PREFECTSHIP: THE BACKBONE OF RESIDENTIAL LIFE AT BLAIR P. 04

INTRODUCING THE CENTER FOR INNOVATION & COLLABORATION P. 14

AN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP ‘HATCHED WITHIN THE HALLS OF BLAIR’ P. 38
On Exhibit

The Annual Student Art Exhibition
April 28 to May 24, 2016, in the Romano Gallery

On the Cover: Senior prefects are mentors, friends and "phenomenal role models" who support their underclass prefectees through adolescent challenges and bring "joy and fun to all that happens at Blair." Here, Kathryn Hall prefect Jade Assad ’16 (center) checks in with Nia Shaw ’17 (left) and Sophie Parker ’18 (right) as they head to lunch on a busy winter day.
Prefectship: The Backbone of Residential Life at Blair

Blair prefects offer classmates advice and counsel and partner with faculty to keep dormitories running smoothly. Learn more about these service-minded culture carriers and tone setters who lead by example and help peers navigate the ins and outs of boarding school life.

Introducing the Center for Innovation & Collaboration

Blair has launched an academics-focused campaign, the centerpiece of which is construction of a dynamic new academic building designed to inspire creativity, promote innovative thinking and collaborative learning, and connect classroom study to real-world challenges.

My Path at Blair: Engineering a Bright Future

Meet Annika Rollock ’14 and Jeremy Joachim ’13, two young alumni who have charted unique courses at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Brown University. The engineering majors reflect on how their Blair experiences put them on track for STEM careers.

Sweet Innovation

A friendship forged at Blair led Richie Eu ’03 and Mitsuharu Kurokawa ’03 to bring their highly respected family businesses together for a sweetly innovative confectionery venture.
Lucy Pennell ’17
Kathryn Hall resident Lucy Pennell ’17 took advantage of her dorm’s proximity to Blair Lake to snap this photograph, which she titled “Perspectives.” Calling it a “typical lake photo that was taken in not-such-a-typical way,” Lucy turned the camera upside down to capture the water’s reflection at the top of the image. “I hope people look at my photograph for a while and, hopefully, realize that the perspective is unusual,” she said. “Before Blair, I had no photography experience, except for the pictures I took on my phone, but Blair has made me realize that I am pretty good at it. The campus is so beautiful so it helps to have something aesthetically pleasing to capture.”

What do you think about the stories in this issue of the Blair Bulletin? Let us know—your letter may be published in the next issue. Please send your comments to bulletin@blair.edu.
As a young child, I recall being told that I had an “overactive” imagination, to which I responded—“Thank you.” Reflecting upon how I would respond to such a statement today, my answer would involve greater exposition and more nuance, but the sentiment would be quite the same. Our world suffers not from an overabundance of well-leveraged creative energy; rather, it is a precious resource that we are called to even more fulsomely realize. Imagination may indeed be our most valuable form of renewable energy, driving progress, innovation and growth. When nurtured and harnessed properly and lovingly in individuals and teams, it is a powerful gift and a platform from which to launch ideas that change the world. And it is, indeed, a gift for me and our faculty to be training and caring for the next generation of successful entrepreneurs, innovators, storytellers and change-agents who will make a difference through their moral courage, their respect for others, their hard-earned knowledge and their imaginative leadership.

Of course, taking part in creative endeavors is not a new concept here on the hilltop. Over the years, students have explored the contours of their imaginations through participation in the fine and performing arts, through ideas they’ve nurtured in academic projects and writing across all disciplines, and through clubs and activities they’ve instituted and enjoyed. Imaginative thinking abounds in the daily life of our close-knit community, and a well-executed, creative and strategic play on the field, court or mat has often been the difference-maker in hard-fought athletic contests.

What is new at Blair is our now-under-construction Center for Innovation and Collaboration (CIC), a dynamic, multidisciplinary academic facility that has been designed to amplify the Blair experience by tapping fully and intentionally into students’ creativity and imagination. Unlike any other academic building on campus, the CIC features learning spaces that are open, technology-rich and configured for maximum flexibility. The Center will become home to our fine arts and technology departments, and we envision those complementary disciplines interwoven throughout our curriculum as teachers and students work collaboratively in the CIC’s media labs, maker space, open classrooms, common areas, and art and ceramic studios. All of this is geared toward more deeply developing in our students an awareness of their ability to solve complicated problems and to cultivate the creative and empathetic leaders our society needs.

The CIC will surely become central to the curricular and co-curricular life of the School. Imagine a typical class day: Fine arts and technology classes meet in the CIC’s studios and glass-walled classrooms, while sophomores convene in the collaboration forum for a presentation by a visiting scholar. Break-out sessions in the forum and its surrounding conference rooms allow for intensive small-group discussion, while some students disperse to the media labs or maker space for related project work. After classes, robotics and engineering students spend time before sports or study hall working on longer-term projects, and, during the evening hours, Model UN, Quiz Bowl, class councils and other groups make excellent use of large and small meeting spaces, while students drop in to the maker space or ceramics studio to experiment and create. In addition, the School community will gather frequently in the collaboration forum for Society of Skeptics lectures, arts presentations, film festivals and more. The learning opportunities in the CIC are limited only by our collective imagination.

A full description of the CIC and concurrent Weber and Bogle Hall academic-space realignment projects begins on page 14, and I invite you to discover more. I am deeply grateful to the alumni, parents, Trustees and friends of the School who have provided early and generous contributions to the Forward Thinking Campaign in support of these academics-focused endeavors and to all who have made gifts to the School to date this year. Your belief in our educational mission and your belief in our students—the creative leaders of tomorrow—make the Blair experience possible.

Picasso famously said, “If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it.” Standing, as I did recently, on the footprint of what was East and Davies Halls, staring at this tabula rasa, I envisioned the possibilities that lie ahead, and all that our students and faculty will continue to achieve and become together when the CIC opens. Imagine that!

Christopher Fortunato
Head of School
Picture it: It is your first day as a new student at Blair. Regardless of your class year, home country or level of excitement about the first few days on campus, you can’t help but feel a little nervous about navigating the academic and social challenges of starting somewhere new.

Who, you wonder, will help you figure out how to manage your course load, deal with homesickness, choose a sport and select an advisor? Yes, you recall from earlier visits that faculty members are exceedingly warm and welcoming, but you question whether adults can fully understand just how tricky this adjustment might be. Just as the anticipation begins to feel overwhelming, you check in at your dorm, meet your housemaster and are introduced to your prefects—and you realize that you have access to a constellation of relationships at Blair that ensures you are supported, connected and in the best possible position to take advantage of the exceptional learning opportunities that exist across campus.
Tone Setters & Culture Carriers
As alumni who graduated from Blair after the prefect program’s 1956 inception know, prefects—a group of senior leaders charged with protecting and perpetuating Blair culture, offering classmates advice and counsel, and partnering with faculty to keep dormitories running smoothly—are hardworking peer mentors who are, in many ways, the backbone of residential life at Blair.

“Prefects are phenomenal role models who bring joy and fun to all that happens at Blair, while supporting students during challenging times, embracing new traditions and upholding established ones that define the Blair experience,” said Head of School Chris Fortunato. “When students have a problem or need advice, they want to get multiple viewpoints, and sometimes the most valuable insight comes from a peer who has been in their shoes before. I have been regularly impressed by the maturity, thoughtfulness and social courage of our prefects as they guide fellow students and help them become their best selves.”

A Service-Oriented Job
Not only do prefects help new students manage the transition to life on the hilltop; they support the development of deep and meaningful relationships across campus, model behavior for their peers, help prefectees navigate social and academic challenges, and assist housemasters in overseeing study hall and planning activities designed to unite dormitory residents. Given the immense responsibility associated with this key leadership position, it is no surprise that prefectship at Blair is, at its heart, a service-oriented job enjoyed most by students who derive great satisfaction from taking care of others.

“Pretty much every student at Blair has an anecdote about how a prefect changed his or her life,” said English teacher Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79, who has overseen the prefect program for much of the last decade. “The power of that sentiment—‘if my prefect hadn’t counseled me or intervened when I was struggling, I wouldn’t be the person I am today’—is simply amazing, and speaks to the ‘pay it forward’ mentality of our prefects. They want to be that person for someone else.”

The fact that senior prefects must balance these weighty demands with their own rigorous academic schedules and the college-application process is a testament to the service-mindedness of Blair students. “Prefects are service-leaders who care not about the title or privileges associated with the position, but about helping other people,” Ms. Conforti-Browse added. “I am most impressed by prefects’ willingness to listen, learn and put their own work aside to make sacrifices for others. They are charged with passing on the best of Blair culture to new students—and, many times, creating that culture. Each school year’s tone really depends on how prefects respond to that charge.”

Paying It Forward
The desire to mentor and genuinely care for younger classmates is a big draw of the prefect program; in fact, many prefects say this is what compelled them to become involved. “As a freshman and sophomore, I always admired and looked up to my prefects,” said boarding student
My prefects not only have made hard times better, but have brought an extra element of joy to good times as well.
the dorm her “home-away-from-home.” “Being empathetic and available, not just to your friends but to anyone who needs you, is a huge difference maker for those of us new to Blair,” she said. “Having access to this network of support has taught me about the values that are important to me and that I want to emulate in the future.”

West Hall resident Oliver Foote ’18 agrees. “It is one thing to be told how important leadership is, but to watch my prefects lead by example is incredibly powerful and has really struck a chord with me,” he said. “My prefects not only have made hard times better, but have brought an extra element of joy to good times as well. I couldn’t be more grateful for the selfless time and help they’ve offered me.”

Solving Problems, One Student at a Time

Given the unique stressors of adolescence and boarding-school life, prefects are especially essential when it comes to managing things like homesickness, social stress, conflict with fellow residents and struggles with academic work.

In addition to giving specific advice and connecting students to faculty members who can offer extra help or counsel, prefects make a real difference by simply spending time in the dorms. “The most valuable thing that you can give someone is your time and attention,” said Locke Hall prefect Shoshana Geller ’16. “I always look forward to 10 p.m., when study hall ends and the girls come and hang out with me at the duty desk. That’s when I really get to know my prefectees and create bonds with them.”

The best prefects, JahAsia Jacobs ’16 has learned over the years, are strong listeners who are always present in the moment. “Being a leader is mostly associated with creating order and solving problems,” she said. “In that way, I am a leader as a prefect in Locke, but I also lead by spending time with the girls at Gourmet Gallery downtown or helping them with their homework. I have discovered leadership is not so black and white—there is more to being a prefect than offering advice or maintaining order in the dorm. It means being part of cookie decorating during our holiday party and just dancing with my prefectees.”

Establishing such layered relationships with dorm residents makes it easier when it comes time to guide students in coping with challenges such as homesickness, an issue JahAsia and her Locke colleagues often see. Her advice? Turn to the Blair community for help. “If you surround yourself with all the amazing things Blair has to offer, it is hard to feel isolated,” JahAsia said. “The girls find after a while that they are so occupied and having so much fun, they forget they are away from home—because Blair starts to feel like home.”

Offering classmates support in such targeted and general ways allows Blair prefects to make a deep impact—one that, for many, will be felt long after graduation. “My prefects are the hardest
workers I know, and, as my friends and role models, they really make me want to give everything I do 100-percent effort,” said Nina Sigety ’19, who lives in Locke Hall.

Lakeside Hall prefects have instilled in Max Bonzulak ’17 a similar takeaway: Being a role model is a powerful thing, and one that reminds him to always “keep my eye on the big picture”—and not to sweat the small stuff. “My prefects have been an example of who I want to be at the end of my Blair career, and I aspire to be like them,” he said.

An Exercise in Leadership Development

When you consider the many communication and problem-solving skills these student leaders practice on a daily basis in their interactions with dorm residents—time management, how to cope with failure and motivate others, ability to empathize, developing a sense of responsibility for others, conflict resolution, negotiation, decision making, and relationship building—it is no surprise that the experience of prefecting has made them more confident and capable leaders.

“I’ve learned that leading is all about positive relationships and compromise,” explained Mike. “You can’t enforce everything through the guise of power; in the end, you can lead by inspiring and advising. Influencing other people’s lives is much easier when they trust in you and know you are looking out for their best interests.”

Locke Hall prefect Katie Shook ’16, on the other hand, has learned important lessons about adaptability in managing problems. “Being a prefect is not just about being a good role model; it is about making sure the girls feel comfortable—which requires adapting to their different needs,” she said. “You cannot take the same approach toward every prefectee—one might just want you to listen to her problems, while another might ask you for feedback and input.”

Thanks to his leadership role in West Hall and responsibilities as a member of Senior Class Council, Justin Swirbul ’16 has a deeper appreciation for the power of his own behavior when it comes to supporting and influencing his classmates. “Being a prefect is about leading and setting an example while forming relationships in the dorm to foster a greater atmosphere,” he said. “The prefect-prefectee relationship will continue to shape who I am as a leader long after I leave Blair.”

Even younger dorm residents believe the prefect system at Blair has inspired them to become stronger leaders. “My interactions with prefects have absolutely encouraged me to pursue the leadership role myself,” said Mekhi Holley ’17, who lives in Lakeside Hall. “I’ve seen firsthand how underclassmen look up to
The greatest lesson I have learned from prefects at Blair is that it is not about you; it is about the people you impact.

The Search for Balance

Although supporting prefectees is the number-one job requirement, the ability to balance the needs of others with your own needs is what Ms. Conforti-Browse believes is one of the most important lessons of being a prefect at Blair.

“Giving others advice and helping them navigate stressful and challenging situations prepares our prefects for college by allowing them to practice time management, conflict resolution and, more simply, empathy for peers,” she said. “It also forces them to consider how their own needs relate to those of the people they are charged with supporting. In the end, finding balance has everything to do with examining your core values and recognizing that you can’t function well if you haven’t prioritized effectively.”

Katie believes that this lesson in “work-life balance” is one she will take with her to college and her professional life. “Being a prefect has made me good at prioritizing,” she said. “Senior year already brings an enormous workload and myriad time commitments, and it is important to know what should take precedence. Although I always feel the need to be in the dorm interacting with the girls, there are also days when I can’t spend the time I wish I could doing that. Whether I am swamped with work or just need a break, there are some days when I have to remind myself that it is okay to focus on me.”

Even if finding such balance is difficult, prefectees across campus are tremendously grateful that their prefects take such a selfless approach to their work. “The greatest lesson I have learned from prefects at Blair is that it is not about you; it is about the people you impact,” said Kathryn Hall resident Caroline Devlin ’17. “I imagine the stresses of senior-year schoolwork and college applications can make it easy to get into your own little world and forget about other responsibilities, but prefects go the extra mile and make an effort to balance time between themselves and the people who need their help or simply want to be friends.”

The key to balance, Shoshana has found, is remaining self-aware. “I’ve become much more conscious of what I say because, as a leader in Locke, I know that people are listening,” she said. “If I’m stressed or upset about something, my prefectees might be less likely to come to me with their problems, and it is my job as prefect to be there for the
Prefectship at Blair Academy

At the start of the school year, Blair’s prefects arrive on campus before the rest of the student body to engage in leadership development and bonding exercises.

girls whenever they need me. In that way, prefecting has taught me to put aside my own problems so I can focus on others—and to realize that a big part of leadership is being able to put others before yourself.”

A Bridge for Students & Faculty

Given how student-centered Blair is, faculty members certainly know a thing or two about putting kids first and, often, prefects build a bridge between their prefectees and teachers, housemasters and coaches whom they might not have otherwise gotten to know well.

“Prefects really support dorm staff and housemasters in developing great relationships with residents,” said Associate Head of School Ryan Pagotto ’97. “If a younger student is reluctant to open up to a faculty member, an endorsement from a prefect he or she trusts will certainly break down barriers, allowing for the development of the meaningful student-faculty relationships that are at the heart of the Blair experience.”

That’s one reason Locke Hall residents like Grace turn to prefects first, knowing that they will either offer useful advice themselves or connect them to the right faculty member who can offer counsel or extra help—“basically directing me to the right resources,” she explained.

Other prefect-aided student-faculty connections happen less formally, through weekend activities such as trips to Blairstown Dairy with a prefect and his or her advisor. No matter the avenue of introduction, “having a support system of both prefects and faculty really makes all the difference,” Caroline said.

Partnering with Housemasters

In their dormitory duties and beyond, prefects take on a great deal of responsibility in partnering with Blair’s faculty and administration to take exceptionally good care of students and prepare them for the next steps of their lives.

“Prefects provide a vital link between students and faculty, in terms of communication and support,” said Associate Dean of Students and fine arts teacher Andee Ryerson, who serves as housemaster of Locke Hall, Blair’s largest girls’ dorm, with her husband, Michael, who teaches in the science department. “It would be impossible for us to fully serve 70 girls without the help of 10 seniors who are our eyes and ears on the ground, and our first resource when any situation arises in the dorm.”
Because they are so attuned to the needs of younger students in a way that housemasters may not be, prefects are integral to identifying and resolving academic or disciplinary issues. “As students, they have a deeper understanding of the freshman experience at Blair than we could ever have, so it is easier for them to empathize with what their prefectees are going through,” said Mr. Ryerson. “They also serve as role models for younger students, walking campus as living examples of the traits we value in Blair students.”

That model of trust and collaboration between prefects and housemasters is a defining characteristic of Blair’s community, creating a culture that embraces and invests in student-teacher relationships. “A new student may not initially jump into a quality relationship with a teacher because, likely, he or she has never had to do that before, so confiding in an adult may seem like a foreign concept,” Mrs. Ryerson explained. “However, when the seniors they know, trust and look up to model this behavior, it makes it the norm and something to which they aspire.”

**Big Brothers & Sisters**

But, before this relationship-based ethos reaches the community-wide level, prefects first set the tone in their own dorms. “South Cottage is small, so our prefects make a big impact on the experience of living here in supporting the girls and doing duty once a week,” said housemaster and language department chair Tim Devaney. “They really help determine the culture of the place.”

Dean of Students Carm Mazza, Blair’s longest-serving housemaster, calls his prefects in Insley Hall his “right-hand people” when it comes to maintaining the culture of the “dorm of mutual respect.” “I rely on them to be big brothers to the young kids, guide freshmen and sophomores on their path at Blair, and help them pave the way to success and to taking advantage of all Blair has to offer,” he explained.

Prefects agree that openness, communication and reciprocal trust with housemasters are all vital to smooth dorm operation and feeling at ease with the hefty responsibilities placed on their young shoulders. “Even if there is a situation that makes you uncomfortable or seems very serious, chances are your housemaster has already experienced something similar and he or she knows
how to deal with it in a way that prefects do not,” said Abby.

And, even if the mechanics of it are slightly different, the depth of the housemaster-prefect relationship is just as impactful for day students as it is for boarders. Noting that day-student coordinator Lois Stival has “served as a mother to us,” Wyatt says he’s been grateful to benefit from her experience and perspective throughout the year, calling her a “vital resource” for day-student boys.

Mike sums up the housemaster-prefect dynamic at Blair: “Your housemaster is like another friend in the building,” he said, “and we get to know them well so we can do our jobs well.”

Advice from Beyond Blair
There is perhaps no one better to speak about the value of Blair’s prefect program than young alumni who are just realizing how their prefects helped shape them into the adults they are becoming. “My prefects were my role models at Blair and helped influence me in ways that I did not see while I was a student,” said Emily Wan ’15, who is finishing her freshman year at the University of Southern California. “I learned the value of random acts of kindness; I learned patience; I learned that hard work pays off. I unknowingly brought these lessons with me to college, and I am using them to be the best person I can be after Blair.”

Almost a year after Blair graduation, former Insley prefect and freshman at Fordham College-Rose Hill Dean Corrado ’15 has found that carrying out his dorm duties senior year gave him a leg up in relating to people and building friendships with classmates whom, at first glance, he might not have considered getting to know. “My experience prefecting has really helped me at college, and I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with some really great guys in Insley who truly cared about their dorm and the students with whom they lived,” he said.

Teddy Wenner ’96, a former East Hall prefect who now serves as Blair’s associate dean of admission and has lived in Insley Hall with his family for the last four years, laughed as he admitted he has a unique perspective on prefectship “from both sides of the desk.” Reflecting on the program 20 years after he graduated and headed off to the United States Military Academy, he said that although some aspects have changed, Blair prefectship, at its core, remains the same.

Mr. Wenner offered this final advice to current senior prefects and underclassmen considering applying for the position in the future: “Don’t underestimate the importance of younger students looking to you for advice and guidance. Everyone who went to Blair remembers their prefects, so realize that you are making a lasting and deep impression, even if you don’t know it at the time.”
A Look Back AT THE BEGINNING

An Initiative Rooted in ‘Purposeful Activity’
James Howard wrote in his personal papers in 1956 that “good morale and discipline…depend in large measure on effective student leadership and initiative.” He went on to make fostering “student initiative and purposeful activity at the dormitory level” one of his objectives as Blair’s 13th Headmaster.

In collaboration with Dick Young ’56, the graduating president of the 1955-1956 student council, Mr. Howard rewrote the student government constitution, creating a new version that retained senior officers but replaced “underclass officers” and “dorm representatives” with “prefects”—a term first mentioned in The Blair Breeze in 1956. Under the new constitution, the council comprised a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, six boarding prefects and one day-student prefect, all of whom were elected by the student body.

Student-body elections of prefects continued until 1964, at which point the administration began appointing prefects in consultation with housemasters, a practice that continues to this day.

The Modern Blair Prefect
Over the next 52 years, the prefect program continued to grow at the same rate as Blair’s residential facilities: The first group of nine prefects “hand-picked” by Mr. Howard and Blair housemasters in the mid-1960s is now much larger, with 50 or so students selected each year to serve in the leadership role.

As its scope expanded, so did the number of students ultimately applying and being selected for the position: Whereas prefects once served as tour guides and admission-office representatives at events for prospective families, the program’s emphasis today is more internally focused, with the goal of fostering healthy living environments and offering students mentorship from peers who can relate to what they are experiencing in ways that adults often cannot.

Today, housemasters carefully select prefects who are willing to invest the significant time and effort the role requires and who exhibit a variety of qualities. In choosing prefects, housemasters seek a complementary and diverse group that represents the personalities within the dorm as a whole and that is reflective of Blair’s student body at large.

No minimum grade point average is required, but prefects must be responsible, committed to helping others, mature and empathetic. That’s not to say a student has to have a blemish-free record; in fact, Blair welcomes students who have learned from past mistakes and want to share that wisdom with younger classmates.

Developing Tomorrow’s Leaders
Today, the prefect selection process begins with a self-nomination submitted to the student life office, in which applicants must assess their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their motivations for applying. After engaging in that process of self-reflection, the students chosen as prefects for the following school year begin working with Ms. Conforti-Browse, writing dorm mission statements, examining core values and character traits, and engaging in exercises on how to lead by example and confront difficult issues they might encounter in the dormitory, such as drug and alcohol use, eating disorders, bullying, academic stress and homesickness.

Once the school year begins, students work closely with their housemasters to develop and hone interpersonal, decision-making and response skills.

A Path for Every Leader
Although the significant impact of Blair’s prefects cannot be underestimated, Ms. Conforti-Browse notes that this position is just one of many leadership opportunities for seniors to assume during their final year at Blair. As director of the School’s leadership programs, it is her job to connect students to the positions that suit them best: running Blair’s annual poetry festival, serving as an ambassador to the advancement office, overseeing projects for the Blue & White Key Society, interning for the communications office or reading at Christmas Vespers, just to name a few.

“Every senior at Blair has a path to a leadership challenge,” Ms. Conforti-Browse concluded, “and it is my job to counsel students about their strengths and weaknesses in relation to their leadership potential and to connect them with experiences that will allow them to develop these competencies and succeed, both during their final months at Blair and in all of their subsequent endeavors.”

A special thank you to Blair library assistant Holly Newcomb for her help in researching the history of Blair’s prefect program.
COLLABORATIVE, DYNAMIC & FORWARD THINKING

CREATING CAMPUS SPACES THAT AMPLIFY THE BLAIR EXPERIENCE
Building upon the School’s core traditions of superior academic preparation and relationship-based learning, Blair is preparing to break ground this spring on a multidisciplinary new academic center designed to inspire creativity, promote innovative thinking and foster collaborative learning. The Center for Innovation and Collaboration (CIC) was conceived after months of research by a community-wide task force, and the flexible, modern facility has been conceptualized as a learning commons that will powerfully augment students’ curricular and co-curricular Blair experience.

The CIC, to be built upon the footprint of East and Davies Halls, will serve as the new home for the fine arts and technology departments, yet the center’s impact will resonate across Blair’s curriculum: Its construction will allow for the realignment of spaces in Weber and Bogle Halls to better facilitate the teaching of mathematics and science, and its maker space and highly configurable common areas will accommodate the convening of large and small groups to work across disciplines. The total cost of the academics-focused endeavor is estimated at $14 million, and fundraising has garnered early support, with generous donors having already contributed or pledged $8 million.

“The CIC and the Bogle and Weber projects provide dynamic spaces that will amplify the School’s educational mission and give our students a more fulsome Blair experience,” said Head of School Chris Fortunato. “Ultimately, our graduates will be prepared to better meet the evolving demands of college and the workplace and become creative, collaborative and inspiring leaders.”

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES LED TASK-FORCE EFFORTS**

Anticipating the closure of the East and Davies Hall dormitories last June, a task force of Trustees, alumni, faculty members and administrators convened in September 2014 to consider the possibility of repurposing these buildings for curricular or co-curricular use. Mindful of the 2011-2016 Strategic Plan’s second initiative—“superior academic preparation is at the heart of the Blair experience”—the underlying assumptions of the task force’s work were straightforward: Any new learning space on Blair’s campus should support and complement the School’s core academic programs and empower faculty to pursue diverse teaching approaches that best serve students in a changing world. Moreover, such space and its programming should reflect Blair’s foundational commitment to relationship-based learning by connecting students and faculty in meaningful ways.

As they visited state-of-the-art collaborative learning centers at secondary schools, colleges and universities, the task force studied not only facility design but also how such spaces were being used and their importance to students’ learning experience. To Trustee and committee
member Marianne Lieberman ’79, the educational value of a collaborative learning center was readily apparent. “In the professional world, collaboration and teamwork are key to achieving goals,” she said. “Fostering cross-department, cooperative programming and academic experiences for Blair students will only become more important over time.”

The committee kept several guiding principles in mind as they considered a comparable academic space at Blair: It must be flexible in design and allow for multiple configurations; it must provide resources for teamwork across disciplines; it must encourage the correlation of academic study and real-world problem solving; and it must invite creativity and innovative thinking through its emphasis on project work and its nontraditional aesthetic. According to Ms. Lieberman, the “lightbulb moment” came when committee members realized that the construction of a new academic center that would house fine arts and technology allowed for the realignment of existing buildings to facilitate much-needed academic-space improvements—namely, the consolidation of mathematics classrooms into a single building and the creation of additional lab space required by the science department.

“Over the past several years, the School has accomplished many of the goals set forth by the Strategic Plan through construction of the pedestrian campus, Hardwick Hall, and Kathryn and Lakeside Halls,” Ms. Lieberman said. “The CIC and Bogle/Weber projects address the Plan’s critical academic piece and complement the building endeavors that have enriched Blair’s arts, athletic, residential and academic experiences. With the footprint of East and Davies serving as the foundation of the CIC, it is absolutely logical to pursue these projects at this time and very exciting to witness the continuing evolution of our campus.”

THREE PROJECTS, EXPONENTIAL IMPACT

The trio of projects resulting from the task force’s diligent efforts will positively impact the Blair community and students’ Blair experience in many ways (see box on page 19). “At the heart of it, the quality of a Blair education has been defined by the quality of interactions between students and faculty—these projects allow us to maximize the Blair educational experience,” said Dean of Academics Nathan Molteni.

The CIC will be an important and highly visible addition to the School’s historic campus, with modern, project-focused learning spaces that complement existing academic classrooms. Blair’s fine arts department will gain significant square footage in its move to the CIC, and, for the first time, the School’s technology classes—currently taught in four separate buildings—will be housed under one roof, in well-equipped, dedicated spaces.

The juxtaposition of art and technology in a single, central campus location positions these complementary disciplines for infusion across Blair’s curriculum. With two media labs, art and ceramics studios, a maker space, and fully equipped technology classrooms readily accessible
The CIC emphasizes what we’ve already done well at Blair: relationships, connectedness and learning. The building’s design makes it transparent to students and everyone what is happening at Blair every day.

— Dean of Academics Nathan Molteni

Relocation of fine arts classes to the CIC’s open, light-filled studios and classrooms allows for the repurposing of Weber Hall as a home for Blair’s mathematics department, which currently holds classes in Clinton, Bogle, Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts and Timken Library. Finally, with mathematics and technology classes no longer occupying real estate in Bogle Hall, the science building’s classrooms and laboratories will be realigned to best accommodate the teaching of biology, chemistry, physics and an array of science electives.

“At Blair, learning is student-led and relationship-based, and students continually encounter diverse information and content,” Mr. Molteni observed. “Constructing a
collaborative learning center that brings disciplines together visually and physically emphasizes those great qualities—kids will discover innovative ways to connect ideas and think about the world and begin to see their own learning through different lights and lenses. These projects present new opportunities for kids to take ownership of their learning, express their passions and learn with others.”

**THE CENTER FOR INNOVATION & COLLABORATION**

The four-level, 25,000-square-foot CIC has been designed by HQW Architects, LLC, as an exciting and inviting cross-disciplinary learning hub. Occupying prominence of place at the crest of the front hill, the building’s exterior slate, stucco and stone features will blend seamlessly with nearby Insley, Kathryn and Lakeside Halls. The CIC’s interior aesthetic, however, will be unlike that of any other building on Blair’s campus, as it will be defined by flexibility, transparency, movement and light.

Open to the entire community and designed to inspire creativity and tap into students’ potential in any number of subject areas and extracurricular pursuits, the CIC includes a maker space, a ceramics studio, two media labs, three technology classrooms and an entire floor dedicated to the fine arts. A signature space in the CIC is the atrium-ceilinged collaboration forum, a large, central, semicircular open area furnished with whiteboards and comfortable, modular seating. It will be ringed by windows that provide views to the landscaping outside, as well as views into the conference and team rooms that surround it. Effectively sized and technology-rich, the space will become home for Blair’s renowned Society of Skeptics lectures and will be easily configurable for classes and gatherings of any size.

“The CIC will be the first space at Blair that is open and academic, where you can literally walk into the midst of intellectual discourse. That is a powerful moment,” Mr. Molteni said. “This building emphasizes what we’ve always said about learning at Blair—that it extends beyond the walls of the classroom. The creation of classrooms without walls and classrooms with transparent walls is a visual representation of what is actually happening intellectually. It will remind all of us that we should always be learning and always be looking for new opportunities to learn.”

For descriptions of additional CIC highlights and to watch a video tour of the building’s interior, please visit [www.blair.edu/collaboration-and-innovation](http://www.blair.edu/collaboration-and-innovation).

**BOGLE HALL**

Bogle Hall currently houses all laboratory science classes, as well as engineering, some mathematics classes and the mathematics department office. Moving engineering and mathematics out of Bogle Hall allows for the reorganization and upgrade of laboratories and classrooms, resulting in greater flexibility in core science-class scheduling and offerings. The creation of larger chemistry and biology labs and the conversion of some classrooms into fully functioning classroom-labs outfitted with gas and water provide space for teachers to explore more sustained and in-depth labs, for nonlab science electives to potentially incorporate a lab component, for new electives to become part of the curriculum, and for upper-school students to pursue advanced, independent research projects in biochemistry and other scientific disciplines.

“Bogle Hall was built in 1989 for a smaller student body, a smaller proportion of which took science classes, and lack of space limits us in some ways now,” noted science department chair Roy Wilson. “Reorganization of the building’s labs and classrooms will allow faculty to create a
Blair students and faculty will realize a host of benefits when these projects are complete:

- The multidisciplinary CIC will be open to the entire Blair community for curricular and co-curricular use, providing flexible, inviting learning and meeting space that is not currently available in Blair’s more traditional buildings.
- Equipped and configured for collaborative, project-based learning, the CIC will provide enhanced opportunities for students and teachers to explore the application of intellectual concepts to real-world problems and issues, contributing to students’ superior academic preparation for college and university study and their professional careers.
- The cooperative space promotes the strong faculty-student relationships that are so important to the Blair experience, as well as the relationships formed among classmates and across all grade levels.
- With technology classes, including computer science, engineering and robotics, anchored in dedicated, appropriately sized and well-equipped classrooms in the CIC, Blair’s technology curriculum will have the capacity to expand and grow.
- The realignment of academic space in Bogle and Weber Halls allows for optimal use of physical resources, different and sustained laboratory work, and better scheduling opportunities. Students will be able to pursue interests and passions in laboratory sciences well beyond what our current capabilities allow.
Although the “Blair experience” is shared by every alumnus of the School, each student charts a unique course during his or her years on the hilltop. And you never know where that course may lead. Here we check in with Annika Rollock ’14 and Jeremy Joachim ’13: Both are studying engineering in college, yet neither would have predicted themselves doing so before coming to Blair. What was it about Annika’s and Jeremy’s singular Blair experiences that put them on track for STEM careers? Engineering minds want to know.

Annika Rollock ’14: Aeronautics & Astronautics @ MIT

Annika (second from right), a sophomore at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), is fascinated by fast jets, spacecraft design and interplanetary travel, yet intellectual history and western civilization were two of her favorite classes at Blair. “I took intellectual history senior year with four other students,” she said of history department chair Jason Beck’s thought-provoking course. “We read and discussed some truly great works and concentrated on individual projects. It was a very original class.” As for western civilization with former Blair history teacher Hans Doerr, Annika described having to defend— in class, aloud and word-for-word— an essay she had written, while Mr. Doerr offered critique. “It was a terrifying experience,” she laughed, “but in the end, it made me a much better writer.”

Reading, drawing and writing are activities Annika loved long before she came to Blair, and she thrived in her history and English classes. For a while, she thought about becoming a journalist or a writer. But science was in the back of her mind, too. Her grandfather had served as a Canadian air force pilot, and ever since a childhood visit to the Kennedy Space Center—which she documented in a 13-page journal entry—she felt a keen interest in the space shuttle and space travel. She did not, however, feel especially drawn to math and science courses until a couple of Blair teachers helped her make sense of it all.

Math + Science + Rowing = MIT

Annika “struggled a bit” in math until junior year AP calculus A with mathematics teacher and Dean of Academics Nathan Molteni. “That class gave me confidence in math,” she said. “I went from being a mediocre math student to one who tried really hard. Mr. Molteni believed I could do it, and that inspired me. I put in the work and learned so much.”

Concurrently, Annika took honors physics with science teacher Michael Ryerson, a class that “made math
“To be honest, the most important thing I learned at Blair was time management.”

make sense.” To Annika, physics represents a grounded application of math. “Chemistry seemed like magic,” she said, “but I would leave physics class with an understanding of why a road had a particular speed limit or why a ride at an amusement park operated the way it did. The science we learned in physics had a feeling of reality; it helped explain the world around me.”

Outside the classroom, Annika found opportunities to pursue her humanities and science interests at Blair, joining History Bowl with Mr. Molteni, serving on the Senior Class Council and becoming one of four founding members of the MythBusters Club, a group dedicated to debunking common scientific myths. The MythBusters were advised by science teacher and former department chair Michael Sayers, PhD, Annika’s advisor. “Doc Sayers was always up for talking, and my conversations with him changed the way I learn and the way I view the world,” she said. “He helped me express my passions and bring them to life.”

Along the way, Annika discovered a new athletic passion, too—rowing crew. Ironically, it was rowing that led her to MIT. She had never considered the elite technology institution, but when it came up in search-engine results as she researched colleges, she gave it a closer look.

“I wanted to learn more about MIT’s crew program, so I contacted the coach,” Annika said. “Of course, she told me I had to earn admission on my own academic merit, but she was interested and invited me to spend a night with a team member. The experience made me realize how special MIT is—it’s quirky, weirdly artsy and full of people who are doing amazing things but who don’t take themselves too seriously. I loved it.”

Since matriculating at MIT, Annika’s crew teammates have become like family; she also plays intramural ice hockey, is a member of the school’s rocket team and enjoys MIT’s traditional “hacks”—nerdy, fun feats of engineering that often involve rooftops. She’s also confirmed her passion for space travel: While taking an introductory aeronautical engineering class, she realized that she did not feel like she was “working”; rather, she was doing what she was meant to do. Annika declared an aeronautic and astronautic engineering major at the end of her freshman year, and she’s on her way to becoming a rocket scientist.

Future Astronaut?

Although she jokes that her career plans are “up in the air,” Annika is serious about her studies. “I’m intrigued by the opportunity to advance the design, propulsion and engineering of space flight vehicles,” she said, “and that goes right back to physics: How can you make the wings, the engine or the tail most efficient? It’s all about figuring out how different adjustments affect flight.”

When she contemplates her four years at Blair, though, it isn’t math or physics that best prepared Annika for coursework at MIT. “To be honest, the most important thing I learned at Blair was time management,” she said candidly. “There are kids at MIT who attended very tech-focused high schools and so had intense, specific math and science preparation. At Blair, I had to do a million things at once; now, I am able to balance my studies, sport and activities at MIT.” The ability to balance multiple demands—along with math and science skills—will no doubt prove important whether Annika’s career takes her to a laboratory or to the edge of the universe and beyond. ☐
Jeremy Joachim ‘13: Mechanical Engineering @ Brown University

As Jeremy advanced through four years of Blair academics, he eagerly took on the challenge of upper-level courses and worked hard to master each subject. "I wasn’t sure what I wanted to study in college or do in my career, but I didn’t want to be excluded from any option because I hadn’t put in the work," he said. So, work he did. And although it definitely wasn’t easy—and required some soul-searching at times to figure out how he was going to succeed in one class or another—the effort was worth it: Today, he’s a junior mechanical engineering major at Brown University and thinking about an exciting future in product design.

To Jeremy, the strong personal relationships between students and faculty “make it happen” at Blair. Teachers hold students to high standards (“that’s a good thing”) and at times “push very hard,” yet the trust and respect students and faculty have for one another inspire kids to put forth their best effort and create a unique learning environment where it’s always possible to try new things. “Students enjoy being at Blair,” Jeremy reflected. “I think most of us realized this is not a conventional way to go through school.”

The Math Path
Jeremy’s experience in math classes illustrates his point about the essential nature of Blair’s student-teacher relationships. Always up for an academic challenge, he took the most difficult math offerings freshman through senior years: geometry honors, algebra 2 honors, AP calculus A and AP calculus BC. In each class, he encountered a teacher—Nathan Molteni, John Padden and Amy Van Nostrand—with a “very strong math mind,” who, beyond teaching good habits and skills, imparted to students an understanding of how math works.

“Blair math teachers want to make sure students appreciate that math is an amazing subject and that they can actually learn it,” Jeremy said. “I believe kids sometimes become discouraged in math classes because they think they are not ‘math people.’ Blair math teachers make the subject accessible to everyone. They encouraged all of us to think on our feet, come up with different solutions and apply concepts to new problems. I had Mr. Padden for algebra 2 honors—he was funny and smart and had an unconventional way of working with students. I loved that class.”

But Mr. Molteni’s AP calculus A was hands-down his favorite. “This was the first class in which I felt incredibly pushed, but Mr. Molteni, who was my advisor, saw potential in me and in everyone. He gave us complex assignments, and, even working in pairs, we didn’t always come up with...
the answers. He made me start thinking about math in a different way—I couldn’t just re-create what was in the book or in an example. Problems were more of a puzzle—and when I understood a mathematical concept, I could approach and solve a problem in a much simpler way. I worked very hard in that class, and soon after it ended, I realized it was an exceptionally valuable experience.”

Learning at Its Best
To Jeremy, learning is at its best when he tackles an unfamiliar subject at an advanced level. He took AP U.S. history as a junior and realized that he had to continuously apply himself to keep up with his peers in a “very hard” class taught by former Blair history teacher Michael Eckert. However, scoring at the top of the AP exam gave him confidence to keep trying new things—like serving as French teacher Maria Bowditch’s teaching assistant and auditioning for Blair’s musical production of Seussical his senior year. “I had always been an athlete, playing varsity tennis and running track, but I wanted to continually challenge myself in new situations,” he said. “Being in the cast of Seussical was the first time I had ever sung, and it was so cool!”

Jeremy has continued singing at Brown, where he is president of an a cappella group, and he has tried other new activities, too. He has recently been leading efforts to bridge art and science/technology initiatives between Brown and the Rhode Island School of Design, and he is currently working as a research analyst for a virtual-reality market intelligence company, offering insights and recommendations on the way virtual-reality technology will affect different business sectors.

Academically, Jeremy has continued taking classes in areas that are completely new to him. In fact, that’s how he got into engineering—it was a subject he knew nothing about. “All the material was unfamiliar in my first engineering class; everything was almost a surprise,” he said. “But because I had the math tools and skills, I could survive. Now I love engineering and the math that goes along with it. I attribute that to my math classes at Blair and to all my teachers who pushed me, made me work hard and held me to high standards.”

Admitting that he was very naïve about the college process, Jeremy is happy that he chose to attend Brown, as its collaborative environment is perfect for him. “I’ve become friends with some amazing, passionate, interesting, smart people who have made me think critically about what I’m doing with my college experience,” he said. “My classes at Brown are challenging, but Blair definitely taught me that working hard is a good thing, and my math skills helped me get a foot in the door of engineering. I would have floundered without the sense of self-pride I gained at Blair. I care about the work I do, and I hold myself responsible for doing it to the best of my ability.”

As Jeremy considers his future in engineering, he intends to pursue a role in product design, combining his creative side with the analytical process of the discipline. And as he considers his past, and what got him to where he is now, he offers a word of wisdom to Blair students: Take your math classes seriously, and take yourself seriously in your math classes. “Believe in the value of your hard work and trust that while you may very well have interests other than math, that doesn’t mean you’re not cut out to be a great math mind, either on the side or full time.”

“I had always been an athlete, playing varsity tennis and running track, but I wanted to continually challenge myself in new situations.”
Leucretia Shaw discovered her love of teaching while she was still in elementary school. She had five older siblings, and when her nieces and nephews visited her mom’s home in the Bronx, New York, Auntie Cretia kept them busy and entertained in her makeshift classroom: “I had the kids sit on the floor ‘crisscross applesauce,’ and once the easel chalkboard was set up, class would begin,” Leucretia laughed. “I taught them all how to read, write, tie their own shoes and even how to braid hair.”

Fast forward to 2016, and Leucretia is clearly as fired up as ever about working with kids. As Blair’s associate dean of admission, she spends much of her time meeting and talking with students and their families about the tremendous opportunity of a boarding-school education. An alumna of The Lawrenceville School, she speaks from the experience of her student days, as well as her 18-year career as a faculty member at St. James School, Lawrenceville and Blair, during which time teaching, coaching, dorm parenting, club advising and more have all been part of a day’s work.

Leucretia joined Blair’s faculty in 2010, when she, her husband, Nigel, and their children, Nia ’17 and Ian, moved to northern New Jersey to ease Nigel’s daily commute. Here, she has taught Spanish 1, 3 and 4; served as an advisor, monitor and a member of the Faculty Executive Committee; and coordinated two service trips to Costa Rica. Two years ago, she added a new dimension to her career with her work in admission.

No matter what role she’s played in the educational realm, though, Leucretia, who holds a BA in Spanish with a concentration in language teacher preparation from Georgetown University and an MA in educational leadership from Columbia University’s Teachers College, has remained focused on the students she serves. In fact, she describes the teaching profession as “the ultimate in service”—and, for Leucretia, service to others is a lifelong commitment that began when she volunteered in a daycare center as a young teenager, grew in high school and college when she tutored disadvantaged students, and continues to this day in the hours she devotes to serving families in need at two local food pantries.

Spend some time getting to know Leucretia Shaw, an educator, admission professional, wife, mother and community volunteer whose passion for her teaching vocation is evident in the energy, enthusiasm and joy she shares with the Blair community every day.
Q. You’ve said your admission to The Lawrenceville School was “the best thing” that ever happened to you. What was it like to transition from your neighborhood middle school in the Bronx to Lawrenceville, and what made your experience there so impactful?

A. Lawrenceville was the best thing that ever happened to me because, almost instantly, my concept of the world broadened, and the possibilities for my life seemed endless. The door was opened for me to meet people I would never have met otherwise and to take part in a number of experiences that were not available to me before I matriculated at Lawrenceville. As for the transition, let’s just say it was not easy. I was certainly an atypical student for Lawrenceville, so I had much to prove.

Q. Why did you decide to pursue a Spanish major at Georgetown University? What was your experience in language teacher training like?

A. I was always good at Spanish in school, as I had started learning the language at the age of 7 from my neighbor, a native of Puerto Rico. Our families spent a good deal of time together when I was a child, so I picked up words here and there and would ask specifically how to say certain things. Throughout middle school and high school, I excelled in Spanish, and I knew I wanted to use it in my career. I had the great fortune of studying abroad in Spain during my sophomore year at Lawrenceville, and I also did an independent study as a senior at Lawrenceville during which I served as teacher’s aide in a beginner-level Spanish class. Each of these experiences, combined with the fact that I had been accepted into Georgetown University’s languages and linguistics school, the only one in the nation at the time, are the reasons I pursued a Spanish major. Because I already loved teaching people things that I knew or saw as essential for them to know, the student-teaching part of language teacher training was exhilarating. I truly had a blast! I did my student teaching in a public high school outside Washington, D.C. It was more about practice than theory, but I enjoyed my classes in child psychology and Spanish teaching methodology, among others. All in all, I was sort of the last (wo)man standing in the language teacher prep program at Georgetown. The language school had merged with the college of arts and sciences and some of the courses of study were being eliminated or changed to reflect the merge. I practically had to beg the administration to let me continue on the track I had started, and thank goodness I did. That experience has been invaluable to my career.
Q. Did you have a teacher who “went the extra mile” for you? Who was it, and why was he/she special?

A. Looking back, I am very fortunate to have had a number of great teachers; it is difficult to choose just one. There are qualities that each teacher possessed, though, that made the difference. The teachers I admired and hoped to be for my students were all kind, passionate about their subject matter and interested in me as a person. Each believed in my abilities and held me to a high standard while maintaining a sense of humor.

Q. Service to others is an important part of your life, and you’ve done everything from working with at-risk youth as a teenager to volunteering significant hours at local food pantries as an adult. Who inspired this commitment to service in you, and what has been your most meaningful service experience?

A. I credit my mother with planting the seed in me to live my life in service to others. She was always helping others in big and small ways. Additionally, I wholeheartedly believe that “to whom much is given, much is required.” I have been fortunate in my life, and to show my gratitude, I give back. Ultimately, we all need help in some situation or another; what is humanity if we cannot be there for each other? Teaching is my most meaningful service experience. Sharing knowledge with someone else, with the goal of helping that person make progress for herself, her community or society at large, is the ultimate form of giving back.

Q. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

A. I am most grateful for the people in my life—family, friends, colleagues, students, strangers—who inspire me or move me by their words or actions.

Q. If you could commit the time to becoming an expert at one thing, what would it be?

A. I would love to explore my creative/artistic side. It would be nice to become an expert in some element of the fine or performing arts, like design, drawing and painting or dancing, singing, acting and playing an instrument.

Q. How did your career in the classroom prepare you for admission work? What do you like most about your current role as associate dean of admission?

A. Over the years, I have had lots of practice talking to young people, asking them questions, and trying to help them find and display what makes each of them great, so I am quite comfortable interviewing prospective students. I love hearing
about their involvements, experiences and passions and getting to share those elements of each applicant with the admission committee and eventually (if the student comes to Blair) with the entire faculty. Also, having been in the classroom, I can speak to families from firsthand experience about the magic that happens in the classrooms here at Blair. The best part of my role as associate dean of admission is being able to brag about Blair to prospective students and their families, to admission peers at other schools, and to consultants and placement professionals in the United States and abroad.

Q. Where have you traveled on behalf of Blair’s admission office, and how much of your time is spent on the road?

A. I have traveled to several states, including Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania, and to Mexico and the Caribbean. Any time spent on the road is mostly in the fall and some in the spring.

Q. What advice would you give to a student who wants to apply to Blair but doesn’t think he or she will fit in?

A. I would tell that student to apply anyway. I cannot say that Blair is all things to all people, but more often than not, we try to be, and it certainly feels like we are all things to all people in particular situations.

Q. What would constitute a “perfect” day for you?

A. Any day that I get an opportunity to do for others is a “perfect” day.
Throughout his professional career, and much of his personal life, Paul Heagy ’54 has tallied an impressive record of service to others. Following his time at Blair, he enlisted in the United States Navy, proudly serving our country for 31 years, including a tour overseas during the Vietnam War. Then, in 2006, two months into his retirement, a friend asked Paul to join him on the volunteer staff at Flagler Hospital in St. Augustine, Florida, where he has since donated his time every week for the last decade. In January 2016, the hospital recognized Paul for achieving an admirable service milestone: surpassing 10,000 volunteer hours, a benchmark he reached in fewer than 10 years.

What began as a means to fill some free time during the early days of his retirement has since grown into a passion for Paul, who describes the volunteer staff at Flagler as “family.” As president of the hospital’s auxiliary board of directors, Paul oversees the operations of more than 200 hospital volunteers, who give 63,000 working hours per year aiding 23 hospital departments, in addition to raising upward of $100,000 annually to support Flagler’s programs. His responsibilities as president also include conducting monthly orientation sessions for new volunteers and running the hospital’s annual Junior Volunteers summer program, which gives high school students real-life experience in the medical field.

Additionally, Paul spends several hours each week working in the emergency room, a post he has held since joining Flagler’s team. From performing routine tasks, such as cleaning rooms to prepare for new patients and stocking medicine cabinets, to contributing to Flagler’s exceptional record of patient care by interacting with and comforting patients and their families, Paul said every day brings new challenges and adventures. “It’s never the same thing day in and day out, and I’ve done it for 10 years,” he explained.

The biggest challenge at Flagler, he added, is trying to keep the high-volume hospital and trauma center running efficiently. Serving a population of more than 210,000 in Florida’s St. John’s County, Flagler depends on Paul and his volunteers to assist nurses and other personnel. “By performing certain tasks, we volunteers can help save nurses’ time, so they can focus on patient care,” he said. “I like to say that we—the volunteers—are on-purpose people. We know what we have to do, and we come back every day and do it.”

Paul’s commitment to the medical field began during his days as a Navy corpsman, a rating he achieved soon after his enlistment, and in part thanks to Blair, which, Paul noted, gave him the structure and study skills he needed to do “famously well” on a number of difficult assessments. His first duty assignment was Naval Hospital Philadelphia, where he worked for a year before attending radiology school in 1955. This opportunity extended his enlistment for a year, and that summer, he met his soon-to-be wife, Kay, who was studying to be a nurse at the nearby Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. They were married in 1957 before Paul headed out on a tour of duty with the Marine Corps and eventually was stationed with troops on the ground.
in Vietnam during the Vietnam War. He continued to gain medical experience as an aircrewman, often aiding in helicopter medevac situations. He also worked with the medical civic-action program, offering medical attention to citizens, in many cases orphaned children, living in rural areas of Vietnam near where he was stationed.

Upon his return stateside, Paul, now a senior corpsman, was selected to attend further schooling with the Hospital Corps, promoting him to the equivalent of a physician’s assistant in today’s terms. He was later summoned for a special program: serving as a physician’s assistant at Camp David during the presidencies of Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon, where he provided medical treatment for the presidents, first families, and Cabinet and Secret Service members. He was later assigned to the White House staff, again providing medical treatment to the first family and other staff members, often traveling across the country with government personnel to do so.

Through the years of his military career, Paul and Kay celebrated the birth of their two children, Michael and Patricia, and he managed college-level coursework, earning two associate degrees, as well as a bachelor of science degree from the University of the State of New York. About the time of the Watergate scandal, Paul found that he wished to limit his workday to the standard eight hours and travel less frequently, so he requested a move to Jacksonville, Florida, which was granted. He worked at Naval Hospital Jacksonville for a short time before taking an assignment as command master chief at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. He was later named senior Navy corpsman and moved to Norfolk, Virginia, where he oversaw a fleet of 300 hospital corpsmen. To end his career with the Navy, Paul and his family moved one last time to the Little Creek Naval Dispensary in nearby Virginia Beach. On July 30, 1984, after more than 30 years of service, Paul retired from the Navy.

He spent the next 14 years as security manager for Northrop Grumman Corporation, during which his responsibilities included securing company grounds, government property and classified information going to and coming from the modified aircraft. During his years at Northrop, Paul also resumed his work with the Boy Scouts of America. Having dedicated 25 years to the organization, he was ultimately granted the Silver Beaver Award, a prized accolade that nationally recognized him for his distinguished service to youth. When he was ready to retire from the corporate world, a colleague and friend told Paul about volunteer opportunities at Flagler.

With his 80th birthday now behind him, Paul says he still isn’t ready to completely retire just yet. In fact, he recently ramped up his volunteer efforts, initiating a major campaign for the Flagler volunteers to fully endow a neonatal unit for the hospital, which required raising more than $400,000. Paul said when he hands the hospital’s president the final check for the project at their next board meeting, he and his dedicated staff will be eager and ready to take on the next project, whatever it may be.

“It just seems that working with people and doing things for others was a spark that found its way into my life.”

Paul tended to children outside a church in Vietnam as part of the MED CAP program in 1967.
In November, Vanguard Group founder John C. Bogle ’47 accepted the National Institute of Social Sciences’ Annual Gold Medal for Distinguished Service to Humanity, a prestigious, century-old award that has previously honored U.S. presidents, industrialists, Nobel Prize winners and world-famous athletes.

As one of three medalists in 2015, Mr. Bogle was recognized for his impact as the inventor of the world’s first index mutual fund, which “revolutionized the way America’s Main Street families invest.” Also honored were fellow medal recipients Paul Krugman, winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, and world figure-skating champion Michelle W. Kwan.

“Rare indeed has it been for a leader in the investment community to be noted for ‘Service to Humanity’ at a time when ‘Service to Self’ seems more the mode of the moment for the denizens of Wall Street,” said Mr. Bogle after accepting the award at an institute dinner in New York City. “But, truth be told, during my 64-year career, I’ve always ‘marched to a different drummer.’ I’ve done my utmost to serve that slice of humanity represented by our nation’s investors—more than 100 million strong—who are working to build a sound financial future for themselves and their loved ones.”

Blair to Princeton

Mr. Bogle then traced his professional path from Blair Academy to Princeton University, where a 1949 Fortune article inspired him to pen his 1951 senior thesis, “The Economic Role of the Investment Company.” It called for mutual funds to place the interests of their shareholders first and laid out the rationale for the index fund.

His thesis led to a job with Wellington Management Company, where—at age 35—he was named CEO in 1965. An unsuccessful merger and a massive bear market in stocks led to his termination in 1974, when Mr. Bogle founded Vanguard, turning the industry structure upside down.

Mr. Bogle noted that he accepted the award with “great humility,” especially in light of the many other eminent medalists of the last century, including William Howard Taft, Andrew Carnegie, Calvin Coolidge, Marie Curie, George C. Marshall and Charles A. Lindbergh.

As for his own impact on and service to humanity, he said: “We can easily measure the extra investment returns earned by the structure and strategy developed at Vanguard 41 years ago, and it comes to more than $250 billion of savings to our investors. But more important than even that huge number is that we have helped millions of individual human beings and their families to live more comfortably, to send their children to college, to buy a home and to enjoy a more comfortable retirement—even to do well enough to exercise their philanthropic instincts.”
Edwin M. Sabol ’36, founder of NFL Films, changed the way football is broadcast and viewed around the world, a feat that earned him induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame and his organization more than 100 Emmys. As the Hall of Fame card bearing his name and photograph recounts, Mr. Sabol “revolutionized how sports were filmed and presented” in his role as NFL Films founder, president and chairman.

Mr. Sabol was born on September 11, 1916, in Atlantic City, New Jersey, but grew up in Philadelphia. At Blair Academy, he excelled in several sports, most notably swimming, and set World’s Interscholastic records in the 40- and 100-yard freestyle races as a senior. According to Herb Siegel ’46, Mr. Sabol’s swimming record began to garner national recognition for Blair as the school to attend if you were interested in the sport of swimming and wanted to be coached by the now-famous Chet Williams.

Mr. Sabol continued his aquatic pursuits after accepting a scholarship to The Ohio State University, and he was selected to try out for the 1936 Olympic team. Mr. Siegel recounted the results of the team trials: “As he got out of the pool and was congratulated for breaking the pool record and being selected to compete in the Olympic Games in Germany, Ed said, ‘I will not swim before Hitler in Nazi Germany.’ In the next group, Peter Fick, for the first time, bested Ed’s record by one-tenth of a second and, therefore, was selected for the Olympics. An article in The Saturday Evening Post back then described how Ohio State’s coach, Mike Peppie, filmed Ed swimming from beneath the water and then had Peter Fick copy his style.”

Mr. Sabol loved Blair so much that he named his daughter after the School—as well as the film company he founded with son Steve, which was originally called Blair Motion Pictures (although that name eventually changed to NFL Films). In a 2005 Blair Bulletin article, Mr. Sabol made two things clear: his love of Blair and his passion for his profession. “The best days of my life were at Blair,” he told the magazine. “I had so much fun there! You just don’t realize that, though, when it is happening.”

He went on to offer advice to readers about remaining inspired by their work. Of his success with NFL Films, he said, “It was never for the money. I loved filming and loved filming the football games. When you love what you’re doing, all other things come automatically. When you like something, it’s easy. I’ve always said, ‘Don’t let people tell you about the way things should be done; do it your own way!’”

Mr. Sabol, the only Blair alumnus to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, died at the age of 98 in early 2015.
Blair’s former writer-in-residence Steven Kampmann returned to campus last fall to teach “Dream Memoir,” a first-of-its-kind seminar that gave nine students the opportunity to dive deeply into the writing process as they explored connections between their dreams and life experiences. In an intensive yet unconventional course, students learned about the dream world and how to write meaningful memoir, prompted by an element of something they had dreamt. They were encouraged to share their memoirs with those for whom it would be equally important, strengthening the connection between their own and others’ stories. Mr. Kampmann designed the creative core of the course to be “counterintuitive to today’s sound-bite culture,” tapping into students’ imaginations, their passion for self-expression and, most of all, their dreams.

‘Furnace of Creativity’
An actor, screenwriter, and director with a slew of film and television credits, Mr. Kampmann is a familiar face at Blair. He and his wife, actress/writer Judith Kahan Kampmann, served on the faculty from 1998 to 2010, during which time Mr. Kampmann taught public speaking, creative memoir, and the popular senior-level English “Dreams” course, while Mrs. Kampmann established and grew the School’s video studies program. Together, they were an artistic force to be reckoned with. “Judith and I always taught at the creative end of the spectrum,” he said. “Our courses tried to give students an outlet to find and express their unique voices.”

Since retiring from Blair five years ago, Mr. Kampmann has continued to write, lecture, and pursue his lifelong fascination with dreams. He returned to the School in spring 2015 to present a Society of Skeptics program on the meaning of dreams, and when nearly 200 students attended the lecture, Mr. Kampmann and Head of School Chris Fortunato realized that the dream world was a subject that continued to resonate with Blair kids. They began to explore ways to avail students of Mr. Kampmann’s expertise, and the “Dream Memoir” seminar was born.

“Dreams are a furnace of creativity within you,” Mr. Kampmann said. “Stephen King dreamed the entire plot of Misery, and Paul McCartney dreamed the melody of ‘Yesterday.’ When students are connected to their dream world, they are much more likely to think ‘outside the box’ when faced with a problem or challenge. My lifetime interest in dreams has definitively made me a more creative person, not only in writing film but in all aspects of my life.”

A ‘Different Dynamic’
Senior Brianna Annunziata ’16 aptly described “Dream Memoir” as having a “different dynamic” than other courses at Blair. Offered as an evening seminar, the class met on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. in Chesnutt Chapel rather than in a regular classroom, and grading was pass/fail, removing the pressure of working for a
grade and allowing for greater freedom of expression. “We were hoping to enroll eight to 10 students, a number that would give each person ample opportunity to explore and share dream experiences,” Mr. Kampmann said. “Truthfully, there was no guarantee anyone would sign up.” But despite this being an “extra” course that did not count toward a departmental requirement, nine “dream-curious” students quickly registered, impressing Mr. Kampmann with their willingness to add the seminar to their busy schedules.

Perhaps most importantly, this was the first time “Dream Memoir” was ever taught—anywhere. “I told my students they were inventing the process of dream memoir,” Mr. Kampmann said, explaining that dream memoir is not dream analysis but rather the recording of a memory or a story triggered by some part of a dream. “They were on the cutting edge of a dynamic new experience as they bridged their subconscious and conscious lives through sharing dreams and writing memories from them. It says something special about Blair as a school to offer students an alternative learning outlet like dream memoir.”

Brianna signed up for “Dream Memoir” to further her understanding of the convergence of science, dreams and the human mind. “I loved learning about the psychology of dreams as well as their spiritual and real-life applications,” she said. “Our minds are trying to communicate with us through dreams, and that helps us discover more about who we are at the deepest level. In sharing memoirs and stories with my classmates, I learned their stories and became more connected to them, too.”

For Emily Lunger ’17, enrolling in “Dream Memoir” was one of the best decisions of her junior year. “Mr. Kampmann created a haven of relaxation and imagination,” she said. “I was able to immerse myself in a seminar that was both about my own life through dreams and about gaining an understanding of others’ lives by sharing stories and feedback. I learned valuable lessons, like why it’s so important to face your fears. Mr. Kampmann gave us an outlet that truly opened my eyes to the way I see the world—I’m thankful to have had the opportunity to work with him.”

Look for the Book
Mr. Kampmann hopes to incorporate his experience of teaching dream memoir at Blair in an upcoming book, *Dream Memoir—A Creative Life Inspired by Dreams*. Although he will include some information on the workings of dreams and dream analysis, the book will focus on a method of writing meaningful memoir originating from a person’s dream. It will also include a number of Mr. Kampmann’s personal dream memoirs covering different chapters and moments in his life. “Old and new dreams are stimulating new dream memoirs,” he said. “The book is growing.” With a goal of ultimately creating deeper connections among us, dream memoir fits the Blair ethos like a dream.

In March, Mr. Kampmann addressed the Society of Skeptics about creativity and film in “The Making of Stealing Home from Script to Screen.” To watch a video of his presentation, visit [www.blair.edu/kampmann](http://www.blair.edu/kampmann).
A visit to the maker space during “B” block reveals a firsthand look at the exciting, ongoing work of Blair’s robotics class—the nine students enrolled in the yearlong computer science elective are actually building a life-size humanoid robot. Meanwhile, over in Timken Library’s technology classroom, three students are taking on the challenge of creating original smartphone apps in the semester-long phone app design course. This is the second year Blair has offered these project-based electives, two courses that veteran computer science department chair and Director of Technology Sam Adams said “connect students to the future” through their incorporation of leading-edge technology and their collaborative, hands-on approach.

The classroom vibe in robotics and in smartphone app design is dynamic and collegial as students, who range from freshmen to seniors with varying levels of programming and tech experience, work through the largely self-paced, Internet-based curriculum. Mr. Adams, an engineer with undergraduate and graduate degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and 20 years’ experience teaching computer science, sees his role as that of facilitator and guide, as he identifies goals and tasks for students to complete and directs them to online tutorials for specific knowledge.

“I’m learning right along with my students,” he noted, clearly as intrigued as the kids about building a robot from scratch and developing smartphone apps using the latest programming languages. “There is a real-world aspect to the projects and the teamwork required to execute them that keeps everyone engaged in learning and doing. Students have to figure things out as they go, and, in the process, they’re developing problem-solving skills that will be invaluable in college and in life.”

Robotics meets one day each week in the technology classroom, where students use the LEGO MINDSTORMS EV3 system to explore and master the discipline’s basic concepts. Developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the LEGO system is an “amazing tool,” according to Mr. Adams, that makes the mechanical and electrical engineering as well as the programming aspects of robotics accessible to students. “There is a great deal of assembling and disassembling going on, and students who are curious about particular topics can pursue them in depth,” Mr. Adams said. “That’s a big strength of project-based learning.”

For their remaining three weekly meetings, students head to the Park Street maker space, where they are working together to bring their robot to life. The class is participating in the open-source InMoov project, a collaborative online effort that has connected schools and individuals worldwide who are interested in building 3D-printed, life-size robots. With laptops open on tables covered with hundreds of plastic parts, Blair robotics students regularly consult blogs and web pages as they go about their tasks of printing components on the MakerBot 3D printer and assembling, testing, powering up and, occasionally, starting over when pieces break or ideas don’t come together as planned. Mr. Adams updates whiteboard lists of task assignments and problems requiring resolution, keeping the work on track.

Teamwork is essential, especially because the InMoov website is more of a guide than a set of directions. “Other groups that post to the InMoov site are building their robots using different parts,” Josh Walker ’16 said as he fitted the robot’s gear-and-screw shoulder-movement mechanism together. “We have to figure out how to make our robot work with our parts.” Irene Choi ’18 is the designated printer of parts, and she explained how each component must be hand-filed after it

*Irene Choi ’18 prints robot components on the 3D printer.*
comes off the printer. Harley Wedholm ’17 and Michael Ietta ’19 had recently fabricated the robot’s hands using more than 100 of those parts, while Jason Pan ’18, Spencer Quinn ’18 and Ronan Smarth ’18 worked on the chest, eyes and circuit boards, respectively. Ronan has “learned a lot” in robotics—a sentiment echoed by several of his classmates. “I might want to study engineering or technology in college,” he added. “This course is helping me figure out whether that’s something I want to do.” Will Pinkerton ’18 signed up for robotics for a different reason: “I wanted to do something outside my comfort zone. I’m definitely enjoying it,” he said. “Everything we’ve been able to accomplish—even something like making the robot’s wrist turn—has been so cool.”

Mr. Adams noted that building the robot is a multiyear program at Blair, and the goal for 2015-2016 is to have it entirely assembled and all parts moving. That’s admittedly ambitious with just three class meetings in the maker space each week, but it’s an exciting project that the class is motivated to finish.

The students delving into smartphone apps also have an ambitious goal: Each is tasked with creating a working app by the end of the semester. Cole Schultz ’18 and Justin Choi ’18, who are working in a Macintosh environment with iPhones, came into the course with no programming experience; Josh, who is working in a Windows environment with an Android, has AP computer science under his belt.

In the first several weeks of the spring semester, all three students had installed and debugged emulators on their laptops— basically, software that would imitate a smartphone on their computers—and they were using online tutorials to explore sample code in a development environment to gain an understanding of software capabilities.

Swift, the latest iPhone app language, is “all new” to Cole, but he is enjoying the experience of working with it. “Mr. Adams is helping us take this step by step, and I’ve learned a great deal already,” he said. Eventually, the classmates will decide on a single app and develop it for the iPhone and for the Android before further exploring what it can do.

Over and above the exposure to technology that robotics and phone app design offer Blair students, Mr. Adams sees tremendous value in the collaborative nature of the courses and in the fact that they inspire interest and excitement about engineering and computer science. “The projects we’re working on are real-world and complex, but fun,” he said. “They leave kids wanting to do even more.”

To view a student-produced video of maker space activity, visit www.blair.edu/robotics.
Innovation & Social Change Explored at TEDxBlairAcademy

In the spirit of world-renowned TED Conferences, where compelling ideas are shared through short, powerful speeches, Blair hosted the first-ever TEDxBlairAcademy in November in collaboration with Gill St. Bernard’s School. Nearly 100 students and teachers convened in Bogle Hall’s Cowan Auditorium for the four-hour conference focused on innovation and social change. Seven juniors and seniors representing Blair and Gill each spoke on a unique aspect of the topic, and participants also enjoyed videotaped TED talks, a presentation by Rutgers University School of Public Health research associate Daniel Giovenco and the opportunity to delve deeper into ideas over lunch. As noted in the opening video presentation on the origin of TEDx, it was a day for “curiosity, skepticism, inspiration and action.”

The idea to hold a TEDx event—the “x” denoting it as an independently organized TED event that helps share ideas in communities around the world—originated with Head of School Chris Fortunato and history department chair Jason Beck. “It’s important to give students opportunities to play around with big ideas,” said Mr. Beck, who coordinated the conference with Michael Chimes, Gill’s director of academic technology. “The intentionally broad topic of innovation and social change allowed our student speakers to intellectually inquire into aspects of their own lives and our rapidly changing society. The results of their scholarly exploration gave all our participants some interesting ideas to consider.”

The intersection of math and music, anxiety and authenticity around social media, and the humanity of machines were some of the concepts students examined in thought-provoking 18-minute talks. Blair senior Sanjay Paul ’16 discussed the ways in which beliefs factor into everyday decisions in a talk titled “It’s Complicated: Zero Sums and Relativity.” An accomplished debater and veteran Model UN participant, Sanjay found the TEDx forum completely different from other speaking opportunities. “This conference had a feeling of continuity as we moved from speaker to speaker with relative ease and enthusiasm,” he said. “It was great to sit back and listen to some really bright people discuss ideas they are passionate about!”

Ethics, Philosophy & the Art of Daily Living

During the fall semester, 15 freshmen and sophomores embraced the opportunity to think through some of life’s most potent philosophical questions and consider how their ideas on these topics connected to everyday life. These students were enrolled in “Introduction to Ethics,” a new course developed and taught by chaplain and religion and philosophy department chair Russell Powell that uses Plato’s most famous writings to examine how philosophy contributes to the art of living.

“There was never a dull moment in ‘Introduction to Ethics,’” Mr. Powell said, referring to the thought-provoking conversations that characterized class meetings. Typically, student interest directed the flow of conversation, while Mr. Powell guided the class in discovering and asking the “questions of intrigue” beneath the surface. “The Socratic ideal of living a life in which a person’s actions are in sync with his or her beliefs resonated immediately with students—they want to live meaningful lives,” he said. “We would think through the ideas we read about in Plato’s text and discuss how we could put them into practice. My students realized early on that the connection between what we did in ethics class and what we did outside class was robust.”

Jake Mantegna ’19 agreed that the lessons he learned in “Introduction to Ethics” could be readily applied to his everyday life—and that wasn’t what he expected when he signed up for the course as a means of satisfying the School’s religion and philosophy requirement. “This was a very interesting and intriguing class with great roundtable discussions about philosophical issues,” he said. “The single thing I loved most about this class and that set it apart
from others was that we often meditated before class to unwind and focus ourselves for the discussion ahead."

Mr. Powell, a graduate of Yale University (MDiv) and the University of North Carolina–Charlotte (BA in religious studies), taught at Yale’s Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics, Princeton University, Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton Day School before joining Blair’s faculty in 2015. He is currently working on his dissertation on ethics, politics and theology in the nature writings of John Muir and expects to receive his PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary in 2017. Throughout his education and career, Mr. Powell had often thought about teaching a philosophy course focused on a single text, and “Introduction to Ethics” brought that idea to life. He found teaching it—and creating a classroom environment in which students could freely share questions and concerns—personally and professionally rewarding.

“Discussing and exploring the many facets of Plato’s text and unpacking its meaning as a group can be life-changing; experiences such as this have certainly changed my life,” he said. “I wanted to help instill this method of detail-oriented academic inquiry in my students and help them see that it truly has bearing on the lives they lead.” Mr. Powell is looking forward to the unique perspectives each new group of students will bring to this course in the years ahead. ■

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**The Blair Alma Mater(s)**
by Holly Newcomb, Library Assistant

An October 7, 1920, editorial in *The Blair Breeze* addresses the life expectancy of school traditions: “Things that we regard today as customs are not among the memories of the students of a half decade ago… When we ‘come back’ to the school we love a decade hence, we may not recognize it. New buildings…may alter its physical appearance. New customs and traditions may honor its walls; new faces may grace the campus…” These words have certainly proven true, even with regard to the song that represents Blair to its graduates.

Blair Academy has had no fewer than three different songs as its alma mater. The first was “Vive La Old Blair Hall,” based on the old college/camp song “Vive La Companie.” As early as 1906, it was referred to as the school song, and it is identified as the alma mater in the 1911 and 1918 student handbooks. It continued in use as a “fight song” at pep rallies and sports events into the 1930s.

The second song, “Alma Mater,” composed by Thornton Allen (class of 1909) and Malcolm Joy (class of 1908) and dedicated to Headmaster Dr. John C. Sharpe, was first performed at a recital in February 1908. The Breeze and student handbooks from 1921 to 1941 list the song as the alma mater.

As modern Blair graduates may remember, the song known today as “The Blair Song” or “The Blair Alma Mater” was composed in 1919 by Blair faculty member Harry Colin Thorpe. Originally called “Blair Love Song,” it quickly became part of campus life and was performed at Class Day and Commencement exercises beginning in the 1920s. Handbooks from 1942 on list it as the alma mater.

The song has undergone some changes in recent years: The Arch replaced the Ark in the text, and new harmonies and arrangements have been written. It is the song that most, if not all, living alumni think of as the Blair song.

The editor of that 1920 Breeze concludes that, although Blair’s campus and customs would change, “…it will always be Blair, our alma mater…” and, indeed, it is. Vive la old Blair Hall…Dear Alma Mater true to thee…Ever, always, dear old Blair.
RICHIE EU '03 AND MITSUHARU KUROKAWA '03 have a great deal in common: As teenagers, they moved half a world away from their families to attend high school abroad; they embraced their Blair experiences and successfully navigated the English language, American culture and unfamiliar dining-hall food; they are fellow Babson College alumni; and they share a connection so deep that Richie proudly spoke at Mitsu's 2013 wedding about his great and loyal friend.

Coincidentally, the classmates also happen to be next-generation executives in long-established and highly respected family businesses, Richie at Eu Yan Sang International (EYSI), Asia's largest traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) group outside China, and Mitsu at Toraya Confectionery Co. Ltd., maker of celebrated Japanese sweets and purveyor to the imperial court. Both companies are rooted in tradition, hold similar values regarding quality and heritage, and enjoy the esteem and trust of millions of customers. However, they also face a particular challenge: keeping their time-honored products relevant in the eyes of modern-day consumers.

In fall 2015, the Blair classmates took on this challenge with the public launch of a new artisan confection, a collaborative first for EYSI and Toraya that centered on an exotic yet healthful ingredient—edible swiftlet's nest. The project took a year of careful planning by teams from EYSI and Toraya to come to its sweet ending, but, according to Richie, the idea for collaboration was literally “hatched within the halls of Blair.”

Friends for Life

Richie and Mitsu met in fall 2001 during a welcome-international-students excursion to a Blairstown pizza place. Richie was a returning sophomore, having come to Blair from Singapore in the footsteps of five great-uncles, Alexander K. Eu ’44, Andrew K. W. Eu ’48, Fred K. F. Eu ’48, John K. Eu ’48 and Charles K. P. Eu ’44. Mitsu, a new sophomore, had just arrived at the School from Japan. Their conversation on that bus ride to the restaurant was mostly about how to spell Mitsu’s last name, but it was also the beginning of an enduring friendship.

Both Richie and Mitsu benefited tremendously from their Blair experience, growing up in many ways as they lived far from home for the first time. “During my four years at Blair, I went from being ‘the oldest young person you’d ever meet’ (according to mathematics teacher Latta Browse) to someone who interacted with a diverse range of personalities with self-assurance,” Richie said. He credits
history teacher Martin Miller, PhD, and English teacher Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79 with pushing him to achieve high academic standards, and varsity basketball coach Joe Mantegna, his advisor, with teaching him the importance of separating emotions from work, a skill that is “hugely important in a family-owned business.”

Mitsu described his Blair years as some of the most impactful of his life, during which he gained confidence in his ability to survive in a challenging environment and had the invaluable experience of living in a different culture with different rules and expectations. English teacher Robert Cooke mentored him through the intricacies of the English language with kindness and a great sense of humor, and Mitsu discovered a love for creating pottery and ceramics under art teacher Philip Homes, which led to his winning the 3D art award his junior and senior years. He especially appreciated the “well-designed” physics class of science teacher Rick Clarke, PhD, and Mr. Browse’s “challenging” calculus BC class, never having imagined when he left Japan that those subjects would be among his favorites.

Even with all they gained academically and culturally in their years at Blair, the lasting friendships Richie and Mitsu forged here remain an especially meaningful part of their experience. “I can count an 18th-generation family-business kid from Tokyo, a New Orleans chef, a current NBA player from the South Sudan, a banker from Hong Kong and a fellow family-business kid from New Jersey among my closest friends—that is not a normal occurrence,” Richie quipped.

Richie and Mitsu’s friendship—and their discovery that each was a “business kid” whose family owned a respected and long-standing Asian company—led to conversations, even as Blair students, about someday “doing something” together. These conversations continued through their college years as business and entrepreneurship majors at Babson College and into the start of their professional lives. Finally, when they became managers at their respective companies, “someday” arrived.
Family Businesses, Family Values

Richie began working for EYSI in 2013, following two years of mandatory service in the Singapore military, his 2009 graduation from Babson and four years in private equity. His interest in joining the family enterprise had strengthened as he observed his father, EYSI CEO Richard Y. M. Eu, grow the company from six stores to its current 300. In addition, the company mission—“caring for mankind”—resonated deeply, and he wanted to further his family’s legacy in the health and wellness sector. He started in business development at an EYSI subsidiary in Sydney, Australia, before moving to his two current roles: general manager in business development for Eu Yan Sang Hong Kong and strategic development manager for EYSI.

Mitsu opted to join Toraya right out of college. “It was my dream,” he stated simply. “Toraya is as much a part of my identity as is being Japanese.” The company’s dedication to maintaining the heritage, artistry and meaning of traditional Japanese confectionery embodied important family and cultural values for Mitsu, and living those values gave him motivation and goals. He knew that whatever he wanted to accomplish in life, he could do as part of his family’s business. Mitsu spent his initial three years at Toraya learning manufacturing operations, first at a factory and then as a pâtissier in the kitchen of the company’s Paris boutique. Following that, he moved into management and serves now as director of the company, where his work revolves around projects that enrich Toraya’s value and legacy for today’s consumer.

Collaboration

Tradition and heritage are hallmarks of the success Toraya and EYSI have enjoyed, but, as Richie pragmatically observed, “That doesn’t mean we should sit back and allow motivated competitors, new ideas and emerging platforms to overtake us.” Two years ago, Richie and Mitsu met with teams from their respective companies to propose the exploration of a collaborative project. They hoped to tap into one another’s strengths, develop opportunities for product innovation and gain entrée to new markets. “Both companies were as fascinated and excited as we were about the collaboration,” Mitsu said, and a process of careful research and planning began.

The result was a brand-new product: a Toraya wagashi (traditional Japanese confection) made with EYSI’s signature, high-quality edible bird’s nest, a TCM delicacy credited with medicinal powers. Em-bu-kan, as the collaboration sweet was named, debuted on November 2, 2015, at a month-long specially curated exhibit in Toraya’s Tokyo Midtown shop. The pop-up space enticed customers with beautifully displayed Em-bu-kan and exclusively packaged bird’s nest. It was designed to demystify the therapeutic properties of bird’s nest for Japanese consumers, as well as to stimulate conversation about food therapy—and, of course, inspire sales.

Richie and Mitsu deemed the collaboration a success, notwithstanding the fact that the inventive sweet sold out daily during the exhibition. For Richie, the “palpable buzz created within the walls of EYSI” over five countries...
Eu Yan Sang International (EYSI) is an integrative health and wellness company whose products and services are rooted in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Founded in 1879 by Eu Kong, a Chinese native and great-great-grandfather of Richie Eu ’03, the business’s first establishment was a shop in Gopeng, Perak, Malaysia, that dispensed medicine and herbs to tin miners suffering from opium addiction. Eu Kong named his shop “Yan Sang,” which translates to “caring for mankind,” a corporate value that remains strongly held nearly 140 years later. Today, EYSI is known throughout Asia for its strict quality control, high manufacturing standards and excellent customer service. The company operates 268 retail outlets, four food and beverage stores, and 35 TCM clinics in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China and Australia. www.EuYanSang.com

Toraya Confectionery Co. Ltd. is a maker and purveyor of wagashi, traditional Japanese sweets that represent the essence of Japanese culture and play a vital role in seasonal celebrations and lifetime milestones. Since the early 16th century, when the business was founded in Kyoto by Enchu Kurokawa, Toraya artisans have used bean paste and other ingredients of exceptional quality to carefully craft wagashi that appeal to all five senses. The company's mission is “to please customers with delicious wagashi.” Mitsuhiro Kurokawa, father of Mitsuharu Kurokawa ’03, is currently the 17th-generation president of Toraya, which has three manufacturing facilities, about 80 shops throughout Japan and a boutique in Paris. www.toraya-group.co.jp

was significant. “This collaboration brought EYSI into Tokyo—a new market for us—and we learned a lot from Toraya’s team in terms of product and package design, ingredient curation, and visual presentation,” he said. “More importantly, I believe this collaboration demonstrated to our customers and fans that by partnering with a highly respected brand like Toraya, we are constantly innovating and pushing the envelope of accessible and relevant consumer goods.”

Mitsu was especially pleased that Toraya had created wagashi that had never been made before, and he was confident that em-bu-kan would become part of the company’s line. The collaboration enabled Toraya’s team to gauge the Japanese market’s reaction to unfamiliar
ingredients, and, with an eye to expansion into some of EYSI’s core market areas, the team was able to investigate the flavor profiles and taste preferences of EYSI consumers in Hong Kong and Singapore.

The Future Looks Sweet
With a successful collaboration under their belts, the next question is, logically, will EYSI and Toraya work together in the future? If the decision is left to Richie and Mitsu, the answer will likely be yes, although the specifics have yet to take shape. It may be a new wagashi that incorporates a different TCM ingredient, a pop-up that would bring Toraya to one of EYSI’s operating countries or something altogether unique. “We will continue to seek advice from each other on how best to enter the market in each other’s core regions—North Asia/Japan vs. Southeast Asia/Singapore,” Mitsu said, and Richie surmised that bringing Toraya to EYSI’s core market would be a “great exercise” that would help Toraya understand the Southeast Asian palate, much as his company’s foray into Tokyo had helped EYSI.

Whatever the future holds for EYSI and Toraya, the Blair classmates remain fast friends, and neither Richie nor Mitsu sugar-coated his advice for the School’s international students: From Richie—Have fun, meet as many students and faculty as you can, ask anything and everything, and don’t be afraid of standing out. Embrace the fact that you come from a different culture, and be confident in trying out new experiences, journeys and adventures. From Mitsu—Enjoy. Be involved. Don’t hesitate to speak up. And good luck with the food.

Head of School Chris Fortunato and Assistant Head of School for Enrollment and Communications Peter G. Curran visited a combined six cities during coinciding trips to Asia last November. This sojourn marked Mr. Fortunato’s and Mr. Curran’s first visit to Shanghai, and both enjoyed the opportunity throughout their time in Asia to meet prospective families, catch up with alumni and share news from campus with parents of current students.

Mr. Fortunato concluded his trip with a stop in London, where he attended a reception for alumni, parents and friends hosted by Stathes Kulukundis ’60.
It didn’t take long for Kristen Bogart ’01 to realize that Blair uniquely prepared her to succeed in the fashion and retail industry. Since she first entered the field 13 years ago as a sales associate at Ralph Lauren, Kristen has regularly relied on her “ability and confidence to connect with various leaders” to advance her career, skills she says stem directly from her experiences at Blair.

Because Blair has been so instrumental in her own professional development—for 10 years in various positions at Ralph Lauren, and now at Anthropologie, where she serves as district visual manager for the chain's New York City stores—Kristen has developed a “pay-it-forward” mentality that has made her one of the most active mentors in Blair’s Networking Program, which pairs young alumni with more experienced graduates who can offer professional advice, job opportunities and career connections.

In collaboration with Blair’s advancement office, Kristen has helped match two Blair alumnae with jobs at Anthropologie’s store in New York City’s Chelsea Market: Cheryl Lima ’14 in May 2015 as a part-time sales associate and Kymbia Ainsworth ’07 in September 2015 as the store’s full-time manager-in-training.

“My years at Blair were, by far, the most formative of my life,” Kristen explained. “Now that I have been out of school for 15 years, it has become increasingly evident how my Blair education has impacted my personal development. At Blair, I had the privilege of being a Bogle Brothers scholar. As such, I feel it is my responsibility to give back. I am not in a position to do so through designating a scholarship, but I can help the Blair community by donating my time as a class representative and by sharing my professional experience, via networking and assisting my fellow alums in finding internships or positions within my company.”

It is not just a feeling of responsibility that inspires Kristen to support fellow Blair graduates in their professional endeavors: She knows firsthand that Blair instills in its students many of the qualities that make for a successful employee, including “Mentorship is mutually beneficial: The mentee gains from his or her mentor’s experiences and connections, and the mentor is rewarded with increased perspective, innovation and renewed enthusiasm.”
discipline, leadership skills, a willingness to work hard, and the ability to think critically and analytically. “Blair alumni are mature, composed and bright,” Kristen said. “The School also expects students to be productive, conscientious, respectful and kind, which are all key characteristics we strive to establish in our employees at Anthropologie. We consistently hire based on strong leadership skills, as opposed to technical aptitude. Obviously, development of leadership skills is at the core of the Blair experience, and having the opportunity to engage with these young leaders through Blair functions and, subsequently, in our Chelsea store has been an absolute pleasure.”

Director of Alumni Relations Jenny Maine, who personally pairs each networking match, is exceedingly pleased with the outcome of linking Cheryl and Kymbia with Kristen—especially because she used different platforms to connect them, illustrating the value of Blair’s multipronged approach to most effectively leveraging alumni expertise and establishing fruitful mentor-mentee relationships.

Brought Together by Social Media
In spring 2015, Kristen learned of an opening for a sales associate at her Chelsea store and immediately contacted Jenny, asking her to spread the word to the Blair community. Cheryl responded to a post about the opportunity on her class Facebook page, and the rest is history: She was hired for the summer and did so well in her position that she returned to the store over winter break in late 2015 to help with the holiday rush.

“Working at Anthropologie in Chelsea Market has been amazing,” said Cheryl, whose responsibilities included manning the cash register, overseeing the fitting rooms, answering phone calls and checking the store’s database for specific inventory.

“The main lessons I took away from the experience are that communication is absolutely key and that slow and steady win the race. I worked a lot of late shifts, so making the store look perfect was also essential. I had never been so thorough in my life!”

As a history and women and gender studies major at Franklin & Marshall College in Pennsylvania, Cheryl hopes to pursue a career in public relations, an area in which she gained some experience during her time at Anthropologie. “I felt responsible for helping our sales team achieve our goals, and I personally pitched many items on a daily basis,” she said.

And, given the rave reviews she received from her supervisors, she did it well. Kristen couldn’t be happier with how the pairing worked out. “Cheryl radiates optimism, and her passion for her position and the brand was evident in her work,” she said. “She always arrived at work with a positive attitude, infectious smile and impeccable dress. The attributes on which we focus—understanding our cultural aesthetic, connection with the customer and leadership skills—were all highlights for Cheryl. While neither Kymbia nor Cheryl report directly to me, I often receive thank yous from my Chelsea Market store manager, asking me when the next Blair event is to see whether we can find more employees like Kymbia and Cheryl.”

Given how much she learned at Anthropologie and from Kristen, Cheryl offers this advice to other young Blair graduates: “Take advantage of the Blair Networking Program! Before Jenny Maine intervened, I was stressed out about finding a job. But soon, I started my first day of work and fulfilled a dream of working in retail at a boho chic store. Blair alumni are involved in many different careers, so there is definitely a networking opportunity out there for you. All you have to do is ask.”
A Professional Opportunity Seven Years in the Making

About a year after Kymbia graduated from Blair and had begun studying urban planning and architecture at Columbia University, she attended a networking reception for young alumni in New York City organized by Jenny and hosted by Trustee Jim Krugman ‘65 and his wife, Connie. There, she met Kristen, who at the time worked in retail as creative presentation coordinator for Ralph Lauren’s corporate office. The visual aspects of Kristen’s job led Kymbia to pepper her with questions, and the two hit it off and remained in touch over the years at other Blair events and through social media. When Anthropologie’s Chelsea store was looking for a manager-in-training last spring, Kristen knew Kymbia would be an excellent fit and looked forward to the possibility of working with her. Hired in the fall, Kymbia has since embraced her position with enthusiasm, impressing her supervisors with her professionalism and personable nature.

“Kymbia epitomizes quiet and thoughtful leadership, adding a sense of calm and confidence to our extremely eventful and hectic Chelsea Market store,” said Kristen. “She is equally well-received and respected by her employees, peers and supervisors, which is a testament to her integrity and passion. I recall the first time I met Kymbia, I was taken aback by her maturity and poise, characteristics that still impress me when we spend time together. Now that we have known one another for many years, I also know Kymbia as intensely witty, spirited and artistic—so much fun to be around.”

As for Kymbia, who completed her undergraduate work in 2011 at Columbia and worked for four years as director of a Beacon Program for University Settlement in the lower east side of New York City, her position at Anthropologie is a dream come true. As a supervisor and a member of the accessories team, she works with a “very positive group of people” who motivate one another to be their best, and she helps set the tone of the store and customers’ shopping experiences.

“I would not have been able to transition into the world of retail without having met Kristen, and that wouldn’t have been possible without Blair’s commitment to hosting alumni networking events,” said Kymbia. “I am very grateful to Blair and the Krugmans for their role in creating this opportunity.”

Given her own experience, she encourages her fellow Blair graduates to make an effort to attend Blair events, especially the young alumni get-togethers.

“You don’t need to have a specific goal in mind to go,” said Kymbia, who aspires to one day transition to Anthropologie’s visual team, which comes up with fresh, new ways to heighten the customer experience. “As you mingle and catch up with familiar faces and say hello to new people, you may foster unexpected connections. When I went to my first alumni event in New York, I just wanted to reconnect with my Blair family. After introductions were made and conversations commenced, I found an amazing mentor in Kristen. Just show up! It’s a safe space to open up about your goals, admit if you’re unsure about what you want to do and ask for advice.”

Embracing the Program’s Shared Benefits

As for Kristen, she is thrilled that the two Blair matches she has helped facilitate have worked out so well. “Both Kymbia and Cheryl have exceptional leadership qualities and presence, no doubt as a result of their common experience with Blair,” she said. “Mentorship is mutually beneficial: The mentee gains from...
his or her mentor’s experiences and connections, and the mentor is rewarded with increased perspective, innovation and renewed enthusiasm. Blair’s alumni network is strong, diverse and inspirational, and I would love to hire more Blair connections.”

As for her own career—which began with an interest in business and fashion at Lehigh University in the early 2000s, followed by graduate studies at Parsons School of Design and more than a decade at Ralph Lauren as store manager, buyer, interior designer and creative presentation logistics manager before she joined Anthropologie in 2014—Kristen doesn’t rule out the possibility that Blair’s networking program may one day help her achieve her own dreams. “I would love to become the CEO of a Fortune 1000 company focused on retail and fashion, and I would welcome the opportunity to further enhance my connections via Blair’s Networking Program,” she said.

In the meantime, she is thrilled with her job at Anthropologie, where she oversees the teams who conceptualize and execute window and interior displays, floor plans, propping, product placement, and event coordination for her district’s stores. Calling the brand’s management structure “incredibly entrepreneurial,” Kristen relishes the autonomy in decision making and responsibility that district managers enjoy. She also calls the company’s artistic component “extremely attractive” and appreciates that her teams create every detail of store displays, unlike many retailers, which use offsite art rooms to mass-produce props and other items.

Crediting Blair and Lehigh with providing her the skills to succeed in a highly competitive industry, Kristen is currently implementing various training initiatives designed to foster Anthropologie’s growth and plans to return to the classroom in 2016 to earn an MBA, having completed all but two classes required to finish her master’s degree in interior design at Parsons.

“As a creative director, it is crucial to our team’s success that I am fluent in design processes and can communicate in high-level dialogue with artists and designers,” she said. “Equally important, in a Fortune 1000 corporation, is an ability to analyze business and make appropriate entrepreneurial decisions to drive those businesses, a fantastic foundation set at Blair and Lehigh.”

The difference maker at Blair, she added, is its focus on developing key leadership skills that are crucial to the progression of entrepreneurial thinking. “Whether it be through exposure to leaders in academia or industry at Society of Skeptics or Chapel talks, or through everyday interaction with teachers and administrators, Blair students are taught by example what it means to be true leaders,” she explained. “When we graduate with a Blair education, that confidence, integrity and those leadership skills directly influence how we look at calculated risk taking, entrepreneurial decisions and assessment of talent.”

As she looks to the next educational chapter and considers MBA programs, Kristen will leverage that perspective to advance her own professional goals. “In earning my MBA,” she concluded, “I’ll increase my academic understanding of management and, hopefully, build business connections like those that Blair is fostering through its wonderful Networking Program.”

Interested in offering your professional expertise and guidance to a fellow Blair alum or in finding out whether Blair can connect you with a job opportunity? Email Jenny Maine at mainej@blair.edu, and discover for yourself how mutually rewarding involvement in Blair’s Networking Program can be.
Blair has always offered a wealth of opportunities for students passionate about vocal music to practice and perform. Over the generations, there have been many campus groups dedicated to creating beautiful music: Singers have joined everything from student-led choirs and bands to school-wide ensembles and choruses. One of the most popular options at Blair today is the student-run a cappella group, led this academic year by seniors Jenna Faust ’16 and Tiffany Sharma ’16.

Although a cappella has existed on campus in one form or another for at least two decades, 2015 was a banner year for the vocalists: In addition to performing across campus for students, teachers and Trustees, for the first time, the group produced and submitted a music video to Macy’s All-School A Cappella Challenge, which offered the top three schools $25,000 prizes. Although other ensembles ultimately won the competition, Jenna and Tiffany are incredibly proud of their “awesome” video of the Jackson 5’s “I Want You Back,” calling it “our greatest accomplishment so far as a group.”

Completed in just two weeks—no small feat, given the “jam-packed schedules” of a cappella’s 19 members—the video not only showcases the incredible talent of these impressive students, but also highlights the beauty of Blair’s scenic campus (to watch it, please scan the QR code below or visit www.blair.edu/a-cappella-music-video).

Blair A Cappella’s Student Leaders Teach & Learn—While Making Beautiful Music

In what follows, Jenna and Tiffany talk about why they joined a cappella, skills they’ve developed overseeing the group, their favorite performances to date and—as Blair musicians across generations well know—why music continues to transcend generations and bring people together.

Q. What compelled you to join a cappella when you first came to Blair?

Tiffany: I auditioned for a cappella my freshman year because I loved singing and had never been in a group like this before, so I thought it would be fun and interesting to try. Little did I know that it would become so important to me over the next four years.

Jenna: Once I found out that Blair had an a cappella group, I was especially excited to see it because of how much I love that genre of music. A few of my friends, as well as a former leader of the group, Maddie Kling ’13, encouraged me to audition. She talked to me a lot about how wonderful a cappella was at Blair, so she inspired me to get excited about potentially being part of it.

Q. Running a cappella is no small commitment of time and energy. What keeps you passionate about staying involved, especially during your incredibly busy senior year?

Tiffany: Since my freshman year, I knew I wanted to lead a cappella as a senior—I wanted to give it my all during my last year here, so when I was given the opportunity to co-lead, I accepted without a moment’s hesitation. This group has become like family to me, and I was extremely excited to take on a new position and improve as a leader and a musician through the process.

I love working with the people in the group; every singer is so talented and excited to make wonderful music. It is amazing hearing everyone’s voices and seeing what we can create when we all put together our love for music!

Jenna: I wanted to lead a cappella because I saw a love and knowledge of music in myself, which I shared with previous leaders. I felt that I could handle the responsibility my senior year, and I wanted to feel the excitement of performing with the group from a different perspective—and Tiffany and I can now view our music as something we built and created, rather than something we only learned and performed.

I like watching the group come together, take the music we have on paper and make it real. Everyone works so hard to figure out how to sing what we are teaching them, and when they get it right, you can see the looks of excitement on everyone’s faces. It’s really beautiful to interact with such wonderful people, who have such passion for music.
Q. You both agree that leading a cappella has given you many opportunities to hone important communication, problem-solving and relationship-building skills. What would you say has been most valuable as you prepare to leave Blair for college?

Tiffany: This leadership role has made me more comfortable with making on-the-spot executive decisions and organizing a large group of people. You always need to sort out a lot of last-minute details when you perform, and Jenna and I have learned to quickly anticipate, adapt and resolve changes or problems that arise before or during performances and rehearsals.

Jenna: The biggest lesson for me has been patience. When you’re working with others, you can’t expect everything to come together the way you want it to. Leading is about recognizing where other people are and how they feel about certain situations and working with them. I’ve learned that you need to have lots of patience when teaching, and I think that patience will especially help me in the business environment in the future.

Q. Is there one performance this year that stands out to you both as the best?

Tiffany: For me, it was our performance for the Blair Trustees at Sharpe House in October 2015. We had just finished our big music video project, so the group was incredibly relieved and proud of our accomplishment. This happiness and pride was evident in our performance that night as we sang “The Circle of Life” and “I Want You Back.” The room filled with our harmonized voices, and every single person seemed to be enjoying the music as much as we were.

Jenna: This year’s Peddie Day pep-rally performance was my favorite. Our group put in a huge amount of effort and spent really all of our free time learning and memorizing the music. I’ll admit, it was a pretty stressful week, but when we all came together, and the soloists sang a mash-up of three songs [Sia’s “Chandelier,” Taylor Swift’s “Bad Blood,” and Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believing”] beautifully, I was so happy and proud of everyone.

Q. What was it like creating your first music video, and are you glad you did it?

Tiffany: Even though we didn’t win the Macy’s contest, we gave it our all and created an awesome video, and everyone is so happy that we can share it with our family and friends, showing off our wonderful group and Blair.

Jenna: Making the video was extremely fun, and we had a lot of great people helping us with directing and shooting. Even though we lost, that video is going to be a memory of campus for all of us when we graduate and for the alumni who have already moved forward in their lives. We were excited about the possibility of winning, but we were more excited by the prospect of making a lasting memento that will remind us of the group and Blair forever.

Q. A cappella is just the latest student-run vocal group on campus, but your performances have resonated with alumni representing all eras of Blair’s history. In what ways does the experience of coming together with peers and creating beautiful music transcend generations?

Tiffany: Love of music overcomes any distinctions between people. I love music so much because it brings people together in unexpected ways and creates a wonderful opportunity to build beautiful friendships and art.

Jenna: Music, as well as the experience of listening to it and appreciating it, will always be something that people treasure. No matter how songs or people change over the years, music will always bring us together because it doesn’t appeal to just one type of person—there is something in it for everyone.
Worth a Thousand Words: The Arts in Photos

During the fall and winter, the Blair Academy Players staged two well-received productions that showcased student performers’ range and talent: the unconventional love story Ring Round the Moon and the beloved musical The Wizard of Oz. According to veteran Blair theatre teacher and director Craig Evans, the engaging ensemble casts “pushed themselves to go beyond the comedy of situations and discover the truth about their characters.”

Exhibits in The Romano Gallery bring the work of professional artists from across the United States onto campus for students and faculty to study and enjoy. In 2015 and 2016, the gallery showed the work of ceramic artist and printmaker Shellie Jacobson, photographer Jon Naar, sculptor John Belardo, and painters Joseph Losavio, Kathleen Hall and Julie Jankowski. At the gallery’s annual faculty show, members of the Blair community enjoyed the work and artistic vision of the School’s six talented fine arts teachers.

Student musicians in the Orchestra, String Orchestra, Chamber Choir, Jazz Ensemble and Singers showcased the traditional repertoire they’d mastered at Blair’s annual Fall Concert and Christmas Vespers services. Noting that Blair instrumentalists and vocalists impress her more every year, performing arts department chair Jennifer Pagotto applauded the groups for their dedication, determination and drive to learn “very demanding material” and “play and sing better at each and every concert.”

To view more performing arts photos, visit www.blair.edu/flickr.
When Dan “DK” Kraines ’06 drove up Blair’s front hill as a new junior in 2005, he was understandably concerned about his transition to a new school. His classmates were mostly returning students, and he expected social circles to already be well-established and perhaps difficult to navigate. Despite his qualms, he arrived as scheduled and checked into East Hall, which would be his home for the next nine months or so. Met by his prefect, senior leader Nana Acheampong ’05, DK was relieved to be immediately welcomed into the fold, toured around the dorm, and shown all the nooks and crannies that made the building unique. There was a cookout that first night—groups of boys bonding over food and getting to know the hall staff who would also be their teachers and coaches. By the end of the first week, DK knew East Hall would forever have a place in his heart.

East Hall: ‘The Way Dorms Should Be’

There was something magical about East Hall that made it different from the other residence halls on campus. It didn’t house a ghost like Locke Hall and wasn’t the first dorm at Blair like Insley, yet something drew alumni back year after year to wander its halls, share stories and reminisce about their days as residents.

Built as Blair’s second gym in 1886 thanks to the financial support of DeWitt Clinton Blair, son of the School’s founder, John I. Blair, the building looked quite a bit different than it does today. Formerly a two-story structure where students climbed rope, competed against each other in the basement bowling alley, and attended assemblies and prayer meetings, chapel, and graduation, the gym became a dorm 28 years later. According to a 1915 article in The Blair Breeze, the name “East” was to serve as a placeholder “until a better name presents itself” (and, apparently, none ever did).

As the student population grew, a third floor was added in 1926 to house the entire senior class, which some may have assumed led students to refer to it as “The Ark” because of its resemblance to an upside-down boat. In
fact, that nickname was introduced years earlier in 1915, because the pool beneath the north wing (which later became Davies Hall) conjured for many Noah’s Ark, and the name stuck until the 1950s (the origin of the nickname required some sleuthing and was revealed at the conclusion of a 1957 school-wide contest won by Mel Tabak ‘57). Over the years, periodic renovations continued, including the most recent one in 2004, when all the dorm rooms were gutted and rebuilt, and the housemaster’s apartment was updated.

A Community Within the Community
In the more than 100 years that it served as a dormitory, East Hall fostered a tight-knit community within our larger Blair community and became home to a fortunate group of Blair boys who, through their shared experiences in this building, became men. East shepherded many thousand young men through the trials and tribulations of adolescence, helping shape residents into the adults they ultimately became. It was more than a dorm: East was the place where students across generations learned of major global events, including wars, peace declarations and terrorist attacks; it was the place where so many teenagers navigated personal triumphs and crises; and it was the site of countless Blair happenings—many of which can only be admitted long after the offenders graduated, as you will learn.

Bob Rouse ‘42 remembers sitting in a friend’s dorm room and listening to the voice on the radio detail the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Thirty years later, G. Doug McWilliams ’71, who lived in East his junior year, remembers gathering in the dorm’s common room with other seniors to watch the televised draft lottery drawing, and consoling friends who would go to Vietnam instead of college because their birth month and day matched the numbers selected. Neal Sigety ’76 recalls watching the fall of Saigon on his housemaster’s grainy black-and-white television in the 1970s, while Kyle Home ’02 sat in fear, shock and disbelief in the common room as the World Trade Center’s Twin Towers fell in New York City on September 11, 2001. In each of these and other scenarios, residents of East Hall pulled together as a community and supported each other during difficult times. Even in the most tumultuous circumstances, East Hall served as a safe haven for its residents.

Of course, there is sometimes no better support than engaging in shenanigans and tomfoolery—and this is something on which East Hall residents of all class years...
seem to agree. Fred Mirbach ‘69 and roommate Dennis Drazin ‘69 climbed down the pine tree right outside East’s third-floor windows to get an advance start to evening snack time in the dining room, always making them first in line—and allowing them to collect a delivery fee from fellow dorm residents.

Bob Neff ‘49 regaled me with stories of the East Hall basement designated as the smoking room for Blair students, who sat around in their red Hugh Hefner-style jackets, waxing poetic as they lit up their Lucky Strikes and Viceroys—obviously during an era that preceded the Surgeon General’s report on the dangers of cigarette smoke!

Jim Naisby ‘57 was designated the humanitarian of his class when he raised an injured baby crow in the closet of his room for six months, feeding it crackers from the dining hall before releasing it back to the wild—and, as you can imagine, the maintenance crew was none too happy to see the remains of Jim’s efforts when the school year ended. Mel Tabak ‘57 shared memories of hiding with friends behind East Hall’s raised roofline and throwing snowballs at beloved faculty member Henry Cowan, who was bewildered and could not determine their source of origin. Mel also recalls dorm raids that ended up with many students swimming in Blair Lake.

The Way to Residents’ Hearts... Through Their Stomachs
You can’t be housemaster of East Hall for 11 years and be completely surprised by teenage boys’ voracious appetites, but I admit that I found their caloric intake sometimes shocking. Virtually every Thursday night when I was on duty, I would fire up the dorm grill and host a 10 p.m. barbecue for East Hall residents (who, by the way, had already eaten in the dining hall and The Black Canteen). From 2004 to 2015, those boys consumed nearly 20,000 hot dogs, 6,000 hamburgers and 1,000 chunks of grilled kielbasa—yes, I have done the math. Most of the food was not as fresh as the steaks and burgers donated by Blair alumnus and parent Coray Kirby ‘80, whose family owns and operates a farm, but the boys were always well fed. Then, there was the occasional “pizza overload” event (where I’d keep ordering pizzas until no one could eat another bite), “make-your-own” sundaes (complete with 20 gallons of ice cream) and the always-popular Korean BBQ, usually sponsored by the parents of Minahm Kim ‘10. In addition to these episodic additions to the menu, East residents were also frequent
customers of local establishments offering food delivery. In my tenure as housemaster, I estimate that restaurants such as Ho-Ho’s, Frank’s Pizza and Pizza Express received more than 12,000 calls just from East Hall.

Of course, when off-campus food delivery wasn’t available and in-room snacks were depleted, resourceful students took matters into their own hands, often in clever ways. Pat Maillet ’10 and Terence Rhea ’10 bought an old 7 Eleven–style hot-dog cooker, complete with heated rollers, and placed it on a board sticking out of their dorm-room window so the machine was technically not “in the building” and therefore not in violation of about 20 different fire codes.

**A Source of Faculty Unity & Pride**

Although such student silliness and boundary testing ensued on a daily basis, it is safe to say that East Hall deeply impacted Blair teachers—and vice versa. Director of Studies Dick Malley (1968-1989) recalls the faculty coming together to paint the dorm for an hourly stipend prior to Jim Kelley’s first year as Head of School in 1976. Although he and his colleagues were not professional painters, they “had pride in spades” and felt uniquely united by the experience as Blair began a new chapter in its history. Dick also describes how faculty members identified the modest physical change made to East (which was at one point a larger building) that created Davies Hall—with the result being two smaller, more personal dorms.

Other former housemasters, including William Finley (1967-1975), shared more humorous anecdotes: During the seven years the English teacher oversaw a floor of the dorm, he often listened to recordings of professional piano recitals. On one such occasion, he did so with his window open, and a student walking by later admitted his surprise that Mr. Finley was such a fine pianist. This was, of course, much to the amusement of Blair’s legendary music teacher.
Nevett Bartow, who “could barely breathe” when William shared the tale, knowing he’d be challenged to even locate middle C on the keyboard.

**My Own Stories**

Looking back, I embrace both the lighthearted memories made during my tenure in East and the deep impact the experience had on me as a person and as a teacher. I remember when I walked out of my apartment at 2 a.m. after hearing noise and found two students dressed as Superman and Batman battling with lightsabers—a bizarre mix of the comic-book and science-fiction genres that I admit caused me to question what exactly was in my dinner that night. I recall how cold it was and how hard I laughed with Mike Shiffert ’14 and Andrew Litvin ’14 as we built a snow couch (or “snouch,” as we came to call it) outside the dorm on a particularly chilly day.

Over the years, I have been amazed at how many things students wrap in tin foil—from their entire beds right down to dimes and quarters in their tin foil–wrapped desks (actually, this was a prank pulled by John Redos ’09 and Nate Reichel ’10, who covered the furniture and belongings of some unfortunate fellow residents entirely in Reynolds Wrap—hard to forget that one).

Late-night or early morning fire drills from steamy showers that triggered the smoke detectors were a common event for my family, and the tree outside our East Hall apartment was always our post-alarm meeting spot. My colleague, Tom Parauda, who served as East Hall housemaster from 1995 to 2000, used that same tree for that purpose when his family lived in East, recalling that he sometimes evacuated the dorm when the fire alarm sounded only to realize it was just triggered by a burned bag of popcorn, and he would send students back to their rooms.

Most of all, I will remember East Hall as a place that united a slice of the Blair community, with its common room, 1950s “gang” shower and dorm rooms serving as forums where kids discussed everything ranging from politics, sports and world events to school, relationships and family. As preparations begin to transform East into Blair’s newest academic building, one that will promote innovation and collaboration, it is only natural to reflect on and embrace the dorm’s rich history and the allegiance that so many alumni have to their former home.

As the new CIC takes shape, those who hold East dear will be pleased to see many similarities in the buildings’ external appearances, a lasting tribute to how important East Hall has been over the years and an acknowledgment of how many lives it has touched. In the hearts of Blair students, faculty and alumni, East will continue to hold a special place for many years to come.

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*Left: An East Hall dorm room, 1982; right: East Hall decorated for the holidays in 2014.*

A special thank you to Blair library assistant Kate Skeffington for her assistance in researching East Hall’s history and locating photos that show the building’s evolution over the course of its life as a gymnasium and dormitory.
It was a stroke of luck that Linda Klesik came to work at Blair in 1987. She had lived in northwestern New Jersey for more than 30 years before visiting Blair’s beautiful campus for the first time. Captivated by the School’s stately charm on that autumn day, she immediately knew that she wanted her children to one day attend.

From their birth, Mrs. Klesik was dedicated to her daughters’ education. Weekly excursions to the library—and their mom’s passion for reading—introduced Erika ’89 and Shara ’95 to books and the world of academia early on.

“My goal was to educate my daughters and inspire them to become independent women,” she said. And, as generations of Blair students know well, that steadfast commitment to educating children carried over into the workplace, as Mrs. Klesik has lovingly served the Blair community for nearly three decades.

Once her daughters were old enough to attend elementary school, Mrs. Klesik pursued full-time work. She began her Blair career in the School’s advancement office, and although she enjoyed working closely with Blair alumni for seven years, she was delighted with the opportunity to transition to the college counseling office, where it quickly became apparent that her role as director of college counseling services went far beyond scheduling interviews with colleges and mailing out students’ admission applications.

In many ways, Mrs. Klesik “held students’ futures in her hands,” a precious responsibility she didn’t take for granted. She worked with Blair kids from the time she scheduled their very first meetings with their college counselors through graduation day and developed special relationships with students who often looked to her for guidance and support during a sometimes-difficult process.

As she reflected on her years at Blair, Mrs. Klesik remembered some of her most joyful moments as the times when students would pick up long-awaited college decisions in Clinton Hall’s mailroom and race across Meerwarth Courtyard to her Locke Hall office so they could open the letters

“Linda is one of the most selfless and compassionate people I have ever met. She is a tireless worker devoid of ego—always willing to allow someone else to get the credit as she labors away behind the scenes. Her retirement will leave a huge void in our office, both personally and professionally.”

– Joe Mantegna, Associate Dean of College Counseling

by Melissa Collins ’09

AS SHE RETIRES, LINDA KLESIK REMINDS US:

“BLAIR WILL ALWAYS BE HOME”
together. Oftentimes, the news was good, and Mrs. Klesik would celebrate her students’ achievements with them. But even when the hoped-for acceptances didn’t materialize, Mrs. Klesik was always there to console students in those emotional moments.

Her connection to students was so special that she was honored with the class of 2000 ACTA yearbook dedication—or, as Mrs. Klesik calls it, her “Academy Award.” “It was unbelievable to think that I was only the third staff member to ever be honored with the ACTA dedication,” she said. “It meant so much to me that the students valued my time and relationship with them to recognize me in that way.”

“For most people, college counseling and cheer are concepts that might not coincide,” the dedication reads. “Yet, with a ‘college counseling queen’ like Mrs. Klesik, even essays, rejection and deadlines do not seem all that threatening.”

“For nearly 25 years, Linda has been the proverbial glue that holds the college office together,” said longtime Dean of College Counseling Lew Stival, echoing the sentiments of the ACTA dedication. “In addition to her upbeat and engaging personality, she possesses an extraordinary talent for connecting with kids, especially those struggling with the college process.”

In the weeks leading up to her last day at Blair, Mrs. Klesik will remain as poised as ever as she masterfully shepherds Blair’s class of 2017 through the start of the college admission process. And, in May, at the conclusion of commencement exercises, she will “sigh with relief,” knowing that she deftly pulled off her 23rd-consecutive, and final, graduation ceremony.

She’s looking forward to retirement, but Mrs. Klesik said she won’t be downshifting her activities; rather, she looks to take advantage of having more time for her own passions. An avid reader of the Bible, she hopes to pursue a more in-depth study of the sacred text and take on a greater role with her church’s mission program through Stephen Ministries.

Mrs. Klesik also hopes to visit hospitals and nursing homes, providing comfort and care to those who might need it. An animal lover at heart, she dreams of getting involved with animal therapy, aiding those in need of emotional uplifting. And, of course, she looks forward to spending even more time with her high school sweetheart of 45 years—her husband, Marty—and her daughters and their families, especially her grandchildren.

“I won’t be just sitting around,” she laughed, “but I do want time to relax and visit family and friends.”

As Blair’s class of 2016 gets ready to graduate this spring, Mrs. Klesik said she, too, is preparing to say goodbye to the School, but, like the soon-to-be alumni, she will forever remain connected to Blair. “I have always told students, ‘Blair will always be home,’” she said. “And I’ll always feel that Blair is home to me, too.”
ASSISTANT DEAN OF COLLEGE COUNSELING PRESENTS AT REGIONAL & NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Blair’s Assistant Dean of College Counseling Britt Freitag addressed the topic of effective collaboration among multigenerational coworkers at the 2015 regional and national conferences of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Speaking from the millennial viewpoint, Ms. Freitag and three of her contemporaries, Occidental College Associate Dean of Admission Charlie Leizear, Babson College Associate Director of Admissions and Community Outreach Alex Trempus, and Associate Director of University Advising at EF (Education First) Academy Drew Granucci, discussed ways to create a college counseling or admission workplace culture that optimizes the experience and perspective of colleagues of all ages.

“Creating and delivering this presentation was a very positive experience for me, and we received an enthusiastic response from conference attendees,” Ms. Freitag said. The talk included many concrete examples of workplace best practices designed to help the 250-plus audience members put the advice into action. Ms. Freitag drew upon her experience as the senior assistant director of undergraduate admission at The George Washington University, an admission counselor at The Catholic University of America and the assistant director of admission at the Corcoran College of Art + Design to prepare for the presentation, and she noted that her “very supportive boss,” Blair’s veteran Dean of College Counseling Lew Stival, was among the attendees.

THE BLAIR LEADERSHIP STORIES PROJECT: 500 STORIES & COUNTING

“What do I stand for?” To date, 504 members of the Blair community have answered this question in personal video narratives that have been filmed and catalogued as part of The Blair Leadership Stories Project. Aimed at enhancing students’ communication skills and building upon Blair’s successful public speaking program, the Project began in 2014 and has become a signature component of Blair LEADS, the School’s cross-curricular leadership initiative.

Each year, members of the freshman and senior classes work closely with English teachers to develop and hone personal stories detailing a “leadership moment:” a time in their lives when they faced a challenge or choice and stayed true to the character and values that Blair holds in highest regard. Thirteen faculty and staff members, five Trustees and 15 alumni have also taken on the challenge of filming a Leadership Story, and a wide selection of compelling videos may be viewed at www.blair.edu/leadership-stories.

Leaders are great storytellers, and Blair students will continue to develop effective communication skills through The Leadership Stories Project this spring, as more than 100 additional students prepare to record their leadership moments. Alumni will have the opportunity to participate in The Leadership Stories Project during Alumni Weekend workshops conducted by English teacher Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79 on Friday, June 10, and Saturday, June 11.
Since last fall, members of the Blair Academy and Blairstown communities have had a new forum in which to exchange ideas and explore shared interests: the Town/Gown Academy. During Wednesday evening sessions at the Outreach Center of the First Presbyterian Church of Blairstown, adults and teens from Blair Academy and the surrounding area have come together to participate in conversation and community and to enjoy one another’s company.

Longtime Blair theatre director and English teacher Craig Evans is the creator and facilitator of the Town/Gown Academy, which he described as “presentation with participation.” Three-session workshops exploring acting and public speaking took place during the fall, and art and religion are among the topics under consideration for upcoming seminars. Former Blair faculty member Steven Kampmann joined Mr. Evans in presenting the public-speaking forum, and Mr. Evans welcomed teens and adults to suggest subjects and contribute their ideas and expertise.

The Town/Gown Academy is jointly sponsored by Blair Academy and the Outreach Center of the First Presbyterian Church of Blairstown. “So far, each session has given participants the opportunity to learn about something they’re interested in and talk about it or try it out with others who share that interest,” Mr. Evans said. “I’ve been impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of the dozen or so folks who have attended our workshops. It’s been a great way for students and adults from the School and the surrounding community to really get to know one another and create terrific connections.”

If you want to be instantly in the know about happenings at Blair, download the School’s free native mobile app from iTunes or Google Play. The app gives users access to news, calendars, athletic information and more, all in a format that’s faster than Blair’s mobile website and conducive to multimedia posts.

With the mobile app, users can scroll through images in news stories with a simple swipe. Blair news, calendars and athletic information are easily customized according to personal preference, and students, teachers and parents can access password-protected directories or update their contact information by entering a four-digit pin after logging into the app for the first time with their website username and password. And to make Blair’s most popular calendars more easily accessible to those on campus, the dining-hall menu, the daily class schedule and the list of upcoming Skeptics speakers are all located in the app’s main menu.

Download the app by searching for “The Official Blair Academy App” in the iTunes or Google Play stores. Once you download the app on your device, please be sure to allow Blair to send you push notifications. For users who prefer to use Blair’s mobile website instead, visit www.blair.edu from any mobile device to access much of the same information: mobile-friendly Blair news updates, calendars, password-protected directories, a campus map and, of course, a direct link to the School’s full website.
In a digital-era effort to “connect the community through the written word,” Tys Sweeney ’17 and Chris Liu ’18 launched an online publication in April 2015 called The Blair Academy Oracle (www.blairoracle.com). The student-designed website “caters to modern society’s need for a constant flow of information,” according to its founders, by providing an interactive platform for news, photos, videos, commentary, essays, poetry and other items of interest.

“Anyone who has a connection to Blair Academy can submit work to The Oracle,” Tys said, and he has encouraged students, alumni, teachers and parents to get involved. “Writing solidifies a community and establishes a forum of communication that is open to everyone.”

Overseen by language teacher Pedro Hurtado Ortiz, history teacher Hannah Higgin, PhD, and English teachers James Moore and Douglass Compton, The Oracle features a variety of postings—both serious and humorous—including exclusive interviews, periodic photo caption contests and galleries of original artwork by Blair students. More than 50 members of the Blair community have contributed articles and photographs to date, and about a half-dozen new stories are published each week.

Tys and Chris noted that the site offers a different perspective on campus life and promotes the community’s interest in journalism. This year, Seth Kim ’18, Jack Saxton ’17, Stephen Marcus ’17 and Emily Choi ’17 joined the publication’s editorial board, and The Oracle now averages between 50 and 150 visitors each day. In addition, students launched Oracle Radio in February, which airs on Saturday evenings and offers musical selections by a student DJ, interviews and news by a student anchor, and commentary by guests.

“We’ve expanded our efforts to create an integrated, social and intellectual community platform for expression and seen results,” Tys said. “We hope every Blair student and teacher considers writing for The Oracle, as it is a way to strengthen our community, complement each other’s work and remain connected to ourselves and to the outside world.”

COMPETITION & CAMARADERIE REIGN AT HEADMASTERS’ SOCIETIES GAMES

With winter on the wane and spring break still a few weeks away, the Blair community enjoyed five days of friendly—but highly spirited—competition as they took on the many challenges of the Headmasters’ Societies Games. From February 15 to 19, teachers and students on Teams Breed, Kelley, Howard and Sharpe competed in everything from a cup-stacking contest and a bake-off to a ping-pong tournament and a good old-fashioned tug-of-war. “We incorporated a new faculty-only volleyball contest this year and brought back ‘Name That Tune,’ both of which proved very popular among teachers and students,” said Associate Dean of Students Andee Ryerson, coordinator of the event. Following an all-star talent show, the final contest of the games, team Breed was declared the 2016 winner, while teams Sharpe, Kelley and Howard placed second, third and fourth, respectively.
ADVEMENT TEAM WELCOMES
NEW DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP & ADVANCEMENT ASSOCIATE

Earlier this year, E. Courtnay Stanford ’95 and Kristine Scialla P’20 joined Blair’s advancement team, stepping seamlessly into their new roles as director of stewardship and advancement associate, respectively. They bring a range of experience, an appreciation for the School’s educational mission and a great deal of enthusiasm to the busy advancement office.

As director of stewardship, Mrs. Stanford works closely with loyal alumni, parents and friends to recognize and thank them for their support of the School. A proud Blair alumna whose family includes many Blair graduates, she is a longtime class representative for the class of 1995. Mrs. Stanford earned her bachelor’s degree in social work at Salve Regina University and her master’s degree in hospitality with an event concentration at Johnson & Wales University. Prior to coming to Blair, she worked in business and educational administrative roles. Mrs. Stanford and her husband, Eamonn, have a 5-year-old daughter, McKenna.

Mrs. Scialla, an advancement associate for parent and alumni relations, assists in the coordination of alumni and parent events, including Parents’ Weekend, Grandparents’ Day and Alumni Weekend, as well as parent volunteer activities. She earned a bachelor’s degree in communication at William Paterson University and holds a New Jersey elementary-education teaching certificate. A language-arts teacher earlier in her career, Mrs. Scialla and her husband, Mark, are the parents of three children, Olivia ’20, Adriana and Mark Jr.

CELEBRATING OUR DIFFERENCES AT INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND

In a multinational and multiethnic community celebration, Blair teachers and students proudly shared their heritage —and tastes of home—during the School’s annual International Weekend on January 9 and 10. Veteran French teacher Maria Bowditch, who coordinated the event for the 21st year, noted that participation in International Weekend often leads students to feel more “at home” at Blair. “Kids become better known in the community when they have the chance to share the things they’re most proud of from home,” she said. “It’s very satisfying to be asked to share.”

Students, teachers and even some local Blair parents enjoyed a festive evening of international food and fashion on Saturday, while Sunday brought even more opportunities to sample global cuisine during an outing to a local Japanese restaurant and at a hands-on French bread-baking lesson with language department chair Tim Devaney. The weekend concluded with Sunday-evening Vespers showcasing the religious diversity of the Blair community.

The Blair International Awareness Club (BIAC), led by Yueqi Du ’16, Abby Bodner ’16 and Ellie Chi ’17, and members of the language faculty each played a role in planning the festivities. “I really enjoyed this opportunity to teach my friends how to write calligraphy and to serve them authentic Chinese food,” said Ellie, a native of China. “International Weekend is important, because it acknowledges and celebrates the diversity in our community. It has always been the time of year when I feel especially proud of my cultural background.”
MAKER SPACE HUMS WITH AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY

Using everything from hardware-store hammers to a state-of-the-art 3D printer, students have worked to bring their original designs to life this fall and winter in Blair’s maker space. Mathematics teacher Jay Gnanadoss oversees the after-school maker space activity, and for four afternoons each week, he guides novice and experienced “makers” through the design-and-build process.

The projects students have undertaken run the gamut from fanciful to practical: They include an animated, 3D-printed dinosaur head; a domino-stacking robot; a remote-controlled airplane; a model of a Chinese pagoda; a wooden clock and eating utensils for people with physical challenges. Michael Savettiere ’17 crafted a foam surfboard from scratch; Justin Swirbul ’16 and Joe Mandel ’16 designed and constructed electric guitars; and Yueqi Du ’16 and Sydney Altman ’16 attempted to build and program a piano-playing robot.

“I loved the freedom of being able to create pretty much whatever I wanted,” Justin said. “I didn’t go into the activity knowing how to make an electric guitar, and no one at Blair had done a project like this.” After some concentrated online research, he ordered the necessary materials and got to work. “I was able to test different ideas and figure out what I needed to do with Mr. Gnanadoss’ help. Having the opportunity to just create something was awesome, and I really enjoyed it.”

“Kids are learning that making an idea happen requires a lot of planning and hard work,” Mr. Gnanadoss observed. He supports students through the entire process, from research and design, to putting together a work plan, ordering parts, building, programming and “troubleshooting every step of the way.” “Even when the projects have not come to fruition, students have gained a sense of the complexities of design-and-build work,” he said. “They’ve dealt with hiccups and figured out alternatives when necessary. It’s been a good all-around learning experience.”

The after-school maker space activity has continued during the spring semester, with a new group of makers building upon their ideas in Blair’s laboratory/workshop.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM RECOGNIZED FOR ‘EXCELLENCE IN NEWS WRITING’

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District II, a regional organization of advancement professionals representing more than 700 educational institutions in the Mid-Atlantic, awarded Blair’s communications office a Bronze Award for “Excellence in News Writing” in its 2016 Accolades Awards competition. Blair’s submission included a selection of website news posts from 2015 representing the work of each member of the communications department, and the judges were particularly impressed by the way the stories addressed a variety of audiences.

“Our communications team provides substantial and meaningful website coverage of Blair happenings on a daily basis,” said Peter G. Curran, assistant head of school for enrollment and communications. “This consistent news flow is vital to keeping our alumni, parents, students and prospective families informed and connected. I’m delighted that our staff’s excellent work has been recognized by CASE.” The award was presented to Director of Communications Suzy Logan ’99, Assistant Director of Communications Joanne Miceli and Communications Manager Melissa Collins ’09 during a February 8 reception at CASE District II’s annual convention in Philadelphia.
Touring the World Beyond Blair Broadens Students’ Horizons & Deepens Their Learning Experience

In 2015-2016, faculty members are leading a number of domestic and international trips as part of Blair’s global engagement commitment, exploring six different countries over various school breaks. “These are wonderful opportunities for our students to practice what they learn in the classroom and to live the values of our community in the world beyond Blair,” said history department chair Jason Beck, who oversees the School’s global travel program. “In our interconnected society, students not only need to practice their ability to build relationships and solve problems in hands-on ways, but also to experience firsthand that their actions matter and can effect change.”

Read on to discover how this year’s travel experiences are connecting students to global issues and encouraging them to develop solutions to problems affecting others around the world.

Winter Long Weekend, January & February 2016

Destination: The Cayman Islands

Trip organizer: Marine science teacher W. Rod Gerdsen

Itinerary: Exploring the wonders of the marine world off the beach of Grand Cayman, including an up-close examination of stingrays and turtles, and assisting during an after-hours program for students of an island primary school

What students took away from the experience:
A healthy respect and love for the Cayman Islands’ marine world and for the culture of the island nation, as well as a “better understanding of marine science and how cross-cultural relationship building can be infused into any discipline,” Mr. Gerdsen said.

Destination: St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee

Trip organizers: McKenzie Belton ’16, along with Shelly Mantegna, wife of associate dean of college counseling Joe Mantegna, and math teacher Danyelle Doldoorian

Itinerary: Visiting and volunteering at the hospital, serving meals and hosting game nights for families at Ronald McDonald House, and exploring Memphis

What students took away from the experience:
Stronger communication skills, an ability to step outside their comfort zones, and a love and appreciation for the ways in which St. Jude’s helps change the lives of families across the globe—as well as for the strength
and resilience of children receiving treatment there. “These children are amazing and continue to be positive even when faced with life-threatening situations,” said McKenzie, who helped organize the trip for the second-consecutive year. “Most of all, we wanted the kids in the hospital to have a good time, and we learned how awesome it is to help others.”

Spring Break, March 2016
Destination: Paris, France; Rome & Florence, Italy
Trip organizer: Associate Dean of Students & fine arts teacher Andee Ryerson
Itinerary: Exploring the art and architecture of those cities at various museums, churches and monuments (including the Roman Forum and Colosseum, Vatican City and the Vatican Museum, Galleria Borghese, Galleria Uffizi, Musée de Louvre and Musée d’Orsay)

What students took away from the experience:
Exposure to and an appreciation for European culture, history and art and a deeper understanding of how each influences the others. “My goals were to open students’ eyes to the rich history of these countries, give them a firsthand look at life there today and provide the context to appreciate art they might not have otherwise enjoyed,” said Mrs. Ryerson. “Our trip was chock-full of examples of not ‘judging a book by its cover.’”

Summer vacation, June 2016
Destination: Costa Rica
Trip organizer: Associate Dean of Admission Leucretia Shaw
Itinerary: Project work at a high school in the town of El Paraíso, living with host families and working to improve Spanish-language skills, assisting Costa Rican peers in the classroom, seeing key sights (including the rainforest), and engaging in cultural activities

What students will take away from the experience:
More robust leadership skills, a better understanding of the issues that affect a small rural town in another country and an appreciation for the way others live in the world beyond the students’ own hometowns, Blair and the United States as a whole. “Students coming on the trip have chosen to step outside their comfort zones by venturing into unknown territory—a different country, a different language, a different way of life,” Mrs. Shaw said. “They will return as stronger communicators and better problem solvers who have real-world experience building relationships with people from another culture.”

Trip organizer: Head of School Chris Fortunato (traveling with his wife, Erin, and their children, Matty and Katie)
Itinerary: Exploring the country’s traditions, history and culture through visits to museums, theatrical performances and, possibly, a session of Parliament. The trip concludes with a three-day stay at Radley College, a British boarding school, where students will experience life in the community and engage in a service experience. The timing may coincide with the presentation of history teacher Hannah Higgin’s doctorate at the University of Cambridge, and the group hopes to have the opportunity to connect with various Blair alumni living in the United Kingdom.

What students will take away from the experience:
A heightened ability to build relationships, try new things, learn about a different culture, and reflect on those experiences with classmates and teachers. Mr. Fortunato has also invited the 26 students traveling with him to help devise and negotiate the group’s final travel. “Students will drive our itinerary and later have the opportunity to examine together what they are taking away from the experience intellectually and emotionally, which should make for an unforgettable trip,” he said.
The New York Times Chronicles Kelvin Serem ’13’s Path from Kenya to U.S.

In November, The New York Times featured a story about Kibargoiyet, Kenya, native Kelvin Serem ’13, describing his journey from his rural village to Blair Academy and then to Lafayette College, from which he will graduate with dual bachelor’s degrees in 2017.

The article noted that the college junior and Division I cross-country athlete has much more on his plate than the typical student: Aside from managing demanding coursework and challenging athletics, his mind often travels back home, as he worries about an “endless” list of things ranging from corruption in Kenya to funding the education of his siblings.

Writer Dan Barry details how Mr. Serem established the Serem-Blair School in Kenya in 2014 with the help of history teacher Quint Clarke ’87 and many others at Blair. Even from afar, the school’s founder helps oversee the operations of the building as well as its growth—a library/computer center and playing fields are now under construction at the five-classroom school that educates more than 100 students a year. When asked about the stress of overseeing the operation of the Blair-Serem School, Mr. Serem humbly told the Times, “I never say I am building a school. I say, ‘We are. We are building a school.’”

To help alleviate these stressors, Mr. Serem finds solace in his sport—running—which gives him the opportunity to envision the ways in which he will try to aid his village after graduation next May: “While running, he has come to a decision. When his American studies are done, he will return to his village and do what he can to connect it to the rest of the world. Imagine this, for example: Wi-Fi in Kibargoiyet,” the article concludes.

Luol Deng ’03 Visits President Barack Obama at the White House

President Barack Obama invited Luol Deng ’03 to the White House for an Oval Office meeting following peace negotiations between the United States and South Sudan, where Mr. Deng, an unofficial ambassador to the African country, was born.

The White House posted a photograph of the late-August 2015 meeting on its official Instagram channel, stating that President Obama “thanked [Mr. Deng] for his efforts and asked for his advice on how the United States can best support the peace agreement” between the U.S. and South Sudan.

President Barack Obama met with Miami Heat NBA player Luol Deng ’03 in the Oval Office in late August 2015. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)
Ivy Magazine: Vanessa Black ’06, a Catalyst for Change

Through her new company, BLKFLM, Vanessa Black ’06 hopes to be a catalyst for change in modern media, notes Ivy Magazine in an October feature article. After Ukraine’s pro-Moscow president was driven from power by violent protests in 2014, Ms. Black traveled to Ukraine’s capital city, Kiev, with plans to capture on film the “stories of everyday Ukrainian people that were not being told by national news” during the Crimean Crisis.

“I’ve always been interested in youth movements,” she told Ivy Magazine. “…I’ve always loved seeing kids standing up for what they believe in, so I’ve looked for projects that showcase them.” Documenting personal stories behind the political struggle between Ukraine and Russia is just one of the many movements and issues Ms. Black has depicted through her films and photography in hopes of igniting change across the globe.


(D0 (Full Article) www.blair.edu/vanessa-black

Dion Lewis ’09 Makes Big Impact for New England Patriots

Much as he did for the Bucs back in 2008, Dion Lewis ’09 made huge plays with the New England Patriots’ offense this season, bursting onto the professional football scene after signing with the team in December 2014. In just five games of the 2015 regular season, he gained more than 200 rushing yards, nearly 400 receiving yards and two touchdowns for the Patriots.

Just as his skills helped Blair’s varsity football team go 17-1 in his two years at the School, his ability to make big plays in the professional arena means Mr. Lewis will become a mainstay in the NFL, reports an article published by WEEI, a Boston-based sports radio station.

His value to the Patriots “has already been established long term,” the article notes, adding that Mr. Lewis signed a two-year extension with New England just months after the franchise added him to its roster. Although he was sidelined with an injury for the remainder of the past season, the Patriots offense will welcome him back to the starting line for the 2016 and 2017 seasons.

(Full Article) www.blair.edu/dion-lewis
Robin Scheman

A longtime supporter of Blair and its programs, Robin Scheman P'10 '14 brings a unique and valuable perspective to the Board of Trustees. She is a former Blair parent whose children, Rebecca and Andrew Litvin, graduated in 2010 and 2014, respectively, and a former Blair faculty member who worked with the Board of Trustees, Head of School and Strategic Planning Committee on special projects.

Prior to coming to Blair in 2011, Ms. Scheman enjoyed a successful career in human capital management, strategic planning and organizational development. After completing her undergraduate work at Union College and earning a master’s degree from Columbia University, Ms. Scheman went on to hold key executive positions at Bankers Trust Company (1988-2000) and Deutsche Bank (1999-2001). She ended her corporate career at Lehman Brothers, where she served as managing director and head of leadership development and talent management until 2009.

Given her professional background, Ms. Scheman played a key role in guiding the search process that resulted in Head of School Chris Fortunato’s successful hire and on-boarding at Blair. To ensure a smooth leadership transition, she worked closely with the Board and the entire School community and continued to serve on the administrative team in a senior advisory role until fall 2014.

After concluding her work with Blair, Ms. Scheman accepted her current position as a principal at True North Management Group, a real-estate private-equity firm based in White Plains, New York. In her role as chief administrative officer there, she supports business growth by overseeing talent management, strategic planning and day-to-day operations.

In addition to her professional responsibilities, Ms. Scheman sits on the corporate advisory council for Bottom Line, a nonprofit that assists low-income students with the college admission process, and on the board of trustees for the Jewish Foundation for the Education of Women, which awards educational grants to females of diverse, secular backgrounds. Over the years, Ms. Scheman has held leadership roles on the boards of a number of other organizations, including the Horizons Student Enrichment Program and Prep for Prep.

While her children attended Blair, Ms. Scheman served as a Blair parent fund group volunteer, and she held similar roles at her children’s colleges, Barnard and Williams.

“Robin’s expertise is in identifying opportunities to strategically leverage talent and resources, and this is invaluable at a place such as Blair, where our most important assets are the relationships that are forged across campus,” said Board Chair Doug Kimmelman P'12 '13 '15. “Her love for Blair is evident, as is her commitment to serving as a steward of the School who is dedicated to advancing its name and reputation.”
Robert C. Dughi ’66

Loyal Blair alumnus and supporter Robert C. Dughi ’66 rejoins Blair’s Board of Trustees after a two-year hiatus. He served the Board with distinction from 2009 to 2013, bringing insight and expertise to the Education and School Life Committee and playing an instrumental role in developing Blair’s Strategic Plan:

Building on Strength, which set the vision for the School’s forward progress from 2011 to 2016.

A former Blair two-year wrestling captain, Mr. Dughi was awarded the Jamieson Award in wrestling and the Brooks Prize in baseball, and he won the coveted Headmaster’s Prize. Mr. Dughi attended Cornell University, where he earned his undergraduate degree in 1970 and a master’s degree in business administration in 1972. He was founder, board chair and president of the Copeland Companies, a financial services concern that became CitiStreet, a Citigroup Company. Mr. Dughi is currently the executive chairman of the board of U.S. Retirement Partners, a national retirement-planning firm serving public school teachers. He also serves as chairman and CEO of Financial Soundings, LLC, a financial technology firm that provides retirement advice and employee communications for employer-sponsored retirement plans.

Mr. Dughi’s interest in education extends well beyond the realm of employee retirement-planning services for teachers; he is also actively involved in nonprofit organizations that support high school youth. For nearly 20 years, he has served on the board of NAF, a nonprofit offering public-private partnerships that deliver STEM-related, relevant curriculum, business-mentoring and internship

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opportunities to underserved secondary school students across the nation. He was also a member of the Newark Academy board of trustees executive committee. Additionally, Mr. Dughi is a financial principal with FINRA, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority.

The son of Louis J. Dughi, who served on Blair’s Board of Trustees in the late 1960s, Mr. Dughi shares his Blair connection with his brother, Louis John Dughi Jr. ’65, who also served on the Blair Board in the 1980s. Mr. Dughi lives in Key Biscayne, Florida, and raised three children with his wife, Maura. With his 50th reunion on the horizon, he’s serving on the class of 1966’s Reunion Committee in preparation for a warm homecoming, which he and Maura look forward to attending.

“Mr. Dughi’s professional background, coupled with his institutional knowledge of Blair and his passion for enhancing the lives of school professionals and the students they serve, make him an excellent fit for continued service on Blair’s Board,” noted Mr. Kimmelman.

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Elise Bates Russell joins Blair’s Board of Trustees as a representative of the Newton Presbytery, honoring Blair’s long-held historical ties to the Presbyterian Church.

In her current role as executive director of the nearby Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center, she furthers the center’s mission of providing “a place apart where all people can experience God’s love within a welcoming Christian community” by facilitating leadership development, retreats, outdoor education and team-building programs for local youth and families, as well as nonprofit and corporate groups. In addition to directing the center, she works as an architectural consultant for Run River Enterprises, a consulting firm specializing in camp and conference master planning and design.

Before moving to New Jersey, Ms. Bates Russell earned her undergraduate degree in art history from the College of Wooster in 1995, followed by a master’s degree in architecture from the University of Michigan in 2000. She has worked in Johnsonburg for two years and has just completed a term as president of the board of the Presbyterian Church, Camp and Conference Association, which represents sites across the United States and Canada.

Her professional background as an architect and her experience in site development and working with adolescents make her a valuable addition to both Board committees on which she currently serves: the Covenant Committee, charged with overseeing the spiritual mission of the School, and the Building and Grounds Committee, which manages campus facilities and provides strategic planning and oversight of future building plans.

Ms. Bates Russell has been an enthusiastic supporter of the School since she first worked with students and faculty as part of Blair’s inaugural Day of Service in May 2014. On that day, 85 Blair students visited the Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center and, under the direction and guidance of Ms. Bates Russell and her staff, completed a variety of projects, including the removal of invasive plant species.

Ms. Bates Russell resides in northwest New Jersey with her husband, Rick, an engineer and educator, and their three daughters. “Fellow Board members and I have already been impressed by Elise’s passion for leadership development, effective team building and healthy governance, as well as her commitment to the School’s growth and success,” noted Mr. Kimmelman.
For the “unassuming local kid from Blairstown,” the School on top of the hill seemed like an unreachable dream. One of three children from a family of modest means—his mother a middle-school teacher and his father a construction worker—Dean Tanella ’78 never thought he could be a Blair student until, at the urging of his mother, he visited campus and met Peter Hahn, Blair’s director of admission. That meeting changed the trajectory of Dean’s life, eventually leading to a successful career in investment banking as president of HarborLight Capital Group, LLC, in Tampa, Florida.

Mr. Tanella remembers his first encounter with Mr. Hahn as if it were yesterday. The two talked for a while about Mr. Tanella’s interests and aspirations, and not long after—realizing the young man’s potential—Mr. Hahn encouraged him to apply to Blair. “He was so friendly and embracing,” Mr. Tanella recalled. “He knew a Blair education was beyond my family’s reach, and he explained that there were scholarship funds available to help pay for my tuition.” Several weeks later, he received his acceptance letter in the mail, and, in his words, “the seemingly impossible became reality.”

Mr. Tanella spent his first days as a student on the soccer field, even before the start of classes, training with other promising young Blair athletes for the upcoming fall season. He made the varsity starting line-up as a freshman, the first of a long list of accomplishments during his Blair career. Sports became the avenue through which he developed many meaningful relationships, as long bus rides to Peddie, Hun and Lawrenceville provided ample time for conversation and camaraderie with teammates. “Being surrounded by kids from all over the world was eye-opening,” Mr. Tanella explained.

Serving on the Admission Committee and working as a tour guide were other avenues that broadened his perspective: In those roles, he welcomed families to campus from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds. “Giving tours helped me learn to articulate my thoughts and forced me to reflect on my own Blair experience; it elevated my appreciation for the education I was receiving,” he noted.

Whether on the athletic fields, in the classroom or working for the admission office, Mr. Tanella credits Blair with expanding his worldview. He traveled outside the United States for the first time during his years at Blair and considers global awareness to be among the most important benefits of a Blair education. “Blair was a fantastic launching pad to a world I didn’t even know existed, academically, geographically and professionally,” he said. “I’m not at all sure where I would be today if it weren’t for my Blair experience.”

Blair selects its scholarship recipients with a great deal of care, considering candidates with strong potential and a willingness to apply themselves fully in and out of the classroom. Mr. Tanella did not disappoint. Varsity captain of three sports—soccer, basketball and baseball—he also excelled in the classroom as a member of the Cum Laude Society and winner of the Schmelzer-Selinger Religion Prize, the Henry Cowan English Prize and the coveted Headmaster’s Prize, awarded at commencement to the senior who displays “conspicuous loyalty, outstanding leadership and a fine spirit in Blair life.”
Unsurprisingly, Mr. Tanella didn’t just catch the eye of Blair’s students and faculty; he greatly impressed his scholarship donor, John C. Bogle ’47, who ultimately offered him a job at his burgeoning mutual fund company, The Vanguard Group (now the world’s largest). Left to decide between a four-year baseball scholarship to Tulane University and the opportunity to work for Mr. Bogle, Mr. Tanella took the advice of his father, an avid reader of The Wall Street Journal, and accepted the job at Vanguard. Over the course of the year he worked there, he received tremendous support from the company’s founder, who even bought him a brand-new suit at Brooks Brothers in Philadelphia. Mr. Bogle, of course, expected hard work in return, confident in the investment he was making in this fellow Blair graduate.

Reflecting on his early life, Mr. Tanella recounted, “I was just a kid from Blairstown who harbored a fear of failure and came from modest means. The Chief—my affectionate name for Mr. Bogle—believed in me; that’s what he does—he’s an astute investor, so he invests his time and treasure well in people who have potential and are willing to work hard. He actually thanked me for the privilege of allowing him a good investment to pour his resources into, a young man with potential, citing the joy he experiences in helping others succeed. It was a paradigm shift for me.”

Mr. Tanella later attended Princeton University, also Mr. Bogle’s beloved alma mater, and earned his MBA at Harvard University. He currently resides in Florida with his wife and their two daughters, works as an investment banker, and spends a considerable amount of his private time in Christian ministry, playing golf with clients and following a disciplined fitness regimen. But despite his professional success and the passage of time, he never forgets his original investors—the many people who believed in and supported him along the way. As a means of paying that support forward, Mr. Tanella and his family established the Tanella Family Scholarship in 2000, which helps provide a Blair education to other deserving students.

He explained, “Jack’s generosity toward me and my family changed the way I view my own generosity—personally and professionally. I am joyful for the opportunity to help others who are deserving of a break, and the establishment of this scholarship is just one way for me to do that.”

For Mr. Tanella, the family’s scholarship was an important first step and a way to give back to the School that has given him so much. Because of the generosity of people like Mr. Bogle, Mr. Tanella and many others, Blair has had the privilege of opening its doors to generations of Blair students from all different backgrounds. That so many former scholarship students, like Mr. Bogle and Mr. Tanella, pay it forward with scholarship support shows the deep impact such an investment makes on students well beyond graduation.
Forging Lifelong Connections: The Impact of Scholarship Support at Blair

Each fall, Blair hosts a special scholarship dessert at Sharpe House for newly named scholarship recipients and donors. Students enjoy meeting some of the School’s most ardent supporters and learning about their connection to and support of Blair. For alumni, parents and friends who are sponsors of named scholarships, the social is a chance to engage with current scholarship recipients and see firsthand the direct impact of their gifts.

Each school year, Blair’s named scholarship recipients receive a packet of information outlining the nature of their particular scholarship and the person(s) who established it. Students write letters to their individual donors, thanking them for their support and sharing details of their Blair experience. Many of the donors appreciate the outreach and stay in touch with their students throughout their Blair careers.

Local donors—and even a few who travel considerable distances to stay connected—frequent campus to watch athletic events, attend concerts or take their students out to nearby restaurants. One Blairstown couple hosts scholarship recipients in their home each fall, treating them to a home-cooked meal and friendly conversation around a fire.

Each spring, Mr. Bogle, whose Bogle Brothers Scholars program has supported more than 150 students since he established it in honor of his late twin, David ’47, and older brother, William ’45, in the late 1960s, enjoys a special luncheon at Sharpe House with his current Bogle scholars. During this annual visit, Mr. Bogle gets to know students, sharing with them his wise counsel and encouraging them in their diverse endeavors.

Even after graduation, many Blair scholarship recipients stay in touch with their donors, sharing the details of their lives throughout college and beyond. In this way, Blair’s scholarship program truly has a lifelong impact on those involved.

To learn more about Blair’s named scholarship program, please contact Director of Stewardship E. Courtnay Stanford ’95 at stanfc@blair.edu.
‘Top-Notch Dormitories’ Kathryn & Lakeside Halls Dedicated

The Blair community gathered on October 17 to dedicate the School’s two new dormitories, Kathryn and Lakeside Halls, and to honor the leadership donors whose contributions helped make the residence halls possible. The afternoon ceremony was attended by many Trustees and loyal supporters of the School, including Board Chairman Emeritus John C. Bogle ’47 and former Chairman James Jenkins ’66, and gave Head of School Chris Fortunato the opportunity to thank the Kimmelman and Romano families, who named the buildings, for their generous support and steadfast faith in Blair’s mission.

Board Vice Chairman Dominick “DJ” Romano ’74 and his daughter, Martine ’04, spoke on behalf of the Romanos, honoring in their remarks the family’s matriarch and the dorm’s namesake, Kathryn, who attended the ceremony with her husband, Dominick V. Romano, Hon. ’51. Sharing her inspiration for and commitment to the residential experience of young Blair women, DJ described his family’s long-held belief in the importance of giving back to the communities that have positively impacted their lives.

Chairman of the Board Doug Kimmelman P’12 ’13 ’15 recalled the day he and his wife, Carol, a former Trustee, discovered the Blair community on a visit to campus with their daughter, Annie ’12. As the parent of three Blair graduates, Annie, Robert ’13 and Tommy ’15, Mr. Kimmelman underscored the value of strong teacher-student relationships and the role that top-notch dormitories play in helping
“Our School is most powerfully built upon the relationships formed between students and teachers, in the classroom, on the fields and, most notably, in the dormitories, where students and faculty live side by side.”

–Head of School Chris Fortunato

Blair attract and retain the very best students and faculty.

Mr. Fortunato recognized Chan Hardwick, Blair’s Headmaster of 24 years, and his wife, Monie, welcoming them back to campus for the first time since their retirement in 2013 and thanking them for their substantial legacy and ongoing support. He also expressed gratitude to Chief Operating Officer Jim Frick, Director of Facilities Dave Schmitt, and Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Committee Robert Sigety ’75 for their capable oversight and tireless work in ensuring the project was completed before Blair opened for its 168th year. The ceremony ended as Kathryn “Kay” Romano cut the traditional blue ribbon at the entrance of Kathryn Hall, signaling the official opening of both dormitories.
The School is preparing to break ground on The Center for Innovation and Collaboration (CIC) this spring, setting in motion three dynamic, academics-focused campus projects designed to amplify students’ Blair experience and encourage deeper relationships, connectedness and learning (please see full story on page 14). Blair’s advancement office has already laid significant groundwork for the projects’ funding, having secured gifts and pledges totaling more than $8 million of the estimated $14 million needed to build the multidisciplinary CIC, repurpose Weber Hall for the teaching of mathematics, and realign Bogle Hall’s science classrooms and laboratories.

The advancement office and Trustee campaign cabinet have undertaken a focused fundraising effort, christened “Forward Thinking: A Campaign for Innovation & Collaborative Learning,” to fully fund these pivotal projects. “We’re grateful for the generous financial support we have received to date and energized by the enthusiastic response of Trustees, alumni, parents and friends,” said Chief Advancement Officer Craig Hall. “The CIC and Bogle and Weber projects enhance the relationship-based learning that defines the Blair experience. A gift toward their completion is one that will impact the education of generations of students.”

If you would like to make a gift in any amount to the Forward Thinking Campaign, please contact Mr. Hall at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5640, or hallc@blair.edu.
Can you identify the students in this picture from the late 1980s?

Email your answers to Suzy Logan at logans@blair.edu. The first three people to correctly identify the students pictured will win prizes from the Blair School Store.

Lights. Camera. Take Action!

Your planned gift can help Blair Academy create a future worth recording.

For more information on how to include Blair in your estate plans and become a member of the John C. Sharpe Society, contact Velma Lubliner, assistant director of advancement, at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5634, or lubliv@blair.edu.

www.blair.edu/planned-giving
Despite impressive performances from each of the 13 teams competing against Peddie in November, the Buccaneers were unable to wrench the Kelley-Potter Cup from the Falcons for the second-consecutive year. As the sun set on Hightstown, Blair fell short of victory by a score of 4-9.

During the traditional cup ceremony on the football field’s 50-yard line, Head of School Chris Fortunato graciously congratulated Peddie’s headmaster Peter Quinn, thanked Peddie for hosting the festivities, and commended all the athletes for their dedication and commitment.

Although it is always fun to win the Cup, Associate Head of School Ryan Pagotto ’97 reminded the community that there’s so much more to the Peddie Day tradition than tallying victories and defeats.

“Whether we win or lose on Peddie Day, the week remains one of the absolute highlights of the year for Blair students,” he said. “The silliness and spirit create bonds of friendship throughout the student body like nothing else. Everyone is focused on a common cause, and through that cause, relationships and memories are born and solidified.”
01 A leading scorer, Deng Gak ’17 helped boys’ varsity basketball win its ninth MAPL title.

02 Boys’ squash earned second place in this year’s MAPL tournament, finishing 12-10 overall (Cameron Kurtz ’16 pictured).

03 Wrestling won its 36th national prep title; Chris Cannon ’19 was a freshman standout at 113 pounds.

04 Grace Middleton ’16 broke her sixth Blair record, swimming the 200-meter free in 1:59.08.

05 A team leader, Jack Rauch ’16 scored 15 points in the MAPL championship game vs. Hill.

06 195-pound national prep champion Chase Singletary ’17 defeated his top-ranked Wyoming Seminary opponent twice this season.

07 Liana Zranchev ’16 and Kendall Fitzgerald ’16 led girls’ varsity squash to a 10-8 season; the team finished second at MAPLs.

08 Tatum Fuller ’19 skied for Blair during a successful—but warm—season.

09 Blair’s leading scorer Andra Espinoza-Hunter ’17 earned her 1,000th career point in February.

10 Justin Choi ’18 posted strong times throughout Blair’s 5-3 swimming season.
Meet Blair’s 2015-2016 Winter Champions

Wrestlers Finish Season with 36th National Prep Title
Blair wrestling won the 2016 national prep tournament on February 27, finishing the competition with seven champions. This marks the 36th time the Bucs have won the national title since 1974.

“I congratulate all of Blair’s wrestlers on ending the season on such high note,” said head wrestling coach Brian Antonelli ’93. “Our success this season was entirely a team effort that could not have been achieved without an enormous amount of time and hard work, which each of our athletes delivered day in and day out.”

This latest national prep title caps one of Blair wrestling’s most engaging and successful seasons to date. In December, five underclassmen made the podium at the Ironman Tournament, although the team ended up finishing second to Wyoming Seminary. The Bucs went on to defeat Bergen Catholic and Bethlehem Catholic at the Beast of the East Tournament, emerging from that competition as team champions. After losing to St. Paris Graham in early January, the Bucs faced some of the best teams in the Midwest at the Geary Invitational, winning the overall competition by more than 40 points. Blair wrestlers continued to dominate at the “Who’s Number One” Duals in mid-January, clinching big victories over nationally ranked Clovis, Delbarton and Bethlehem Catholic. The team built on that momentum with a huge victory over Wyoming Seminary at home in late January, a win that allowed Blair to reclaim its long-held number-one-in-the-nation ranking. In the state championship tournament and qualifiers leading up to national preps, Blair athletes qualified in all 14 weight classes, and the Bucs boasted 12 champions overall.

To learn more about individual victories and to watch a video of the Bucs defeating Wyoming Seminary on January 24, visit www.blair.edu/wrestling.

Girls’ Basketball Clinches 6th-Straight MAPL & State Titles
The girls’ varsity basketball team defeated Mercersburg Academy to win the 2016 Mid-Atlantic Prep League (MAPL) title and The Lawrenceville School to become the N.J. prep “A” state champions.

These victories concluded a season marked by hard work and dedication, noted head coach Quint Clarke ’87. Over the course of the winter, the Bucs beat New Jersey’s number-one team, Rutgers Prep, at home; junior guard Andra Espinoza-Hunter ’17 (pictured on opposite page) scored her 1,000th point for Blair; and the team competed against a number of tough opponents representing six states before clinching its sixth-consecutive MAPL and state titles.

“I am incredibly proud of what this group of talented and tough kids has accomplished this year,” Coach Clarke said. “Our success is due to our athletes’ integrity and heart, and I’ve been very fortunate to work with each of them.”

Boys’ Varsity Basketball Wins 9th MAPL Tournament
Heading into the 2016 MAPL tournament as the number-one seed, Blair’s varsity boys’ basketball team lacked several key players who were sidelined by injury. But that didn’t stop the Bucs from winning the MAPL championship for the second-consecutive year after defeating the Hun School in the semifinals and the Hill School in the finals. This latest championship victory marked the ninth time the team has won the title in the 18 years since the tournament was established.

The MAPL win capped a season of ups and downs that included impressive wins on the road against powerhouse teams from Cushing Academy and Hudson Catholic. The team’s 18-8 record is even more notable considering the number of starters who were forced from the court due to injury before the MAPL tournament began, said head coach Joe Mantegna. “I couldn’t be more proud of how this team came together and what they were able to accomplish in the face of a good deal of adversity this season,” he concluded.

To read about how all of Blair’s teams fared, visit www.blair.edu/winter-team-recap.
Dr. Lucian Fletcher Jr. ‘41

How Planned Gifts Fulfill Blair’s Mission

Gratitude, admiration and opportunity are the words Dr. Lu Fletcher Jr. ‘41 associates with his beloved alma mater. As a young boy growing up in rural Branchville, New Jersey, Dr. Fletcher remembers well the days of his youth, a time when gasoline cost four cents a gallon and the topic of his eighth-grade debate was "Resolved: The tractor should replace the farm horse as the primary means of working the soil." Obviously, a lot has changed since then. The young boy who long ago failed to convince his audience of the superior utility of the farm tractor later became a leading cardiologist in northwestern New Jersey, where he practiced for more than four decades.

Blair played an instrumental role in the trajectory of Dr. Fletcher’s path in life. An exceptional score on a middle-school achievement test caught the attention of a local educational administrator, who recommended the young Lucian to Blair as a top scholarship candidate. Despite his academic prowess, Dr. Fletcher recalls failing his first English test at Blair and summoning the resolve to work harder to achieve better results. In addition to his course work, as a scholarship recipient, he shouldered the responsibility of retrieving the mail from the town post office and delivering it to campus mailboxes during meal times. After four years of hard work and dedication, he graduated from Blair with honors and headed off to Princeton University, eventually earning his medical degree from Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons as part of the U.S. Navy V-12 Program. In his words, “I owe everything to Blair; it played a critical role in my personal growth and development, opening up doors of opportunity that I was not likely to experience otherwise.”

Dr. Fletcher eventually decided to return to the region where he grew up to establish his surgical practice, and he impacted scores of patients and families as a cardiologist and internist. He also served in leading administrative roles at professional associations and hospitals, including as president of the New Jersey affiliate of the American Heart Association and as chairman of the coronary care unit at Newton Memorial Hospital, among others. After a lifetime of meaningful work and service to his community, he credits Blair with much of his success. Grateful for the education he received and for the opportunities the School has afforded him since, his bequest to Blair is a simple and heartfelt thank you. "I hope my feelings and actions in response to the wonderful education I received at Blair will inspire others to give back, too," he said.

A former member of Blair’s alumni Board of Governors and a member of the True Blue Loyalty Society and the John C. Sharpe Planned Giving Society, Dr. Fletcher shares a connection to his alma mater with many members of his immediate and extended family, including: his brother John Fletcher ‘45, son Lucian Fletcher III ‘70, daughter Constance D. Fletcher-Hindle ‘74, and grandsons Nicholas Hindle ‘04 and Colton Hindle ‘10, as well as many other nieces, nephews, cousins and in-laws. As such, his legacy at Blair extends well beyond his bequest and will be felt for generations to come. —Dr. Lucian Fletcher Jr. ‘41
Connection is Key @ Regional Blair Alumni Receptions

This year, Blair continued to expand its efforts to connect with alumni from across the globe at a host of receptions held in Chicago, London, New York City, Bechtelsville, Pennsylvania, and Menlo Park, California.

“We have purposefully planned several regional events in locales that we haven’t visited before, and the response from alumni has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic,” said Director of Alumni Relations Jenny Maine. “Not only do these events give Blair graduates the opportunity to remain connected to the School, they also promote relationship building by introducing alumni from the same area who may not have known each other or realized fellow Bucs lived nearby.”

Jenny and her advancement office colleagues have also been pleasantly surprised by the number of young
alumni who have made reconnecting with Blair a priority. “Along with our steadfast older alumni, huge numbers of younger graduates are attending our receptions,” she said. “They are eager to maintain their connection to Blair and meet fellow alumni they might not have known while in high school. This is especially exciting as we venture beyond our traditional engagements in New York City and Washington, D.C., and plan events in cities and countries around the world.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Earl C. Olofson</td>
<td>February 5, 2015</td>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
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<td>1936</td>
<td>David M. Shull</td>
<td>September 7, 2015</td>
<td>Lafayette, California</td>
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<td>William Vandersteel</td>
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<td>Jupiter, Florida</td>
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<td>Frank C. Myers Jr.</td>
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Earl C. Olofson. Mr. Olofson attended Blair for one year and was well-known as “Cliff” to his classmates. Following his 1936 graduation from Lehigh University with a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering, he worked for IBM as a field and service engineer and a design engineer. He entered the Navy in 1942 during World War II, where he served as an intelligence officer, working on classified code-breaking projects as a member of the team known as the “Dayton Code-breakers.” Following the war, Mr. Olofson continued a career in technology and design and pursued graduate studies at The Ohio State University. An eternal optimist who loved sketch art and music, Mr. Olofson passed away at 101 years old. He was predeceased by his wife of 64 years, Alma, and his brother, Carl T. Olofson ‘30. Mr. Olofson is survived by four children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

David M. Shull. The 1936 ACTA notes that Mr. Shull was an athlete, a musician and a member of the ACTA board. After attending Blair for one year, he studied at Princeton University, graduating in 1940. Mr. Shull served his country in the U.S. Marine Corps and enjoyed a long business career, retiring from Chevron Chemical in 1984. Over the course of his life, he held many leadership roles as a dedicated member of the Masonic Lodge, receiving the Hiram Award from Acalanes Fellowship Lodge No. 480 in 1990 and The Grand York Rite Lifetime Masonic Achievement Award. Predeceased by his wife, Dorothy, and his brother, Frederick W. Shull ‘35, Mr. Shull is survived by four daughters.

William Vandersteel. Mr. Vandersteel, a native of Vlissingen, Netherlands, was known by his birth name, Willem Dionys van Nijmegen Schonegevel, during his two years at Blair. He shortened his last name to Vandersteel as he processed his immigration at Ellis Island in 1943. A Blair athlete and member of the glee choir club, Mr. Vandersteel was elected his class’s “future genius,” according to the 1936 ACTA. He graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1940 with a degree in aeronautical engineering and served as a U.S. Army Air Corps test pilot during World War II. After working briefly for General Motors in its advance styling division, he went on to found three companies: Ampower Corporation, which facilitated cross-border shipping and engineering; TubeXpress, which adapted the use of pneumatic tubes for freight transport; and a third business that advanced photo-on-metal signage. A skilled designer, Mr. Vandersteel developed improved wings for model airplanes, built a hydrofoil that lifted a boat off the water and designed the house in which he lived with his family in Alpine, New Jersey. The father of Ann V. Vandersteel ‘85 and Tina Vandersteel Cressotti ‘86, Mr. Vandersteel is survived by five children and six grandchildren.

Frank C. Myers Jr. Mr. Myers, known as “Sandy,” attended Blair for one year. He was a member of the ACTA and The Blair Breeze boards, and the 1939 yearbook describes his “cheerful attitude that stamped him as one of the best-liked fellows on campus.” Following Blair, Mr. Myers graduated from Dartmouth College and proudly served in the Army with the 292nd Ordnance Maintenance Company in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. He and his wife, Almira, married in 1949 and began farming outside York Springs, Pennsylvania. An active member of his community, Mr. Myers was a long-time member of the York Springs Lions Club and the Ye Olde Sulphur Spa Historical Society, and he served on zoning and school boards. Mr. Myers is survived by his beloved wife of 66 years, five children, 11 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Edwards F. Rullman. A loyal alumnus of the class of 1940, Mr. Rullman served on Blair’s Board of Governors and was a member of the John C. Sharpe Society. He was “one of Blair’s best-liked fellows” according to the 1940 ACTA, as well as captain of the varsity track team and secretary of the senior class. Mr. Rullman graduated from Yale University in 1944, served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War II and enjoyed a distinguished career in architecture. He earned a master’s degree from the Yale School of Architecture in 1955 and received a Fulbright grant to study in Rome. Mr. Rullman worked for a Manhattan architecture firm until 1965, subsequently going into business for himself and eventually forming a partnership focused on restoring historic properties in New York. He and his wife, Francesca, lovingly restored their own home, an 1829 corner brownstone in Brooklyn Heights, New York. Movie buffs call this house the “Moonstruck House” because it was the setting for the 1987 film Moonstruck. Mr. Rullman was instrumental in persuading the City of New York to establish Landmark Designation for Brooklyn
In MEMORIAM

WINTER-SPRING 2016

M. D. Anderson gained worldwide recognition as a center for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Through the years, Dr. Dodd served in leadership roles in a number of professional organizations, including as chairman of the board and president of the American College of Radiology, president of the American Cancer Society, trustee of the American Board of Radiology, president of the Texas Radiological Society and president of the Houston Radiological Society. His academic appointments included posts at St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Luke's Hospital, Texas Children's Hospital, Hermann Hospital, Jefferson Medical College, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Texas Medical School, Baylor College of Medicine and Texas A&M University. According to his obituary published in the Houston Chronicle, one of the greatest accomplishments of his career was the standardization of the use of mammography for the detection and diagnosis of breast cancer. Dr. Dodd wrote extensively in medical journals and publications, authored four books, delivered 21 national and international named lectureships, and was recognized for his many achievements with a host of awards, including the Presidential Medal of the American Cancer Society. Predeceased by his wife, Helen, Dr. Dodd is survived by six children, 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

1941

Gerald D. Dodd Jr. A physician with a distinguished career in diagnostic radiology, Dr. Dodd was the grandfather of Christopher A. Dodd ’06 and a loyal member of the class of 1941. While at Blair, Dr. Dodd was an avid athlete, participating on the football and wrestling teams. He studied medicine at Lafayette College and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II as a hospital corpsman. After the war, he continued his medical studies, graduating from Lafayette College in 1945, earning his medical degree at Thomas Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1947, and completing his internship at Fitzgerald Mercy Hospital in 1948 and his residency in radiology at Thomas Jefferson Medical College in 1950. Dr. Dodd served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean conflict, rising to the rank of captain as Chief of Radiology at Mitchell Air Force Base and commander of a mobile radiology unit. He then continued his career in diagnostic radiology, achieving the highest levels of expertise in the field, particularly in the areas of breast and gastrointestinal imaging and organized radiology. Dr. Dodd was appointed an assistant professor at Thomas Jefferson Medical College in 1952 and, in 1966, became a professor and the first chairman of the newly formed division of diagnostic radiology at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. During his tenure, M. D. Anderson gained worldwide recognition as a center for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Through the years, Dr. Dodd served in leadership roles in a number of professional organizations, including as chairman of the board and president of the American College of Radiology, president of the American Cancer Society, trustee of the American Board of Radiology, president of the Texas Radiological Society and president of the Houston Radiological Society. His academic appointments included posts at St. Joseph’s Hospital, St. Luke’s Hospital, Texas Children’s Hospital, Hermann Hospital, Jefferson Medical College, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Texas Medical School, Baylor College of Medicine and Texas A&M University. According to his obituary published in the Houston Chronicle, one of the greatest accomplishments of his career was the standardization of the use of mammography for the detection and diagnosis of breast cancer. Dr. Dodd wrote extensively in medical journals and publications, authored four books, delivered 21 national and international named lectureships, and was recognized for his many achievements with a host of awards, including the Presidential Medal of the American Cancer Society. Predeceased by his wife, Helen, Dr. Dodd is survived by six children, 13 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

1942

James A. Tirrell Jr. Mr. Tirrell attended Blair for two years and remained a loyal supporter of the School throughout his life. An all-state football end, he was co-captain of Blair’s 1942 team and a Notre Dame University football recruit. Mr. Tirrell attended Notre Dame until he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps to serve his country as a bombardier during World War II. He graduated with a JD from Rutgers Law School in 1949 and was a member of several professional organizations during his career, including the American, New Jersey and Warren County Bar Associations, the latter of which he served as president. Mr. Tirrell was the attorney for a number of Warren County municipalities and school boards, and he served as the Warren County prosecutor from 1973 to 1980. Preceded in death by his wife, Jane, he is survived by his son and daughter-in-law.

1943

William D. Fletcher. A four-year Blair student, Mr. Fletcher was a member of The Blair Breeze, the Stylus and the golf team. During World War II, Mr. Fletcher served two years as a private first class in the 10th Mountain Division in Italy. A decorated war veteran, he was the recipient of two Purple Hearts. He attended Syracuse University, earning a BA in 1949. Mr. Fletcher is survived by his cousin, Dr. Lucian Fletcher ’41. He was preceded in death by his wife, Shirley.

John R. Ward. During his four years at Blair, Mr. Ward played football and was a member of the ACTA and The Blair Breeze. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps for three years during World War II as a private first class. Mr. Ward graduated from the University of Vermont in 1950 and served in the Peace Corps from 1963 to 1965 in Tunisia, North Africa, where he met and married his wife, Lucia. In 1967, he earned a master’s degree in education from Utah State University, and he enjoyed a successful 45-year teaching career in Oregon. Mr. Ward was a member of the Lions Club, the American Legion and many other civic organizations, and he delighted in running his tree farm. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, three children and four grandchildren.
Hugh D. Outterson. The Rev. Outterson was a lifelong loyal member of the class of 1944. Entering the School in 1943, he was a member of The Blair Breeze board and ACTA staff. He proudly served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and graduated from the University of Rochester in 1949. Following studies at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Mr. Outterson became an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in 1952. He served in pastorates in a variety of locations, including New York, New Jersey, Venezuela and Indiana, and was an active community member, participating in such organizations as the Presbyterian Border Ministry, Greece Rotary Club and the Eunice Lodge F&AM. Mr. Outterson is survived by his loving wife of 63 years, Barbara, with whom he enjoyed attending Blair reunions over the years, four children, eight grandchildren and a great-grandson.

1946

E. F. Randolph Erdman. Mr. Erdman, known as “Randy” or “Erd” to his Blair classmates, attended the School for six years, during which time he was a member of the choir, blue color club, the Stylus and the swim team. He served in the Army at the end of World War II and again during the Korean conflict, when he was wounded in action. After his honorable medical discharge from the military, he attended the University of Richmond, earning a BA and an MA in English literature. Mr. Erdman enjoyed a long career with the federal government, serving in posts throughout the world with the National Security Agency and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He was a member of the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and the Association of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO). Mr. Erdman was predeceased by his wife, Nancy.

Arthur M. Quinn. Mr. Quinn attended Blair for his junior and senior years and graduated from New York University in 1952 with a BA in economics. He was an avid cross-country skier at Blair and continued to ski throughout his life. A loyal member of the class of 1946, he served as class representative from 2001 to 2006. Mr. Quinn is survived by his wife, Jeanne.

Donald R. Sparks. For more than 35 years, Mr. Sparks was president of Sparks Exhibits, an exhibit and design business founded by his grandfather. He also served as president of the national trade organization Exhibit Designers and Producers Association and of the Wenonah, New Jersey, board of education. Mr. Sparks attended Blair for one year, but he left his mark on the football field and in the classroom and remained a loyal supporter of the School for life. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture, Mr. Sparks served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean conflict. He and his wife of 62 years, Joann, resided in Wenonah for more than 50 years. He loved sailing and was a member of the Corinthian Yacht Club. He is survived by his loving wife, two sons and three grandchildren.

1950

Bruce D. Boselli. An esteemed physician who was board-certified in internal medicine and hematology, Dr. Boselli was a leader in patient care, medical education and clinical research during his 28-year tenure at Guthrie Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, Pennsylvania. The 1950 ACTA predicted his future success, pointing to his “excellent scholastic record,” “bright personality” and “steady determination.” At Blair, Dr. Boselli was captain of the tennis team; a leader of the German club, the Stylus and The Blair Breeze; and an honor roll and cum laude student. He matriculated at Cornell University, earning his bachelor’s degree in 1954 and his MD at Cornell’s Weill Medical College in New York City in 1957. He met and married his wife of 59 years, Shirlee, a nursing student, during that time. Dr. Boselli completed his internal medicine residency at New York Hospital, served a three-year tour with the U.S. Army Medical Corps in Germany and returned stateside for a three-year stint as an internal medicine resident at the University of Vermont Medical Center. He joined the Guthrie Clinic at Robert Packer Hospital in 1964 and served in a number of leadership roles: Dr. Boselli founded the hospital's hematology and oncology department in 1965, serving as its chief until his 1992 retirement; he was the president of the Robert Packer Hospital staff in 1973; and he served on the Guthrie Clinic board of directors from 1975 to 1990. Dr. Boselli was also active on several local boards in his community and was a founding member of the Valley Philosophical Society. His favorite pastimes included golf, fishing, history and bird-watching, an activity he and Shirlee especially enjoyed together after their retirement during winters at Captiva Island, Florida. A loyal supporter of the School who returned to Blair to celebrate his 50th reunion in 2000, Dr. Boselli is survived by Shirlee, five children and six grandchildren. He was predeceased by his brother, Eugene R. Boselli ’56.

1951

George W. Beierle. A three-season athlete, Mr. Beierle was a member of Blair’s football, basketball and track teams during his postgraduate year. He attended East Carolina University (ECU) before being drafted into the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict. He graduated in 1960 from ECU and moved back to New Jersey, accepting a position as a woodshop teacher at
1953
George H. Thompson Sr. A graduate of Lycoming College and Dickinson Law School, Mr. Thompson enjoyed a 55-year career practicing law with his partners and associates at Thompson, Calkins and Sutter. He also served as an elder and trustee of the Plum Creek Presbyterian Church and on numerous boards in his community of Oakmont, Pennsylvania. Mr. Thompson was an athlete and musician during his two years at Blair, playing soccer and baseball and also serving as vice president of the chess club; he remained a supporter of the School through the years. Mr. Thompson is survived by wife, Mary, three children and nine grandchildren.

1952
Stephen S. J. Hall. The Rev. Hall was a Blair varsity athlete, an honor student, and a member of the band, drama club and choir. He graduated from Cornell University with a BS (1956) and served two years in the U.S. Marine Corps. He continued his studies, earning an MBA from Michigan State (1966), and he enjoyed a successful career in business, during which he worked for the Sheraton Corporation, as Harvard University’s vice president of administration and as an entrepreneur. In 1988, he earned an MDiv from Harvard University and became an ordained minister, serving as pastor of Beechwood Congregational Church in Cohasset, Massachusetts, until 1993 and as pastor of the American Church in Paris for many years. Mr. Hall and his wife, Marjorie, retired to Sarasota, Florida, in 2000, where he remained an active member of his church and community. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, four children and many grandchildren.

1954
Matthew G. Botnick. A loyal alumnus of the class of 1954, Mr. Botnick graduated from Bucknell University in 1958 and operated two family-owned automobile dealerships for many years. He had been writing and producing the TV spots for Botnick’s since 1983, and the company’s slogan, “I just can’t believe this,” made him well-known in Broome County, New York. Mr. Botnick was very active in his community and served on the board of the Broome County Chamber of Commerce. While at Blair, he was a member of the cross-country, basketball and varsity golf teams, and he continued to play golf for many years. Mr. Botnick is survived by wife, Gloria, three children and four grandchildren.

1960
John F. Robinson. While at Blair, Dr. Robinson was known as “Skip” to his classmates; he played varsity football and was a member of the science club. He graduated from Furman University in 1964 and the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1968, embarking upon a 40-year career as an optometrist. Dr. Robinson also served two years in the Medical Service Corps at Fort McClellan’s Noble Army Hospital. A loyal member of the class of 1960, he is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Toni, two sons and four grandchildren.

1961
Charles V. Molesworth Jr. Mr. Molesworth was a member of Blair’s junior varsity soccer, football and wrestling teams, and he served on The Blair Breeze and ACTA staffs, as well as on the junior dorm council. He studied at Otterbein College, served in the U.S. Navy from 1963 to 1965 and earned a bachelor’s degree at the University of Maryland in 1970. Mr. Molesworth spent his career in telecommunications, working for companies including MCI Telecommunication and AT&T. Together with his wife, Nancy, he owned Big Sky Bread Company, a bakery and coffeehouse in Raleigh, North Carolina, for several years. Mr. Molesworth is survived by his wife.

1962
Sidney Portnoy. Dr. Portnoy, a licensed clinical psychologist with more than 25 years of experience, was co-founder of Penn Valley Counseling Associates. He earned his undergraduate degree at Franklin & Marshall College (1966), an MA at Bucknell University (1968) and a PhD in clinical psychology at Temple University (1972). A junior varsity cross-country runner, wrestler and tennis player at Blair, he remained loyal to the School and the class of 1962, writing at his 50th reunion that he had much to be thankful for, including his great family and his “good educational start at Blair, which paved the way for the future.” Dr. Portnoy is survived by his beloved wife, Sandra, two children and four grandchildren.
**In Memoriam**

1963

**Ronald P. Knox.** A loyal alumnus, the 1963 ACTA notes that Mr. Knox was the band president, played varsity golf and served as a study hall monitor. A 1968 graduate of Parsons College with a BS in business administration, Mr. Knox enjoyed a successful career as a nursing-home administrator, retiring in 2006 as senior vice president of operations for Unicare Health Facilities. In 2007, Mr. Knox and three partners founded Feed My Sheep, a nonprofit Christian catering company, where he served in full-time ministry. He is survived by his devoted wife, Joanne, two children and four grandchildren.

1964

**John D. Weesner.** Mr. Weesner attended Blair for his junior and senior years and was a prefect and a member of the swim team; he was also voted “best dressed” by his classmates, according to the 1964 ACTA. He earned a BS in aerospace engineering from the University of Virginia in 1971 and an MA in engineering administration construction management from The George Washington University in 1975. Over the course of his career, he worked in the electric-utilities industry, as well as in engineering and management, establishing his own consulting practice in 1983. Mr. Weesner loved spending time outdoors and piloting his private seaplane. His son, John P. Weesner ’94, wrote a moving tribute about his dad’s love of flying [please see Class Notes, page 95]. Mr. Weesner is survived by his wife, Gitta, and their son.

1966

**Chad L. Cumming Sr.** A Blair varsity wrestler and JV football player, Mr. Cumming lettered in both wrestling and football at Lawrence University in Wisconsin, where he earned a bachelor’s degree and met his wife, Judy. He began working as a teacher and coach, but transitioned to sales for several years, a career move that brought him and his young family to Arkansas. The Cummings purchased an 80-acre farm in Perry County, realizing their dream of living in the country. Mr. Cumming returned to the classroom in 1993 at Pulaski Academy, where he was a highly respected history teacher who won several awards for teaching excellence. Until his retirement in 2013, he also served as Pulaski’s assistant football coach. A devoted husband and father, Mr. Cumming is survived by his wife of nearly 47 years, two sons and six grandchildren.

1968

**Andrew J. Carlson.** Mr. Carlson attended Blair for one year and served in the Seabees, a division of the U.S. Naval Construction Forces. He later worked for John Deere in the company’s heavy-equipment division. Mr. Carlson is survived by his wife, his brother, Richard A. Carlson ’68, and two children.

1970

**Glenn T. Reeves.** During his four years at Blair, Mr. Reeves played junior varsity soccer and tennis, and was a member of the Stylus and chapel committee. He earned a BA in Bible studies at Southern California College (1979), an MA in Christian education at Talbot Theological Seminary (1981) and an MA in counseling at Azusa Pacific University (1987). Mr. Reeves worked as a marriage and family counselor and was a longtime resident of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Survivors include his wife, Wendy, and four children.

1972

**David H. Callen.** A 1976 graduate of Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration, Mr. Callen received his MBA from Rollins College in 1984. He enjoyed a long career in hospitality management, serving as president of Callen Company/Carnegie Hotel Group and as president of H. I. Development, one of the nation’s leading privately owned hotel management, development and consulting companies. Mr. Callen is survived by his wife of 23 years, Nicole, and five children.

1977

**Craig R. Schmidt.** A loyal member of the class of 1977, Mr. Schmidt attended Blair as a four-year day student. The 1977 ACTA notes that he was editor of The Blair Breeze and a member of the varsity “B” club. He studied at Vassar College and Virginia Commonwealth University prior to pursuing a career in journalism. He worked for various newspapers in New Jersey and New York, including the New Jersey Herald, New York Daily News, Star-Ledger and The Record, among other publications and companies. Mr. Schmidt is survived by his wife, Deborah.
2007

**Jared R. Platt.** A world-class wrestler, Mr. Platt captained Blair’s number-one nationally ranked wrestling team in 2007. He earned national prep wrestling titles at 215 lbs. in 2006 and 2007, as well as ASICS All American honors in 2006 (honorable mention) and 2007 (third team). He achieved further wrestling success in freestyle, placing first (215 lbs.) at the 2007 Junior Nationals, fourth (211.5 lbs.) at the 2008 University Nationals and second (211.5 lbs.) at the 2010 University Nationals. In 2007, he won gold medals in freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling at the Pan Am Junior World Championship, a “rare achievement,” according to Rusty Davidson, who wrote about the event for USA Wrestling. Mr. Platt was a Penn State University wrestling recruit, but his efforts with the Nittany Lions were curtailed by injury. He continued his career as a professional mixed martial arts fighter, a coach at the Buxton School of Wrestling and an assistant wrestling coach at Blair. A devoted husband and father, Mr. Platt courageously battled stage 4 cancer. He is survived by his wife, Candace, two daughters, and many family members and friends.

Past Parent & Friend of Blair

**Vera C. Ronco.** Mrs. Ronco was a graduate of Marywood College; a devout member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Roseto, Pennsylvania; and a culinary expert. Her children, Joel ’78, Lucienne ’80 and Michael ’82, attended Blair as day students from 1974 to 1982. During these years, Blair athletes who played lacrosse, field hockey, basketball and softball came to know Mrs. Ronco as a caring and supportive parent to all Blair students. She showed her support by inviting entire athletic teams, coaches and former Athletic Director A. Jon Frere to her home in Roseto for end-of-season lasagna parties, which became team rituals. She also was an early adopter of preparing and sharing pregame meals with Blair athletes and fans alike. She is remembered by her children’s close friends as a caring parent who offered her home and love freely during their stay at Blair and afterward. Mrs. Ronco is survived by her children, their spouses, six grandchildren and one great-grandson.
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June 10-12, 2016

Weekend Highlights:

- Blair Cup Golf Scramble
- "Skeptics" Presentation by Martin Miller, PhD
- View Student-Produced Videos
- "Tell Your Blair Story" Workshop with Carolyn Conforti-Browse ’79
- Friday-night Class Gatherings
- 5K Run with Blair cross country coaches Martin Miller and Latta Browse

- Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
  - Edwin M. Sabol ’36
  - Thomas E. McLean ’73
  - Mark T. Lieberman ’74
  - Nicole Nicusanti Tipton ’93
  - Edwina O. Adrien ’06

- Head of School Assembly & Awards Presentation
- Portrait Unveiling of Blair’s 15th Headmaster Chan Hardwick & his wife, Monie

- Alumni Art Show Reception with Kristen Bogart ’01
- Alumni Lacrosse Game, led by Teddy Wenner ’96
- Squash Round Robin with Blair coaching staff
- Saturday-night Dinner and Dancing to "The Good Times Band"
- "Verdant Hills" Road Cycling Tour, led by Carl Cramer ’72 and Rob & Sharon Merrifield

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Questions? Contact Jenny Maine, director of alumni relations, at (908) 362-6121, ext. 5655, or mainej@blair.edu.

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