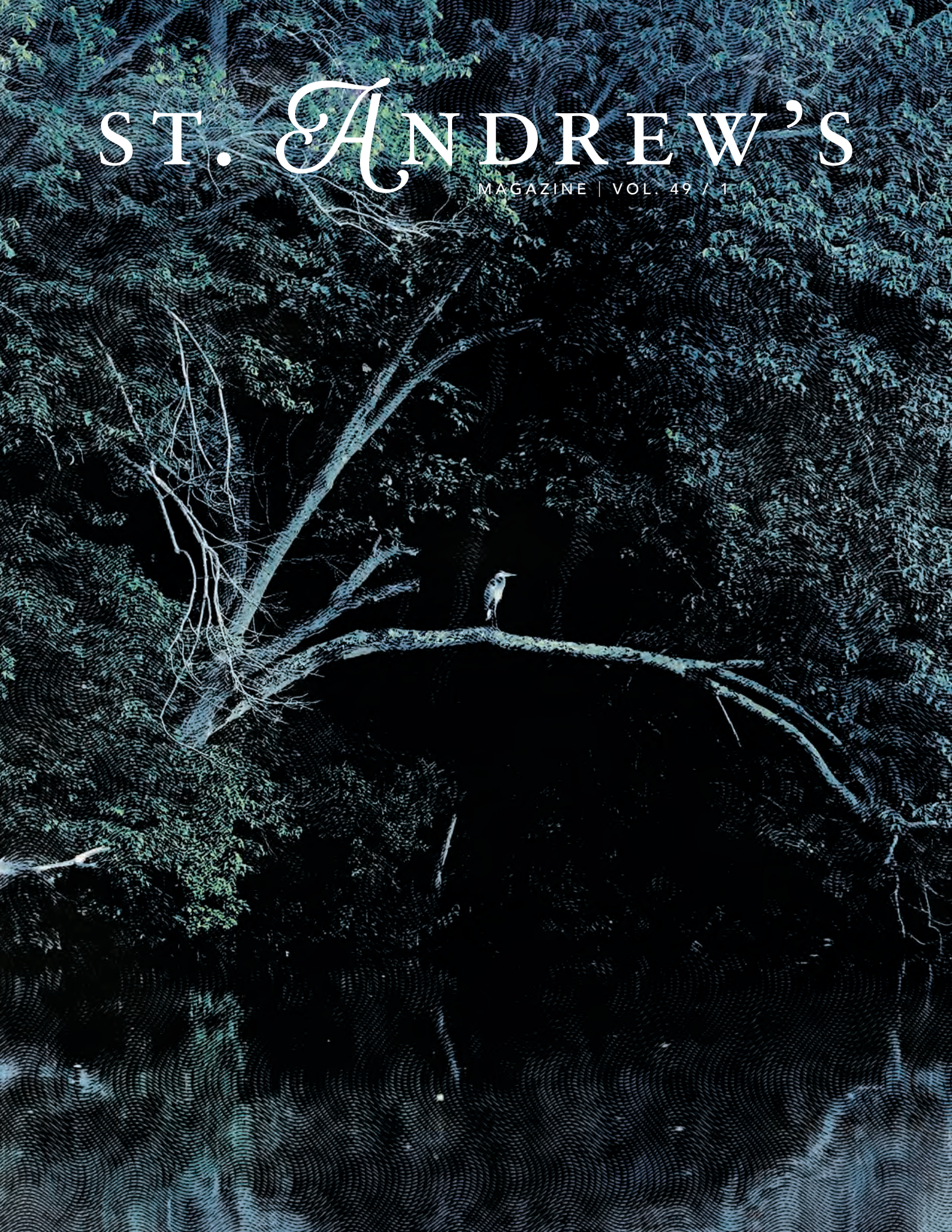


# ST. ANDREW'S

MAGAZINE | VOL. 49 / 1



FROM THE EDITOR

- 2 Seeing with Fresh Eyes

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

- 6 Write the First Line

STORIES FROM CAMPUS AND BEYOND

- 8 Book Club  
12 Process Over Product

BRICK BY BRICK

- 14 Building on  
What Came Before  
18 We Are All Chaplains  
20 The Next Generation of  
Founders  
24 Things Worth Protecting  
28 The Final Five Percent

FEATURES

- 32 A Teaching Practice  
42 Notes from Beechwood  
50 A Class That Said Yes

CAN'T HELP BUT CONNECT

- 58 Home, Again  
64 Class Notes  
72 In Memory



*On The Cover: A Great Blue Heron keeps watch from a branch that bows over Noxontown Pond, photographed by Arno Loessner.*



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Seeing with Fresh Eyes

I have gazed out over Noxontown Pond more times than I can count.

I looked on in disbelief when I first arrived here—I've never had an office view like this.

I've looked on with bittersweetness every Commencement, never quite ready to say goodbye to the young people who reframe my world each year with their curiosity and earnest questions. Watching them huddle on the T-Dock for their first photos as alumni gets me every time—wasn't it just yesterday they were considering their first, timid leap into the pond?



*"St. Andrew's keeps handing me, you—all of us—fresh eyes with which to see the world."*

I looked on with unabashed awe during this June's Reunion Weekend, when a double-rainbow anchored itself from bank to bank and swept across an ombré sky. It turned every alumnus gathered on the Front Lawn into a teenager once more. They raced toward the water, hand in hand, and I felt, yet again, the timeless pull of this place.

I've even looked on with anger after my daughter, who could not resist the siren call of the cool water lapping up the golden-hour sun of late August, jumped off the dock at Rodney Point—a mere day after we spent many hours (and many dollars) at a salon getting fresh braids for the new school year. In what I consider an act of mother nature advocating for all mothers, my daughter promptly locked eyes with a snake, and that took care of that.

My relationship to the pond, in other words, is proprietary. But then I looked at it through the eyes of Arno and Mary Loessner P'84,'86.

For two decades, the couple has lived on the pond, in Beechwood Cottage. They invited me to their home recently to discuss Arno's essay, excerpted on page 42. Over banana bread, coffee, and a driving rain thumping against their windows, they told me their story, much of it linked to the pond—how they use it to measure the seasons, to take account of what has changed, to understand both humans and wildlife. It is their teacher, offering lessons of attention, respect, faith, and balance. To me, the pond is a pond. To them, it is a living member of the family. This perspective shift, this seeing with new eyes, is a feature, not a bug, of St. Andrew's.

It happened again while I was reporting on Eric Kemer's four decades at the school, which you can read about on page 32. The beloved math and science teacher, who began teaching here in

1987, retired in May. Eric is, by his own description, a "dabbler," which he defines as one preoccupied by creative pursuits. I would define a dabbler—at least, this particular dabbler—as a man of boundless curiosity, artistry, and creativity; a modern day Renaissance Man who possesses intellectual super powers. One dabble involved photographing and then paper-cutting the leaves of a sycamore, a tree Eric had walked under for decades without really noticing. When he finally did, he was entranced. He came into my office, in his reserved and soft way, to share with me the greeting cards his leaf dabble had produced—a stunning body of work. He showed me that a leaf is not just a leaf, any more than a pond is just a pond. I keep one of his cards pinned to my wall as a reminder to look deeper.

St. Andrew's keeps handing me, you—all of us—fresh eyes with which to see the world. A community built on access provides precisely that: access to the relationships, stories, and perspectives that allow us to see beyond our own. Which is why the story on page 28 is so critical to who we are—thanks to a generous anonymous gift, our financial aid program, which underpins it all, has expanded to historic heights, helping us bring even more deserving Saints to the table.

All of these students will eventually have their own answer to what this place looks like. It won't be the same as mine or yours, but it will be offered to all of us as an invitation to look longer and think deeper, to see today what we didn't yesterday.



AK White



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# A place to celebrate growth and connection.

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MESSAGE FROM  
THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

# Write the First Line

It will surprise no one reading this that since I was very young, I have loved the start of the school year. In late August, my father would bring us to Capitol Office Supply on Lookerman Street in Dover. I doubt it was air-conditioned, but it always seemed so cool inside on a sweltering afternoon. My brother and I would each get a new Artgum eraser, a box of #2 pencils, and a notebook. I associate this time of year with the smell of sharpening cedar pencils, and crisp, blank pages.

Each year provides plenty of opportunity for reflection and learning from the past year, but the fall is all about anticipation—what will we write on this new, blank page? And how will we revise it and develop it? Great schools ask us to begin before we know who we will be—to write the first line before we know the last. It is another way to understand our motto: *Faith* is a requirement of *learning*—we ask our students to be courageous, and take that leap, precisely because they—and we—*do not know*. We believe that earnest work, sustained attention, courageous thinking, and generous schoolmates will get us from here to there.

There is so much to look forward to as we welcome new students and adults, learning once again that St. Andrew's is self-generating. Places like St. Andrew's don't automatically exist. They are brought into being through thousands of generous acts of care, patience, and shared purpose, formed in the recognition that each of us is deserving of grace and love, that each child in our care is valuable beyond measure, that when we inevitably make mistakes, we will mend them together.

The work of a school, done well, is constructive, and that is what you will see reflected in these pages. Work in classrooms, like Mr. Kemer's, joyfully shaped and reshaped over four decades. Work on the Garth, which we are restoring as the first of many projects to prepare our campus for its second century. Work on behalf of our financial aid program, which, thanks to a group of remarkably generous benefactors, has grown beyond anything in the school's history.

*Faith* is a  
requirement  
of *learning*

---

And so, we begin again, grounded in an enduring mission: the past is never forgotten, but rather presents us with our next chance to grow and become. I know that in what will seem both an eternity and an instant, my new Artgum will be worn down to a nub, my pencils tiny shadows of what they once were, and the pages of my notebook full. What a miracle! Thank you for your engagement, care, and partnership, which make it all possible.

In partnership,



Joy McGrath '92  
Head of School

# Stories from Campus and Beyond

*Word on the Street at St. Andrew's*



## Book Club

*Three members of the St. Andrew's community on their recent books—and how the school impacted their work.*

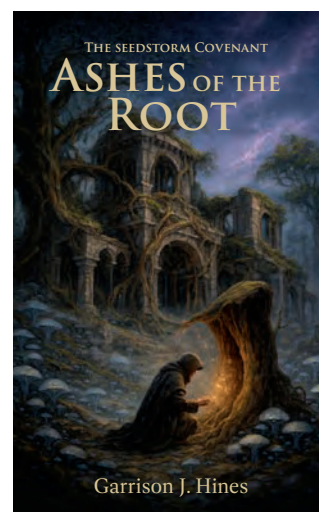
### *Ashes of the Root*, Book 1 of The Seedstorm Covenant Trilogy

*by Joseph "Garrison" Hines '14*

**THE PITCH** Blending myth, ecology, and resistance, this Afrofuturist saga about two brothers on opposites side of the same war tackles memory, stewardship, and the dangerous cost of forgetting where we come from.

**THE CONNECTION** Hines, the founder of North Roots—a Philly-based urban agriculture nonprofit that seeks to combat hunger by increasing access to fresh, organic foods grown in the agency's community gardens—says SAS influenced both his founding of North Roots and *Ashes of the Root*. "[Former biology teacher] Peter McLean is almost solely responsible for sparking my passion for environmental stewardship," Hines says. "His life and his dedication to the natural world always piqued my curiosity." Hines studied nature at St. Andrew's through the lens McLean offered: via the call of a bird, the leaf of a tree, the petal of a wildflower. And McLean's students did it, he says, through a "quadrat," a 10x10 square chosen by each student and from which they observed nature and campus throughout the year to compile notes and, later, a paper. "From here we could quietly observe the natural world," Hines says. "These were some of my favorite projects because they gave me the space to be alone during a time when I often felt overwhelmed and out of place." McLean was so influential to the teenaged Hines that the future novelist immortalized McLean and his wife, Carol Ann Pala. "They are represented in the novel through the two characters they inspired," Hines says. Which ones? There's only one way to find out.

*Ashes of the Root* is available at [readseedstorm.com](http://readseedstorm.com).





*"I got a strong moral education  
from St. Andrew's"* —John Seabrook

## *The Spinach King: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty*

by John Seabrook '76

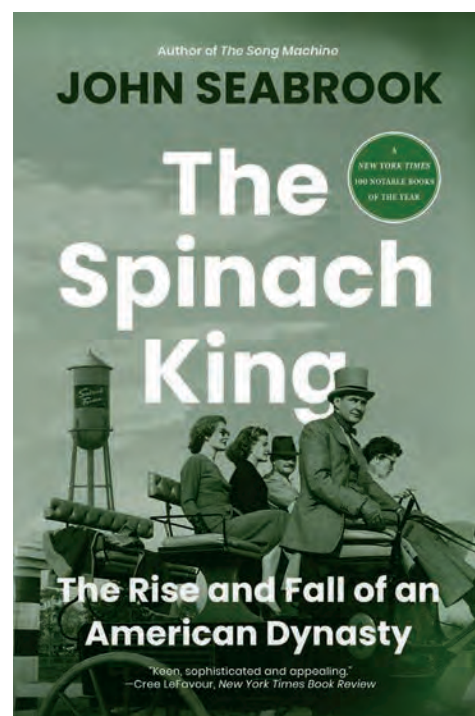
**THE PITCH** The longtime *New Yorker* journalist and student of people turns the magnifying glass inward in his unflinching account of his own family's rise and reckoning as emperors of a frozen food dynasty.

**THE CONNECTION** Long before John Seabrook became a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, he was a student in Bill Amos's biology class, tracking a colony of pine beetles in a dead log near Noxontown Pond. "The observational skills I learned in biology class with Mr. Amos ended up being put to use not in a laboratory as a researcher, or even in the practice of science," Seabrook says. "Instead, those hours led to a career of writing nonfiction, where I studied and reported on colonies not of beetles but of people, whose stories I tell."

Even when those stories are about his own family. "I come from this family of amoral men who were willing to do whatever it took to get ahead and to win," he says. "I turned out differently, with a developed moral compass." He credits two overlapping forces: his mother, Liz, a St. Andrew's trustee during his time at the school, and the school itself. "I got a strong moral education from St. Andrew's," he says, pointing to the school's Episcopal identity and its emphasis on respect for others.

Writing honestly about his family's history—including a 1934 labor strike at Seabrook Farms that ended violently, and the company's treatment of Black workers—required a finely tuned and clear-eyed sense of right and wrong. "St. Andrew's helped me to get that," he says.

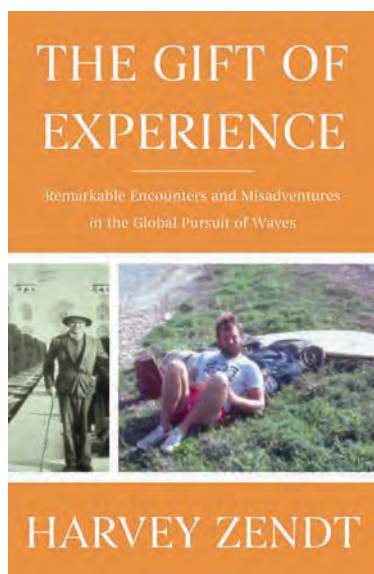
*The Spinach King* is available at [wwnorton.com](http://wwnorton.com).



## *The Gift of Experience: Remarkable Encounters and Misadventures in the Global Pursuit of Waves*

**Harvey Zendt, former SAS coach and special assignment assistant**

**THE PITCH** A pioneer of surfing Avalon, N.J. waves in the early 1960s, in 1976, Zendt set off on a global search for the next great wave. His thirst for the swell took him from Puerto Rico to Hawaii, to Australia to Fiji, and beyond. Along the way, he found the thrill of the ride doesn't last forever, but his broadened understanding of humanity, and the boundless good will of the people he met along the way, does.



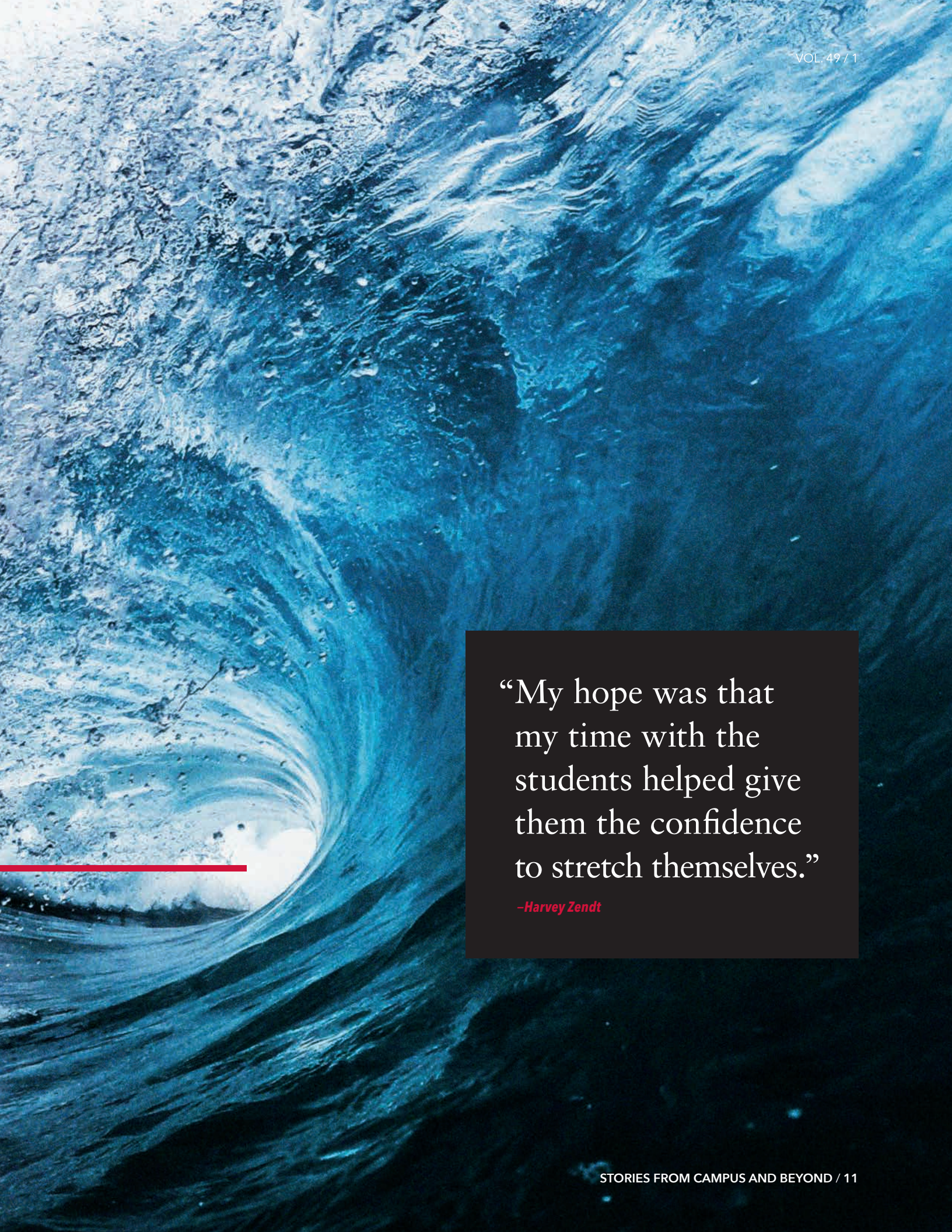
**THE CONNECTION** For Zendt, the relationship between his time on campus and his memoir starts with the faculty he worked alongside. “I was so inspired by the teaching of writing at SAS that I asked a few of the English teachers to read portions of the book and offer feedback,” Zendt says. “Their insights were helpful and greatly appreciated.”

That same environment gave Zendt an audience for the stories that would eventually become his book. “While working at SAS, I found it easy to convey the growth I gained from the many multicultural experiences I had in my travels,” he says. “The students were curious and interested in various facets of these encounters. Stories from the trip would surface in a number of contexts—at the lunch table, on dorm, and in the various presentations I did with classes.”

Zendt, who still surfs, also led SAS students on regular trips to Delaware and New Jersey—outings that became about more than the sport itself. “My hope was that my time with the students helped give them the confidence to stretch themselves, whether it was through surfing or any other activity,” he says. “The kids were so wonderful. They were interested, curious, and smart”—qualities he says pushed their conversations on those beach trips into unexpectedly deeper territory.

That same spirit of stepping beyond a comfort zone became the animating idea behind the memoir. “I wrote it in part to inspire readers to do this kind of ‘stretching’ in their own way,” Zendt says.

*The Gift of Experience* is available at [barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com).



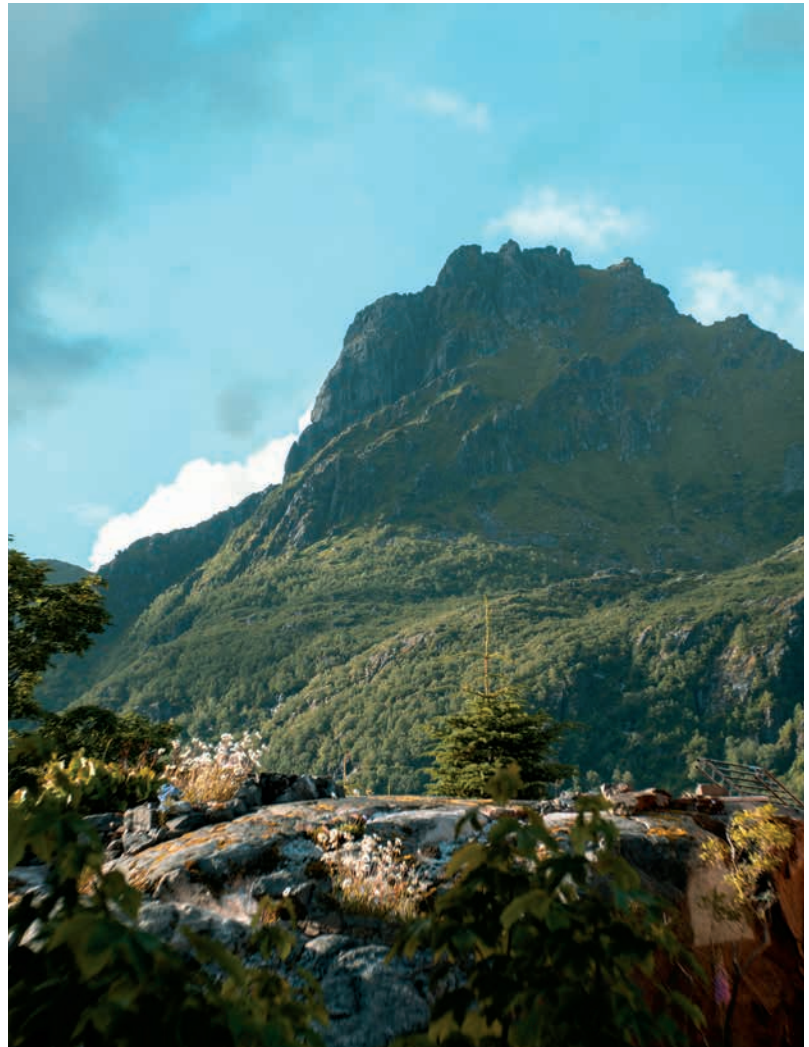
“My hope was that  
my time with the  
students helped give  
them the confidence  
to stretch themselves.”

—Harvey Zendt

## Process Over Product

A two-week artist residency on a remote Norwegian island pushed photography and printmaking instructor Josh Meier P'24,'28 into unfamiliar territory. Out of that discomfort came a sharper case for why the making matters more than what's made.

*"You're not here to make a masterpiece, you're here to be in that process."*





# Building on What Came Before

Word travels fast among alumni, and in June, word was that the Garth was soon to be under construction. For at least one passionate Saint at Reunion, that news came with some panic:

*"They're going to touch the Garth?"*

Chief Financial and Operating Officer Bill McClements '81 P'12 understands the reaction.

The McKinstry Garth, the central Gothic stone outdoor gathering space gifted by Ann duPont in 1955, is integral to the school's culture of face-to-face connection. It serves as the school's "front porch," an outdoor classroom, a study space, an outdoor dais and altar, and the heart of significant school traditions like Commencement. One of the most photographed spaces on campus, it's also one of the most beloved.

But there's no need for alarm: the construction is a protective and restorative measure.

Ongoing construction projects are reshaping campus—one restoring an icon, the other reimagining a vintage space.

"The McKinstry Garth was constructed 75 years ago with a very specific design intent, and it was modified 25 years ago in ways that nobody foresaw would actually threaten its integrity," McClements says. "So we're putting it back to a structure that's much more aligned with history, and ensuring that it stands strong for the next century of the school."

The trouble began in the early 2000s, when the roof, which was original to the structure in 1955, was removed. In its place, the school installed a system of channels to manage rainwater as it flows from downspouts on the building across the arches into the center of the Garth—a design that worked well enough at the time, but has struggled against the increasingly intense rainstorms of the past two decades. The channels freeze in winter and overflow in summer downpours, and the excess water has taken a steady toll: cracked seams, crumbling bluestone, and moss creeping across archways that were never built to stay wet.

There is also a gutter issue, McClements says.

"The gutters above the Garth are not large enough to manage modern downpours, and water regularly overflows them and dumps down next to the structure," he says.



“This has led to increased water penetration into the buildings themselves.” The current gutters will be replaced with larger ones.

As a result of all the excess water, and freezing and thawing in winter, portions of the limestone have begun to crack and come loose, and the original oak doors that connect Founders through the Garth are seriously damaged.

The school brought in architects to study the problem, and an early option was to leave the Garth without a roof and simply improve the water flow beneath it. But for a relatively modest additional investment, the school could solve the water problem at its source by putting a roof back on, one designed differently than the original.

Once the full scope became clear, the project became too large to complete in a single summer without closing the Front Lawn to students this academic year. So the work has been split into two phases. This summer, contractors repaired the above-ground masonry—the cracked arches and loosened stones—and installed the new roof and gutters.

The new roof will have one major change from its predecessor, which famously hosted desk-set-throwing theatrics in *Dead Poets Society*—there will be no way for students to access it.

Next summer, crews will return to dig out the Garth’s interior and reroute the underlying drainage system with a greater capacity to handle larger rain events, repairing and replacing the bluestone surface to ensure stability, and directing water toward the central drain and away from the building. That work is also expected to ease some of the long-standing drainage issues in the Chapel.

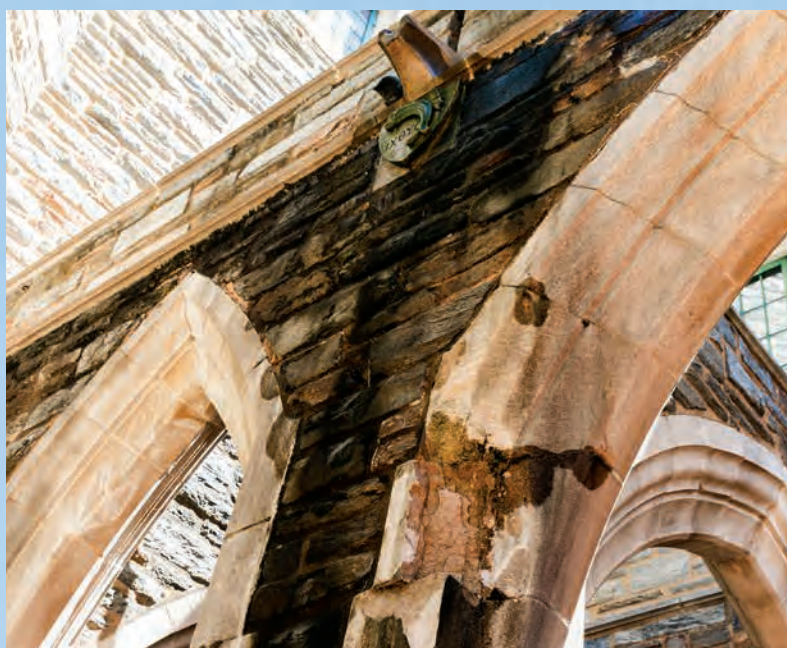
By fall 2027, the Garth will be built to last, and will look like it did when it was first constructed—arches intact, bluestone underfoot, a roof running along the top, and the whole

school gathering in front of it for Commencement as it has for generations.

The full project will cost roughly \$2 million. A grant has covered \$500,000 of that total, and the school continues to raise the balance.

On the other side of campus, inside Cameron Gymnasium, a different kind of transformation is underway.

For years, the school’s advancement team has worked out of three separate spaces across multiple floors in the Cameron Gymnasium.



"It's a very difficult way to run a team, particularly a team that must tackle the important work that they're doing," McClements says.

The old gym, meanwhile, has drifted away from its potential for years. Originally the school's basketball court, the old gym has also served as a classroom, a chemistry lab, and, most recently, home to the school's ergs—advancement employees who work in Cameron Gymnasium know when the rowers are in session, thanks to the boisterous music that thumps down the halls. Along the way, additions have included a drop ceiling installed at 11 feet, which swallowed nearly two-thirds of the room's three soaring windows and buried the 26-foot ceilings that make the space distinctive.

"It's just gorgeous," McClements says of the room's underlying architecture. "But wildly underutilized, both from a highest-and-best-use and an aesthetic standpoint."

The school engaged design firm VMA for the project.



The plan calls for a new mezzanine level built around the room's tall windows, restoring the sense of height and light while adding usable square footage. The advancement team will occupy both levels of the redesigned space, which will also include two larger meeting spaces and a kitchen. The building's entrance, staircase, and flooring will remain, although refreshed with new furniture.

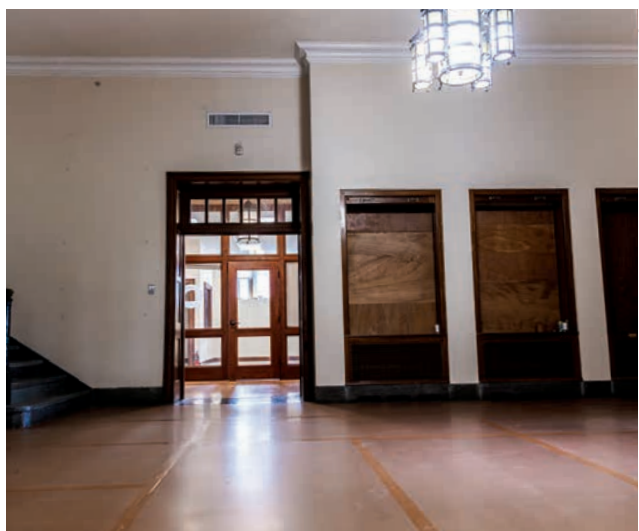
"We'll not only be restoring some beauty to that space, but setting up a cohesive space for the people doing the critical and daily work of raising money for the school," McClements says.

The Cameron Gymnasium construction has created one more riddle for the school to solve—what to do about the now-displaced erg room?

The answer is to relocate the room to the Sipprelle Field House to better serve our student-athletes.

“A small addition will be created in Sipprelle, purpose-built to serve the workout needs of our rowers,” McClements says. “The space will be bright, well air-conditioned, and have doors that open to a flat outdoor area so rowers can take their ergs outside without lugging them through a lobby and down a set of stairs as they do today.”

Construction costs for the Cameron project and the erg addition are running close to \$3 million, not including furnishings for the new office spaces. Fundraising for the project is underway, with several gifts already



“The space will be bright, well air-conditioned, and have doors that open to a flat outdoor area so rowers can take their ergs outside without lugging them through a lobby and down a set of stairs as they do today.”

—Bill McClements

committed. Together with the Garth restoration, the school faces about \$6 million in design, construction and furnishing costs between now and next summer.

“These three projects are very different from each other but address essential needs,” McClements says. “In the end, we will have a much more resilient Garth, high-quality office space for the advancement team, and a long-term home for our crew programs—all of which are cornerstones in their own ways for St. Andrew’s success in its second century.”

*The projects remain open for support. Those interested in learning more should contact Laurie Kettle at [lkettle@standrews-de.org](mailto:lkettle@standrews-de.org).*

# We Are All Chaplains

New Head Chaplain Peter Carey finds the holy in the “in-between”

When St. Andrew's new chaplain, Peter Carey, arrived at his last school in Florida, there was no chapel. It wasn't a construction delay, or ongoing renovation—the building simply didn't exist yet. Neither, then, did a robust Episcopal identity.

“Since we had no physical chapel, there was some resistance to this whole notion of ‘Episcopal identity’ and even ‘chaplaincy,’” he says. “So I visualized myself as a kind of missionary, working first to build rapport and relationships with students, staff, faculty, and families—and then finding ways to connect with the spiritual and holy.”

Without a sanctuary, holiness had to live somewhere else. Carey found it scattered across campus—in the training room, the lounge outside the college counseling office, the locker rooms, the musical rehearsal spaces, the faculty lounge, the cafeteria. As chaplain to a community of nearly 1,500 students and 300 employees, he came to see the job as inseparable from ordinary campus life.

“I really leaned into all the ways that ‘chaplaincy’—of care, pastoral work, encouragement, celebration, lamentation, and community building—was broad and vital,” he says.

That experience shapes how he’s approaching St. Andrew’s, though he’s careful to draw a distinction. St. Andrew’s program, he says, is not one that needs to be built. “It has incredible spirit-inspired leadership among adults and students,” he says. “The chaplaincy is strong at St. Andrew’s.”

Part of his job, he says, is to help the community notice all the places, and all the ways, where chaplaincy is happening. “I believe that my work is to help folks to be mindful and attentive to the ways that the spirit is at work, not only in the midst of a Chapel service, but also in the in-between moments of connection, celebration, encouragement, and awareness,” he says.

It’s a philosophy that goes back to a conference poster he once saw. Four boldly written words stuck with him: *We are all chaplains*. Carey traces the idea to St. Paul’s notion of a priesthood of all believers—

ministry not as one person serving a congregation like “a waiter doing all the work for the table,” but as something distributed, empowering everyone around it. At a boarding school, he says, that idea has particular force: “Everybody has their boots on the ground.”



Carey, who prefers to go by “Chaplain Carey” or “Chap,” comes to SAS after nine years at a church in Philadelphia and, before that, stints at Episcopal Academy and the school in Florida.

What draws him to working with young people at a boarding school is the sheer volume of access—a contrast to parish life, where you typically catch people in a single snapshot. At a school, connection happens constantly: on the field hockey sidelines, in a rehearsal room, in the hallway between classes.

“I find it’s the in-between where real stuff often happens,” says Carey, who can’t wait to be a part of all of it.

During his SAS interview process, Carey sat in on a class, taught one himself, and shared a few meals with students. What struck him, he says, was how much the school’s culture centers on kindness and mentorship—older students looking out for younger ones, traditions built to bring people together rather than sort them.

“There seemed to be a whole lot of traditions that were all to build things up rather than to separate,” he says. “I’m very excited to be a part of a culture like that.”

“This is what we’re offering you  
because *this is exactly who we are.*”

—Ninette Enrique

# The Next Generation of Founders

Associate Head of School for Advancement Ninette Enrique on stewardship, philanthropy, and preparing St. Andrew’s for its second century.



Ninette Enrique was not looking for St. Andrew’s when her phone rang last summer.

Chief Financial and Operating Officer Bill McClements ’81 P’12, with whom Enrique went to Williams College, was on the line, and wanted to know if she knew anyone who might be able to fill an open position to lead advancement at St. Andrew’s. She told him no. Months later, when the search still hadn’t turned anyone up, McClements invited Enrique to campus. Enrique, then with The Hotchkiss School in Connecticut, agreed—for reasons that still mystify her.

“I distinctly remember thinking, ‘Why am I going to Delaware?’” she says, laughing. “I still don’t know why I said ‘yes.’”

It didn’t take long for her to figure it out.

“Once I got here, I said to Bill, ‘I have no idea why I came, but I feel like I’m supposed to serve at St. Andrew’s,’” she remembers. “I left with a strong sense that I was meant to be here at this particular moment.”

It’s a fitting origin story for someone whose job is now to help others imagine and steward something they can’t yet see: the second century of St. Andrew’s.

*Our campus is never finished. Year over year,  
hand by hand, it’s planted anew.*



Enrique arrives with the kind of experience that makes that belief easier to embrace. In her role as chief advancement officer at Hotchkiss, she designed and led the school's \$250 million "Ever Forward" campaign, its first capital campaign in 30 years.

As St. Andrew's inches closer to its 100th birthday, Enrique feels particularly well prepared for this moment.

"Having recently led a campaign of meaningful scale and complexity, I feel fortunate to bring that experience to St. Andrew's as we begin thinking about what the future might require," she says.

Enrique is known around campus for her quick smile, oversized black glasses, and vibrancy—and for asking the kinds of questions that showcase an insatiable curiosity about others.

It didn't take long for her to immerse herself in campus life. She joined faculty-led Latin dance classes, swayed with students as they sang "Rivers and Roads" at the last Chapel of the academic year, stepped behind the booth to lend a hand at Reunion registration—she wants to deeply understand her community.

She's also a roll-up-her-sleeves, get-to-the-tough-stuff kind of leader. She credits some of this to her immigrant roots.

"My parents, my brother, and my sister arrived in the U.S. from the Philippines," says Enrique, who is the first-born American on both sides of her family. She was raised in Cleveland, a place where "you can't put on airs." Those Midwestern values of humility and genuineness still guide her today, personally and professionally.

"I truly believe my immigrant story has led me to do what I do: helping donors realize the good they want to do in the world," she says. "I think it comes back to growing up and watching how Americans leaned into supporting the communities they cared about. That became part of what I thought the American dream was: choosing to give of your own resources to support your community and organizations you care about."

That same instinct is what has kept her in schools specifically, rather than some other corner of the nonprofit world: education is one of the clearest paths upward. "The work I get to do in education ... it helps people, regardless of their backgrounds, to reach their dreams, to access upward mobility, not only for themselves, but for their families," she says.



What sold her on St. Andrew's was its unwillingness to be anything other than who it is. "All schools say the same things, and many schools try to be everything to everyone, but St. Andrew's is the opposite," she says. "St. Andrew's says, 'This is what we're offering you because this is exactly who we are.'"

What she found underneath that confidence was a foundation that is deeply human. "Face-to-face connection, humility, and kindness," she says. "There is a generosity of spirit that runs through the school and all the people who love it."

A generosity of gratitude, too—Enrique says it's clear St. Andrew's has always known how to say thank you. And for nearly a century—and for good reason—that gratitude had one name attached to it. School founder Felix duPont's endowment was so foundational to the school that, as Enrique describes it, the community's instinct for generations was to say: "With gratitude and humility, we are so deeply thankful, Mr. duPont."

But Enrique sees that debt as everyone's to carry now.

"We must think of ourselves as the next generation of founders," she says. "We are all Felix duPont, this collective of people who will sustain, nourish, and advance St. Andrew's. We must take on the mantle of Felix duPont, who made this place possible, and who set the school up for its first hundred years. It's our turn now."

She'd like the SAS community to consider the approaching centennial as an inheritance.

"We have a powerful opportunity to steward a place that has impacted all of us in profound ways," she says. "This is how we allow St. Andrew's to step into its second century with dynamism and confidence that the next hundred years will be as good as the first."

Behind that vision is a simple conviction: institutions like St. Andrew's do not remain extraordinary by accident. Every generation inherits the work of those who came before and must decide what it will leave to those who come next.

Getting there will require listening carefully, honoring what makes St. Andrew's distinctive, and helping each generation see its role in strengthening the school for those who follow.

"One of the questions every great school faces is how to secure the resources it needs while remaining true to its values," she says. "St. Andrew's has always been willing to be deliberately out of step, and preserving that character while preparing for the future is one of the opportunities before us."

To remain deliberately "out of step," as American Urbanist William "Holly" Whyte '35 put it when speaking of St. Andrew's upon the school's 50th anniversary, "requires clarity, courage, and collective responsibility," Enrique says.

It's the collective part that really makes her heart beat—we're all in this together.

"Just think about the word 'philanthropy,'" she says. "It comes from Greek roots that mean 'love of human-kind.' When I talk with donors, what I'm listening for are their values. It's my privilege to help people express those values at St. Andrew's in ways that strengthen our community and create opportunities for others."





“We are all Felix duPont, this collective of people  
who will sustain, nourish, and advance St. Andrew’s.  
... It’s our turn now.”

—*Ninette Enrique*

“I want to do whatever I can to make sure  
that a family’s financial situation never  
prevents a child from receiving a  
St. Andrew’s education.”

*—Laura Merriman*



New trustee Laura Merriman P'26,'28 on access to education, future-proofing the SAS experience, and the “magic” she can't quite explain.

*The story of each St. Andrean starts with a seat at the table.*

# Things Worth Protecting

Ask Laura Merriman P'26,'28 what she's most looking forward to working on as St. Andrew's newest trustee, and she'll give you two answers—one that is tangible, and one she can't quite yet explain.

The first is expanding access to St. Andrew's. The second is the “magic.”

“I think most who know St. Andrew's would say there is something that's truly extraordinary, almost magical, about the school and its community,” Merriman says. “I don't necessarily understand the components of how it all comes together behind the scenes—the decisions, big and small, that are made to create this experience—but I'm looking forward to gaining insight and supporting the school in cultivating that environment.”

Merriman and her husband, Zac Merriman P'26,'28, have two Saints: recent graduate Drew '26, and Alex '28, a junior. Watching how her children have grown at St. Andrew's—the critical thinking, the values they've learned, the close and healthy relationships they've formed with their peers and faculty—made saying “yes” to the board an easy decision.

“Particularly, as Drew goes off to college and I've been reflecting on the totality of his St. Andrew's experience, it was a simple decision,” she says. “Why wouldn't I want to be a part of this school and support it as it heads into its next hundred years? If I can play some small role in helping set the school up for success so that more children can benefit the way I've watched my children and others benefit, I'm all in.”

She's particularly passionate about the school's mission of access, and the financial aid program that makes it possible. "I want to do whatever I can to make sure that a family's financial situation never prevents a child from receiving a St. Andrew's education," she says. "I hope the school's financial aid program can become even more robust, expanding and attracting not only a broader pool of amazing students, but also faculty who want to be a part of this community."

She joins the board at what she sees as a pivotal time. Not only is the school heading closer to its centennial year, but quickly shifting technology raises important questions: In the future, what will it mean to receive an excellent education? The school's approach—learning built around independent thinking and humanity—must be safeguarded, she says.

"To teach and foster the elements of humanity—the ability to think critically and strategically on your own, to understand how to create authentic human connection, to have moral accountability—is to future-proof education," she says. "That's what St. Andrew's is doing."

Merriman spent her career in biotech, working in product and organizational strategy, marketing, and sales leadership roles. During her tenure, she focused on fostering teamwork and leadership principles that positively impact performance and culture. "My sweet spot is the intersection of strategy and execution," she says. "While setting a sound strategy is essential—and fun—it is no good if people don't know how to make it come to life. Understanding and prioritizing the steps to support the strategy, and making sure the team is aligned, are equally important."

***The carving wall keeps growing  
because our community  
always makes room.***

That's where focus and diligence come in. "You have to pressure test: 'Okay, our vision is this, and our strategy to get there is that. Are those aligned and durable? What could take us off course? And then knowing this, do we have the right next steps and resources, both people and financial, to support it?'" she says. "Those are the kind of questions I'm excited to get into with the board."



She's direct about what she won't be doing. For example, evaluating investment portfolios and scrutinizing architectural plans, she says, are not her areas of expertise. Her focus will be people: how the board supports Head of School Joy McGrath '92 and the leadership team without stepping into the day-to-day, and how it helps the school stay true to itself, particularly in times of uncertainty.



“You could see a world in which St. Andrew’s could say, ‘No, this is how we’ve always done it so this is how we will continue in the future,’” Merriman says. “But I feel like the school has done a really good job of meeting the moment and adapting in ways that remain authentic to St. Andrew’s.”

As for that SAS “magic?” She doesn’t want to solve the mystery, *per se*. Some things, she suggests, aren’t meant to be fully explained—just protected.

*Who is in the room shapes everything about an education.*



# The Final Five Percent

How one anonymous gift changed the life of 15 students—and that's only the beginning.

Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Will Robinson '97, P'26,'28 discovered something in his first year in the admissions office in 2022 that unsettled him: in the final days before the accept list closed in March, a small number of mission-fit students—kids the admission team wanted, kids who they felt belonged at St. Andrew's—didn't make it. The school couldn't stretch financial aid any further.

“It wasn’t a lot of kids,” Robinson says, “but one was too many.”

He calls these kids the “final five percent”—the students St. Andrew’s wanted but couldn’t afford to support.

It was an uncomfortable truth for Robinson, particularly because he attended St. Andrew’s on financial aid.

When Robinson was a student, his parents, who were paying tuition at four of their children’s schools, needed a bit of breathing room. Robinson’s father called every one of those schools to ask for help, but only one said “yes”—St. Andrew’s.

“It was the only school willing to throw my parents a lifeline,” says Robinson, who has spent his career making his family’s story the rule, not the exception.

But the numbers began to work against him. And this year would be more acute than most.

The Class of 2026 had the smallest financial aid allocation of any class currently enrolled last year—\$1.2 million, between \$300,000 and \$500,000 less than any other grade. This meant that with all the aid committed to the other three classes, there would be less available for the Class of 2030.

Even as the school’s overall aid budget grew, the admission office knew it would need to pass over more strong, aid-dependent applicants than in any previous cycle. The “final five percent,” Robinson feared, might become a “terrible ten.”

In 2025, when former chair of the St. Andrew’s Board of Trustees Scott Sipprelle ’81 P’08 and his wife, Tracy Sipprelle P’08, endowed the Sipprelle Scholars Fund, they gave the school more than a scholarship fund—they gave the school the permission to think differently about financial aid altogether. The program sent admissions looking for promising students in regions the school hadn’t recruited from before. That stipulation forced the advancement team to ask a bigger question: could the school build a financial aid strategy that didn’t rely solely on scholarships and endowment? This year, an anonymous donor proved the answer was “yes.”



“... if they have the courage,  
curiosity, grit, and kindness ...  
they will be able to afford  
St. Andrew’s.”

—Joy McGrath '92, Head of School

The anonymous gift changed the equation not just for the Class of 2030, which it immediately impacted, but for every class. A \$5 million commitment—\$1 million annually for five years, designated exclusively for financial aid—helped push the school’s financial aid budget to over \$8 million this admissions cycle, and gave the admission team the ability to make their best offer first, instead of asking a family to stretch beyond what they could afford and hope they’d enroll.

The gift has also made it possible for St. Andrew’s to build on its legacy with a historic new financial aid initiative: effective now, all admitted students from qualified U.S. households that make \$150,000 or less—which accounts for nearly 80 percent of Americans—will pay zero tuition to attend St. Andrew’s.

The anonymous donor’s generosity makes the initiative possible today—sustaining it for generations will require St. Andrew’s to build approximately \$20 million in new endowed support for financial aid. The gift is both transformational and catalytic: it changes what St. Andrew’s can offer families now, while creating an opportunity for others to help ensure that the commitment endures.

“I received a scholarship to attend St. Andrew’s, and the school changed the trajectory of my life and that of my family,” says Head of School Joy McGrath '92. “It’s impossible to overstate what a St. Andrew’s education has meant to

the thousands of us who have benefited from the founding vision. Now this transformative experience will be available to even more young people, and our more transparent approach will make it easier for families to understand that if their child is ready for this intellectual and personal challenge—if they have the courage, curiosity, grit, and kindness that we seek in our students—they will be able to afford St. Andrew’s.”

McGrath is particularly excited that the policy will allow St. Andrew’s to continue bringing students from every corner of the United States to the school. “This new policy underscores the fact that students of all backgrounds should have a seat at our table,” McGrath says, “where they will benefit from a wide variety of perspectives and points of view, and offer greater opportunities for debate, discussion, and inquiry.”

For the donor, the decision traces back to a basic view of what access should mean.

“We think the St. Andrew’s community is one that can be of enormous benefit to kids with high potential,” the donor says. “As it stands, how much money you have can determine whether you have access or not. We feel it’s both the privilege and the responsibility of those who have been



disproportionately rewarded to redirect some of that reward toward helping those with potential have access to the same opportunities as others.”

Robinson remembers exactly what happened when he told his six-person admission team about the gift, and that the full \$1 million would be available for the current cycle.

Four of the six are St. Andrew’s graduates—Robinson, Matt Wolinski ’00, Stacy Duprey ’85, and Grace Saliba Hill ’12. Like Robinson, all attended St. Andrew’s on financial aid.

“The room erupted in a mixture of relief and celebration,” Robinson says. “People were tearing up, clapping, and whooping.”

Thanks to the gift, St. Andrew’s went from 119 students on financial aid in 2025 to 134 in 2026—15 additional students who otherwise might have landed elsewhere.

They include top-ranked scholars, three-sport athletes, children of military families, valedictorians, and so much more, from all over the nation.

One story in particular has stayed with Robinson, a student from a college-access program who had impressed the admissions team. The student had been matched with a different boarding school, and St. Andrew’s had moved on, allocating the spot to another strong applicant. Hours before decision day, the student’s program called: the original school had pulled its funding. Was there still a place at St. Andrew’s?

“In any other year,” Robinson says, “we would have already allocated the money to the next student, and this student would have fallen firmly in the final five percent.” But this year, the gift meant St. Andrew’s didn’t have to choose.

For Robinson, the significance of the gift isn’t only in the number of students it added—it’s in what it allowed his office to be: aggressive, competitive, and unapologetic about pursuing the students who fit St. Andrew’s mission, regardless of what their families can pay.

“When finances are removed from the decision,” Robinson says, “kids who should be Saints choose St. Andrew’s.”

***If you would like to learn more about supporting financial aid at St. Andrew’s in perpetuity, please contact Ninette Enrique at [nenrique@standrews-de.org](mailto:nenrique@standrews-de.org).***



*I can do this*

*kindness*

*support*

*generosity*

# A Teaching

Eric Kemer never planned to end up at St. Andrew's. Forty years later, he's still not sure how to measure what he leaves behind.



# Practice

*fun*

By his own admission, when then-27-year-old Eric Kemer P'04,'08,'11 walked into his first classroom at St. Andrew's in 1987, he had no idea what he was doing.

It was a section of calculus. Or maybe physics. Memories hazy over four decades, he concedes.

What remains as sharp as if it was yesterday was what happened at the end of the period. It's a moment that's stayed with him, one that chokes him up retelling it.

"I began that morning by telling myself, 'I can do this,'" says Kemer from his Amos Hall office in May, his last official month of teaching at St. Andrew's. "I got through it. Toward the end, I said to my students, 'Well, everyone, this was the first class I've ever taught.'"

The students burst into thunderous applause.

"It was spontaneous, they were having fun, and I was floored by it," Kemer says. "That moment remains the perfect encapsulation of the St. Andrew's experience—an incredibly precious culture of support, kindness, generosity, and fun."

He entered that classroom a young man who had been uncertain of his path. He left it knowing he ended up exactly where he was supposed to.

Kemer grew up in a small town in upstate New York, the kind served by a single central school drawing students from farms as far as 30 minutes down country roads. By ninth grade, something wasn't clicking. "My mom noticed that I wasn't flourishing," he says. "I was withdrawing, and I wasn't particularly challenged."

It was May of his freshman year when his mother's doctor mentioned two boys he knew who attended Salisbury School, a boarding school in northwestern Connecticut. They went to check it out.

Kemer sat for an interview, and came away understanding the odds weren't good—he'd need close to a full scholarship, and the admissions cycle ended months ago. Then, weeks later, at Salisbury's final faculty meeting, the group decided a student with a generous scholarship wouldn't return. A seat, and the funding to fill it, opened.



"I got a call," Kemer says, "and ended up at Salisbury."

It was the first time Kemer's path bent on dumb luck, but it wouldn't be the last.

After college, Kemer—the senior teacher at the time of his 2026 retirement—was on track to become a research scientist.

He studied materials science and engineering at Brown, drawn to a field that split the difference between the pure physics he loved and something with a clearer path to a career. He nearly stayed at Brown for graduate school. Instead, at the last minute, he took a job at IBM.

"I think it was a first signal to me of needing to end up at St. Andrew's—I'd get excited with the novelty of a new project, it would wear off, and I'd go home and spend hours reading novels instead."

The pattern repeated. He left IBM for graduate school at Northwestern, then left that too, taking a job at Cabot Corporation to be near Susan, then his girlfriend and now his wife of decades with whom he shares three children: Ben '04, Laura '08, and Sarah '11. Cabot led him to a research fellowship at Lehigh University—and to the same old restlessness.



“It was spontaneous,  
they were having fun,  
and I was floored by it.”

—Eric Kemer

“It quickly became apparent to me that this research path was not fitting,” he says. “I wanted something more meaningful, more purposeful—something that fit my love of learning and variety, and that opened up the space for a life of literature, of being out in nature, of connecting with people.”

The idea of teaching came from a teacher of his own, from Salisbury. “I contacted a former teacher who I really appreciated for his intelligence and gruff kindness,” Kemer says. “I remember thinking about the life he’d made with his family at Salisbury, and I had an intuition a life like that would work for me.”

Then another stroke of luck, another bend in the road. While he was auditing a philosophy of science course at Lehigh, Kemer struck up a conversation with a stranger, an undergraduate who mentioned he’d gone to boarding school.

“I said, ‘Oh yeah, which one?’” Kemer recalls. “He said, ‘St. Andrew’s School.’”

The student, Bentley Burnham ’83, described the school with enough enthusiasm that Kemer went straight to the Lehigh library after class in search of the Directory of American Independent Schools. “I scanned down to St. Andrew’s, and the bit I read was impressive,” he says. He was drawn to the school’s commitment to financial aid—he saw his own story there.

He mailed a cover letter and resume to St. Andrew’s, addressed to no one in particular. Within two weeks, he had an interview scheduled for early November. He got a second interview, and an offer, a few weeks later; this time, he brought Susan.

All these years later, Kemer still wonders if he was set up—the weekend of his second interview just happened to be the Christmas dinner.

He and Susan found a Dining Hall resplendent in white tablecloths, the warm glow of candlelight, and adorned with greenery students gathered from the forests.

“I thought, ‘Isn’t this a sell,’” he says, laughing. He shared dinner with former math instructor John Higgins. “He was someone I came to deeply appreciate,” Kemer says, “one of the most wonderful people and math teachers the school has ever had.”

The Kemers were staying at the home of former Head of School Jon and Joan O’Brien P’84, GP ’15, ’17, ’19, ’22, and it was that evening that Kemer was sure the fix was in.



“Eric is a truly brilliant scholar, and the only person I know who turned down MIT—twice.”

—Will Rehrig

“We’re all just chatting when the doorbell rings,” Kemer says, eyes twinkling. “We open the door, and the seniors are there, caroling. These angelic voices are serenading us. I looked at Jon like, ‘Really?’”

It worked. “I took the offer,” Kemer says. “It felt like a no-brainer.”

In choosing St. Andrew’s, Kemer turned down another offer, from a place people don’t usually say “no” to—MIT, which had romanced Kemer more than once.

“Eric is a truly brilliant scholar, and the only person I know who turned down MIT—twice,” says Science Department Chair Will Rehrig ’11. “He’s also the most humble person I know.”

To Rehrig’s count, Kemer has taught more than 1,000 Saints.

“He guided each of them in a rigorous exploration into the world of math and science,” Rehrig says. “He’s taught every chemistry and physics course the school offers, and along the way, he even wrote his own textbook. But what has made Eric such a special teacher is the care and concern he gives to each of his students, pushing them beyond what they thought possible.”

His students would attest.

Harvey Johnson ’97, former dean of math and science at St. Andrew’s from 2010 to 2023 and now upper school dean of faculty at Polytechnic School in Pasadena, Calif., still remembers a demonstration from Kemer’s classroom: two metal rods, one a magnet, one not.

“He handed us two apparently identical metal rods and said, ‘Figure out which one is a magnet,’” Johnson says. “It’s a simple demonstration, but it placed the authority of the budding scientist in ourselves—we become the scientists, rather than being told how field lines look on a magnet.”

That was Kemer’s way, Johnson says. He didn’t give an answer when a question could inspire. “What he did so well was give us a key to open a door, but trust us, as curious future scientists, to know how to walk through it,” he says. “I felt seen, and that he knew we were worthy of that trust. It was really powerful.”

For Johnson, the lesson went further than any demonstration—it became a philosophy of what teaching was for.

“He understood that what matters most is the relationships you have with your students, and that has to be the center—not the chemistry, not the physics, but the person,” Johnson says. “If you ask him why he’s teaching, it’s about a two-way conversation. He’s not transferring knowledge in one direction. He’s fascinated by students. And if you’re really fascinated by your students, it’s hard to beat that in a teacher-student relationship.”

Kemer was also Johnson’s advisor. “At the time, I actually didn’t understand the relevance of having an advisor—I thought it was just about getting food,” he says, laughing. “But in retrospect, I needed a male figure in my life in a way I hadn’t been able to articulate. He was that for me then, and again when I returned to St. Andrew’s to teach.”

Yiru Wang ’25, who took three courses with Kemer, remembers all the little things that added up to an educator who brought every inch of himself to the work: the Target runs with Wang’s Multivariable Calculus course so Kemer could feed his Takis obsession. (“Not the Trader Joe’s healthy ones,” they clarify, “the real ones,” which he’d then parse out to the class using measurement tools he pilfered from the chem lab.) The videos he shared of his granddaughter singing *Frozen* tunes. The stories he’d tell of his early morning walks, which left his students to wonder, “What does he think about out there?”

“You’d wonder, ‘What experiences shaped someone so thoughtful, so playful, so brilliant and yet so wise in ways no textbook could ever teach?’” Wang says. “Mr. Kemer’s gift was he never felt larger than life. He let you see pieces of who he was, and in doing so, he reminded you that the people who shape us most are often those who show us how to be fully, genuinely alive. He was just so human.”



Wang particularly liked the smaller classes they took with Kemer. “Some of what we were working on would cause him to take a few quiet moments to think, and so it felt like it was all of us—not just the students—who were stuck on a puzzle, figuring it out together,” Wang says. “He never talked at you. He was part of the group.”

For Tore Olsen ’89, an economist who now lives in Denmark, Kemer’s classroom taught him something closer to a philosophy of living than pure science.

“Mr. Kemer was a life-changing teacher,” says Olsen. He took physics with Kemer, then found himself the sole student enrolled in an advanced chemistry elective. “The school created the class even though it was only me, which to this day, I’m very grateful to St. Andrew’s for,” he says.

What he remembers best isn't the chemistry. It's the morning after he pulled an all-nighter writing an English essay. In a class of one, it's hard to hide. When Kemer noticed his sole student kept nodding off, he said, "I know you can do well when your brain is there, but it's not there today. Just go back to your dorm, and sleep."

"That's how he was," Olsen says. "He truly cared about you."

Kemer's professional journey influenced Olsen's. "He exemplified what I think is a true academic and a true teacher and mentor," he says. "He pursued academic work and research at a high level, and he decided to change his path. That taught me that you don't have to just follow convention and go in one direction—if you find something that's your passion, do that. I've made a number of changes, and I've had a very interesting life as a result. In a way, Mr. Kemer gave me that."

And, Olsen adds, his classroom was just fun—for Kemer, learning meant play, clever pranks, hijinks.

"This is a man who would submit comics to the school newspaper," says science instructor Dan O'Connell P'19,'24. "He is a teacher who rallies armies of students each winter to roll gargantuan snowballs on the Front Lawn. He makes class discussions feel like playtime."

Adds Rehrig, "He's one of the clearest examples of a lifelong-learner there is—there are no limits to his interests or his curiosity. ... This is what it means to live an incredible life as an educator."

Kemer taught 16 different courses, filling in wherever the school needed him—physics, chemistry, and calculus at first, then economics and statistics—even a senior tutorial on unconscious cognition.

"It's interesting that lawyers say they have a law practice, and doctors have a practice," Kemer says. "But teachers don't use that word. But it's the cyclical nature—every year you try again, you saw what didn't work, and you always had something new to try. I had a teaching practice here, and it was good."

Kemer worked under three heads of school—O'Brien, Tad Roach P'04,'07,'13,'18, and Joy McGrath '92—and credits each with sound leadership and a keen understanding of not only his gifts as a faculty member, but that of his peers, too.

"I wasn't an A+ boarding-school triple threat in terms of being in the classroom, in the dorms, and in athletics, and all the heads of school I have worked under recognized my strengths," Kemer says. "I think it's really a mark of good leadership to see who you have, and fit the pieces in."

That's not to say he didn't have a brief history as a double-threat. "The zenith of my coaching career came as the assistant coach to fourths soccer," he says. "I worked very hard, and was very busy, but not having those additional responsibilities provided a certain bandwidth."

It was the room to breathe he'd left corporate research to find—a life of books, purpose, nature, people—with a fair amount of "dabbling" thrown in for good measure.

"Dabbling" is the word Kemer uses to characterize his creative pursuits, and he insists on the modesty of it. His dabbles include art, music, building with his hands, basketball, "bizarre" (by his admission) experiments in physical fitness (ask anyone whose been at St. Andrew's long enough about Kemer and his push-ups).

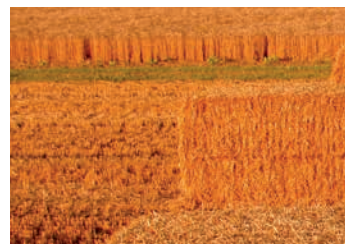
"I dabble for its own sake, not some grand ambition," Kemer says. "The dabbles run their course, and a lot of them are serendipitous."

All the dabbling, colleagues say, is to the betterment of the school.

"It's with humility he describes himself only as a 'dabbler,'" says O'Connell.

**"Eric is an explorer the likes of which this school may never see again."**

*—Dan O'Connell*





He rattles off Kemer's range: he is a serious basketball player, a self-taught harmonica player, a photographer, a man capable of more push-ups in a single day than O'Connell has done in his life. A devoted student of history, literature, religion, and philosophy. The author of textbooks and numerous scientific papers. His latest dabble, an obsession with cutting photo reproductions of leaves into meticulous paper art, turned into a series of greeting cards.

Kemer describes, almost sheepishly, his fixation with a sycamore tree on campus, the inspiration that led to his paper art. "I've been walking under this same tree for 40 years and not once really noticed the variety and color and shape of the leaves," he says. "They are stunning."

Then there's the pond upon which he's looked for decades. For years, he'd wake up, look out his back bedroom window, and take a photograph from the same spot, a quiet accumulation of moments he eventually had mounted, with help from photography instructor Joshua Meier P'24,'28, into a series of images that chart the seasons of the pond.

And one day, on a small clearing overlooking the Appoquinimink River, in the woods right across Noxontown Road, he found a log. "I said, 'Hmm. I wonder if I can cut it in half?'" Kemer remembers. "And if I can, can I make a bench? And then I said, 'Oh, there's an interesting rock—I wonder what it would be like to make a stone patio.'"

He started to clear a little space: an isolated bluff where he could read, think, and be swept up in the natural world.

But he couldn't keep this dabble to himself. It was too beautiful, a place too conducive to encouraging human connection and relationships.

"Eric organized a rotating roster of students and friends to collect perhaps 200 large stones and to form a stone circle," says O'Connell. "Today, folks call it the Fortress of Solitude"—a name borrowed, O'Connell notes, from the secret Arctic sanctuary where Superman escapes the pressures of the world, stores dangerous technology, and connects with his Kryptonian heritage.

"Eric's fortress is like Superman's in the first of these ways, and possibly the second—he does, after all, have one degree in materials engineering and another in materials science," says O'Connell. "But probably not the third. Eric is not from Krypton. He is not a Superman ... or is he?"

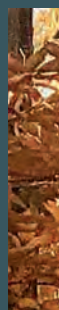


Adds Wang, “He’s just such a multidimensional human being on top of being a teacher. I feel like that’s what made him so impactful. The conversations we were able to have with him went beyond a textbook.”

And sometimes, there was no conversation at all.

Wang remembers a class trip to the Fortress of Solitude. Kemer pointed out this plant and that to his students, but then retreated to “his zone,” Wang says, giving the class the space to slip into theirs. “We all got to take a step back and see the beauty of this place, live in the moment, and that was enough—the person who brought us here had no further agenda than that.”

What’s a dabbler to do in retirement? “I’m not sure yet,” Kemer says. He can’t wait to take advantage of the location of his new home in Newark, close to his grandchildren and White Clay Creek Park. “We’ll be adjusting to living in our own home for the first time in a while, so there’s a lot of chores,” he says. “I haven’t thought much past spending time with my grandkids and getting outside.”





On a recent visit to the Fortress of Solitude, I followed a white-tailed doe as she made her way out to the river clearing. The circle of stones, laid by many hands, is polished smooth from the tread of Saints over the years. The log benches show signs of recent care—brushed of debris, tidy. This is the work of students leaving it better than they found it, the way their teacher left them.

He also insists he hasn't spent any time thinking about legacy. What will he leave behind?

"Oh, I don't think anything," he says. "I'm just satisfied that I did some good, and that hopefully students feel that way, too, but I don't cling to that. I'm trying to figure out what it means to do something for its own sake, and just stop there."

Wang thinks otherwise. "Mr. Kemer's legacy isn't just the kind that brings old classmates together over shared stories," they say. "It's the kind that finds you on an ordinary morning when you're sitting alone and a memory returns. Before you know it, your eyes get teary, your heart feels full, because Mr. Kemer made you feel seen."

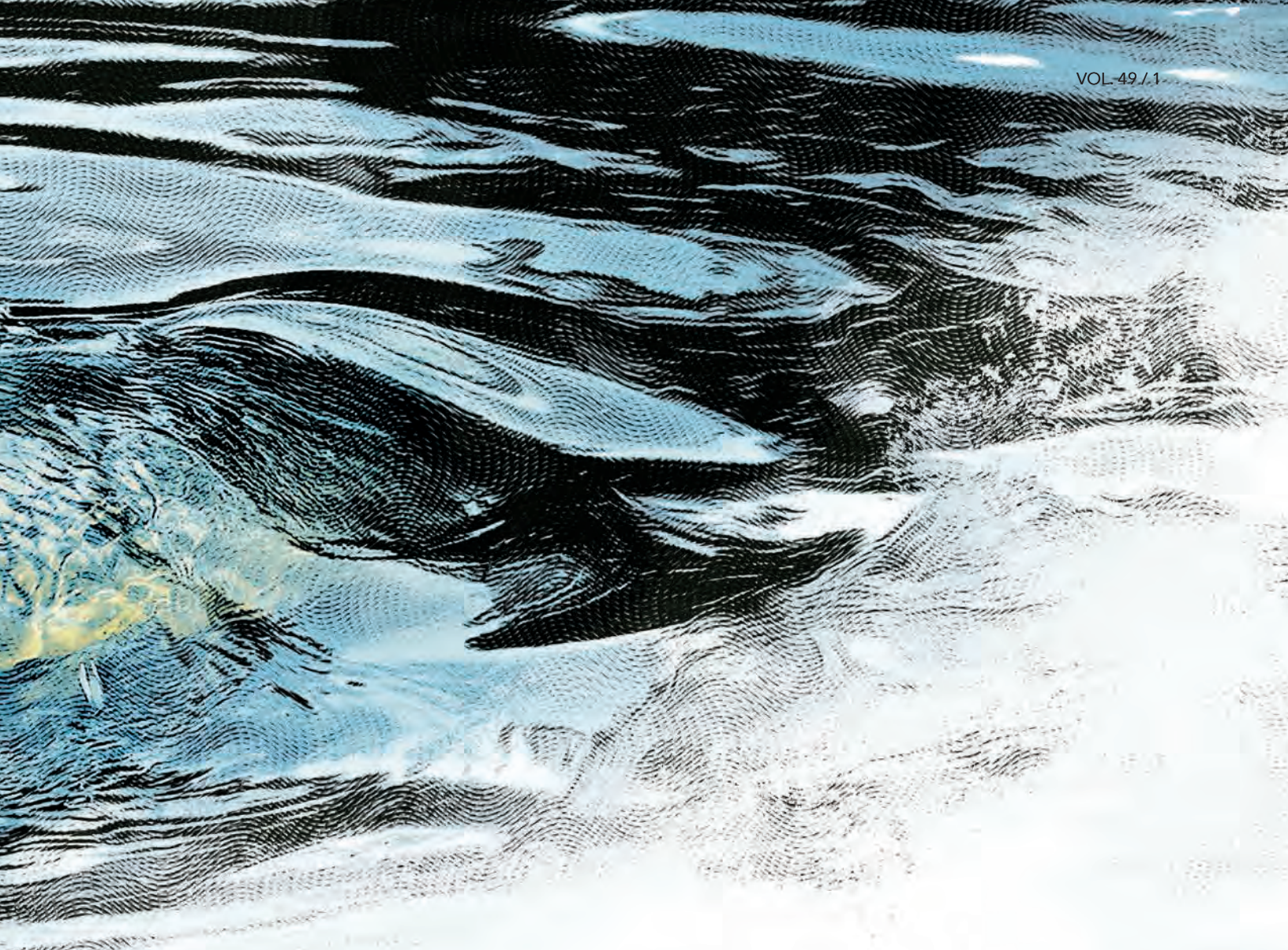


# NOTES FROM BEECHWOOD

TWO DECADES  
OF WATCHING  
NOXONTOWN  
POND

By Arno “Skip” Loessner P’84,’86

*Arno and Mary Loessner P’84,’86 are beloved long-time members of the St. Andrew’s family. They are alumni parents, and Mary worked for 30 years in the head of school’s office. Arno is professor emeritus and former vice president at the University of Delaware. For the last 20 years, they’ve been our good neighbors across the pond. The photos throughout these pages were taken by Arno and stylized to honor his naturalist spirit.*



## WORTHY OF A LIFETIME OF STUDY

Most mornings, when the air is perfectly still and light comes low through the beeches, everything seems held in suspension and Noxontown Pond feels like the world is at peace.

In 2005, my wife, Mary, and I built a cottage on the shore of the pond. We look across at the St. Andrew's campus, the woods and the wildlife around us, and know we are in a special place. Our cottage sits 20 feet below mature beech trees that bear the initials of students from the class of 1944 carved into the bark. From the cottage, which we named Beechwood, we observe others for whom this is home—our neighbors, the barred owls and bullfrogs, who call through the night; Kingfishers who announce themselves on the wing; black racer snakes who move across the water

with astonishing speed; and Slider turtles, some as large as dinner plates. The turtles pile onto sunlit logs to warm themselves, and enter into a state of brumation in winter that slows their metabolism and allows them to survive beneath the icy pond surface. In late fall, thousands of snow geese whistle past on flights from the Eastern Shore, so high they are often heard before they are seen.

We have watched eagles teach their young to fish, tracked the movement of deer, raccoons, beavers and foxes, and listened to the distinctive sounds of pileated woodpeckers. It can be comforting to sleep next to Canada Geese until a fox meanders along the edge of the pond and causes a sleep-ending cacophony.

## Defining Noxontown

William Amos, longtime naturalist and beloved teacher at St. Andrew's, published *The Life of the Pond* in 1967. Reading it inspired us to move here. The book's preface notes that Noxontown Pond was his laboratory. His description of every pond as a "system, governed by relationships between producers and consumers and shaped by the balance between predators and prey," has become a lens which complements our practice as nature photographers to observe carefully and assess critically.

Noxontown Pond, which covers 158 acres, began as a mill pond in 1740, when Thomas Noxon used water power to grind wheat and corn. The fresh water that spills over the dam enters the Appoquinimink River—a Lenape word that means "a place where the waters come together"—and flows eventually to the Delaware River and Delaware Bay.

The pond's surroundings include 2,200 acres of conserved farmland, woodlands, and open space that serve as an open-air chapel where the gifts of nature are celebrated. Steep banks down to the pond—probably the result of erosion caused by tidal flows before the dam was built—are an exception here, where the area just to the west is known as "the levels." Campus is situated adjacent to the pond on the west, and to the east is Noxontown Road, where a pair of bald eagles nest in a tall oak tree.

Approach the shoreline quietly in early summer and you may see fish spawning, either in bowl-shaped depressions in the shallows, or, in the case of carp, noisily splashing under the lily pads in spawning aggregations. The tranquil impression from the window of our cottage conceals an ongoing struggle for survival below the surface—it's all about food.

In the fall, thousands of starlings and blackbirds descend in murmuration on the beech and oak trees. Their weight shakes the branches, which releases nuts that fall to the ground. There, the turkeys find them. The deer, not blessed with good vision, follow the turkeys to their feast in a natural collaboration that we could all learn from. To paraphrase the poet and artist Khalil Gibran, the sights, sounds, and lessons of Noxontown do not end at the shore, but in the hearts of those who observe and listen.

## Living With Wildlife

Most of our interactions with wildlife are positive, but a few conflicts have caused us to adjust our expectations or reverse course. We stopped planting flowers in the spring because foxes, raccoons, and skunks interpret a disturbance of the soil as a signal that turtle eggs are buried. By morning, whatever we planted would be excavated. In the evening, when the bats begin to fly, a beaver sometimes swims past our cottage. We like the beaver family, but we don't trust them. When they began to chew the trees on the property, we set our boundaries by wrapping the trunks in wire mesh. It seems they didn't take too kindly to it—now, our encounters with beaver on the water are usually accompanied by a sharp tail slap to let us know we aren't welcome at their place, either. Northern water snakes can look convincingly like copperheads, so I give them wide berth. Black snakes, on the other hand, can be useful in controlling rodents in our crawl space. Our heating technician declined to re-enter the crawl space after discovering a black snake. I told him I hadn't seen snakes there, which was true—but then I'd never actually been in the crawl space before.

Everything is eventually hitched to everything else. For example, we called an exterminator one winter when mice moved in during the snakes' hibernation season, chewing through insulation and running in the walls. The treatments used may have contributed to a decline in the number of black snakes we've seen since. The interaction between humans and wildlife can disrupt natural balances in the number and variety of wildlife species. Amos described Noxontown as “a highly productive pond” worthy of a lifetime of study.

Over the 20 years we have been observing here, some wildlife have diminished, even disappeared. Egrets that once fed along the water's edge now appear only at dusk, then take flight at first light. Mallards and green herons that were regular residents when we arrived have declined. Rabbits have nearly vanished from the fields. In August, we saw a pair of mischievous otter for the first time in many years. Some of this can be attributed to the three nesting pairs of bald eagles that have, for several years, called Noxontown home. There were fewer eagles when we moved here. Amos wrote that the “carrying capacity” of a pond—the relationship between producers and consumers—governs its health. Apex predators make demands on a system, especially when they have young to feed. We find ourselves thinking about the capacity of Noxontown to sustain biodiversity under such pressure. Even if some of the eagles eventually move on, is natural replenishment likely without some assistance? It is possible to be grateful for the eagles and also aware of the cost of their abundance.



“I WANT TO SHARE A SECRET:  
WE STUDY BUSINESS, MEDICINE,  
LAW OR ENGINEERING BECAUSE  
THEY HELP KEEP US ALIVE ...  
BUT LOVE, ROMANCE, POETRY AND  
THE BEAUTY OF NATURE—  
THAT’S WHAT WE LIVE FOR.”

# What the Pond Teaches

We have tried to model ourselves on the wildlife around us by being more attentive. We feel an emotional attachment when we witness a doe who falls on the ice work hard to recover so she can coax her stranded fawn across, and a certain kinship when we witness eagles send off their young—just as we did when Michael and Laura left for St. Andrew's. Animal instinct may exceed human understanding, but when the environment around us changes drastically, as with the two decades of changes we have observed, we understand a need to consider how the balance might be restored.

As with many things in life, perfection is rare. Finding a happy medium in the form of a more balanced biodiversity is challenging. Legislation and regulations to protect eagles have successfully increased their population in the lower 48 states from near extinction to 316,700 in 2020. The number of nesting pairs has increased from 417 in 1963 to 71,400. This success story has been possible thanks to actions to conserve land and water resources across the country, like those taken by St. Andrew's School. Now, as population and development increases in Delaware and surrounding states, public policy should be examined in light of experience and the best scientific information available to seek equilibrium in wildlife management; and budgets should provide for investment of public and private resources committed to achieve better balance of built and conserved environments.



That approach matters for wildlife and for the quality of all our lives, because even among the quiet waters and the stately trees, wildlife, with whom we share impulses of survival and reproduction, are confronted by challenges of survival with no choice but to deal with the world as they find it. They become, in turn, evidence of adaptation, a symbol of solitude, and a reason for preservation that can be understood scientifically, contemplated spiritually, and defended ethically. We hope to leave this place in as good or better condition than we found it. We are grateful to the trustees and administration of the school for the opportunity to have this experience and to share some of what we think that means. That, too, is a lesson the pond teaches, one science alone doesn't cover.

In the film *Dead Poets Society*, filmed on the very campus that surrounds us, John Keating, played by Robin Williams, calls his class together. "Huddle up! Huddle up!" he says. "I want to share a secret: we study business, medicine, law or engineering because they help keep us alive ... but love, romance, poetry and the beauty of nature—that's what we live for."

The initials carved into the beech bark outlast the hands that carved them, the way this pond will outlast us. When the clock tower chimes, we remember those who came here before us for whom this pond and land were deemed worthy of conservation.

In the words of the poet Thomas Gray, "The pealing anthem swells the note of praise."



*This essay was excerpted from a longer version. You can read the full piece at [standrews-de.org/magazine/beechnwood](http://standrews-de.org/magazine/beechnwood).*



## A CLASS THAT SAID



Rain moved Commencement indoors this year, but the 74 members of the Class of 2026 went all in, as they always have.



Lilting notes from a chamber ensemble filled the Sippelle Field House on Sunday, May 24, as parents and loved ones of the Class of 2026 filtered in, toting damp umbrellas, or, in the case of the family of Redda Brigety '26, giant cardboard cutouts of their Saint's head, which would prove to be a wonderful surprise for the graduate later in the ceremony.



Chilling winds and a steady rain forced the 93rd Commencement Ceremony indoors, which was perhaps a fitting circumstance for the Class of 2026, whose hallmark, according to co-presidents Abraham Perry '26 and Lila Lunsford '26, was the ability to embrace the unexpected. "We learned early on that things don't always go according to plan," the duo wrote in the preface to the *Story of Us*, a book of senior reflections. "But our grade's defining characteristic is that we go all in, regardless of the outcome."

Much to their delight, and in a lovely nostalgic echo of their first St. Andrew's Frosty Run—whereupon the whole school boards school busses and descends upon various Wendy's in the state of Delaware—the 74 members of the Class of 2026 packed into busses at Founders Hall one last time and were driven to the Old Gym to protect them from the rain.

St. Andrew's Board of Trustees Chair Richard B. Vaughan '88 P'24,'27,'30 opened the program, and spoke of the traditions that bind.

"Traditions at St. Andrew's foster identity and belonging, link generations of students, and reinforce the values on which the school is built," he said. "And by all accounts, the Class of 2026 has done a spectacular job of honoring the traditions entrusted to them, and have done so with passion and perseverance."

*“We learned early  
on that things  
don’t always go  
according to plan.”*

**—Abe Perry**



Vaughan welcomed the class to the alumni community, and charged them to take seriously their role of stewards of the school's future. “We ask you to stay connected, give back any way you can, and always help your fellow St. Andreans when asked—and in your future lives, find ways to create new traditions that reinforce and share your St. Andrew’s values with the communities that you build.”

Next, Head of School Joy McGrath '92 (notably absent was her trademark Commencement hat, a casualty of the indoor ceremony) turned first to the parents in the room—many of whom had watched their children leave home at 14—and thanked them for their trust. “You made this moment possible: the learning and growth, the community, the friendships,” she said. “Your generosity has made us all better, stronger, and wiser, and our world will be better for it.”

She then reflected on a moment from a Chapel Talk delivered by Enid Appiah '26 during Senior Week.



“She shared that one thing she had learned at St. Andrew’s is that faith can coexist with profound uncertainty,” McGrath said. “This comment stopped my heart—that you have learned this here, that you can live with conviction even as you do not know what lies ahead. ‘Faith and learning,’ our school motto, means that you can believe and still question.

“I hope you feel how much confidence we have in you: in your integrity, your curiosity, your decency, and imagination,” McGrath continued. “You will need this confidence in an uncertain world. But you

have practiced it here, and you know how to get up again when you fall, how to ask for help, and how to connect with and inspire those you may find beside you.”

John M. Seabrook '76—distinguished longform journalist with *The New Yorker* and author of many books of nonfiction—unwittingly composed the perfect address to a class already known for its penchant to embrace the pivot. He advised them to acknowledge something he wished he had when he was sitting in their position five decades ago: that their intellectual journey might not serendipitously align with the opportunities the world would offer them. Their careers may lie behind a door they’ve yet to even learn exists, he urged.

“All those hours I spent closely observing and reporting on a colony of pine beetles in a dead log in the woods near Noxontown Pond would end up being put to use not in a laboratory as a researcher, or even in the practice of science,” Seabrook said of his own path of self-discovery.

“Instead—spoiler alert!—the hours will lead to a long career of writing nonfiction for *The New Yorker*, where I would study and report on colonies not of beetles, but of people.”

Seabrook was wistful remembering his Commencement, yet adamant that there is no true end to the journey of a St. Andrean. The friendships, mentorship, the joy of learning, the faith—they come along for the ride. “Your SAS experience is a moveable feast,” he said. “And your real diploma, your credential, is not the document you’re getting today—your credential is your prepared mind. A prepared mind possesses critical thinking skills, and it has the ability to adapt, to learn, unlearn, and relearn—to live with uncertainty and keep moving.”

Co-presidents Perry and Lunsford offered their final reflections of their time on the pond, each leaning into the sensory experience of St. Andrew’s.



Perry told the story of what St. Andrew’s felt like to him—pencil in hand, sketching out the frames of what would eventually be a graphic novel in Chinese about an environmental justice super hero. Pond water slicking his arms as he churned harder and faster in a crew shell. The warmth of an Engelhard spotlight on his face as he delivered lines (in a British accent, no less) in the fall play. Not

a single one of these choices—Chinese, crew, theater—would have been made, Perry noted, if not for his St. Andrew’s self.

“The person I am now only exists because I kept choosing to opt in, even when it felt weird or uncomfortable,” he said. “I said ‘yes.’ Here’s to all the things we said yes to, and to whomever we said yes to them with.”

For Lunsford, it’s the sound of St. Andrew’s that she’ll never quite shake. Sneakers on hardwood and enthusiastic screaming as the girls basketball team rushed the court—smack in the



middle of the quarter—to celebrate a teammate’s first three-pointer. The splash of the water after the intentional flip of a canoe. The chatter of late-night conversations

drifting through dorm. Voices echoing through the woods. A soaring high note sung by a senior in the Andrean Choir.

“We are a class of undeniable voices. As we leave here, we may forget schedules, assignments, and tables, but we’ll never forget the sound of the Class of 2026,” she said. “Years from now, something in the sound of footsteps echoing down a hallway or laughter carrying across a room, we will hear of the sound of St. Andrew’s again.”

(A sound to be added to the St. Andrew’s canon: the raucous applause from the III Form section that punctuated the ceremony—the continuous, staccato noise of gratitude as the youngest Saints showed love to their senior Big Siblings.)

Before the awarding of diplomas, the following Commencement Awards were presented:

- Robert T. Jordan Award: Jonathan Josue Castellanos ’28
- Christopher Wilson Award and Scholarship: Eden Appiah ’26
- The Cristin C. Duprey Diversity and Inclusivity Award: Kayden Murrell ’26 and Janie Sarang Kim ’26
- Jonathan B. O’Brien Head of School Award: Margaret Mead Gilheany ’26
- John McGiff Fine Arts Award: JiaHe Zhu ’26 and Margaux Guillissen Firmenich ’26
- The Henry Prize: William Dormer Robinson ’26 and Miriam Claire Hulsey ’26
- The King Prize: JiaHe Zhu ’26
- The Founder’s Medal: JiaHe Zhu ’26
- William H. Cameron Award: Joseph Leonard Teti III ’26 and William Dormer Robinson ’26
- St. Andrew’s Cross: Abraham Debessay Perry ’26





As every  
St. Andrean  
knows, all paths  
lead to the Front Lawn.

It's where the Class of 2026 first met the peers and adults who would become their closest friends and mentors. It's where the whole school gathers on Opening Weekend to do a dance that no one truly knows, but that's the point: we figure it out together. So despite the lingering drizzle, as the day drew to a close, with diplomas clutched in hands, the Class of 2026 hoisted white dresses above ankles and squelched leather dress shoes through the mud to gather again where it all began.

Laughter rose across the Front Lawn as they took photos, embraced, took one last moment on the T-Dock, and lingered in the place that had held them for years. Soon they would pass through the front gate as alumni. But the Front Lawn would remain, and the pond beyond it, and the mist rising slowly off the water—carrying, as it always has, the voices of every class that ever gathered here.

*“We are a class of  
undeniable voices.”*

—Lila Lunsford



# Home, Again

Reunion 2026 welcomed nearly 330 Saints  
back to the place that made them who they are.



St. Andrew's does not lack for beautiful views.

Sunset in the fields. Golden-hour pinks reflecting on the pond. The forest trails in full, wondrous bloom. Stars twinkling over the T-Dock. The Front Lawn in spring—lush, vibrant, essential.

To be added to the list: the view from the Registration Table at Reunion.

Sure, it's simply a tent placed in front of Founders that looks toward the Main Drive. But this is where sheer St. Andrew's magic happens each June—the hugs, the happy tears, the jumping up and down, the screams of joy—as Saints from all over the world return to the people, and the place, that changed their lives.

Reunion 2026 was no different. Whether they were celebrating their 5th Reunion, their 70th, or somewhere in between, the nearly

330 Saints celebrating Reunion set the tone for the weekend from the very moment they arrived, and they carried their love and warmth for each other and their school throughout the weekend.

Friday evening featured a 50th Anniversary Reception for the Class of 1976 and a Welcome Back BBQ on the Front Lawn, in which alumni were treated to a concert by the school's faculty band, Granville Jam. The band—featuring arts instructor Josh Meier P'24,'28, director of academic and college counseling Jason Honsel P'24, English teacher Ben Knudsen, math teacher Gabe Perla, and science teacher Will Scully—offered a musical trip down memory lane, with songs calibrated to resonate with each Reunion class.

Saturday offered alumni a chance to steep themselves in everything campus has to offer. Some took to the trails with Head of School Joy McGrath '92. Others joined a cross-country run with boys cross-country coach Will Rehrig '11. Many future Saints along for the weekend with their parents experienced the pond for the first time, bravely adventuring out on to the water before a celebratory ice cream after a job well done. Others simply settled back in to all the places where they will always belong. New this year: alumni pulled weeds and learned alongside Native Roots Farm Foundation founders Courtney Street '05 and John Reynolds '06 in the Three Sisters Garden—a reminder that St. Andrew's relationship with this land runs much deeper than the view.



Head of School Joy McGrath '92 welcomed Saints later that afternoon at the School Meeting in Engelhard Hall.

"I think often about the school I'll hand down to my successor," McGrath said. "And since our centennial is just three years away, it's the right moment to be thinking long-term. What do we want our successors to celebrate in 2129? This school's DNA is strong—it's why you come back. I believe that a hundred years from now, our successors will still recognize the values we live by today."

A keen area of interest for alumni has been how St. Andrew's will grapple with AI. "Our faculty have done serious, thoughtful work—and their conclusion mirrors our deepest instinct: human virtues matter more than ever," McGrath said. "When content can be generated in seconds, deep reading, original argument, imagination, and face-to-face dialogue become more valuable, not less."

She shared that the school has updated its AI policy and has asked faculty to establish a baseline competency with large language models. "We will continue to refine our approach," McGrath said. "I am proud of how our faculty have engaged this challenge—with curiosity, humility, and thoughtfulness."

McGrath next shared that she and the board have been asking fundamental questions about St. Andrew's: What is St. Andrew's, at its core? What can we never give away? What do we have to do—right now—to protect those things?



“Five answers kept coming back,” she said. “We are a school built on human connection. We are a leader in financial aid—because who is in the room shapes everything about the education. We are an Episcopal school, and that foundation gives us a moral and spiritual framework. We believe our facilities should be modest and modern—purposeful, not extravagant. And we are stewards of this extraordinary landscape.”

From those commitments, she said, four priorities emerged for the next decade: reclaiming the school’s leadership in financial aid, investing in faculty, building a financial model where philanthropy plays a more intentional role, and—at the top of the list—caring for campus, particularly Founders Hall.

“We are approaching a moment when the alumni of St. Andrew’s will be asked to step forward,” she said. “Not to reinvent this school—but to preserve and strengthen what it has always been. The work is real, the plans are being readied, and the alumni moment is coming as we approach the centennial. And I rest easy knowing that when it does, we will empty the bucket, as Saints always do.”

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“We are a school  
built on *human*  
*connection.*”

—Joy McGrath '92, Head of School

At the Awards Banquet that evening, many Saints who emptied the bucket were celebrated with Reunion awards.

The Fishers of Men Plate goes to the classes whose alumni showed up in the greatest numbers as Saints Fund donors—one from the earlier half of SAS history, one from the later. This year, that honor belongs to the Class of 1976, with 60 percent of their classmates giving, and the Class of 2001, with 58 percent.





The Giving Bowl tells a different story: not the percentage, but the total—the class whose combined generosity to the Saints Fund was the largest in their Reunion year. This year, the Class of 2001 claimed the Bowl with collective giving of \$60,554, securing two awards.

The Founders Cup takes the longest view of all. Established in 2004 to mark the school's 75th anniversary, the Cup honors the Reunion class whose total giving—annual, capital, endowment, legacy—has been the greatest since their last Reunion. This year, it belongs to the Class of 1981, whose cumulative support of \$12,788,562 since their last Reunion is remarkable.

Finally, this year's Distinguished Alumni Award was presented to Scott Sippelle '81, P'08.

"Each reunion reminds us of the shared virtues that bring us together," McGrath said in her remarks that evening: "curiosity, integrity, service, and an optimism that commits us to something greater than ourselves."

It's a fitting frame for a man whose connection to St. Andrew's spans nearly five decades.

"Each reunion reminds us of the shared virtues that bring us together."

Sippelle arrived as a III Former in 1977, following his eldest brother, Dwight Sippelle '76, through Founders' doors—and eventually, all four Sippelle brothers would find their way to Middletown, Delaware, sons of two United States diplomats. They came as recipients of the Haselton Scholarship, one of the school's oldest funds, established to support the children of U.S. foreign service officers. St. Andrew's made Sippelle's education possible, and he has spent much of his adult life returning the favor.

Sippelle's most sustained work on behalf of St. Andrew's came as a trustee—25 years of service, including nearly a decade as board chair. McGrath put it plainly: "His record of service to the school during times of transition and change will be a major chapter in St. Andrew's history."



... an optimism that commits us to something greater than ourselves.”

—Joy McGrath '92, Head of School



His philanthropy has been equally wide-ranging: the renovation of Amos Hall, expanded financial aid and geographic reach for SAS students, and—alongside members of his family—the creation of the Sippelle Fieldhouse. “He has done all this,” McGrath said, “because he cares about our students, he believes in what St. Andrew’s does in the world, and he has treasured his St. Andrew’s education and has found the school today worthy of his investment.”

Beyond SAS, Sippelle and his wife, Tracy Sippelle, along with their daughter, Jessica Sippelle '08, support organizations working in health and wellness, environmental conservation, educational opportunity, and reducing political polarization.

“His love for St. Andrew’s is not a blind affection,” McGrath said, “but an eyes-wide-open commitment to always do what is right for the school, and what this school can do for the world.”

Prior to the ceremony, Saints who were looking for a sign that they were back where they belonged found it in a post-downpour double-rainbow that arched over Noxontown Pond before fading into the twilight.

Saints of all Classes—from 1956 to 2021—were spellbound, taking photos, soaking in the moment, or racing down the Front Lawn toward the water, hand-in-hand with friends, their teenage selves once more.



# Class Notes

## 1954

**George Baxter** shared that he and his wife, Peace, are enjoying good health and life at Ann's Choice, a retirement community in Warm-inster, Pennsylvania, after selling their longtime home of 50 years in 2012. In 2021, they also said goodbye to their beloved Vermont home, where they had spent 30 memorable summers and watched all of their grandchildren grow up. George added that they are both still happily driving, Peace in her 2013 Volkswagen Passat TDI and George in his 2019 Volkswagen Beetle Turbo Diesel, and are grateful that life has been good.



## 1957

Susan and **Tim Bloomfield's** daughter, Grace, having graduated from Georgetown University Medical School last year, just finished her intern year at Johns Hopkins University Hospital. Her residency is in the field of general surgery. She will be getting married on Labor Day weekend to Stephen Finan, who was her high school classmate and best friend. He graduated from law school last May and started his legal career as an associate at Hogan Lovells, an international law firm that is the successor to Hogan & Hartson, the firm where Tim started in 1968.

On a class Zoom call, **Sam Wyman, Tim Bloomfield, Mike Quillin\*, Jack Kramer, and George Brakeley** discussed their big 70th Reunion next year. They all plan to be there, hopefully with John Cogswell and Tom Rightmyer in attendance, too!

## 1963

**John Schoonover** (above) reports that the Noxontown Navy, a group of dedicated alumni oarsmen from the 1960s, enjoyed another memorable Reunion weekend, returning to the water to row together, reconnect with old friends, and reminisce. Their tradition of attending Reunion and rowing as a group has remained strong for nearly 20 years.

\*Now deceased



## 1975

**Gordon Brownlee** shared that the Class of 1975's record-breaking 50th Reunion in 2025 set new highs for attendance, class gift amount, and Saints Fund participation, thanks in part to an anonymous "Clock Tower Challenge." One year later, the mystery donor has been revealed as **Paul Keyser**, whose challenge paid tribute to his memorable senior prank: replacing the clock tower's 4:00 p.m. chimes with Alice Cooper's "School's Out" on the eve of Commencement. Gordon extends the class's gratitude to Paul for his generosity and leadership in inspiring the Class of 1975 to reach new heights, while noting (with a smile) that the class does not endorse similar misuse of school property.

## 1964

**Al Day** celebrated his 80th birthday in February by bringing his children, their spouses, their grandchildren, and their friends on a memorable trip to the Oasis at Death Valley National Park. Al shared that Death Valley is a wonderful winter destination with something for everyone to enjoy, and the new casitas provided a welcome alternative to a traditional hotel room.

The Class of 1964 recently held one of its periodic Zoom gatherings, with 10 classmates participating—half of the class's 20 active, remaining members. During the conversation, **Dennis Blair** and others shared insights into the current political climate, while **Bill Hammond** provided an update on his lifelong efforts to reduce malaria and other devastating diseases in Africa.

## 1966

Members of the Class of 1966 (above) gathered for lunch in Charlottesville, Virginia, in April for their own Coast-to-Coast Toast celebration. **Peyton Williams, Eppa Hunton, Marie Comstock, Mary Hunton, Bobbie Williams, and Justin Comstock** attended.

## 1974

**Don Harting** has co-authored a nonfiction book to help prepare the next generation of medical writers: *CME Writer's Handbook: A Field Guide to Freelance Opportunities*. Books have been purchased by medical writers in multiple states since the paperback launched in April. Congratulations, Don!



Former faculty members and spouses Jim Bride, Lindsay Brown P'11,'14, Louise Howlett P'11,'14, Peter Brooke, Gail LeBlanc, Ruth Brooke, and Mel Bride met up for their second annual gathering at the Brooke's place in Castine, Maine.

## 1979

**Mike Lilley** recently traveled to England to attend the Henley Royal Regatta, where he watched his son compete with Bucknell's crew. While there, he had a chance encounter with fellow alumnus **Michael Atalay '84**. The two quickly discovered their shared St. Andrew's connection, with Michael recalling Mike's brother, **Jeff Lilley '82**. The pair spent nearly half an hour swapping stories as though they had known each other for years.

Michael reflected on St. Andrew's long history at Henley, noting that seeing today's level of competition only reinforced what an extraordinary accomplishment it was for the school's 1983 crew to reach the finals after winning four consecutive elimination races. He also shared that he and his wife, Elizabeth, later crossed paths with **Griffin Pitt '21**, who had previously competed at Henley with the University of Pennsylvania crew, making it a memorable gathering of Saints on the banks of the Thames.



## 1980

**Letitia Green** (above) has been enjoying a summer filled with family, travel, and St. Andrew's connections. After sailing from Annapolis to New York, she and her husband celebrated his birthday with their daughter, **Meagan Green '11**, and her fiancée, Helen Crenshaw, before continuing on to Rhode Island, where they picked up Letitia's former roommate and lifelong friend, **Virginia Ashpole '79**, and her husband, Mark, for a memorable sail through the Cape Cod Canal to Portsmouth, Massachusetts.

The celebrations continued in Boston, where Letitia reunited with Virginia, Virginia's son, David Ashpole, and his wife, Lexi, and their young daughters, for a visit to the New England Aquarium, followed by watching the July 2 Boston Harbor fireworks from the dock and the spectacular July 4 celebration along the Charles River. Earlier this spring, Letitia and her family celebrated the exciting news that her son, **Kelvin Green '10**, was recruited after 12 years at Intel to a new engineering position in Valencia, Spain, where he and his longtime partner, Alice, will relocate this August.



## 1985

**Dietrich von Stechow** and **Jim Thomas '86** met up in July out in Idaho. They spent a week rafting the Middle Fork of the Salmon River through the Frank Church Wilderness.



## 1986

**Laura Loessner** recently published a book while serving as clinical associate professor and director of practicum education at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. Her work focuses on practicum education, where master's-level social work students learn to apply theory in practice, and she is honored to contribute to the literature in this important area.



## 1989

**Tore Olsen** (above) recently traveled to North Carolina, where he visited his longtime friend and former SAS roommate, **Tomas Puky**, in Charlotte. Tore shared that Tomas and his family have always been like family to him, and the two friends enjoyed reminiscing about SAS, including a memorable trip to Venezuela in 1989. During the visit, they also spent time with fellow classmate **Darron Mills**.



In May, **Tore** celebrated the graduations of his twin sons, Finn and Pascal. Finn graduated from Atlantic College in Wales (which Tore described as looking like Hogwarts) and plans to study real estate and finance at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, while Pascal graduated from Birkerød Gymnasium in Denmark and will spend a gap year studying music.

**Victor van Buchem** attended the France vs. Paraguay World Cup game with **Taylor Cameron '90**, where they witnessed a close Round of 16 matchup with France ultimately winning 1-0.



## 1993

**Elizabeth Reynolds** spent a few days in West Virginia in early July. A self-described “bird nerd,” she was happy to have the opportunity to handle a gorgeous owl!

## 1995

**Erin Tarasi** recently gathered in Los Angeles for a picnic with classmates **Chris Reiger** and **Edward Jones**, along with fellow alumnus **Phil Pinch '97**. The group enjoyed catching up, playing games, and reminiscing.



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## 1996

**Hadley Robin** shared that the past year has been a big one for her family. After eight years in Seattle, she, her husband, Zac, and their two children, Finn (3) and Aberdeen (1), relocated to Thetford, Vermont, where they are enjoying country life by exploring local farms and swimming in nearby lakes and rivers. Hadley would love to connect with any fellow Saints in the area!

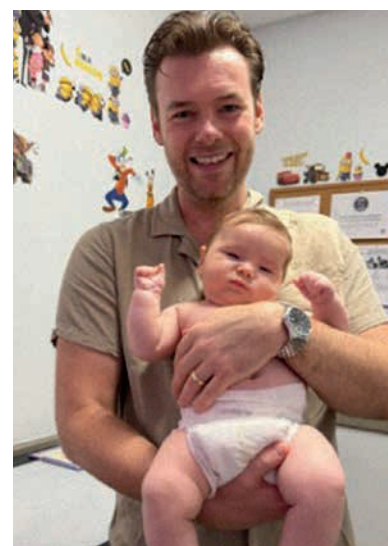


## 1997

Welcome home, **Holly Austin!** Holly, who first learned to row right here, on Noxontown Pond—and went on to win the Peabody Cup with the SAS varsity eight at England's Henley Women's Regatta—came back to the boathouse where it all began. She hosted Ready Set Row, the racing program she founded in 2016, on the pond for a week in July—and brought her kids along for the ride!

## 2001

**Kirk Battle** has been learning the ins and outs of renovation work after being elected alumni vice president of his fraternity at Sewanee. He helped tackle everything from sewage leaks and landscaping to unexpected bat encounters, with a complete renovation featuring native plantings next on the agenda.



## 2007

**Ian James** shared that 2026 has been an incredible year for his family. He and his wife moved to Austin, Texas, in March, welcomed their son, Rio James, in May, and celebrated Ian's new role at SWBC, a well-known Central Texas financial services firm, where he began in April. Ian added in July that Rio is just over two months old and is a happy, healthy baby, measuring above the 90th percentile in every category.

## 2014

**Daniel Maguire** completed the Boston Marathon this April in a staggering 2:37:15, placing 854th out of 29,289 runners. Way to go, Daniel!

**Joseph Hines** recently wrote his debut novel, *Ashes of the Root*, which follows a group of environmental stewards as they lead a revolution to save the natural world.

## 2020

**Miles Abney** recently moved to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to pursue a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, where she connected with fellow alumna **Mary Sella '80**, who works in the School of Social Work. Miles shared that Mary has been a wonderful mentor and friend, and the two are already talking about a road trip back to Delaware for Miles's 10th Reunion and Mary's 50th Reunion in 2030.



## 2021

**Griffin Pitt** is a recipient of the University of Pennsylvania's Thouron Award and will be pursuing an MSc in Water Science, Policy and Management at the University of Oxford beginning Fall 2026. She will be hiking the Camino de Santiago (Francés) this summer.

## 2024

**Joye Wingard**, currently rowing at Harvard, was one of only 38 collegiate student-athletes from across the country selected for a fellowship called The Team, which seeks to connect athletics with civic engagement. As one of this year's fellows, Joye designed and led Next Level Scholars, a year-long project tackling the recruiting gap that keeps many high school athletes—especially those from under-resourced schools—from ever reaching collegiate competition.

## WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We hope you'll share any news from the small to the large—including news of your recent alumni meetups (including virtual gatherings!); job changes and professional achievements; recent travel; weddings and new additions to your family; acts of service, and anything else you want to let us know!

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“To know Bunker was to be with a wonderful, vivid force of human excitement and exuberance.”

—Ned Gammons

# In Memory

## Michael Quillin Sr. '57

1939-2026

Mike was a beloved member of the St. Andrew's community. His senior year, Mike, a varsity wrestler, was voted Outstanding Wrestler at the Delaware State High School Wrestling Tournament, which he also won. He rowed varsity crew in the spring. Mike may have gotten into trouble at SAS a time or two, most notably when he stayed out late after a dance with Judy Harrison Wildy. It was worth it—he later married her. Mike and Judy's two sons also attended St. Andrew's: Michael Quillin Jr. '82 and David Quillin '82. He will be missed. **—The Class of 1957**



## David H. "Bunker" Walker '65

1947-2026



"I can't imagine that anyone who was moving into the South Dorm in September 1961 could have ever imagined that the day January 24th, 2026, would come. I just remember that at 14, I was in a large measure of awe (and a bit of apprehension) in encountering this monumental life-force back there in the largest and best of the alcoves—that primo space with four

windows, for goodness sake—one Edgar Rogers Hill (although woe be unto the unfortunate who used that formal address—a nuggie would be in your future). It was "Bunker," as the newbies were cautioned, and you did not just wander back to that sanctum sanctorum, so much as be summoned to the salon. He was an old boy, in the know, powerful, fearless, and always the

vanguard of the newest and coolest. Growing up, and older, we learned so much more about him, beyond the indelible first impression of bravado and rascality.

We found that our old schoolmate was a caring, sympathetic, supportive, sometimes vulnerable, big-hearted soul who could not have been a better and more loyal friend, one who loved as fiercely as he competed on the SAS playing fields. For his time with us since, the attribute that remained most consistent the passionate life-force that was our brother, Bunker, a friend we were blessed to have. And we will miss him. My love to Diane, Rhett, Kelly, family and the SAS brotherhood.

**—Andy Haynes '65**

"To know Bunker was to be with a wonderful, vivid force of human excitement and exuberance. As with laughter, he was contagious. As teacher and baseball coach, I caught this happy contagion, a distinct honor given me. His suffering is over. My faith looks forward, without question, to a reunion, 'in a greater light, on another shore where nothing will ever separate us.'"

**—Ned Gammons, former faculty**

## Ricardo G. Antoine '05

1987-2026

"Ricardo's Celebration of Life was a beautiful and emotionally difficult day. The Saints in attendance laughed, we cried, we held each other, and we paid tribute to a young man who loved fiercely, worked diligently, and was always his true authentic self. We mourned all that Huntington's Disease stole from him, from us, and from this world, but we chose to rejoice for the gift of time we did have, and the impact Ricardo made in so many lives. The Antoine Family was so grateful for all the love and support their St. Andrew's family extended in their time of bereavement."

**-Stacey Duprey '85**



## John M. Witheford '47

April 17, 2026 – South Yarmouth, MA

## William M. Hayman '55

June 30, 2026 – Washington, D.C.

## George L. Shea '51

April 20, 2026

## Harry A. Jarvis '55

May 3, 2026 – Bakersfield, CA

## Noel B. Wright '51

June 30, 2026

## Leland T. James '56

July 23, 2026 – Irvington, VA



**Charles S. Marshall '57**

*April 1, 2026*



**David H. Walker '65**

*January 24, 2026*



**Charles H. Shorley '71**

*July 27, 2026 – Ocean City, MD*

**Hunter B. Harris Jr. '59**

*May 8, 2026 – Lexington, KY*

**Paul F. Scholla '61**

**James D. McVicker '76**

*April 12, 2026 – Bear, DE*

**Anthony J. Bennett '62**

*May 2, 2026*

**Daniel R. McAlaine '03**

*March 21, 2026*

**James D. Harris '65**

*July 1, 2026 – Bel Air, MD*



**Ricardo G. Antoine '05**

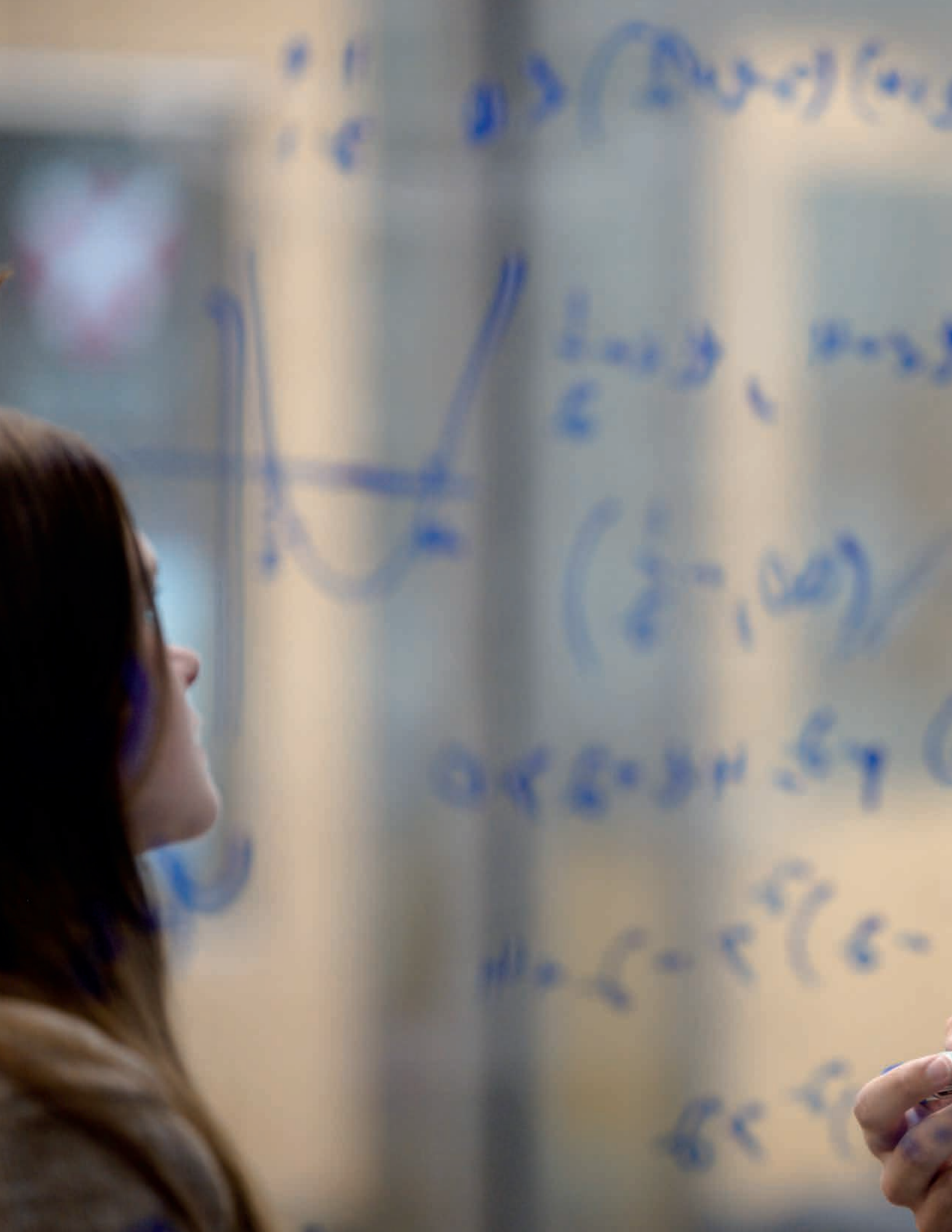
*July 2, 2026*

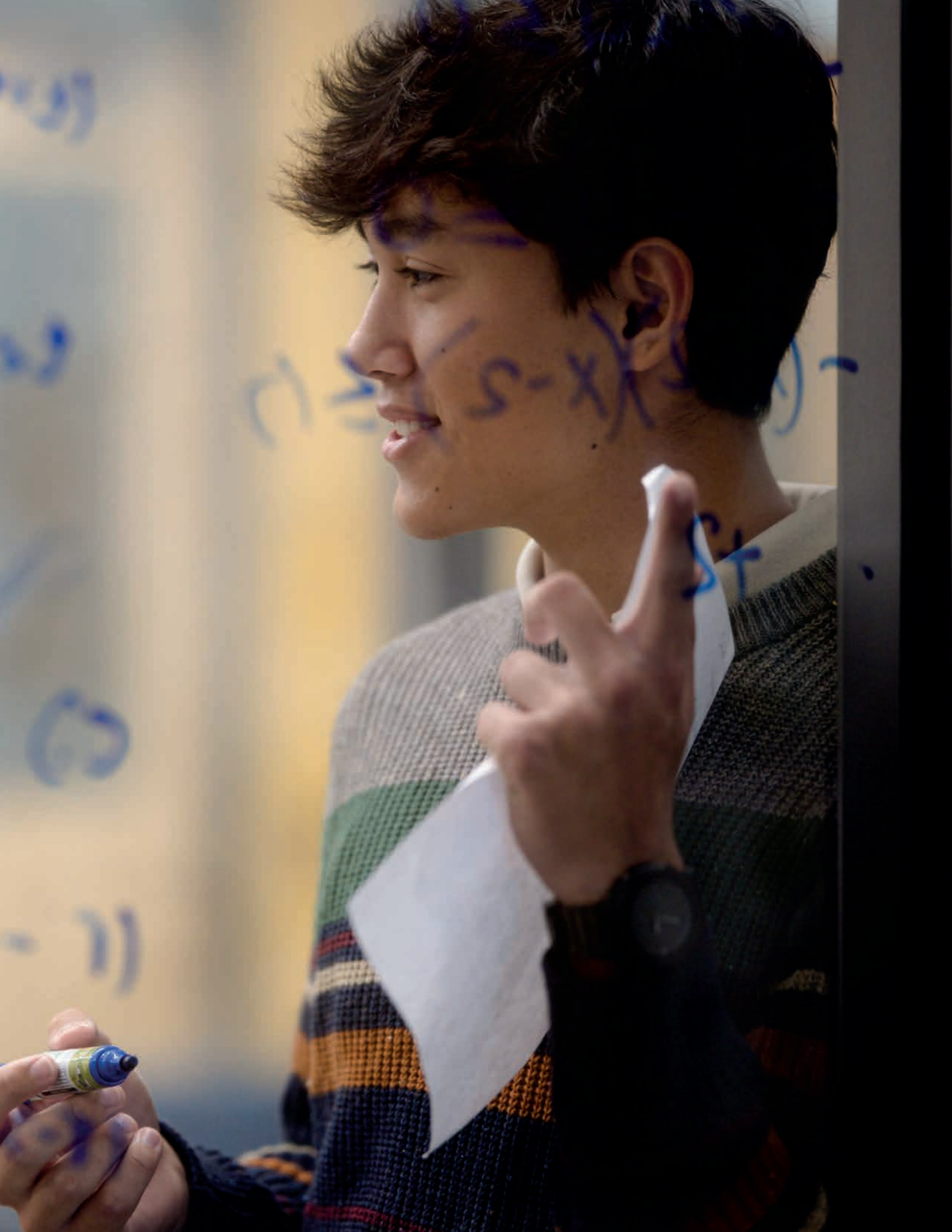
**Andrew M.  
Golemon-Mercer '15**

*April 27, 2026 – Charlottesville, VA*

“May all those  
who we love but  
see no longer  
continue to be a  
blessing to us in  
our hearts.”

*–Chaplain Peter Carey*







## St. Andrew's School

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