



# Thistle

## TALK



Winchester Thurston School

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## Theresa Fox Named Associate Director of Lower School

Lower School Teacher Theresa Fox was named Associate Director of Lower School, effective July 1, 2020. This new role at WT emerged to expand the Lower School's excellence in meeting the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of children.

In this role, Fox is responsible for planning, coordinating, and administering all activities and programs related to student life, conduct, and culture for the Lower School. In a hiring process that included interviews across all constituent groups, one interviewer noted, "Theresa's connection to students, teachers, and all colleagues is unparalleled. She is organized, strong, and is able to see the truth in people. Theresa's connection goes beyond the classroom; she is able to see the whole child, not just one defining moment."

Fox joined WT in the 2004-2005 school year and was most recently a Third Grade Teacher. She also worked as a First Grade Teacher and a Teaching Assistant. Fox received a B.A. in Early Childhood Education from Carlow University and an M.A. in Teaching, Elementary Education, from Chatham University.

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### Mission

Winchester Thurston School actively engages each student in a challenging and inspiring learning process that develops the mind, motivates the passion to achieve, and cultivates the character to serve.

### Equity and Inclusion Statement

As a means to fulfill our credo, "Think also of the comfort and the rights of others," Winchester Thurston will be an inclusive community and will pursue the social and pedagogical benefits that diversity brings. We will place the highest value on enabling students to understand their own identity and those of others. It is our moral imperative to be courageous and intentional in promoting understanding, addressing bias, identifying and honoring qualities of justice, respecting multiple perspectives and contributions, and valuing the dignity of all.

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Middle School Student Council organized outdoor, on-campus social events—like kickball, a live-action Clue game, and charades—for both hybrid and full-time remote students to engage in fun, physically distanced activities.

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL | Scott D. Fech, Ph.D.

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*This year's spirit t-shirt acknowledges the uniqueness of this school year and how COVID-19 has turned our world upside down. Kindergarten student Harper Liu, shown here and on the cover, takes it all in stride.*



**THISTLETALK GOES DIGITAL**

Get more news, photos, and fun at [winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle](http://winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle)



*Scott D. Fech*

## Reimagine Learning

From our very beginnings, Winchester Thurston School has been viewed as a leader in education. Our founders set out to create a unique experience that reimagined learning for girls and young women—one which would prepare them for the rigors of post-secondary education as well as challenging them to break the boundaries that had been established for women.

And while WT has come a long way in our first 134 years, that commitment to reimagining learning continues as we forge new pathways in education.

So what does it mean to reimagine learning in 2020? It would be easy for us to focus solely on the current pandemic and how WT has flexed our school model to be able to have our students back on campus, and how we have integrated new technologies making it possible for some students to be learning remotely. But that limited view would be shortsighted. Even before the pandemic, WT deepened and expanded our commitment to innovative, student-centered pedagogy, curricula, and practice anchored in real-world connections through our Strategic Design. We knew that our practices would need to embed equity and inclusion to ensure that each of our students would be able to make the most of their WT experience. [See page 5 for an overview of our current engagement in this work.] And,

Understanding that  
we are preparing  
our students for an  
unknown future, WT  
remains focused on  
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not yet.

we understood that we needed to evolve our school model to prepare students for an unknown future.

When some people think of innovation in education, too often they focus only on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). At WT, innovation exists not only in our STEM offerings, which we have featured in previous issues of *ThistleTalk*, but across all disciplines. One example is our Visual Arts curriculum which provides our students the opportunity to develop not only the skills needed to create art, but also the ability to understand how art can transform a community with an emphasis on social justice, equity, and inclusion. [See page 8.]

In addition, our students are learning how we approach adaptation in times of uncertainty. They witness how adults adjust to change, and they learn. They see how organizations pivot, and they learn. They are developing resilience as they adapt to a new way of living and being in school, as old routines need to be adjusted to keep the community safe—the ultimate expression of “Think also.” This is what the future requires. Adaptability. Flexibility. Resiliency.

Understanding that we are preparing our students for an unknown future, WT remains focused on both the now and the not yet. Our Board sees this focus on the future as important enough that a new committee, the Future Forum [See page 12.], has been created to help us see and learn from the evolution around us in every field, helping us evolve our programs so that our students are ready to make a difference in the real world. And our success can be measured when we look at our alumnae/i who are leading in the age of COVID-19. [See page 16.]

Often transformational moments for an organization are accompanied by uncertainty. That is certainly true today for WT. But time and time again, we have not let that deter our dreams for a brighter future for our students. Instead, we embraced that uncertainty and took some risks, allowing WT to remain on the forefront of education. Never content to rest on our laurels, we will continue to lead from the front and allow others to follow.

# WT offers a warm welcome to these new members of the Board of Trustees.



**Jessica Bemer** is a Senior Analyst and Portfolio Manager at Snow Capital and was one of four finalists for the 2019 Women in Asset Management Awards, U.S. Value Equities category. Bemer holds the Chartered Financial Analyst® designation and is a member

of the CFA Institute and the CFA Society of Pittsburgh. Bemer's late husband, Keith, was an Upper School Science Teacher at WT. Their children are Brigid (Class of 2027), Anna (Class of 2030), and Mary (Class of 2032).



**Brandilyn Y. Dumas '99** is a Shareholder at Greenberg Traurig in New York, where she focuses her practice on commercial real estate transactions, including acquisitions and dispositions, financing, joint ventures, and development. She was named

to the *New York Law Journal's* Rising Star List, and is a Trustee at Harlem Link Charter School. Dumas was WT's first Mary Houston Griffin Scholar, and is an active member of WT's Alums of Color group.



**James Isler** is the Chief Investment Officer at SCC Investment Advisors. He is a member of the Board of Directors (past Chair) of the Pace School, a private nonprofit school for special needs students, and of P3R, the engine behind Pittsburgh's favorite

races including the Pittsburgh Marathon. Isler and his wife, Erin, are the parents of Lillian 'Lilly' (Class of 2032) and preschooler David (hopefully Class of 2035).



**David Kamin** is the Managing Partner of Gridiron Partners, an Institutional Advisory Firm, and the Managing Principal of Kamin Capital. His professional experience includes advising Pension Funds, Endowments, and Foundations on investment decisions as well as developing

and redeveloping Commercial Real Estate projects in multiple sectors. Kamin has two children at WT: Fiona (Class of 2028) and Camila (Class of 2030).



**Savita Mulla Narasimhan** is an international development policy expert, integrator, and strategist. She serves on the board of Strong Women, Strong Girls in Pittsburgh, has traveled to over 30% of the world, and speaks five Indian languages.

Narasimhan and her husband, Hari, are the parents of Aria (Class of 2023).



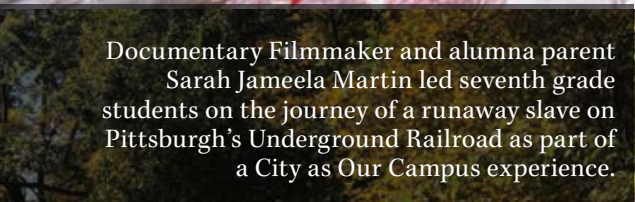
**Tiffany Sizemore '95** is an Assistant Clinical Professor of Law at Duquesne University School of Law where she developed and directs the Youth Advocacy Clinic. She works closely with the National Juvenile Defender Center and serves on their Advisory

Board. Sizemore is the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Juvenile Defender Association of Pennsylvania and also serves on the board of Pittsburgh's Neighborhood Legal Services. Sizemore is an active member of WT's Alums of Color group.





Ninth grade students volunteered with ForGoodPGH, East End Cooperative Ministry, and Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse during a day of City as Our Campus activities.

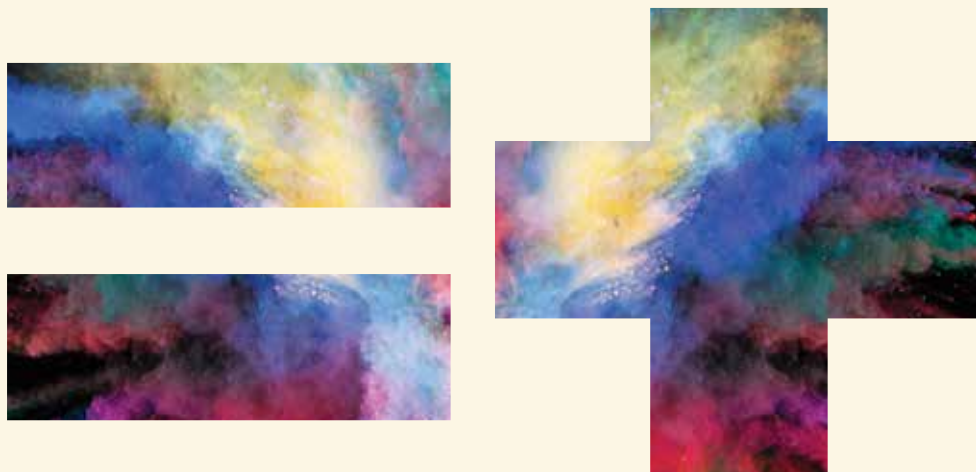


Documentary Filmmaker and alumna parent Sarah Jameela Martin led seventh grade students on the journey of a runaway slave on Pittsburgh's Underground Railroad as part of a City as Our Campus experience.



For several years, students from Peking University Elementary School have visited WT, sharing their culture and traditions, and creating meaningful relationships.





# Equity + Inclusion:

## *Leaning Into Discomfort to Enact Lasting Change*

Four years ago, Winchester Thurston hired its first Director of Equity and Inclusion to develop and implement school-wide structures that have become more deeply rooted with each passing year. Today, WT expands the work by engaging The Glasgow Group, noted experts in the field.

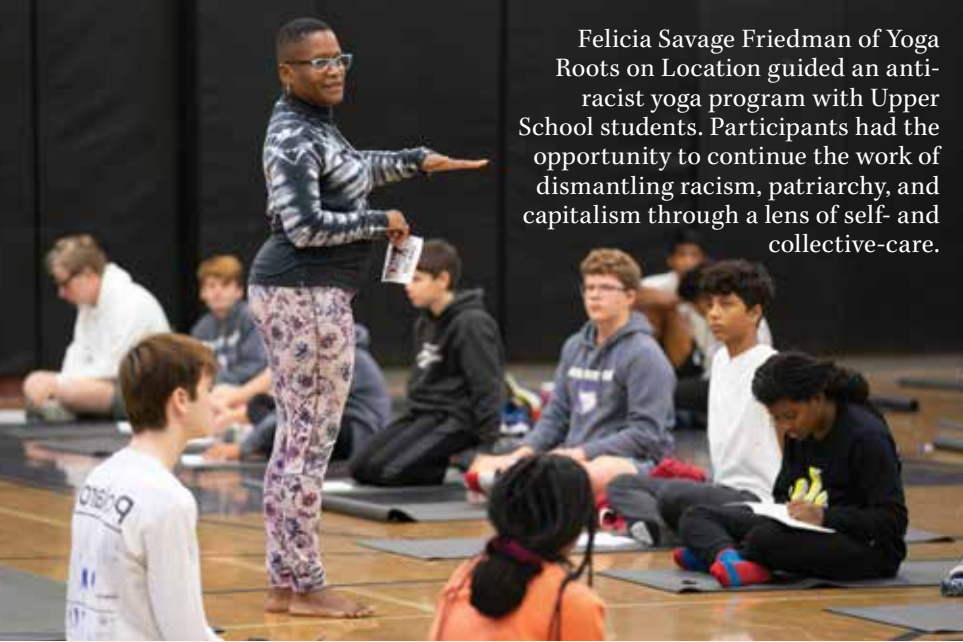
“The opportunity to have external consultants push us in this work is important,” states Assistant Head for Education and Strategy Adam Nye. “They come with a fresh set of eyes, as a neutral third party. I look forward to The Glasgow Group helping us to confront the challenges and obstacles that have held us back.”

The decision to involve an external consultant was precipitated by the departure of Director of Equity and Inclusion Diane Nichols, and informed by feedback from WT alumnae/i of color after the murder of George Floyd.

“Hearing from our alums of color really let us know that we needed to have an outside group that could take a look and be honest and objective with us as we work toward our goals,” says Head of School Dr. Scott D. Fech. “Diane left us with a strong infrastructure, and we wanted support as we continue our work and while we look for her successor.” The alums helped determine priorities for The Glasgow Group’s agenda, says Fech. “Listening to stories from both alums and current students, and hearing where we’re not serving students of color as well as the call for improvement, helped us identify places where we know there’s work to be done: Are our Handbooks reflective of inclusive

The photos in this article show a range of experiences throughout the curriculum that bring diversity, equity, and inclusion front and center at WT.  
Please note that these photos were taken prior to the pandemic.

Felicia Savage Friedman of Yoga Roots on Location guided an anti-racist yoga program with Upper School students. Participants had the opportunity to continue the work of dismantling racism, patriarchy, and capitalism through a lens of self- and collective-care.



practices or are they holdovers from a prior age? Does the curriculum provide mirrors to what students are doing in the classroom? And, are we doing the kinds of employee training that is needed to become an anti-racist community?”

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment**

It is The Glasgow Group’s mission to find answers to these questions. The consortium of consultants is helmed by President and Principal Consultant Dr. Rodney Glasgow. “Our deep connection to schools allows us to keep our finger on the pulse of school climate and culture,” asserts Glasgow. “This context will inform our assessment and recommendations for WT. We will take a fresh look through key documents, core policies, practices, and procedures, as well as conduct various focus groups to interrogate the lived experiences of the school.”

Feedback will also come from surveys, adds Nye, noting that the data-driven work will involve the full WT community and result in an actionable plan. “It would be impossible to engage in this work and to transform our community if we do not listen to, and honor, the lived experiences of every constituent—despite the discomfort that will accompany this work.”

### **Focal Points of Growth**

Newly-appointed Director of Academics Desiree Jennings oversees diversity, equity, and inclusion from a curricular standpoint. [See page 15.] As

such, she is responsible for documenting and refining WT’s curriculum.

Jennings believes that teaching is, itself, “diversity, equity, and inclusion work, and that curriculum and instruction are critical vehicles for pushing that work forward and holding it back, to varying extents...depending on our commitments to the work, both as individuals and as an institution.”

The Glasgow Group will assess WT’s curriculum to identify how the diversity of WT’s student community is reflected through what is taught, and how. “We will look for where and how skills such as empathy-based inquiry, honoring varying viewpoints, and identifying opportunities for social action exist across the scope and sequence of the curriculum,” shares Glasgow.

Regarding handbooks and discipline, the Group will examine how policies and practices create an environment of equity, justice, and belonging. “Are the policies aligned with the goals around inclusivity and diversity? In discipline, we will look at how the discipline process addresses incidents that involve bias, identity-targeting, bullying, and harassment, focusing on how the issues are investigated, the strength and effectiveness of disciplinary consequences, the role of anti-bias education in the discipline process, and how the process focuses on repair of relationships and support for those who have been targeted.”



First graders develop foundational exposure, knowledge, and awareness through the Urban Planning, Architecture, and Community Development Unit, which explores not just architecture, but also how architecture ties into equitable practices in communities.



Kristin Kovacic's Lit City class spoke with Robert Faruq Wideman, subject of the book *Brothers and Keepers*. Wideman was convicted of second-degree murder and given a life sentence in 1976. In 1983, Wideman sought and was granted a new trial on the grounds that the jury never heard crucial evidence in the case. It wasn't until 2019, after 44 years in prison, that Wideman's sentence was commuted.



And finally, regarding alums of color whose raised voices helped shape the process, Glasgow explains, “We are focusing on hearing their experiences and using that to identify ways the school can better serve its current students of color. We will also seek, through a reparative process focused on the healing of negative experiences, to bring alums of color into tighter and better relationship with the school.”

### The Daily Work of DEI

“People understand that we all have responsibility for this, as opposed to it being ‘the Director of Equity and Inclusion’s job’ to do it,” says Fech. “It has become part of our regular discourse. We don’t announce, ‘oh, now we’re going to talk about diversity.’ We’re just always talking about it. There’s always more to learn, and we’re going to make mistakes—but making mistakes doesn’t mean that we stop the work. It means we need to do the work even more.”

With change on the horizon, Fech anticipates the next steps of WT’s DEI journey. “All of this work—the survey of the community, understanding where we are with our curriculum and handbooks, processing and acting on the experiences of our alumnae/i and students—will help us to identify what our needs are for the next Director of Equity and Inclusion,” he reflects. “When Diane was hired four years ago, she had to lay the groundwork for this. We’ve educated the community in the importance of this and how this needs to impact our day-to-day work. Now the question becomes: What are the qualities needed in a person to take this work to the next level?”

Fech underscores the point: “This is lifelong work. There is not an endpoint to equity and inclusion work. We’re always going to continue to improve and grow in it.”

## A Call to Reconnect

Dear Fellow Alums,

Established during Reunion 2019, the Alums of Color group was formed to be an advisory committee for WT around topics of race, social justice, equity, and inclusion, and to create a space for us to have a clear voice in this conversation.

After several leadership meetings over the past year, and the call to action that the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and numerous other victims of police brutality spurred across the country and around the world, we have focused our efforts to help prevent negative experiences at WT, especially those that can be attributed to inaction.



Joy Titus-Young '92



Don Michael Mendoza '06

Collectively, we can do this by highlighting the issues at hand and working to offer WT clear, progressive steps forward – not just to improve for the future, but also to reach a point of reconciliation with the past. We’re fortunate to include two WT Board members in this group, Brandilyn Dumas '99 and Tiffany Sizemore '95. We are grateful to have their support as Trustees behind our efforts. We also are delighted that current parents Linsey McDaniel A'96 and Mary Martin '88 (also a WT faculty member) are voices in our group.

As co-leaders, we are only one part of this group. We hope to engage with other alums of color and welcome them in this ongoing conversation. We will share your thoughts with WT’s leadership team, and with The Glasgow Group.

Please contact either of us at [alumsofcolor@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:alumsofcolor@winchesterthurston.org) to add your voice to this important undertaking.

Don Michael Mendoza '06 and  
Joy Titus-Young '92  
Co-Chairs, WT Alums of Color Group

# Fostering Connection and Advocacy through Art

As WT deepens the work of ensuring an inclusive and equitable community for everyone—weaving its own brilliant tapestry with diverse identities, perspectives, and stories—one need look no further than its Visual Arts curriculum to witness the school’s commitment to this work.

*“You don’t exist if you’re not represented ... I felt a need to claim my own social existence by making the representation happen.”*

—Njideka Akunyili Crosby

“I believe that it’s really important for our department to take a look at the artists and artwork that we are showing our students,” says Kate Gugliotta, Lower School Visual Arts Teacher and newly-appointed Visual Arts Department Chair. “That means showing artists from diverse cultures, abilities, and from the LGBTQ+ community. I want students to see an artist

and say, ‘Wow, that person is just like me’ or ‘I can become an artist, too.’”

As Department Chair, this is Gugliotta’s vision for students across divisions as she collaborates with colleagues Michele Farrell, Stephanie Flati, Carl Jones, and Mary Martin ’88 to reimagine the curriculum with an expanded focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). The foundation begins in Kindergarten, where children learn about artists like Yayoi Kusama who, at 91, still makes art daily, and Amy Sherald, who painted First Lady Michelle Obama’s portrait for the National Portrait Gallery.

“Students are excited to see a video clip of Kusama in her studio,” notes Gugliotta. “And it’s incredible to see how empowering it is for them to create their own large-scale self-portraits inspired by Sherald’s painting. Throughout these units, children are learning empathy, respect, and how to advocate for themselves and their peers.”





*“The art classroom, even virtually, is a space where many students feel free to be themselves without judgment.”*

*—Middle School Visual Arts Teacher Stephanie Flati*

Key to this work is a safe, inclusive space where students can explore and express themselves. Stephanie Flati’s classroom is one such place. There, her dual roles as Middle School Visual Arts Teacher and DEI Liaison intersect, extending the impact of both.

“Through my work in DEI, I have been exposed to many resources and experiences that have helped me incorporate new and unfamiliar artists, methodologies, and ideas into my curriculum. I try to craft lessons that encourage students to express themselves and start a dialogue about who they are.

“The art classroom, even virtually, is a space where many students feel free to be themselves without judgment,” Flati continues. “It’s encouraged to show the wild and weird parts of who you are via the artwork you create—and when you share it, you are in an extremely vulnerable space. Experiencing artwork that someone else created allows us into a part of their lived experience in a way that isn’t possible through any other discipline.”

*“You can’t sit around and wait for somebody to say who you are. You need to write it and paint it and do it.”*

*—Faith Ringgold*

Besides helping students examine the intricate, intimate terrain of their identities, art is a natural vehicle for exploring other complex topics, says Mary Martin ’88, Upper School Visual Arts Teacher and Affinity Programming Liaison. Social justice issues are a particular passion, and Martin implements City as Our Campus resources to support this devotion “in the broadest way, to bring in people who are doing work that’s different than what students are accustomed to or familiar with.”

Martin also draws inspiration from the wider world. Last summer, she devoted considerable time developing new curricular ideas through conversations with other professionals in the field, including artist, activist, and educator Marissa Gutierrez-Vicario, Executive Director of ARTE (Art and Resistance Through Education).



▲ **Maya Roberts, Grade 11**

► **Anna Quimby, Grade 10**

The Manipulated Self-Portrait Project is an identity exercise that challenges students to look beyond what others see on the surface. The methodical cuts and re-arrangement of shapes tell a story that interprets how identity relates to our environment. This year, many students attributed the rearrangements as distortions and fragmented forms reflective of their feelings about COVID-19 adjustments, while others wrote about piecing their lives together, and unsettling feelings.







The grade 5 fiber arts curriculum explores how artists throughout the world have expressed themselves and their cultures through sewing, and how textiles contribute to our collective history through design, storytelling, and process.

In addition to creating their own soft sculptures, students reflected on the stories and work of textile artists such as Yinka Shonibare who explores cultural identity, colonialism, and post-colonialism within the contemporary context of globalization; Louise Bourgeois whose powerful themes of home, family, sexuality, and mortality drive her work; and the women quilters from Gee's Bend who have created one of the most important African American visual and cultural contributions to the history of art within the United States.

"Marissa was captivated by one of our projects, *The Gift*," says Martin. This project is an opportunity for students to create art and use it as a means to connect with people – beyond creating something aesthetically pleasing that goes on a wall. This year's *Gift* will focus on human rights, and will unfold in collaboration with Gutierrez-Vicario. "Students will research human rights, whether housing, religious freedom, or otherwise, and then create something inspired by that and gift it to five people who are somehow connected to that concept."

"There is a desire to teach students so they're equipped to master certain technical skills," says Martin, who began teaching at WT 17 years ago. "But there's a whole other layer I'm exploring as well. The goal with every class is having some concept or idea that relates to the larger picture of the world."

*"To create one's world in any of the arts takes courage."*

—Georgia O'Keeffe

Earlier this year, Gugliotta attended a seminar featuring art educator Flavia S. Zuniga-West, who imparted strategies for decolonizing visual arts curricula.

"To me, decolonizing means re-thinking the historical canon of art history. In many museums, over 90 percent of artworks are by white males, many

of whom are dead. What type of message does this send to our students when we narrate art history in this way?

"Zuniga-West showed our group how to weave multiple voices into a conversation around art history. For example, she showed us how one might juxtapose the paintings *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, completed in 1805 by Jacques-Louis David, with Kehinde Wiley's 2005 interpretation, *Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps*, to examine the tradition of portraiture and all that it implies about power and privilege. For younger students we might talk about clothing and pose and positions of power. For older students, these artworks might lead into discussions of race, power, and social justice."

*"Art is a wound turned into light."*

—Georges Braque

Art can illuminate, instruct, and inspire. It can break hearts and bind them. Its power is infinite. But in WT's evolving art curriculum, art's most potent contribution may well be its power to foster connection.

"Regardless of our backgrounds, art serves as the common thread that unites us all through personal experience and inspiration," notes Gugliotta. "We hear each other's stories and become advocates for each other."

# FUTURE FORUM: SOWING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

Just over a year ago, WT's strategic vision was unveiled, highlighting four strategic priorities (Reimagine Learning, Rethink Time and Space, Strengthen Community, and Support Employees) rooted in a commitment to develop individuals of strong character and prepare them for the demands of a changing world. Now, the Board of Trustees builds on that commitment with the Future Forum Committee, a visionary approach for supporting and inspiring the school's strategic work.

"Future Forum is about taking the pulse of the changing discourse in fields across a wide spectrum—not just education—and understanding how the intersectional and multi-disciplinary nature of today's world informs our mindset," shares Trustee Illah Nourbakhsh, Future Forum Committee Chair. "It is a way for the Board to interrogate knowledge that is outside its own envelope of experience and wisdom."

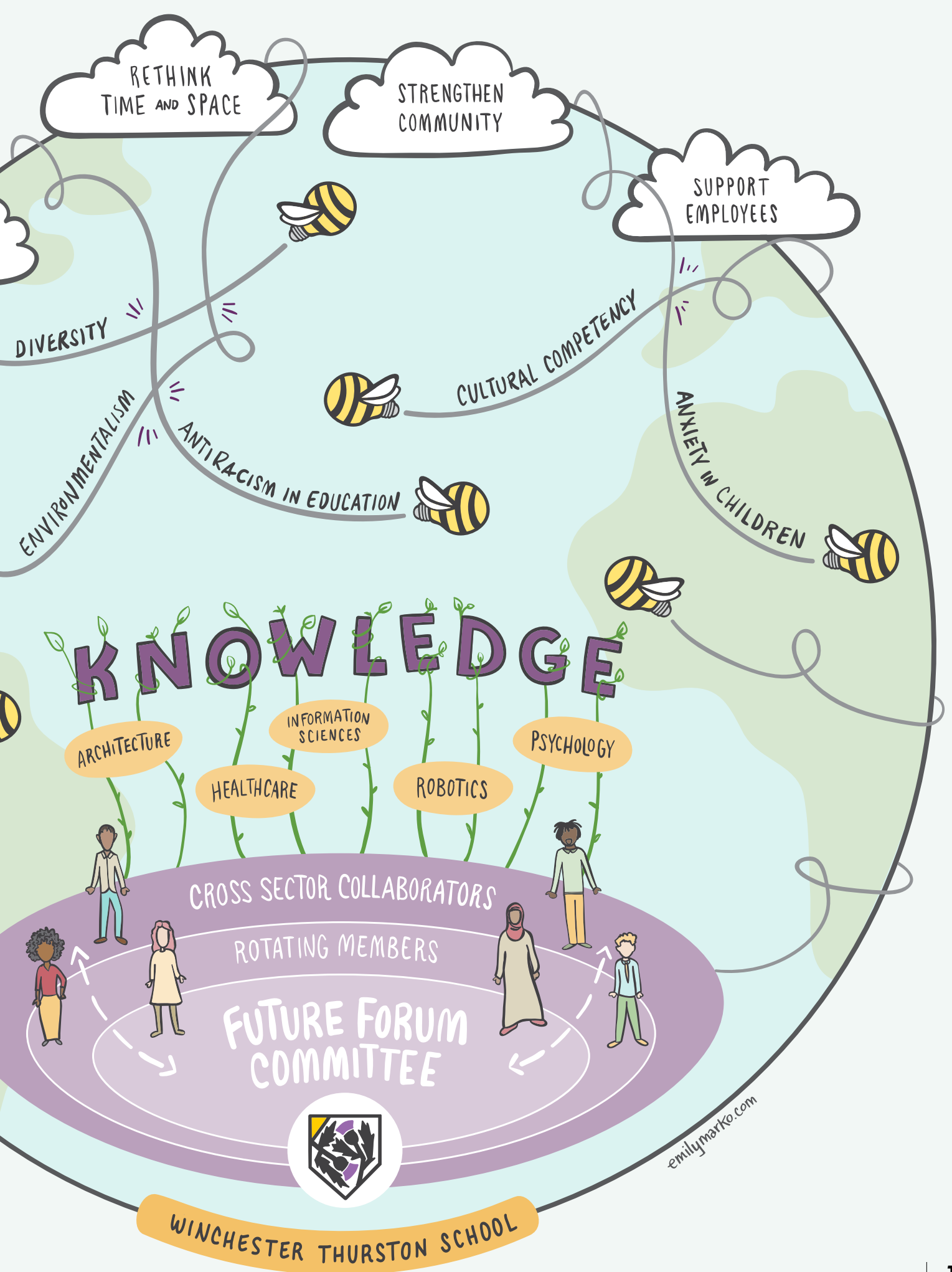
## **Sipping from many wells of expertise**

Future Forum emphasizes breadth rather than depth, a structure allowing participants to "sip from the wells of many disciplinary experts," says Nourbakhsh. Every few months, a rotating group of six Board members and employees convenes for reflection and conversation with thought leaders from multiple fields. "We hope to formulate a grammar for leading-edge practices and beliefs that are likely to influence WT into future years, on topics as diverse as physical plant, curriculum, parent engagement, and athletics." The size of the group creates an intimacy intended to catalyze outstanding conversations, and the process invites a consistent flow of fresh ideas and forward thinking.

The idea for Future Forum came from Board President Paul Rosenblatt's desire to build on the work of the Board's recently dissolved Generative Thinking Task Force. Rosenblatt characterizes generative thinking—a cognitive process utilized by boards to produce creative decision-making—as "important for identifying and exploring new ideas in the context of current and anticipated issues, and deciding whether and how to act upon them." The Board had integrated this thinking so thoroughly into its meetings and operations that a standalone task force was no longer







necessary, but Rosenblatt wanted to maintain the overarching focus on the future, and proposed taking the spirit of generative thinking to another level.

“One of my goals in establishing the Future Forum is to make sure that we as a Board are regularly being introduced to new ideas and practices, not just in education, but in other fields as well.

“The Future Forum is a place for us to share ideas and cross-sector concepts—to cross-pollinate our thinking with ideas outside of our own realms of experience,” Rosenblatt continues. “What do the world’s leading thinkers believe is in our future? Some of these folks are actually in our own community here

interesting is, how do we build on these and calibrate our work to incorporate them? The road will be long, arduous, and extremely challenging, but WT’s response to COVID-19—which included many voices in the process of input, discussion, analysis, iteration, and implementation – has taught us that this is the only way.”

### Digging into disruption

“It’s hard not to think about this in the context of COVID-19, because we’ve been forced to be so flexible and break open our thinking constantly—even more than we could have imagined,” acknowledges Head of School Dr. Scott D. Fech. “We’d already been in



at WT or in our own city. What should we anticipate and prepare for? What exciting new ideas are out there for us to discuss and debate and incorporate into our long-range planning?”

Adds Nourbakhsh, “These thought leaders are futurists in some way, whether in their remarkable ability to predict how cultural boundaries change, or in their ability to take trends now underway and create ontologies that make sense of those changes so we can see the bigger picture.”

### Incorporating all voices

The Future Forum Committee has already identified a meaty list of topics and themes to be explored, including cultural competency, diversity and anti-racism in education, climate change and environmentalism, anxiety in children, new kinds of evaluations, and counter-narratives.

“Illah’s idea to rotate the Board members is the first of many steps to assimilate all voices into these seemingly disparate conversations,” says Trustee Savita Mullapudi Narasimhan. “The collective knowledge will introduce speakers who will elevate our school through diverse insights and ideas. What will be equally

the mindset that we can’t keep doing things the way we’ve done them in the past. This sampling of how all sorts of industries are disrupting their fields will be invaluable to our work. We can model the thinking of what it means to be disruptive, and it can inform us in new ways of thinking which are not necessarily about school, but about mindsets. It’s really wide open.”

As the Future Forum Committee digs into disruption and the wide-open work of helping to prepare WT’s students for an uncertain future, they do so enthusiastically embracing the changes they, too, will be asked to make.

“A critical part of preparing for the demands of a changing world is to be open to changing ourselves,” admits Narasimhan. “And for this we need to amass credible knowledge from experts in various fields and learn to make connections to our work for more integrated solutions. Sometimes, this may mean starting all over again and other times, it may mean adding important spokes to a tried and tested wheel. Our hope is that Future Forum discussions will operate as a knowledge platform helping us sow seeds for the best future we can offer our whole community.”



# Setting the Foundation for Future Learning

Desiree Jennings joined WT as a First Grade Teacher in the 2015-2016 school year with a B.S. in Education from the University of Georgia and an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction from Teachers College, Columbia University. With the intention of helping students observe and reflect upon their surroundings, one of her early adjustments to the first grade curriculum was to broaden the architecture unit to include foundational exposure, knowledge, and awareness of equitable practices in communities. “This lays the foundation for future learning,” notes Jennings. “It encourages students to ask increasingly complex questions that get to the root of social issues.”

It was this kind of thinking that Dr. Scott D. Fech was looking for when WT created a new position, Director of Academics and Gary J. Niels Chair for City as Our Campus, designed to review and align WT’s academic program within the framework of the school’s Mission and its Strategic Priorities.

As part of a national search, Jennings was tapped to fill the role. She spoke to us about her initial work and her vision and planning for the future.

***Q: Your affinity for teaching is well known. What was it about this position that lured you out of the classroom?***

I loved developing curriculum, and had consistently worked to strengthen my skills in that regard. I also felt a strong connection to the recent experiences I had supporting teachers in their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work as the Lower School DEI Liaison—I was energized to problem solve with them, and it was rewarding to help move the work forward.

These experiences reinforced my desire to grow in new ways as an educator, but I couldn’t imagine being too far removed from the heart and soul of our work—the students. This role allows me to impact curriculum, support teachers, AND remain closely connected to the learning and growth of students—it combines all of the elements I was looking for!



***Q: A review and alignment of the PK – grade 12 curriculum is not a small undertaking! How do you anticipate beginning the work?***

The process has started with gathering stories. Learning from teachers, grade levels, and departments about how we arrived where we are today and what their goals are for growth and evolution. As that picture becomes clearer, I’m working with faculty members to consider the extent to which the curriculum aligns with who we say we are.

Additionally, I am beginning to work with our DEI consultants on the DEI curriculum audit, engaging in a critical and thorough examination of the DEI work we are doing in our curricular content and teaching work. [See page 5.]

***Q: Community-based learning has long been a hallmark of a WT education with City as Our Campus. What further evolutions do you see in this work?***

I hope that City as Our Campus can provide consistent opportunities for students and employees to engage in culturally responsive service learning throughout the PK – 12 curriculum. For this vision to be achieved, teachers need the time and space to develop this curriculum and to sustain its innovation and growth. I’m also eager to give greater space to student voice and choice in these experiences, and to nurture our community partnerships to greater depths.

***Q: How do you envision your role impacting WT as a whole?***

A valuable aspect of my role is helping to bring to light the ways in which all members of the WT community have a meaningful impact on teaching and learning. In partnership with our leadership team, our non-teaching offices, and our faculty, I hope to help develop opportunities that allow employees to connect with each other, share their work, and find ways that we can support each other in moving teaching and learning forward.

In true WT fashion, alums across many different fields have been strong voices and instrumental workers in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 and in understanding its impact on individuals. Here are just a few examples of the work they're doing.

Contact Amiena Mahsoob at [mahsooba@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:mahsooba@winchesterthurston.org) to share the pandemic-related work that you are doing.

# WT Alums on the Front Lines of COVID-19

WT Trustee Jennifer Gonzalez McComb '89, M.D., is the Chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at UPMC Shadyside and a member of WT's Medical Review Board. In a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article this past spring, McComb shared her experiences working through the complexity and stress of planning for the virus and treating patients.

"This is the disease that pulmonologists are ready to take care of. This is what we trained for."

Photo copyright ©, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 2020, all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.



Read the full articles at  
[winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle](http://winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle)





Cynthia M. Bulik '78, Ph.D., is the Founding Director of the UNC Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders. This summer she called on WT's "Think also" credo to guide individual responses to the ethical questions of mask-wearing in an article in *Psychology Today*. [See inside back cover for more on this piece.]

"We are all in this together, but we can only get out of it together by thinking also of the comfort and rights of others."



Cassandra R. Davis '01, Ph.D., is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she studies disruptions to schooling environments, particularly following natural disasters. Davis authored a perspective piece for *EdNC*, in which her research on natural disasters provides guidance for schools navigating disruptions due to COVID-19. *EdNC* is the online newspaper of EducationNC, a collection of nonprofits and initiatives acting as a catalyst for change for North Carolina's students.

"It's time our policymakers start asking teachers pertinent questions regarding their needs and the extent to which those needs are met."



Benjamin D. Brody '95, M.D., is an Attending Psychiatrist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and an Instructor in Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College. He is involved in clinical trials for the treatment of major depression and bipolar disorder. Brody is the corresponding author of "A COVID-19 testing and triage algorithm for psychiatric units: One Hospital's response to the New York region's pandemic."

"The implementation of the algorithm is designed to mitigate COVID-19 transmission, preserve the safest and least restrictive treatment environment for psychiatric inpatients, and provide a model adaptable to other institutional settings." – From the Abstract

Photo: John Abbott Photography



Rivers Leche



Margaret Balich



Aria Eppinger

## Commencement 2020

“Many have said this is a strange year, which while true, belittles the weight of the time we’re passing through. This is a disastrous year. One of disappointments and solitude, of economic hardships and racial turmoil, of strife and loss. To not acknowledge this pain does not let us speak to the resilience and courage we have shown.”

—Rivers Leche, Student Council President

The 58 members of the Class of 2020 were celebrated with a physically distanced diploma ceremony and pre-recorded video commencement address on Thursday, August 6.

Student speakers Rivers Leche, Margaret Balich, and Aria Eppinger were joined by Board President Paul Rosenblatt and Head of School Dr. Scott D. Fech in addressing students and families in the video. During their remarks, they lauded the class for their adaptability and courage during these unprecedented times, and offered a shared hope for the future.



Adia Glen (C) and Aida Beru (R)



Ian Frank

*“But you all, my classmates and friends, you give me hope. You’re smart, cunning, and determined to get what you want. I know that our generation won’t take ‘no’ for an answer, whether we’re finding a vaccine or talking to lawmakers. We know what we want, and we’re not afraid to get it.”*

—MARGARET BALICH

*“All joking aside, the WT teachers are special in that they compassionately share their best counsel as we step out into this uncertain time. From Mrs. Sickler, we learned the importance of relaxation; from Dr. Horton, passion; from Ms. McDermott, the courage to be confident; from Ms. Gropp, the idea of intersectionality; from Ms. Haselrig, positivity; and from Mr. Nassar, germaphobia. Again, all very helpful in our ever-changing world.”*

—ARIA EPPINGER



*"Winchester Thurston School has been committed to preparing you not only for the academic rigors you will face in the months and years to come, but we have been committed to helping you develop as critical thinkers in an age where the truth can be hard to find. We have helped you develop as people who can help identify problems in the world, but more importantly helped you grow as problem solvers who will craft creative solutions which honor our credo. And perhaps most importantly, we have worked to cultivate in you the character to serve others and to make a difference in the world, one person at a time."*

—HEAD OF SCHOOL DR. SCOTT D. FECH



Third Grade Teacher Monica Graham (L) presents her son Morgan Graham with his diploma.



(L-R) Dr. Scott D. Fech, Max Fantazier Lasky, and Assistant to the Head of School Aimee Fantazier

*"Despite the fact that this graduation looks and feels quite different than any of the other WT graduations I have attended, we are here to celebrate you, the graduating class of 2020, for who you are, who you have become as young adults about to start your next chapter in life, and where you will go in the future."*

— PAUL ROSENBLATT, BOARD PRESIDENT

## Winchester Thurston School Class of 2020

Jacob Allebach  
Margaret Claire Balich  
Tatiana Jacoud Barelli  
Aida T. Beru  
Leo Michael Berzon  
Esmeralda Bessor-Foreman  
Daniel Branstetter  
Charles E. Burton  
Yixin Cai 蔡奕昕  
Anisa Callis  
Tianyi Chen 陈天羿  
Corrine Marie Crawford  
Aria Rosalee Eppinger  
Ian Frank  
Alexandra D. Friedlander

Adia L. Glen  
Morgan Bradley Graham\*  
Sydney Amaya Gray  
Elizabeth Caroline Grossman  
Angela Elizabeth Hayes  
Sean Joseph Heintzleman  
Bridget Kathleen Hughes  
Claire A. Hughes  
Igor Karusewicz  
John C. F. Kubiak  
Katherine Kunkle  
Max Fantazier Lasky  
Rivers L. Leche  
Mikayla S. Leimer  
Shuyi Li

Huiyun Liu 刘惠昀  
Shiyu Liu 刘诗雨  
Isabel Sierra Lowry\*  
Jelisa Naomi Lyde  
Izel Machado  
Alessandro Gaetano Memoli  
Thatcher Over Montgomery Jr.  
Lila Summer Ost\*  
Daniel Pellathy  
Christopher Porco  
Sadie Quimby  
Kathryn H. Rockwell  
Scott Ralph Routledge\*  
Patricia Sarada  
Sophia H. Scheatzle

Diederik-Paul Schlingemann  
Nicole Zoi Shigiltchoff\*  
Katherine Barrie Slaymaker  
Leon Peter Dominic Sleator  
Annabelle Small  
Emma A. Small  
Cole A. Smith  
Olivia O. Sobkowiak  
Zoé A. Soteres  
John Elio Stern  
Makoto L. Tomokiyo  
Kieran Walter Williams  
Xiaohan Zhang 张潇寒

\*WT Lifer

## Excellence Honored

*The Emily E. Dorrance award for a student whose conduct, interaction, and leadership best demonstrates the school credo, Think also of the comfort and the rights of others, given by friends of the Dorrance family*

John Elio Stern

*The Mary A. Campbell award for outstanding scholarship, given by Katherine Houston Rush*

Nicole Zoi Shigiltchoff

*The Mary A. Graham Mitchell award for character, personality, loyalty, and scholarship*

Christopher Porco

*The Alice M. Thurston award for integrity, courageous leadership, and service*

Rivers Leche

*The Ruth S. Gamsby award for citizenship, kindness, and courteous helpfulness, given by the Daniel F. Mullane family*

Jelisa Naomi Lyde

*The Nina Wadhwa Student Council award for a student who best exemplifies Gentle in Manner, Strong in Deed, endowed by the Wadhwa family*

John Elio Stern

*The Jane L. Scarborough Award for teaching excellence*

Connie Martin



### THISTLETALK GOES DIGITAL

Get a full gallery of photos from graduation at [winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle](http://winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle)

# REUNION 2020

WT's Virtual Reunion 2020 brought together alums from across generations to participate in a dozen uniquely curated events and Class Parties. Alums participated from their living rooms, offices, and dorms from across the country and as far away as Namibia and Switzerland.

Highlights included:

- ✿ a virtual class visit where alums and current students collaborated in a dramatic reading of *The Odyssey*
- ✿ a passionate discussion on the Constitution led by Dr. Jane L. Scarborough, Former Head of School and Honorary Alumna, and WT Trustee Deborah Acklin '80, President and Chief Executive Officer WQED Multimedia
- ✿ BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and White Affinity Group gatherings
- ✿ Cocktails, Mocktails, and Apps hosted by Head of School Dr. Scott D. Fech, his husband, Rick Soria, and their son, Beckett
- ✿ a Throwback Dance Party—complete with costume changes, kids, pets, and WT gear—hosted by Ilana Ransom Toeplitz '05 with music by DJ Cardi in Miami.

Virtual activities for alums will continue to be offered throughout the year and at future reunions. Contact Amiena Mahsoob at [mahsooba@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:mahsooba@winchesterthurston.org) or 412-578-7511 if you would like to gather your class on Zoom or if you have an idea for a virtual get-together.



Class of '65 Cocktail and Hors d'oeuvres Party and Discussion (Top Row) Nancy Herron, Emily 'Tabby' Amerman Vagnoni, Samantha Francis Flynn, Susan MacMichael Zuntini, Ronda Lustman; (Second Row) Ellen Halteman, Eleanor Levinson Paris, Carol Heape, Margaret 'Peggy' Stubbs, Ann Barber Smith; (Third Row) Judith 'Judy' Johnson Smith, Catherine 'Cathy' Crutchfield Swatek, Frances 'Fran' Weber, Marsha Powell Cable, Nancy Clever Middleton; (Fourth Row) Margaret 'Marny' Riehl Peabody, Helen Mar Parkin, Daryl Massey Bladen, Claudine Cmarada Schneider, Carolyn Slease Frahm; (Bottom Row) Wendy Obernauer Damon, Cynthia 'Cynnie' Pearson Turich, Julie Hibbard Crittenden, Robyn Johnson Alspach, Alice Wadsworth

Save the Dates:  
October 15-16, 2021 &  
October 14-15, 2022



**THISTLETALK GOES DIGITAL**

Get more news, photos, and fun at  
[winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle](http://winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle)





BIPOC alums cultivate joy and fellowship. (Top Row) Joy Titus-Young '92, Don Mike Mendoza '06, Latika Ravi Signorelli '97, Brandilyn 'Brandi' Dumas '99; (Middle Row) Consultant Priyanka Rupani, Linsey McDaniel A'96, Tiffany Sizemore '95, Mary Martin '88; (Bottom Row) Jimyse Brown '10, Lisa Baldwin-Youngblood '84



Dr. Fech (L) and husband Rick Soria (R) share laughter and cocktails with alums.



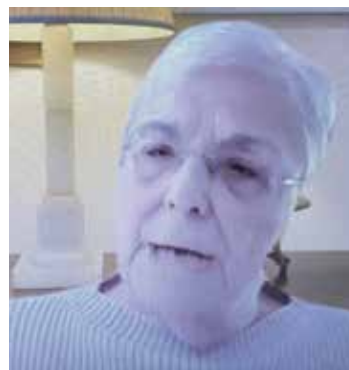
50th Class Zoom Reunion and Small Group Chats (Top Row) Mary Navarro, Helen Berkman Habbert, Saralu 'Sarah' Baehr, Anne Peters, Karen Tall; (Second Row) Jane Appleyard Roel, Susan Nill Flynn, Sally Weigler Golden, Susan Crump Hammond, Rose Sherman Lenchner, Linda Thiessen Bankson, and Sharon Simon Dunlap (pictured together); (Third Row) Joeta Klimoski D'Este, Carolyn Gillespie Raetzke, Megan 'Meg' Hall Dooley, Joanne Thomas Asbill, Hilary Tyson Porter; (Fourth Row) Rebecca 'Becky' Niles Lingard, Polly Haight Frawley, Elizabeth 'Beth' Gargano, Jane Cauley, Cynthia Hodgson Clampitt; (Bottom Row) Kathryn 'Kate' Peluse, Leslie Gross Huff, Sarah Scott Schuyler, Amiena Mahsoob



The Class of '00 Catchup (Children and Pets Welcome) (Top Row) Rasika Teredesai, Sahar Ghaheri, Andrew Santelli and San-Yi 'Shirley' Lin (pictured together); (Second Row) Ian Pajer-Rogers, Erinn Evans Andrews, John Clayton and Noah Ginsburg (pictured together); (Third Row) Leslie McJunkin Hoover, Tara A. McGovern, Andrea Goldblum Blau, Lindsey Meyers Van der Veer, and Jason Shavers (pictured together); (Bottom Row) Claire Blaustein, William 'Billy' Moore, Nawal Qarooni Casiano



Mary Martin '88's Urban Art students share their self-portraits and debrief on a recent City as Our Campus experience with graffiti artist Max Gonzalez.



Dr. Scarborough engages in a lively discussion with many former students.



# ICYMI\*

WT opened its 134th school year like no other. Committed to limiting the spread of COVID-19 while simultaneously keeping the WT experience as intact as possible, students and faculty alike have embraced the new challenges and opportunities.

Fully utilizing well-developed and -researched Learning Models, WT continues to prepare students for the demands of a changing world. For a complete overview of the Learning Models, visit [winchesterthurston.org/covid19](http://winchesterthurston.org/covid19). Be sure to follow WT on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to keep up-to-date.



## A Hybrid Learning Model

in both Middle School and Upper School provides the space needed to be physically distant. Students split into two cohorts which alternate weekly in-person learning and remote learning. During remote learning weeks, students connect to the classroom via Zoom.



## EXPANDED AND REIMAGINED outdoor spaces

include the green space near the Upper School Building, and new play features have been added to many of the existing areas to increase options for physical and creative play.

*\*In Case You Missed It*





## Students and employees complete **DAILY HEALTH SCREENINGS,**

which are verified at drop-off, to ensure a safe community. The face mask requirement spans from Pre-K through grade 12.



Each classroom is fitted with a Logitech Meet Up camera, speakers, and microphones to enable simultaneous **remote and in-person instruction.**



## In the Lower School,

learning is all on campus (with the option to be fully remote). Class sizes have been reduced and classrooms have been added to meet physical distancing guidelines.



All-remote learning Lower School students are assigned to a grade-level homeroom. The

## home learning team

is the bridge between teachers and remote students and their families. All-remote learning Middle School and Upper School students work closely with their advisor for support to make their experience smooth and connected to their peers.







## learning cohorts

are built by balancing the learning needs, social and emotional needs, and dynamics of our students.



## THE RETURN TO SPORTS ACTION PLAN

which includes guidance for practice, competition, and facilities usage, allows for safety at both home and away matches.

WT teams were well-represented in post-season play this fall: Boys Cross Country is the WPIAL Class A Champion for the fifth consecutive year (with senior Patrick Malone finishing in first place), and the team finished third in the PIAA Class A State Championship; Boys Soccer competed in the WPIAL Class A Championship game; Girls Cross Country finished third at the WPIAL Class A Championship, (with sophomore Cyd Kennard representing the team at States); and the Field Hockey team made it to the first round of WPIAL Class A playoffs.

# Miss Mitchell Society

## Expand the Vision of our Founder



*Dr. Mary A. Graham Mitchell was a visionary leader. She broke boundaries by creating a school dedicated to educating women and preparing them for the rigors of a university setting. She reimagined learning by encouraging her students to progress in their education at a time when most women were encouraged to complete their schooling with a high school diploma. And, she created a community of learners and scholars who continue to “Think also of the comfort and the rights of others” to this very day.*

In Miss Mitchell's honor, the Miss Mitchell Society recognizes those in our community who have chosen to expand the vision of our founder through a bequest or planned gift. Including Winchester Thurston School in your will or trust, or adding WT as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, IRA, or 401(k), is a smart way to provide future tax savings while making a lasting impact on the life of our school and students. Every planned giving donor becomes a member of the Miss Mitchell Society—membership requires no particular gift or bequest amount.

Please consider joining the community of supporters in the Miss Mitchell Society. Your gift will help us continue to break boundaries, reimagine learning, support community, and rethink time and space—all in the spirit of our founder. For more information, or to let us know of your intentions, please contact Monica Manes Gay, Director of Advancement, at [gaym@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:gaym@winchesterthurston.org) or 412-578-3746.

### MISS MITCHELL SOCIETY MEMBERS

Following are the current living members of our community who have remembered WT in their estate planning.

Betsy Aiken '72	Anna-Stina Ericson '44	Gretchen Larson Maslanka '83	Henry Posner III
Suzanne LeClere Barley '52	Robert I. Glimcher	Marga Matheny '64	Kathy Zillweger Putnam '71
Loretta Lobes Benec '88	Barbara Graves-Poller '93	Patricia Maykuth '69	Sarah Irving Riling '67
Barbara Abney Bolger '52	Rosanne Isay Harrison '56	Beverlee Simboli McFadden '55	Susan Crip Santa-Cruz '60
Kathleen W. Buechel	Kathryn W. Kruse '58	Kathleen L. Metinko '91	Jennifer M. Scanlon
Joan Clark Davis '65	Elsa Limbach	Frances P. Minno	Sheen Sehgal '89
Judith Rohrer Davis '57	Louise Baldridge Lytle '51	Bee Jee Epstine Morrison '56	Allyson Baird Sveda '84
Judith Ellenbogen '58	Carole Oswald Markus '57	Eileen Mauclair Muse '61	Dr. Beth A. Walter '92
Justine Diebold Englert '59			Gaylen Westfall, Honorary Alumna
			Carol Spear Williams '57

*Please visit [winchesterthurston.org/missmitchell](http://winchesterthurston.org/missmitchell) for the complete list of Miss Mitchell Society Members.*





# A teacher. A coach. An act of love.

Someone in your life, past or present, recognizes your potential, inspires you to be your best self, and helps you find purpose. For many, that someone is a member of the WT community—a teacher, coach, specialist, or administrator.

**We all deserve that someone. Be that someone for another.**

Celebrate a teacher, classmate, or special occasion by giving the gift that actively engages and develops young minds. Your tribute gift will help provide competitive salaries, healthcare, and professional learning opportunities to the faculty and staff of WT.

**Spread joy. Be that someone today.**

Visit <https://give.winchesterthurston.org/tribute> to make your gift and send a special ecard or call 412-578-3748 to request a tribute booklet.

THE WT  FUND



# Winchester Thurston School's 2019-2020 Annual Giving Report

Learning has real allure here at WT. It's a fun, creative, immersive experience. It's tapping into imagination, learning new ways to communicate, taking risks, and working with teachers who care for the well-being of each student. It takes the hearts and hands of many to make a WT education possible.

Each year, philanthropic support makes up 10% of our operating budget. That support, including the WT Fund, our Endowment, and the Earned Income/Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit programs (EITC/OSTC), is critical to our everyday Mission and magnifies each learning experience. In every building and outdoor classroom, and on every stage and athletic field, you have helped to create an environment where learning is effective and equitable, and where students, teachers, and education are highly valued.

The COVID-19 pandemic further amplifies your generosity. As we entered this pandemic, your support helped provide a positive balance in the WT Fund, allowing us to make crucial decisions from a place of strength. These resources supported our dynamic remote learning journey and reinforced our community's commitment to equity and inclusion, financial aid, and faculty compensation, which are critical during these challenging times.

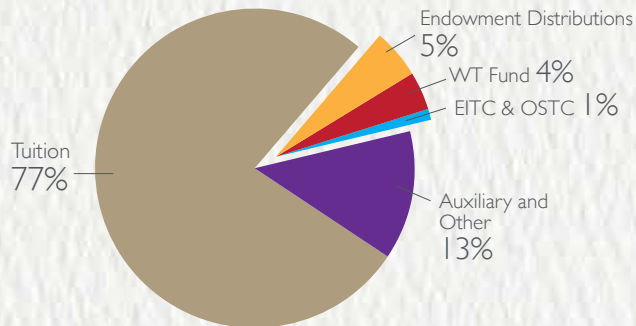
As the pandemic continues, we strive to provide consistency for families—while keeping the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff as our top priority. We've retrofit classrooms with technology, hired more teachers, installed medical-grade air purifiers, and so much more. We couldn't do this without the generous support of the WT community—thank you!

All photos in this Annual Giving Report were taken prior to the pandemic.

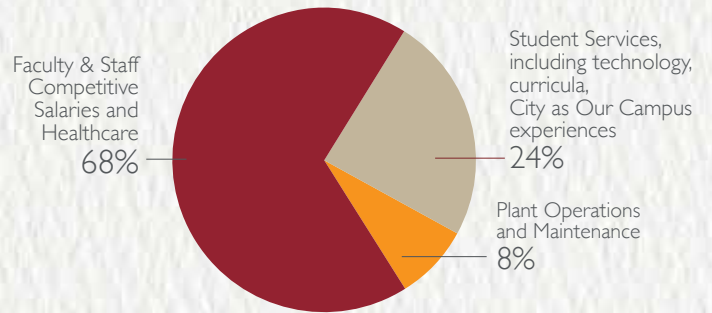


# WT's 2019-2020 Annual Budget by the Numbers

## WT'S ANNUAL REVENUE



## WT'S ANNUAL EXPENSES









# Philanthropy takes many forms.

In addition to the WT Fund, endowment and capital gifts help support WT's vision and development for the future.

## **Endowment: Long-Term Planning**

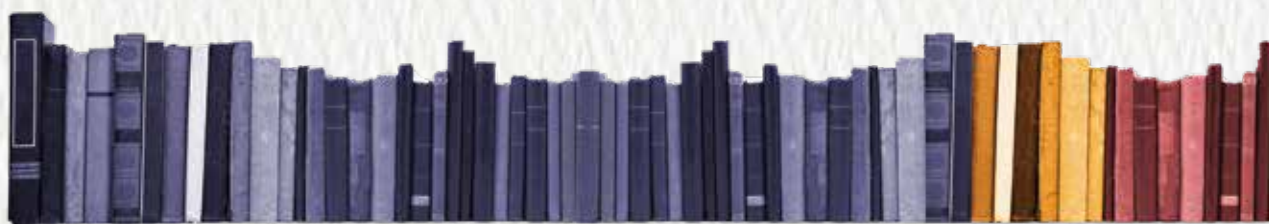
The Endowment represents a longer-term facet of our budget. It comprises charitable gifts given to create an investment principal that grows over time, and that remains a permanent piece of WT's future. A portion of the fund, 5%, is paid out on an annual basis and provides scholarships and programmatic enhancements.

## **Capital Gifts: Capital Improvements**

Capital gifts make possible facility renovations and expansions such as the recent renovation to the Emily E. Dorrance Library in the Upper School. Constantly evolving to provide dynamic learning environments, the Dorrance Library is the heart of the Upper School Building and memorializes Emily Dorrance, a member of the Class of 1993, who consistently demonstrated the school credo, "Think also of the comfort and the rights of others."

## **Thanks for Giving.**

We are grateful for the gifts given within the 2019-2020 fiscal year.



Annual Giving (WT Fund & EITC/OSTC): \$1,029,945

Endowment Commitments: \$141,048

Capital Commitments: \$195,583

**Total Support: \$1,366,576**



# Our most precious asset: Volunteers



The WT Parents Association (PA) is a parent-led collective that exists to build community, camaraderie, and commitment through social engagement, educational opportunities, and financial support. These parents shared their time and talent to create impactful moments and lasting memories for our students and the entire WT community.

## 2019-2020 PA Leadership

### **President:**

Allison Grodin

### **President Elect and Lower School City**

#### **Campus Coordinator:**

Liz Stephan

### **Lower School North Campus Coordinators:**

Melissa Fann and Tracey Schwartz

### **Lower School City Campus Coordinators:**

Elise Blackburn, David Tener, and Katie Warren Whitlatch

### **Middle School Coordinators:**

Jason Chitty, Mary Moore, Constantine 'Costa' Samaras, and Melissa Vecchi

### **Upper School Coordinators:**

Jeffrey Eppinger, Erika Fanselow, Yolanda Frank, Mary Lee Stenson, and Laurie Winslow

### **Room Parents:**

Kelly Bailey

Terri Bell

Jessica Bemer

Teresa Beshai

Renee Brayley

Heather Brooks

Jessica Cantlon

Sarah Clendenning

Mary Crossley

Tim Deily

Helen Dorra

Dena Dunn

Giselle Fetterman

Kate Gardner

Carlynn Graves

Christine Graziano

Meredith Grelli

Amelia Grubman

Liz Harper

Catiana Harris

Jennifer Haven

April Hayes

Kate Underwood  
Herron

Shelby Holloway

Paige Houser

Erin Isler

David Kamin

Diane Katz

Jennifer Kilgore

Christina Knaus

Shanna Kovalchick

Vanessa Torres

Lautenbach

Emily Loeb

Brad Mahon

Linsey McDaniel 'A96

Alefiyah Mesiwala

Amy Nelson

Sara Papachristou

Tracey Schwartz

Megan Sigal

Lauren Sisco

Emily Spanovich

Sarah White

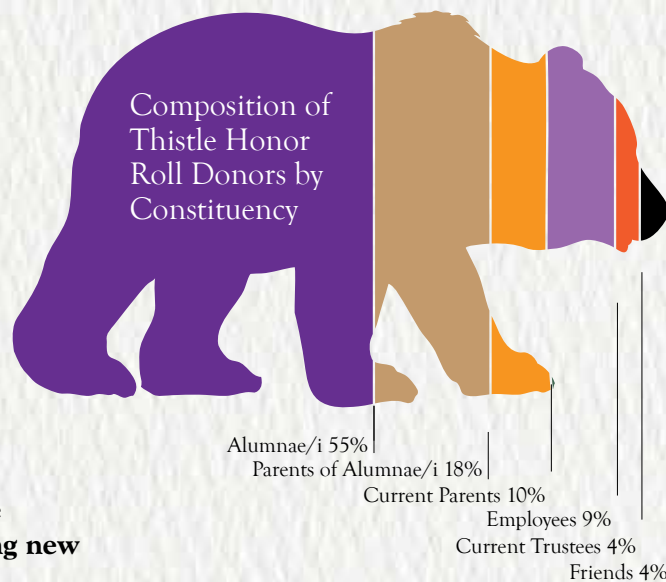
Andrew White



# Lasting impact: Thistle Honor Roll

Much can change in 10 years. However, for nearly 300 devoted WT supporters, their belief in “Think also of the comfort and the rights of others” has held firm. Through life’s twists and turns, these treasured friends have made an ongoing commitment to the WT community.

Our Thistle Honor Roll recognizes those who have made WT a philanthropic priority for ten or more continuous years. This diverse array of friends includes members of virtually every segment of the WT community, with more than half consisting of alumnae/i spanning the classes of 1934 to 2007.



**Philanthropic retention and growth is vital to the financial health of WT. We welcome the following new members to the Thistle Honor Roll.**

Anonymous (1)  
Avery & Patricia Abrams  
Krista N. Balzer  
Kristen & Brenton Burns  
Dr. Shalini Puri & Mr. Carlos  
M. Canuelas-Pereira

Michelle & Jason Chitty  
Kathy Haberstick Cypher '63  
Ninka & Greg Lippard  
Susie & Tom Lippard  
Daniel Marcus  
Graig Marx

Marion Altman Monheim '45  
Hannah Posner '06  
Mary Duecker Reefer '71  
Lisa & Jim Seguin  
Dr. Judith Uptegraff Spaeth '66

**Join us in celebrating the below returning Thistle Honor Roll members celebrating a special giving anniversary. Their trust and loyal support makes so much possible for WT students, their families, and teachers.**

## TWENTY YEARS

Eleanor Agnew '74  
Mary Arcuri  
Daryl Massey Bladen '65  
Heather Capezzuti

Peter Frischmann  
Susan Crump Hammond '70  
Jennifer B. Kaplan '86  
Jane Soxman '66

Brian Swauger  
Stacey & Matthew Tegtmeier

## THIRTY YEARS

Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Baird  
Susan Pekruhn Glotfelty '58  
Randy Lyon Mayes '75

Myrna Katz Morris '56  
Susan Cohen Myrick '66  
Kathy Zillweger Putnam '71 &  
George Putnam

Mrs. Diane Sabelh  
Elisa Lynch Simmons '60

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

For the full list of Thistle Honor Roll donors, visit [www.winchesterthurston.org/thankyou](http://www.winchesterthurston.org/thankyou).



## Gentle in manner, strong in deed.



In early fall of 2019, a team of dedicated donors came together with the goal of helping raise nearly \$100,000 from new and increased gifts. Together, their leadership inspired record-breaking giving with more than 50 parents increasing or doubling their previous gift for 112% growth, renewals from lapsed contributors, and nearly 100 new donors. Join us in thanking these generous leaders!

Patti & Avery Abrams  
 Su Min Cho & Ali Al-Khafaji  
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 Marcie & Matthew Weinstein  
 Gaylen Faller Westfall,  
 Honorary Alumna  
 Katie Warren Whitlatch  
 Laurie & William Winslow  
 Mousumi Moulik-Yechoor &  
 Vijay Yechoor

Every year, seniors leave a gift that supports younger students, honors teachers, or highlights an aspect of their experience that they feel strongly represents their class. Even as the COVID-19 pandemic challenged their choice or access to college in the fall, the Class of 2020 chose to seed a Student Emergency Financial Aid Fund. This special fund helps provide financial aid assistance to WT families directly impacted by the economic fallout of this crisis.

*"When we first chose our senior gift, it was focused on helping younger students to obtain things we may have struggled with – whether that be textbooks or other academic needs. Now, we realize there is a greater need. Even though many of us are confused and feeling helpless, seeding this fund is something the seniors are very proud to do. We believe that giving back to our school means helping other students to thrive as we did, and to support other students as they support us."*

—TRICIA SARADA,  
 CHAIR OF THE SENIOR  
 GIFT COMMITTEE

Together with more than 200 students, teachers, parents, and alumnae/i, we provided more than \$25,000 in relief for seven families with 11 students. For these seniors to practice empathy actively and boldly in the face of their challenges serves as an inspiration, and one more reason to love WT!







## 2019–2020 WT Fund Leadership Giving Clubs

The following individuals stepped forward as leaders and investors in the WT educational experience.

### Leadership Society

*Gifts of \$25,000+*

Lisa Whitcomb Capra '76  
Anne M. Molloy &  
Henry Posner III  
Kathy Zillweger Putnam '71 &  
George Putnam  
The Sigal Family  
Jane Arensberg Thompson '57  
& Harry A. Thompson II

### Thistle Club

*Gifts of \$15,000+*

Ms. Elaine Bellin &  
Dr. Phyllis Coontz  
Marina & Ken Lehn  
Carole Oswald Markus '57 &  
Bill Markus  
Nancy & Woody Ostrow

### Founder's Club

*Gifts of \$10,000+*

Anonymous (2)  
Wendy & David Barenfeld  
The Eppinger Family  
Elizabeth S. Hurtt '74  
Jonathan Kuhn  
Dr. Helane & Mr. Don  
Linzer  
Mary Lee & John Stenson

### 2nd Century Club

*Gifts of \$5,000+*

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Dr. Kerry Bron '84 & Mr.  
Robert Levin  
Bernita Buncher  
Barbara & Gerald Chait  
Susanna & Michael Finke  
Susan E. Hunter '72  
David Kamin

Paula & Paul Lee

Elsa Limbach

The Miller Family

Keith Recker & James Mohn

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Cahouet-Rotondi

Patricia & Norman Sadeh

Adam & Lauren Sufrin

### Portal Club

*Gifts of \$1,500+*

Anonymous (2)

Su Min Cho & Ali Al-  
Khafaji

Renee & Ron Bartlett

Dr. Suzanne Kause &

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Aria Eppinger '20

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Jane Gault Greer '56 &

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Langmead

Linnea Pearson

McQuiston '69 &

C. Wesley McQuiston

Maureen May &

Raj Narendran

Katy & Edward Perrin

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Richards III





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 Amanda, Sofia &  
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### **Fifth Avenue Club**

*Gifts of \$1,000+*

Anonymous (3)  
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 Karen & Marshall Balk  
 Olivia Belitsky '13  
 Ann Cahouet

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 & Andrew Camden  
 Helen Dorra &  
 Greg Casher  
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 Susan Sharp  
 Dorrance A'63 &  
 Roy Dorrance  
 Brandilyn Y. Dumas '99  
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 Katie Warren Whitlatch  
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 Sanja Dacic & Sasa Zivkovic



**Morewood Club***Gifts of \$500+*

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 Mrs. Susan & Dr. Paul  
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 Toby McChesney, Jr. '98  
 M. Elva Merry '70  
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### Kiltie Club

*Gifts of \$250+*

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 Nita Dressler Argyres '52  
 Marcia Arnold Netzer  
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 Katharine Bartlett '07  
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 Braun '65  
 Lois Bron  
 Alice May Succop  
 Burger '69  
 Qing Bai &  
 Edward Burton  
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 Butterworth  
 Clement Cahall  
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 Cannon '72 &  
 David Cannon, Jr.  
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 Karen Arndt &  
 Richard Chaillet  
 Chung-Chou &  
 Steven Chang  
 H. Perry Chapman '71  
 Karen Chen  
 Laura Childress-Hazen &  
 Katie Hazen  
 Miya Asato MD &  
 George Childs  
 Michelle & Jason Chitty

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 Rowan Clark  
 Marla Ripoll & Daniele  
 Coen-Pirani  
 Lori Feinman '84  
 Jennifer Davies '64  
 Cynthia Costa Davis '68  
 M. Megan Donnelly '85  
 Heidi Edwards  
 Jan Alpert Engelberg '67  
 Nancy Kaufmann &  
 Brian Feingold  
 Lois Kaplan Finkel '39\*  
 Francine Gitnick Franke '64  
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 John George  
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Franklyn Lubsey  
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Susan McGowan '66  
Janice & Ernest Meade  
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Eleanore Meredith '77  
Ann & Frank Meredith  
Ira Miller  
Edgar Morales  
Suzanne Motheral '69  
Constance Murray '78 &  
Thomas Murray  
Sonya Narla '07 &  
Vincent Ceretto  
Sunil Narla '06 &  
Carrie Narla

Barbara Kauffmann &  
Jerry Okoko  
E. Patricia Constantin  
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Heather Palonder '87  
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Wesley Wm. Posvar  
Jeanne Horner Pote '64  
Geri Anderson Potter '77  
Helene Stone Prince '79  
Pamela Price Pryor '73  
Mary Jayne Whipkey  
Redenbaugh '37  
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Sherry Weissman  
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Sheen Sehgal '89  
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Seydoux '77  
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Maureen L.  
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Erin Herward  
Thurston '94  
Lois Graham Tingler '51  
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Randall Tracht  
Christine & Thomas  
Trebilcock  
Anne King Unger '84  
Jeanne & Axel Vanbriesen  
Valerie Oke &  
Andrew Wagner

Michelle & David Weisbord  
Amy Guccione Wintersteen '96  
David Wollam  
Jian Yu & Lin Zhang

\*recently deceased

"A" indicates an Associate Alumna/us  
of Winchester Thurston School

"W" indicates an alumna of  
Winchester School

For the full list of 2019-2020  
donors, and to dive deeper  
into philanthropy at WT, visit  
[winchesterthurston.org/thankyou](http://winchesterthurston.org/thankyou)

We have made every attempt to  
ensure the accuracy of this list;  
if you are not listed and believe  
that you should be, please  
contact Michelle Wion Chitty  
at (412) 578-3748.





# Remembering Gloria Cappellanti Acklin

Gloria Acklin taught at WT as a Middle School English Teacher and as the Upper School Speech Teacher from 1970–1991, and was a most beloved faculty member, colleague, and friend to thousands. She was elegant, warm, wise, and extraordinary in every measure, just like her daughters, WT alumnae Gloria Acklin Kreps '77 and Board Trustee Deb Acklin '80. WT is fortunate to be able to continue building on her life's work.

"If it had not been for Mrs. Acklin, I would not be the thinker, writer, or speaker that I am today. Mrs. Acklin challenged me to use my voice...She showed me how very fun it was to think and plan and organize my thoughts. How interesting everything suddenly became. Every day, I use the planning, process, and voice that I learned in Mrs. Acklin's classes. When I read to my children, I hear the inflection and expression that she taught. When they read to us, I hear that, too. It is the best legacy of those years with Mrs. Acklin."

—Annie Hanna Engel '89

"Gloria Acklin is a force of nature. Forty plus years later, she still figures prominently in my mind with every use and misuse of a semicolon. There were two grades for each essay – one for content, and one for grammar. No amount of style could save you from the automatic C or D that would result from one misused bit of punctuation. Grammar was important. As was teaching us confidence. I remember her telling us a story about some poor fellow beginning his request for a date with her by saying he didn't deserve her. 'You're right,' she answered. That was not the future Mr. Acklin. You would never dare to daydream in her classes. The standards were high, but then so was her dedication. And I said 'is' a force of nature, rather than 'was,' because her influence and spirit will remain with us."

—Abby Morrison '82

"Teachers, like my seventh grade English teacher Gloria Acklin, lay the foundation upon which students built goals. She cared about each of her students and taught us to have faith in our abilities and strengths. Mrs. Acklin changed the world one student at a time."

—Constance 'Connie' Murray '78

"Mrs. Acklin will always be known as a WT 'Favorite.' She was my homeroom teacher, debate teacher, and travel chaperone. She encouraged her students to expand their horizons, always be prepared, and think beyond the here and now. She understood 'empathy' and 'compassion' and encouraged us to project ourselves not only with confidence and intelligence, but to project empathy and compassion upon those with whom we interact. Above all, she modeled for us that no matter what role we play in life, always be your best. I forever remember her, Mr. Acklin, and Ms. Carpenter as our willing chaperones as we embarked on a walking tour around the city of Athens. A wonderful experience with truly wonderful people that I have carried and will carry with me all of my life."

—Julie Tarasevich Dever '85

"'He had the eye of a vulture...a pale blue eye with a film over it,' Mrs. Gloria Acklin read dramatically from Edgar Allen Poe's *Tell Tale Heart* to a rapt eighth grade class in a shade-drawn classroom on Halloween. She certainly knew how to grab our

attention, and she taught us effectively to begin each of our essays and speeches with attention grabbers. To this day when I speak in public, I heed Mrs. Acklin's invaluable advice of thoroughly knowing my material and having with me only one notecard with the main topics on it so that without distraction I can directly and intimately engage my audience.

Gloria Acklin was one of a kind. She was the most inspiring teacher I encountered in my entire education (and that includes college and medical school)! Whether teaching English, speech, or theater, she infused her classes with drama, humor, and stories about her family. She was a master raconteur and a teacher who was able to bring literature to life. She animated difficult Shakespearean passages and explained the drama of the French Revolution to teenage girls in *A Tale of Two Cities*. 'Writing is thinking,' she always said and encouraged us to write with brevity to make our ideas stronger. I attribute my ability to write coherently and thoughtfully today to the lessons that Mrs. Acklin taught.

Mrs. Acklin also let us know that teachers are real people. She always talked lovingly about her husband, Jim, and her family. She understood how to make each of us girls feel that there was something special about her and that each one of us had a contribution to make. Gloria Acklin was the quintessential teacher, and her legacy will live on in students like me who remember what she taught even after all these years!"

—Kerry Bron '84, Trustee

1955

**Mary Minor Evans** shares, "Since I have been gone from Winchester Thurston for 65 years, I thought I would show off my running sons, my greatest production. Check out the link in *DigitalThistle* for information on my post-WT life."



Mary Minor Evans' sons (L-R) Matt Evans, Duane (high school friend), Alan Evans, and Jim Evans have run in 120 Grandma's Marathons.

**Marlene Berman Haus** writes, "Hello everyone. I send warm greetings and virtual hugs from Pittsburgh where I am still living after all these years. My life was and is happy even though I did not do anything remarkable – just paid taxes, did community work, obeyed the law, etc. My husband, Dr. Leonard Haus, of blessed memory was also a native Pittsburgher. We witnessed the many changes this city has gone through and were happy here. Leonard was a small-animal veterinarian who practiced on the Boulevard of the Allies for thirty years, and I was happy to work with him after the children were grown. I was widowed 20 years ago. Unlike me, my three children live elsewhere: My son Adam is in Chicago working as a trainer

for that city's 311 service; his brother, Jeffrey, is a tenured Ph.D. professor at Kalamazoo College in Michigan and with his wife, Rachel, are raising my three granddaughters (Shira, Nava, and Mazal); my daughter, Sara Haus Posa, lives with husband Angelo and my grandson, Eli, in Cleveland, Ohio. Eager to reconnect with others. I love my Zoom."

1958

**Kathryn 'Kathy' Kruse** is the treasurer and former president of the Philanthropic Education Organization's (PEO) Sisterhood BN Chapter of Sewickley. The local group, founded in 1986, has helped many women through various programs that offer educational and other kinds of assistance through all stages of life. Her mother, the late Kathryn Kruse of Edgeworth, was one of the 15 members who started the Sewickley chapter. A PEO STAR Scholarship is based on leadership, extracurricular activities, community service, academics, and potential future for success.

1974

**Katharyn 'Kathie' Davis** reports, "I am happily married to the artist Michael Fenwick. I have three children, Cary, Bonnie, and Andy, and two grandchildren, Max and Raven. We are expecting our third granddaughter in January 2021. My law practice is active and busy, although it has been weird getting used to virtual court. I have lost track of the number of live stream programs I have had to master. Before

the pandemic we were doing a lot of traveling, and we hope to start again soon. Wouldn't it be great to have WT-sponsored international tours? Would love to hear from WT friends."

1977

**Suzanne Shapero** shares, "I am in private practice as a dentist, just outside of Syracuse, New York. I just completed my term as President of the County Dental Society."

1998

**Thomas 'Toby' McChesney**, is the Senior Assistant Dean for graduate business programs in the Leavey School of Business at Santa Clara University. He was recently appointed to the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Business School Advisory Council. Toby will serve a three-year term starting in September along with admissions leaders from business schools around the world who provide vision, perspective, and information related to domestic and international graduate business school programs. Follow the link in *DigitalThistle* to read more about Toby.



Thomas 'Toby' McChesney '98

1999

**Brandilyn 'Brandi' Dumas**, a Real Estate Shareholder in global law firm Greenberg Traurig LLP's New York office, has been named to *New York Law Journal's* Rising Stars list. The Rising Stars awards recognize the region's most promising lawyers 40 and younger. Brandilyn has also been named to the WT Board of Trustees. [See page 3.]

2007



Catherine 'Katie' Conway and her husband Jaewon welcomed a baby girl in June.



Katherine 'Katy' Gespass Lawrence reports, "Eve Norma Lawrence was born February 6, 2020!"



## 2010

**Jimyse Brown** recently joined the Physical Education faculty at St. Edmund's Academy. She teaches PE and serves as the girls' basketball coach. She is the Founder & CEO of Hidden Gyms, a youth recreation and sports development organization that provides training and athletic opportunities for children in Kindergarten through grade 12. Coach Brown has previously taught at Pittsburgh Public Schools and is a certified USA Basketball Coach. She earned her B.S. in Sports Management from Shepherd University where she was a student-athlete and her M.S. in Business & Management from the University of Nottingham.



*"Via Zoom, or in the bleachers! She's your teacher!" Jimyse Brown recently rapped a musical introduction to the St. Edmund's Academy 2020-2021 PE classes.*

## 2011

Ripe, the seven piece funk band managed by **Maxwell Stofman**, announced upcoming shows saying, "We are so stoked to be playing more shows with you.

Come out and hang with us for this fun East Coast run. All shows will observe social distance policies. Safety is our priority here so that we can continue to keep playing shows! Much love to you all!" Follow them on Instagram @ripelove

## 2017

**Haydon Alexander** joined the Quantum Theatre team as their Technical Director. Haydon has been involved in theater in school and out since he was 12. After leaving WT, he worked as a carpenter for several theater companies in Pittsburgh, and spent three seasons with the Heritage Theatre Festival at the University of Virginia. Haydon and Quantum colleague Jalina McClarin came up with the idea to offer an interactive experience in Schenley Park.

Together, they created *OK Odysseus*, based on Emily Wilson's translation of *The Odyssey*. It is an audio piece in five parts which you can listen to on your phone as you take a mapped walk in the park, making five stops where a QR code gives you a bit of Quantum's adaptation by Jay Ball and how it differs from the classic text in its point of view. Learn more about *OK Odysseus* at the link in *DigitalThistle*.

## 2018

**Tristan Forsythe** created an online running journal, *The Oval*, showcasing first-person stories about running during the shutdown last spring. Check it out at the link in *DigitalThistle*.



### THISTLETALK GOES DIGITAL

Get more news, photos, and fun at [winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle](http://winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle)

## IN MEMORIAM

The following members of the WT community will be missed by their classmates, friends, students, and colleagues. We offer sincere condolences to their families.

**Suzanne O'Brien Ardan '39**

**Joan Borden Drury '43**

**Jessie Butler Herdic '43**

**Rachel Heppenstall Shingler '43**

**Adrienne Pigossi Shryock '43**

**Jean Clark Yount '45**

**Nancy Moore Whitney '48**

**Anne 'Wendy' Wendell Lusk Colter '56**

**Janellen 'Janie' Sachs Radoff '57**

**Judith 'Judy' Sailer Rocker '58**

**Helen Crozier-Breed '59**

**Polly Brandt Lechner '59**

**Blainie Deutschendorf Logan '63**

**Diana Lichy Tomb '64**

**Mary Helen Hamilton Burroughs '65**

**Jean Harchelroad '71**

**Lindsey Alton '72**

**Leslie Eileen Fisher '76**

**Kathleen Scott Gallagher '76**

**Christin Zandin '88**

**Kathryn 'KC' Henninger Sokol '89**

**Caryn Burgh '06**



**THINK ALSO  
OF THE  
COMFORT  
AND THE  
RIGHTS  
OF  
OTHERS**





# “Wearing a Mask is the Ethical Thing to Do.”

– Cynthia M. Bulik '78, Ph.D.

Cynthia M. Bulik '78, Ph.D., is one of many WT alums whose advice and expertise have been called on to help navigate COVID-19. [See page 16.] This excerpt is from her article in the Friday, August 21 online issue of *Psychology Today*.

“Next time you are debating whether to wear a mask (preferably you won’t even have to debate but it will be automatic, like buckling your seatbelt), ask yourself these simple ethical questions as laid out by Elspeth Tilley, Ph.D., an associate professor at the University of New Zealand.

## *Virtue checks:*

The front page test — would you feel comfortable seeing your behavior on the nightly news?

The significant other test — would the important people in your life be proud of you?

## *Deontological check:*

Are there any rules, laws, codes of conduct, or mandates in my community or workplace that I am bound to abide by?

## *Consequential checks:*

Would you be happy for your action to affect you in the same way it does others (reversibility)?

Would the outcome be acceptable if everyone behaved this way (universalizability)?

And finally, ask yourself: If someone I’m in contact with got sick tomorrow and died, how would I feel about my behavior today? We are all in this together, but we can only get out of it together by thinking also of the comfort and rights of others.”

Bulik’s full article can be found on DigitalThistle: [winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle](http://winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle)





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**STAY TUNED FOR  
OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT  
WITH FELLOW ALUMNAE/I  
AROUND THE WORLD.**

If you have an idea for a virtual offering, contact Amiena Mahsoob at [mahsooba@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:mahsooba@winchesterthurston.org).