



Author Colum McCann Joins St. Andreans for Book Discussion in NYC

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In early April, students, faculty, parents, and alums gathered at the home of Jane and Paul Murphy P'17, '19, '22 in New York City for a St. Andrew's Women's Network book club

discussion of the novel *TransAtlantic* by Colum McCann. The discussion was led by History Department Chair Emily Pressman and Dean of Teaching & Learning Elizabeth Roach. Much to everyone's surprise and delight, the author himself showed up for the discussion. Margaret Murphy '19, Dede Rattray '19, Leandre Pestcoe '19, Arthur Potter '19, and Gus Richards '19 attended the book discussion; each student wrote his or her senior exhibition paper on *TransAtlantic*, and during the discussion shared some of the arguments from their papers with McCann. All are seen here posing with the author.

"When we gathered on Wednesday night in the Murphy's beautiful living room, I witnessed an astonishing exhibition of learning, graciousness, and intellectual stimulation," reflected Elizabeth Roach after the event. "Warm, personable, and brilliant, Colum McCann wanted, most of all, to engage with the students, asking them to talk about the papers they had written on *TransAtlantic* for their senior exhibition projects. With great poise and clarity, they articulated and synthesized their arguments in their papers. McCann validated each of their readings of his novel and explored how their thinking actually opened up the novel to him in new ways."

"That our students had the confidence and intellectual maturity to talk to the author and a room of adults said, to me, that they were fully prepared to tackle any scholarly challenge ahead of them in life," Roach continued. "Wednesday night, in many ways, was the most authentic assessment of learning, one to which every teacher at St. Andrew's contributed. I saw in our students the many oral presentations that they have given during their years here as well as their comfort with adult interaction, their passion

for ideas, their openness to new thinking, their embrace of learning. I was in awe of them, but I was also in awe of their teachers."