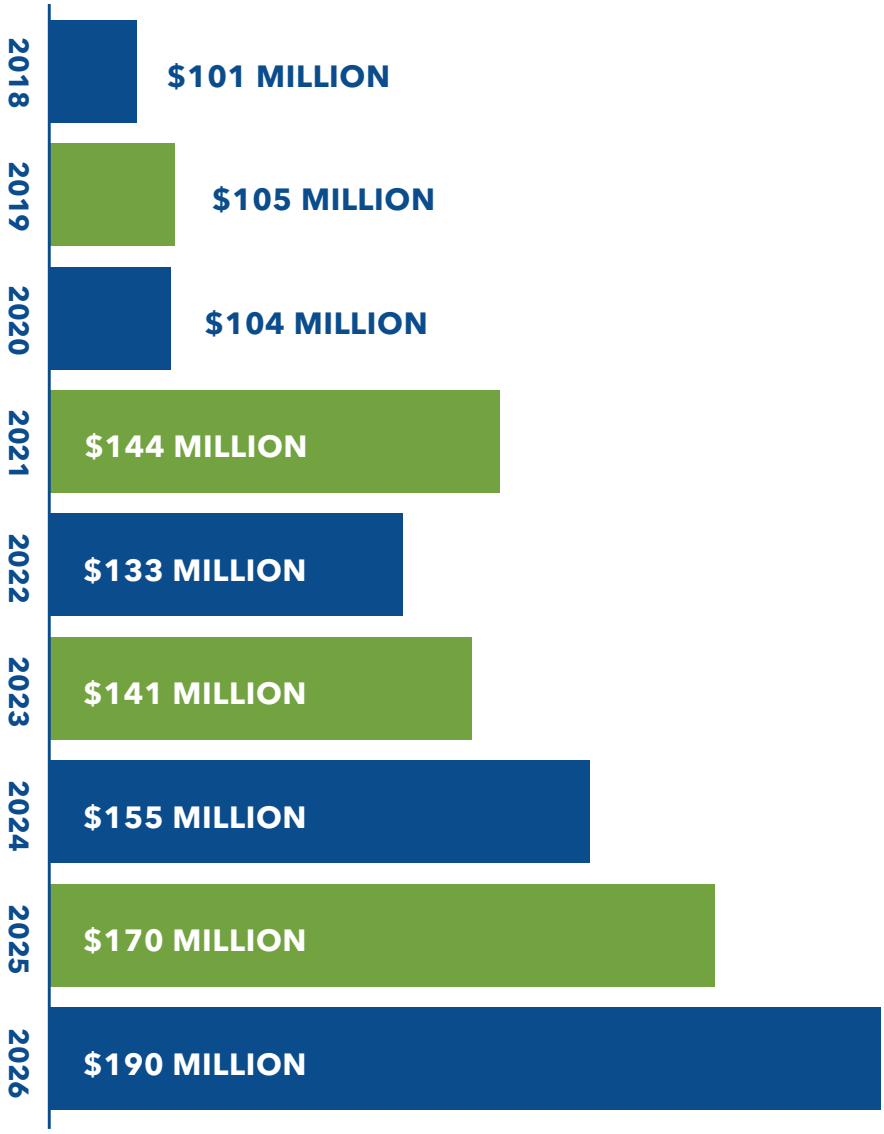


"Blair has always felt like so much more than a school to me—it's a community that has become an important part of my family's story. My sisters and I were each fortunate to attend Blair, and while we had our own individual experiences, we all came away with meaningful friendships, wonderful memories and a lasting connection to the School.

What I remember most about my time at Blair is the sense of community and the relationships I formed with classmates and teachers. Blair was a place where I felt supported, challenged and truly at home. I give back because I'm grateful for what Blair gave to me and my family, and I want future generations of students to have the opportunity to experience that same sense of belonging."

—Madeline Hargis Staples '08

ENDOWMENT GROWTH



"Blair shaped the version of me that shows up in every room that matters, and that debt does not expire. The friendships forged on that campus have outlasted every season of life I have moved through since, and the values instilled there quietly animate the work I do every day in Washington on behalf of communities that deserve better access to opportunity. Giving back to Blair is my way of ensuring that the next generation of students, wherever they come from and whatever they dream of, encounters an institution that meets them with the same rigor, warmth and belief in their potential that it extended to me."

—Jamiyl Peters '98



On the left, Jamiyl Peters '98 pictured with Blair Trustee Kyle Mason '97.

LEADING CLASSES FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT



**Top-five list spans the classes of 1950-2025.*

To read the full annual report, scan the QR code to the right or visit

WWW.BLAIR.EDU/ANNUAL-REPORT.

Blair Academy IN MEMORIAM

1948 Anthony M. Hauck III
March 4, 2026
Frenchtown, New Jersey

1949 Shepherd S. Campbell
March 21, 2026
Cheboygan, Michigan

1950 Robert J. Smythe IV
Lakeland, Michigan

1952 Peter J. Longarzo Jr.
September 24, 2025
Boonton, New Jersey

1953 James Youngelson
July 7, 2026
Morristown, New Jersey

1954 Bruce B. Haselman
February 27, 2026
College Grove, Tennessee

Theodor H. Horstmann
April 6, 2026
Marion, Massachusetts

1957 Edward S. Magee Jr.
December 18, 2025
Gainesville, Georgia

1958 Robert T. Schmid
October 14, 2024
Blairsville, Georgia

1961 Marc W. Suffern II
April 27, 2026
Port Jervis, New York

1963 Gary M. Green
December 29, 2024
Lincoln, Nebraska

John A. Hammond
May 19, 2026
Sutton, Massachusetts

Conrad D. Jones
May 18, 2026
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

William D. Wamester
February 1, 2026
Colchester, Connecticut

1964 William R. Yahner Jr.
April 25, 2026
Salesville, Ohio

1965 Michael E. Lane
March 25, 2026
New York, New York

1966 Dean H. Melnick
2025
Los Angeles, California

1969 William H. Beling
August 25, 2025
Petaluma, California

1970 Russell A. Fowler
March 1, 2026
Hadley, New York

William H. Loeb
December 31, 2025
Highland Park, Illinois

1971 George L. Degener IV
November 25, 2025
Quogue, New York

1983 Roger W. Clarke
May 4, 2026
Apex, North Carolina

Danielle (Ehrlich) Nabinger
January 13, 2026
Marietta, Georgia

2001 Jinyoung Ahn
March 21, 2026
South Korea

2009 Ryan C. Fairclough
April 18, 2026
Newton, New Jersey

2011 Eleanor F. Fielding
April 9, 2026
West New York, New Jersey

Former Faculty

A. Jon Frere, Hon. '74
May 18, 2026
Nashville, Tennessee

Lois P. Underwood
April 11, 2026
Sarasota, Florida

1949

Shepherd S. Campbell
During his one year on the hilltop, Shep was a member of the track team before matriculating at Oberlin College. He furthered his education at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism before launching a distinguished career with *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Associated Press* and *Newsweek*. From 1973 to 1986, Shep served as editor-in-chief of Tennis Magazine and later co-authored *Presidential Lies: The Illustrated History of White House Golf*. He was a respected journalist, editor and author remembered for his sharp intellect, wit and generosity. Shep and his wife, Jennifer, raised their three children in New York City and Ridgefield, Connecticut, before retiring to South Carolina and, later, North Carolina. A lifelong sports enthusiast, he was an especially devoted University of Michigan football fan and treasured summers at the family cottage on Mullett Lake, a gathering place for seven generations of his family. Shep is survived by Jennifer, his children, six grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.

1952

Peter J. Longarzo Jr.
Attending Blair for a postgraduate year, Peter filled his time outside the classroom with a variety of activities and clubs, including camera club, press club, ski club, football, wrestling and baseball. Raised in Lyndhurst, New Jersey, he graduated from Lyndhurst High School, where he met his wife of 70 years, Helen Catherine Mauro. After his postgraduate year at Blair, he earned his bachelor's degree from Lehigh University. Peter and Helen married in 1955 and built a life together in Parsippany, where they raised their family. A successful business professional, Peter worked in marketing and sales for several Fortune 500 companies and later served as a marketing vice president for a multinational Italian chemical company before continuing as a consultant in retirement. An avid sports fan, he especially loved the New York Giants and New York Yankees and enjoyed both watching and playing sports throughout his life. Peter was predeceased by his son and son-in-law, and lovingly survived by Helen, his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and many extended family members and friends.

1953
Emeritus Trustee

James Youngelson
Jim began serving on the Board of Trustees in the early 1970s, during a pivotal time when Blair was debating the reintroduction of coeducation. Supportive of the decision to welcome female students back into the community, Jim was also instrumental in leading a Trustee committee to increase the School's commitment to financial aid. Beyond his committee work, Jim personally supported those goals as well, generously contributing to the Blair Fund throughout his life.

Jim's passion for education can be traced back, in many ways, to his own student days. In 1952, his teacher Mr. Walker described Jim's scholastic abilities as "phenomenal" and, indeed, his four years at Blair as a student were marked by exceptional academic achievements that included being ranked first in his class, winning a public-speaking contest, serving as vice president of the class, president of the Webster Society, and accumulating an impressive collection of awards in English, biology and Spanish.

After graduating from Blair in 1953, Jim continued his pursuit of knowledge, earning his AB degree, with honors, from Princeton University School of Public and International Affairs in 1957 and his LLB from Harvard Law School in 1961. He served in the Army, married Terry, and embarked on a successful legal career at the law firm of Dillon, Bitar and Luther in Florham Park, New Jersey, before retiring in 2015.

Jim held prominent roles in the legal community, notably serving as president of the Morris County Bar Association, chairman of the Regional Ethics Committee, and as a founding member of the NJ Commission on Professionalism in the Law. In recognition of his professional excellence and contributions to the betterment of the legal profession, Jim was awarded the NJ State Bar Association's prestigious Medal of Honor in 1998. Throughout his life, Jim devoted himself to establishing high standards in the legal profession and to the importance of ethics in one's personal life and in society.

In honor of his work to build a society rooted in ethics and personal responsibility, The James Youngelson '53 Annual Lecture on Ethics and

In Memoriam

Responsibility was established in April 2009. This lecture series, initiated by Jim's sister and brother-in-law, Joan and Jonah Sherman, celebrates his legacy and seeks to inspire young people to serve the ideals of justice, responsibility and service.

When Jim was recognized with Blair's Alumnus of the Year award in 2003, it was noted that his leadership was marked by "humility, humor and a deep personal attachment to his many friends at Blair." Those qualities come as no surprise to those who knew Jim well. Serving as a longtime class correspondent and representative of the Class of 1953, Jim nurtured close relationships with many of his fellow Buccaneers. He was held in deep affection by his classmates, and in honor of their 50th Reunion, they dedicated the second floor of Clinton Hall in his name. When Jim stepped down as class representative in 2018, he graciously expressed his gratitude to all those Buccaneers whose lives had become intertwined with his and Terry's, acknowledging the lasting bond they shared.

Jim is survived by Terry; his son and daughter and their spouses, his cherished grandchildren, step-granddaughter, and a host of nieces, nephews, extended family and dear friends whose lives were all touched by his kindness.

1954

Bruce B. Haselman
A four-year Buc, Bruce excelled in swimming, cross country, diving and journalism. During his senior year, he was named editor-in-chief of *The Blair Breeze* and president of the projection engineers' club. After graduating from Blair, he earned a degree in aeronautical and mechanical engineering from California Polytechnic State University. Bruce was an accomplished engineer, innovator and devoted family man whose curiosity and talent for building things defined his life. His engineering career spanned more than five decades and included work with Douglas Aircraft, McDonnell Douglas, TRW, Boeing, Northrop Grumman and the Pentagon, contributing to missile defense systems, aerospace technology and naval research. Recognized as a senior rocket scientist, he retired in 2013. Bruce also founded his own oceanographic engineering company and played a role in developing missile defense tactics and countermeasure systems for the U.S. military. Beyond his professional achievements, he was known for his ingenuity and ability to build, repair and improve nearly anything he encountered. He shared nearly 60 years of marriage with his beloved wife, Gwelda, and was deeply devoted to his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Bruce enjoyed fishing, camping, sailing, RV travel and spending time at the family cabin in Maine and Lake Mohawk, New Jersey. He will be remembered for his intelligence, resourcefulness, dedication to family, and remarkable contributions to engineering and aerospace. Bruce was predeceased by Gwelda and is survived by both his sisters, his children, 11 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Theodor H. Horstmann
Coming from Morristown High School and dubbed the "long hair music lover," Ted attended Blair for a postgraduate year. He was a part of the rod and reel club, choir, glee club, basketball team and track team. Ted continued his education and basketball career at Lehigh University, but in his senior year he suffered a life-changing aircraft accident where he lost both of his legs. With strength and grit, Ted refused to let the accident slow him down. He married his wife, Nancy, and together they raised three sons, who all went to Taft, Nancy's alma mater. Known to be an inventor, Ted was president of his company, Tendco Corporation, in Wilmington, Delaware. He established major patents in three fields: energy reduction processes for aluminum smelters, blowing devices for making beer and wine bottles, and pneumatic brakes on trains. Ted and Nancy traveled the world together, including impactful service work in Tanzania, and would regularly visit the shores of Long Beach Island, New Jersey. Ted was predeceased by Nancy in 2024 and is survived by his sons and family.

1957

Edward S. Magee Jr.
A three-year Buc, Ed was a leader on campus as vice president of the student council, associate editor of *The Blair Breeze*, and a member of the International Society and varsity baseball team. Later in life, he returned to his alma mater to serve on the Alumni Board of Governors from 1972 to 1973 and as a reunion committee member in 2017 for his 60th Reunion. He was a steady supporter of the Blair Fund, gaining him membership in the True Blue Loyalty Society. Ed built a career in golf management that took him and his family from South Jersey to Texas, Florida and, ultimately, Georgia, where they settled in Cumming in 1987. He was active in Cumming First

United Methodist Church and later concluded his career with the Forsyth County School System, where he enjoyed working with young people. A lifelong sports enthusiast and passionate golfer, Ed combined his love of the game with both his profession and personal life, sharing countless rounds of golf and travels with family and friends. He also enjoyed entertaining, watching sports and spending time with his beloved dogs. Remembered for his faith, community spirit, warmth and signature Scotch-Irish sense of humor, Ed leaves a lasting legacy of love, laughter and friendship. Ed was preceded in death by his loving wife, Jacqueline, and survived by his two children and their spouses, grandchildren and a large extended family.

1958

Robert T. Schmid
When Terry wasn't co-captaining the varsity football team, he could be found singing in the choir and glee club and serving as president of the Blue and White Key club. He had an engaged three years at Blair, earning him the coveted role of "toastmaster" at the senior banquet, as well as the Blair Academy Trophy and the Harding Memorial Prize, awarded to the student who has contributed most to musical organizations, at graduation. Terry continued his education at Fairleigh Dickinson University, graduating with a degree in marketing, and he proudly served his country in the U.S. Army. He worked for the Liberty Mutual Insurance company until retirement in 2001. Terry enjoyed gardening, copious amounts of reading, and living a life rooted in faith and the love of his family and friends. He is survived by his beloved wife, Kathleen, two daughters and two sons, three grandchildren, a great-grandchild and his sister.

1961

Marc W. Suffern II
Marc was an active member of the Blair community during his time on campus: swimming for the varsity swim team, serving as president of the International Society and editor-in-chief of the *Stylus*, and conducting radio interviews for *The Blair Breeze*. Post graduation, Marc attended the Pennsylvania State University for his undergraduate and graduate studies. He remained connected to Blair throughout his life through visits to campus, including attending online Zoom meetings with his class. He was a steady supporter of the Blair Fund and contributed to the James and Selena Howard Memorial Scholarship, earning him membership in the True Blue Loyalty Society. He was a proud founding member of the John C. Sharpe Society of planned givers. Marc built a long and distinguished legal career spanning nearly five decades, working as an attorney with the Environmental Protection Agency before establishing his own practice. He served the legal profession faithfully from 1968 until 2015. A man who lived life to the fullest until the end, Marc had a passion for the outdoors and an adventurous spirit. He enjoyed horseback riding, fox hunting, skiing and travel—pursuits of the professed quintessential bachelor, he lived life his way. Marc is survived by his brother, Kevin '64, nephew, Michael '06, and his cousin, Stephen.

1963

John A. Hammond
During his two years at Blair, John played tennis and was secretary for the Webster Society, but he found the most joy on the musical side of campus, playing in the band and singing in the choir and glee club. After attending Lafayette College, John earned a bachelor of science degree from Boston State College and served in the U.S. Navy as a hospital corpsman during the Vietnam War. Inspired by his military service, he devoted his career to caring for others as a registered nurse, counselor, administrator and advocate, working in psychiatric care, addiction recovery, hospice and healthcare administration. Following more than 45 years of sobriety, he became a passionate supporter of those in recovery and, during the AIDS crisis, served as admissions director at Mission Hill Hospice, providing compassionate care to patients and their families. A man of deep conviction, John championed causes rooted in compassion, justice and human dignity. He was also a lifelong lover of music, singing in church choirs and performing throughout his life, including at Carnegie Hall. In retirement, he and his partner of 22 years, Susana, settled on the Pacific coast of Peru, where he enjoyed the ocean, embraced his extended family and community, and treasured time with his children, grandchildren and beloved dog, Chiki. John is survived by Susana, his sons and their wives, and grandchildren.

William D. Wamester
On the hilltop, Bill was an involved four-year student, fencing at the varsity level, participating in the camera club, and singing in the choir, glee club and Tweeds. After graduating from Blair,

Bill attended Central Connecticut State University and Yale University, where he earned a master's in public health. Dedicated to public service, Bill worked as a biology teacher, public health professional and acting director of public health in East Hartford, Connecticut, throughout his career. He also served his community through leadership roles with Midconn Credit Union, the Clinton Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Clinton Board of Education, including as chairman. Outside of his professional life, Bill enjoyed singing in church choirs, playing competitive duplicate bridge and spending time by the water. He and his wife, Norma, retired to Florida while continuing to cherish summers at Lake Hayward in Connecticut with family and friends. Bill is remembered for his lifelong commitment to education, public service and community involvement. Bill was predeceased by Norma and is survived by his two children and grandchildren.

1964

William R. Yahner Jr.
Manager of the little B football team at Blair, Bill also spent time with the dramatics club, projection engineers and the chess club during his three years on the hilltop. He matriculated at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, where he majored in management. Bill had worked as a fire protection engineer at Johnson & Higgins in Cleveland, now known as Marsh. Throughout his life, he stayed connected with his classmates through phone calls and visits, whether they met near his home in Ohio or wherever his work took him. Bill was preceded in death by an infant son and is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Mary, and a daughter. Bill will be remembered as a loving brother-in-law, great friend and mentor to many.

1965

Michael E. Lane
Mike attended Blair for his last two years of high school, contributing to the community through drama club, running cross country and as sports editor for *The Blair Breeze*. He remained connected with his classmates throughout his life and supported the Blair Fund as a 30-year member of the True Blue Loyalty Society. A graduate of Franklin & Marshall College, where he earned degrees in history and Spanish, he also received National Defense Foreign Language Fellowship awards for advanced Portuguese studies at the University of Texas at Austin and graduate work at Tulane University. He enjoyed a distinguished 48-year career in the municipal bond market, beginning in New Orleans with Kohlmeyer & Company before becoming a partner at L.F. Rothschild in New York. Mike ended his career with 19 years at Citi as a director in its municipal securities division. Known for his love of life, laughter and friendship, he was a passionate opera enthusiast who attended more than 1,800 performances. Mike cherished family and friends, adored his golden retriever, Lucy, and enjoyed sports, classic films and great music. Grateful for a long and fulfilling life, he is remembered for his warmth, humor, and appreciation for the people and pursuits he loved. Mike is survived by his treasured partner and spouse of over four decades, Walter, and leaves behind beloved extended family and friends.

1970

Russell A. Fowler
A two-year Buc, Russ was a pivotal part of Blair life in the pool, swimming on the varsity swim team and serving as assistant coach. After Blair, he earned an accounting degree from Iona University and built a career spanning the Eastchester Public Library, the New York State Thruway Authority, and the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation as a computer programmer and analyst. In retirement, Russ pursued his passion for sailing on Lake Champlain and Great Sacandaga Lake, restoring wooden boats and reading historical and maritime literature. He also enjoyed following politics and spending time with family and friends. He is remembered for his gentle spirit, intellectual curiosity and enduring love of the water. Russ is survived by his devoted companion, Sarah, his sister, Elizabeth Horton '74, two nephews, one niece, several cousins, and his beloved cat, Merlin.

1971

George L. Degener IV
George competed on the basketball and tennis courts and was a member of the Blue Book Committee during his four years at Blair. A longtime resident of Quogue, New York, he is remembered for his kindness, humor, generosity and unwavering devotion to family and community. George began his career as an advertising executive in New York City before pursuing his passion for craftsmanship as a respected general contractor. A dedicated member and officer of the Shinnecock Yacht Club, George enjoyed life on the water and was deeply involved in the club's community. He also

faithfully supported the Church of the Atonement through his service and fellowship. Above all, George cherished his family and took great pride in their accomplishments. He leaves a legacy of loyalty, warmth and service that touched countless lives. George is survived by his partner, Veronique, his sons and their spouses, his daughter and her spouse, his cherished grandson, and many extended family and friends.

1983

Roger W. Clarke
Roger was at Blair for three years, during which he held a class officer position, captained the golf team, and served as a member of the Rules & Discipline and Library Committees. He remained connected to the School and his classmates as a 40th Reunion Committee volunteer and supporter of the golf course renovations. He was a member of the True Blue Loyalty Society through his steady contributions to the Blair Fund. Roger earned a degree in political science from Seton Hall University in 1988 before beginning a career in the automotive industry, serving as executive vice president of Event Solutions International. He later pursued veterinary science at St. George's University in Grenada and went on to work as a veterinary practice manager in Connecticut, Staten Island and Brooklyn. Most recently, he worked with students in the Apex Public School system in North Carolina. Roger married Kristen in 2003, and together they raised two sons. After Kristen's courageous battle with ovarian cancer and her passing in 2015, Roger devoted himself to his family. In 2020, he relocated with his sons to Apex, where, with the support of his sister and extended family, he created a loving home. Roger is remembered for his resilience, dedication to his family and his caring spirit. Roger is survived by his sons, his mother, sisters and a extended family.

Danielle (Ehrlich) Nabinger
Danielle attended Blair for two years and stood out as a leader on the field hockey field and in the community as a prefect and peer tutor. After graduation, she earned bachelor's degrees in psychology and political science from Bucknell University in 1987 and an MSW in administration, policy and planning from Rutgers University in 1991. She dedicated more than 30 years to improving the lives of children in the child welfare system, serving as a respected human services strategist and advocate. Through her work across child welfare and healthcare organizations, she built enduring partnerships and programs that helped ensure the well-being of thousands of children. In 1992, Danielle married John, and together they built a life centered on love and family. A devoted wife and mother, she cherished her children, who were the center of her life. Known for her compassion, selflessness and quiet strength, Danielle also had a special love for rescue dogs. She will be remembered for her unwavering commitment to helping others, her extraordinary professional legacy and the kindness and love she shared with everyone around her. Danielle is survived by John and her son and daughter.

2009

Ryan C. Fairclough
During his time at Blair, Ryan competed with the ski, crew and ice hockey teams. He was a man of quiet strength, independence and remarkable mechanical talent. Gifted with a brilliant mechanical mind, Ryan excelled at operating heavy equipment, maintaining machinery and working on the farm, always taking pride in a job well done. A lifelong outdoorsman and free spirit, Ryan embraced adventure and measured life by the miles he traveled and the experiences he gained along the way. His curiosity, authenticity and adventurous nature enabled him to form lasting friendships with people from all walks of life. He will be remembered for his resourcefulness, independent spirit and genuine appreciation for the world around him. Ryan is survived by his father, James Fairclough '77, his mother and her husband, Robin Rost Brown and Otis Brown, and his brother, James Fairclough '04. He will be profoundly missed by his extended family, his wonderful group of supportive friends at home, and the many kindred spirits he met along the road who valued his helping hand and his tireless spirit.

2011

Eleanor F. Fielding
A four-year senior, Ellie was a member of the Blair Academy Players and played for the tennis, track and soccer teams. Living in West Hall her senior year, she made many memories, including late-night talks, with her friends. Ellie was born in Surrey, England, and moved to Long Valley, New Jersey, with her mother, Helen, and brother, Freddie, in 2001. After graduating from Blair, she earned a degree in psychology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. For the past seven years, she worked for The Walt Disney Company in corporate real estate operations. Known for her warmth, creativity and infectious laughter, Ellie enjoyed puzzles, painting and preparing family meals, especially her beloved meatballs. Her magnetic personality drew people

to her wherever she went. Through her selfless decision to be an organ donor, Ellie gave the gift of life to others, leaving a lasting legacy of kindness and generosity. She is survived by her mother, Helen, and stepfather, James; father, Gareth, and stepmother, Anne; siblings Freddie, Danielle, Michael, Emily and Felix; her niece, Lily; her nephew, Jacob; as well as many loving aunts, uncles and cousins.

Former Faculty

A. Jon Frere
Jon and his wife, Penny, also a former Blair faculty member, built a life centered on education, travel and a shared love of learning. He earned his bachelor's degree from Franklin & Marshall College in 1965 and a master's degree in Spanish language and literature from Middlebury College the following year, where he met Penny during a study-abroad program in Madrid. Jon devoted his career to independent school education, working at Blair as a Spanish teacher and coach from 1966 to 1970, when he was appointed head football coach and Director of Athletics and Physical Education. He was instrumental in bringing female athletics to the School and forming the lacrosse program in 1984, when he went on to become Assistant Head of School at St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin, Texas. In 1989, he was appointed Head of School at The Webb School in Tennessee until his retirement in 2005. Even in retirement, he continued mentoring educators and leading faculty workshops at international schools around the world.

A passionate educator, coach and mentor, Jon was an honorary member of the Class of 1974, and he was inducted into the Blair Academy Athletic Hall of Fame in 2023. He remained deeply committed to his students, colleagues and Blair alumni throughout his life and returned to Blair's campus often for visits and to speak at the Society of Skeptics. He was a loyal supporter of the Blair Fund and the scholarship he established in 2004, The A. Jon Frere Scholarship.

Beyond education, he was an advocate for Spanish-speaking communities, helping many Tennesseans obtain healthcare coverage, and enjoyed pottery, golf, travel and music. Above all, he will be remembered for his warmth, generosity and lifelong dedication to helping others learn and succeed. Jon is lovingly survived by Penny, many friends and those who became family.

Lois P. Underwood
Lois was an integral part of the Blair community from 1962 to 1998, when she served in many roles, including admission, that shaped generations of students. Beginning as one of the School's first working housemothers alongside her husband, Charlie, Hon. '77, she helped create a welcoming and supportive home for students on the hilltop. As Blair welcomed girls back to campus, Lois became a pioneering advocate for their success, promoting the School through local radio, serving as day girls' advisor and counseling countless young women throughout their Blair experience.

Balancing her work at Blair and a career as a flight attendant at Trans World Airlines with raising her daughter, Lesley '89, Lois exemplified dedication, compassion and grace. She founded Blair's Peer Leadership program for prefects, served as an academic and personal counselor to students and faculty, and was a trusted mentor whose wisdom and encouragement left a lasting impression on all who knew her. Known for her integrity, warmth, humor and unwavering commitment to others, Lois often spent long nights supporting students who came to think of her as a second mother. She helped shape the character and culture of the School still in place today and the lives of generations of Blair students around the world. For her selfless work, Lois was presented with Blair's highest honor, the Citation of Merit, in 2002.

After retiring from Blair alongside Charlie in 1998, Lois worked for Talbot's in retail for 12 years when they lived in Concord, New Hampshire. Her favorite place was their home on Bear Island in Lake Winnipesaukee, where they resided until 2007 when they moved to Concord. After Charlie's passing in 2011, Lois relocated to Sarasota, Florida, where she lived the remainder of her life. Lois is survived by her daughter, Lesley. Her legacy endures in the countless young people whose lives she enriched and in the spirit of the Blair community.

FOUR THINGS
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

Breaking WNBA Records

Former Buc Olivia Miles '21, the No. 2 pick in this spring's WNBA draft, has led the Minnesota Lynx to the top of the league standings. The rookie guard is already shattering records, becoming the first player in WNBA history to record 400 points, 100 rebounds and 100 assists through 22 games.



Turning the Page Together

Expect to hear people talking about *What Stands in the Storm* this fall. Kim Cross' compelling true story is this year's all-school read, bringing the entire Blair community together around a shared book and a shared conversation.



Ava Satasi '23 Makes London Debut

Ava Satasi '23 made her international debut at London's Greenwood Theatre, stepping into the spotlight with the lead role as Sandy in *Grease*.



32 Percent of Blair Athletes Recruited for College

In 2026, an impressive 32 percent of Blair's graduating seniors were recruited for collegiate athletics. At a time when college recruiting has become increasingly selective, the number underscores the caliber of Blair's athletic programs and the perseverance of our students.



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Save the Date!

Questions?
Contact Nicole Tipton '93, Director of Alumni Relations, at (908) 362-2059 or tipton@blair.edu.

Visit www.blair.edu/alumni/alumni-weekend for more information.