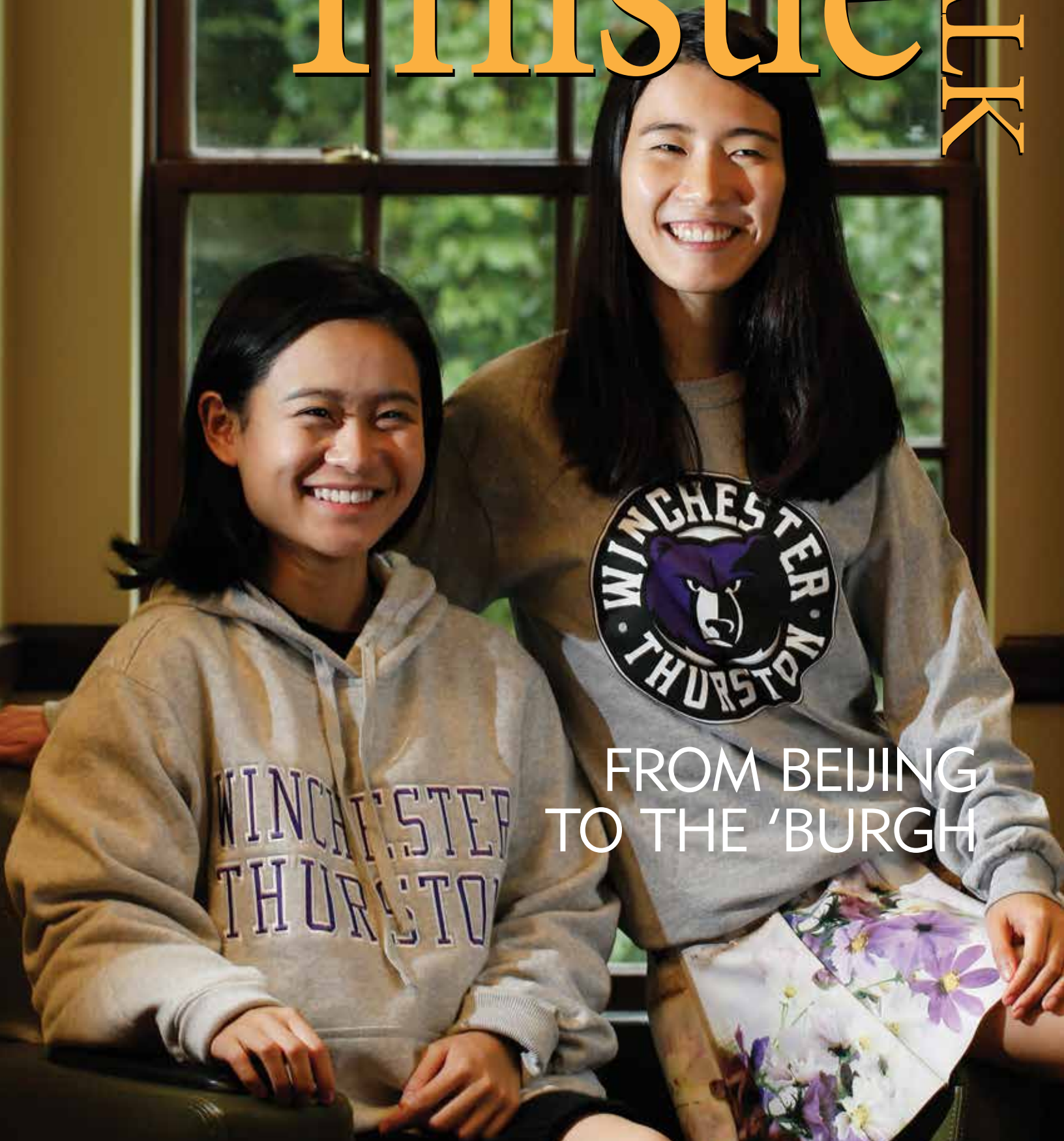


# Thistle TALK



FROM BEIJING  
TO THE 'BURGH



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*Members of the Class of 2015 have enrolled  
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and Merchandising  
Gordon College  
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Northeastern University  
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Purdue University  
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The George Washington University  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Chicago  
University of Cincinnati  
University of Delaware  
University of Maine  
University of Maryland  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Rochester  
University of Southern California  
Vanderbilt University  
Villanova University  
Wake Forest University  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Wellesley College  
Wofford College  
Xavier University



# Thistle TALK MAGAZINE

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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.

### Core Values

We activate our Mission by creating a learning environment that promotes and instills appreciation for these five Core Values: Critical Thinking, Integrity, Empathy, Community, and Diversity.

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... during the past five years, demand from international students has increased dramatically, mostly driven by students from China ...

**FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL** | Gary J. Niels

2

**wt smart**

21

**wt sports**

24

**Commencement 2015**

26

**wt community**

28

**Alumnae/i News**

30

**Class Notes**

33

#### About the cover

Seniors Jiaying 'Jessie' Zhang (L) and Jia 'Karen' Ou (R) are two of 22 students from China who attend WT. Turn to page 4 to learn more about WT's international student population and to hear from Jessie and Karen in their own words about what it means to them to be part of the WT community.

## Features



**From Beijing to the 'Burgh**  
WT International Student  
Population Increases with  
Largest Chinese Cohort to Date

4

**Gaylen Westfall**  
40 Years of Service

9



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## WT's Road to Character

Last spring Kristen Klein, our Director of Upper School, and Matt Bachner, our Upper School Dean of Students, presented each senior with a copy of David Brooks's book *The Road to Character*. Kristen and Matt's preview of the book at our Senior Appreciation Assembly inspired me to pick it up. In the opening chapters, Brooks provides insight into how we have drifted from a society that seeks and lauds such qualities as humility, gratitude, and deference. Rather, today we gravitate toward self-promotion and even boastfulness. Brooks differentiates between our inclinations to accentuate our "resume character" from the selflessness embodied in what he calls "eulogy character."

There is much dialogue in the world of education about character development in schools. A *New York Times* article entitled, "What If the Secret of Success Is Failure?" stirred conversation as it depicted an impressive effort by two very different schools to more purposefully cultivate character traits within their students—one through a visual campaign throughout the buildings as well as a grading system, the other through a less systemic, more organic emphasis.

Some of the character traits emphasized in these schools could be components of Brooks's resume character, traits that improve our performance and our opportunities for success—not at all bad and certainly worthy of distinction.

Paul Tough, the author of *How Children Succeed*, compiled a list of some of the more helpful resume character traits: grit, curiosity, zest, and optimism. What great qualities! Any school would be proud to say that it cultivates these qualities within its students. Certainly to embody these traits is to position oneself for life success.

Nonetheless, in the midst of an increasingly cynical, even nasty climate of American politics, the ubiquitous

world of social media, and the so-called culture wars that now define our American society, I was struck and inspired by Brooks's poignant articulation of the qualities that compose these deeper and ever disappearing eulogy character traits.

Having been helped by a Jewish theologian, Brooks defines his differentiation through a perceived division in the Biblical Creation accounts defined by Adam I (resume character) and Adam II (eulogy character).

Adam II wants to have a serene inner character, a quiet but solid sense of right and wrong—not only to do good, but to be good. Adam II wants to love intimately, to sacrifice self in service to others, to live in obedience to some transcendent truth, to have a cohesive inner soul that honors creation and one's own possibilities.

He goes on to explain that we have lost our cultural capacity to discuss and cultivate such qualities. This led me to begin a conversation here at WT among my colleagues, wondering if I wouldn't be perceived as an aging artifact. Quite the contrary! The discussion led to a

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**Never was there a time  
when we needed more to  
enthusiastically embrace our  
founder's command.**

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chorus of concerns among our teachers and administrators about today's social climate and its impact on our young people. So, we purchased *The Road to Character* for all of our leaders. Although we have had varying responses to the characters that Brooks depicts, apparently as models of Adam II, there seems to be unanimous support for his overall thesis about our society's waning, if not lost, capacity to cultivate or promote the redeeming benefits of a life lived in service to others.

Of course, this leads me to "Think Also of the Comfort and the Rights of Others." I've always been struck by the realism of our founder's mandate: that Miss Mitchell recognized the realities of taking care of ourselves, but also her call to take care of others. Never was there a time when we needed more to enthusiastically embrace our founder's command. So, we are in the midst of discussing and pursuing what an even more deliberate perpetuation of this declaration might mean here at WT. Our only firm agreement at this point is that this intention will not be programmatic, but relational. I look forward to keeping you informed about our developments.

# WT Alumna Takes Helm of Board



**Jennifer Gonzalez McComb '89** was elected president of WT's Board of Trustees in June.

A Trustee since 2012, McComb is a pulmonologist and intensivist at UPMC, and is Chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine and Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at Shadyside Hospital.

She holds a Bachelor's in biology from Tufts University and a Master's in public health from Boston University. She completed her residency at the University of Rochester Medical Center's Strong Memorial Hospital and her fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh.

During her 12 years at WT, McComb was active in sports, playing field hockey and basketball. She and her husband, Paul, have two sons, Henry (Class of 2024) and Samuel (Class of 2027), both of whom attend the North Hills Campus.

## Welcome to our New Board Members



**Kenneth M. Lehn** is the Samuel A. McCullough Professor of Finance in the Katz Graduate School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh. His son, Chase, is a member of WT's Class of 2022.



**MaryJean (MJ) Rusak** is an independent nurse consultant for American Healthcare Group. She has been an instrumental member of the WT community for many years, serving as president of the Parents Association

and volunteering for its many activities. Rusak's children, Daniel '12, Julia (Class of 2017), and Matthew (Class of 2019) each started their WT careers at the North Hills Campus.



**Kurt C. Small** is the senior vice president of health plan operations for Highmark Inc. He has three daughters at WT: Kayla (Class of 2017), and twins Annabelle and Emma (Class of 2020).



**Christine M. Stone**  
A former public accountant, Stone is a financial fraud investigator for Stone Law Firm. She has two daughters at WT: Sophia (Class of 2018) and Lily (Class of 2020).



**Jian-Gang (Jimmy) Zhu** is the ABB Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University and the director of the Data Storage Systems Center, a world-leading research institution in data storage technology. Zhu's son, Christian, is a member of the Class of 2024.

# From Beijing to the 'Burgh

## WT International Student Population Increases with Largest Chinese Cohort to Date



*Fifth grade teacher Karen Gaul provides English language lessons for Middle School students from China.*

When the doors of Winchester Thurston School opened this school year, among the 675 students walking through were 22 whose journey to Morewood Avenue started in China—the largest number of Chinese students in WT’s history.

“I wanted to come to school in the United States because the educational system in China was too rigid to allow much room for individuality and creativity,” explains Jia ‘Karen’ Ou, a senior in her fourth year at WT. “The teachers were the authority and I was only supposed to do what I was told. We

didn’t learn much about how to succeed in life except how to score well on tests.”

Karen found what she wanted at WT. “WT seemed like the perfect fit for what I was looking for: supporting creativity, the arts, values, critical thinking, individuality, and so much more. I liked the small-school environment where everyone knows everyone, so I could do things I liked and simply be myself.”

“I like this environment where both students and teachers engage in class,” proclaims Yijia ‘Eric’ Chen, who entered WT last year as a freshman. “In China, there usually are 50



students in a class and a lot of the time, only the teacher talks. Students just listen and take notes, and are not encouraged to share ideas in class.”

WT has enrolled international students for decades, says Director of International Student Recruitment Scot Lorenzi, noting that this year’s foreign students also include one from Russia, three from South Korea, and three from Brazil. Historically, the school’s international population was comprised mainly of foreign exchange students eager for a one-year dip into American culture. But during the past five years, demand from international students has increased dramatically, mostly driven by students from China, and largely the result of three things: a flourishing partnership between WT and Peking University Elementary School (PUES) that immerses PUES students in WT’s fourth and fifth grade classrooms each fall; WT’s relationship with recruitment agencies that place Chinese students in American schools; and last year, a trip to Beijing undertaken by Lorenzi, Head of School Gary Niels, Director of Lower School Ashley Harper, and fifth grade teacher Karen Gaul.

“When we first started to see applicants, they were mostly for eleventh and twelfth grade, sometimes tenth,” notes Lorenzi. “Now most of our Chinese applicants are for ninth grade, and we are getting more students in the Middle School.” Of the four Chinese students new to Middle School this year, two visited WT’s Lower School in 2012 as PUES students.

Students like Eric and Karen reflect a trend that is changing the enrollment landscape at WT and at secondary and post-secondary schools across the United States. According to the Department of Homeland Security’s Student and Exchange Visitor Program, the number of Chinese secondary school students in the United States soared from 632 in 2005 to 38,089 in 2014. Chinese students now account for almost 50% of international high school students in the United States, and though WT could easily admit far more Chinese applicants than it does—fully 75% are turned away—Lorenzi says the school carefully manages the acceptance rate.

“We are highly selective in the admission process and only take the very best students. We are excited that the students can enhance the school’s culture and enrich the experience for all WT students, but we are mindful of the increased demand on our teachers, especially in classes like history and English, where the students are reading books and writing papers.”

The culture is something the Chinese students appreciate – and enthusiastically embrace.

“I like the whole academic environment,” declares senior Jiaying ‘Jessie’ Zhang who, like Karen, came to WT as a freshman. “It’s more about the relationships I have with the teachers. In the United States, we have smaller classes and it’s easier to connect with teachers. It feels



*The Fuller family hosts Xingru ‘Andy’ Chen (center) a seventh grader from China.*

nice when students and teachers can smile and say hello when they see each other.”

As the numbers have increased, so has WT’s support for students as they navigate their new lives. Chinese teacher Yian ‘Ming’ Rui serves as Dean of International Student Affairs, filling different roles by turn: teacher, advisor, big sister, surrogate mother. She is indispensable in countless ways: bridging the language gap to augment communication between parents in China and WT faculty and administration; coaching students through cultural challenges with school, social customs,



*WT Lower School students welcome Peking University Elementary School students.*

and homestay families; helping other faculty better understand Chinese students to improve their learning experience; fostering social and community connections, like regular Chinese-language-only lunches open to anyone who wants to speak Chinese; peer tutoring between native Chinese students and Mandarin learners; and overseeing the International Club of Cultures, where all cultures are honored. The club's highest-profile event is the spring festival, or Chinese New Year, the significance of which can't be overstated: for students 7,000 miles from home, the ability to celebrate China's most important holiday goes a long way toward easing homesickness and creating roots in their new community.

"There was lots of food—dumplings, rice balls, traditional Chinese snacks," remembers Karen, "and games like Jianzi, Mahjong, Tangram puzzles, and many other activities. Almost everyone in the Upper School participated, and even

the Middle and Lower Schoolers came to the event. It was such a success and the festivities in the community that day really made me feel at home. It felt like we were a big family celebrating the New Year together."

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### **WT's student-centered process results in an optimal college list for each student, domestic or international.**

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WT has also bolstered support for Chinese students and their parents during the college process. Director of College Counseling Dr. David Seward, who speaks several languages, including Mandarin, meets with new students and their families upon arrival to discuss curriculum and the importance of getting involved (and keeping track of activities with an eye toward college applications). As students move through Upper School, Seward continues relationship-building, and by the time Junior Seminar rolls around—a class where eleventh graders begin exploring colleges—college conversations begin in earnest, both with students and their parents.

Often, parents have only heard of a handful of schools,



like Harvard or Stanford, and "... it used to be medicine or engineering, that's all any Chinese student was ever allowed to major in," says Seward, pleased that parents are becoming more flexible.

Rui is instrumental in these conversations, working closely with Seward. "I not only help to interpret for David, but I also help the Chinese parents by explaining the difference in perspectives on good colleges and majors, and the importance of letting their children choose their schools and majors," states Rui.

WT's student-centered process results in an optimal college list for each student, domestic or international. "By and large our students have a really thorough look at their own schools and make up their own minds. That's why we have such a low transfer rate, lower than the national average. Our students tend to stay where they go," observes Seward.

Lorenzi says one thing that could improve the Chinese students' experience is more WT families willing to host them. Most students work with placement organizations to find families with whom they can live. Currently, the majority of international students are hosted by families with

no connection to WT, and Lorenzi would love to see that change. "When we have a family who knows the school and the community, who is tied in with the life of the school and can host these students and get to know them, it contributes to a successful experience," notes Lorenzi.

WT parent Amy Dominek, mother of sophomore Dominique Mittermeier, couldn't agree more. Last year, she and her family hosted fellow sophomore Yanming 'Anna' Cui, an experience she treasures. "It helps our children see something outside of their own lives, to understand there's more in the world. It breaks down barriers and opens up the door to learning about different cultures."

For Rui, watching these young people grow and change at WT calls forth a kaleidoscopic array of emotions: rewarding, exciting, poignant and, ultimately, uplifting. "I feel happiest when I see them integrate into the WT community, mingling with American students without being self-conscious of their own culture. I am privileged to be able to help make WT a truly global school that provides the best learning environment for all students."



*PUES students perform traditional sword dances at Closing Ceremony.*

## Jiaying 'Jessie' Zhang

Growing up with my parents in Beijing, I went to an international school called St. Paul American School. All of my teachers were American, and their system is similar to here. I also went to public schools in China, so I have a good comparison of school systems. For me, I prefer the American way.

I'm always comparing what it was like in China with how it is here. Here we have smaller classes and it's easier to connect with teachers. Another thing is that when I talk to my friends who went to boarding schools in New England, I always feel like WT is more accepting. That helped with the transition, and this environment also influenced me regarding college. I'm applying to all small scale, liberal arts schools, because I want to have the same close relationship with my college professors.

I met Mrs. Rui during my freshman year. She was really nice and very welcoming, and she created the International Club of Cultures. It's about diversity and international students, and this club brought us together. She brings Chinese food every year, and she did many things to help us overcome being homesick. My mother always wants to meet with my teachers and college counselor. Before she came last year for Spring Break she didn't know any of the teachers, and Mrs. Rui helped Dr. Seward to translate during a Skype session with my parents.

My favorite memory is probably when we were in stage crew for the Upper School musical *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Two girls and I were the set designers and members of the tech team. Everyone was having fun and building sets.

*Jessie is a gifted artist and was awarded a Gold Key, two Silver Keys, and an Honorable Mention in Drawing and Illustration at the 2015 Pittsburgh Regional Scholastic Art Awards competition.*

My experience at WT makes me want to major in Art History in college and minor in Studio Art. It's more like contemporary and modern art, and includes mixed media, sculpture, and painting.

Art is very different in China, where it's more about craftsmanship. Here, what matters is the creativity and the idea behind it, and there is more opportunity to explore and grow as an artist.

In China, applying to art schools is very difficult. There's actually a standard test for art students. I have friends who went to art school in China; they basically dropped out of all academic classes and they draw all day. Here you can do both.

## Jia 'Karen' Ou

I'm from Beijing. I have a relatively small family that consists of my parents, my grandmother, my uncle, and me. When I was growing up, my dad used to tell me great things about America: how freedom and individuality were valued and cherished, how America was a country marked with opportunity and fair chance, and how people were able to work hard, create wealth, and realize their dreams. Of course all he talked about were the grand stereotypes of America because he himself had never set foot in the United States, but his words planted the seed of a dream in me, an American dream that eventually made me decide to come to the United States when I was fourteen.

I like how people are so nice and energetic here. I see people talking, joking, and laughing in the hallways all the time, and even if I smile and say hi to a student I've never met before, he or she will smile and say hi back to me (that's how I made friends my freshman year). Teachers, too, are funny and kind. I love how Mr. Bachner tells jokes almost every morning during announcements. I also love how the students at WT strive to make a difference. The efforts of the Go Green club to teach the school about proper recycling in order to reduce the impact of human waste on the environment, the rallies the students organized to protest against racial violence and discrimination, and the innovative work students do in STEM-related courses are all examples of that, and these are exactly the reasons why I love WT.

Reflecting on the past three years I've spent studying in the United States, I think things went relatively smoothly for me. If anything, the most difficult thing might have been learning to grow up and take responsibility. I had never spent more than 24 hours away from my family before I came to the States, and all of a sudden I had to spend a year living thousands of miles away from home and had to do everything on my own. I learned to do my own laundry, wash the dishes, clean the house, manage my own bank account, and take care of myself when I got sick. The transition was hard, but I'm glad that I had the opportunity to learn these important life skills early. In some way the hardest things were also the easiest: I finally got the freedom I wanted. I felt all grown-up and that feeling of being in charge was something I wouldn't have had if I had chosen to go to a school in China.

I want people to know that it's a courageous act when international students come to the United States alone to study. Be kind to them when they can't think of the right English word to express their thoughts, be patient when they have questions, and be helpful when they struggle with schoolwork. I was once shy and diffident because I was always afraid that I would say something stupid in English and make mistakes. I had a hard time making new friends during the first month or two because I was too timid to start a conversation with others.

Over the course of the past three years, WT has witnessed my transition from an inexperienced fourteen-year-old girl to a person who is mature enough to decide for herself and take responsibility for her own actions. At WT I learned how to cope with stress and personal dilemmas and also be more aware of social issues. I couldn't have learned all of these things if I had studied in a Chinese school and lived under the wings of my parents.



# Gaylen Westfall: 40 Years of Service

Gaylen Westfall joined Winchester Thurston School in 1975, and from the moment she passed through its pillared portals, WT became better with her influence. By embracing every opportunity set before her, Westfall's contributions to WT have steadily shaped, enriched, and advanced the school, the culture, and the community. She retired in June, but through her works Westfall—acknowledged by Head of School Gary J. Niels as the “... person who knows more about this school than anyone”—has bestowed an enduring legacy that will impact generations to come.

## **‘We’d like to have you come and work...’**

In 1975, Gerald R. Ford was the nation's 38th president. The Vietnam War was drawing to a close, a gallon of gas cost 44 cents, and a young physical education teacher named Gaylen Faller—soon to become Westfall—leapt at a challenge that would change her life.

“A bulletin board notice caught my eye...inviting people to go rock climbing in Colorado and obtain a master's degree (at the University of Colorado). I didn't know anything about Colorado or rock climbing, but off I went.”

Westfall had attended school in New Castle, PA, in a district where no girls' sports teams or athletic activities existed; she indulged her passion for physical activity through neighborhood pickup games. In the mountains of Colorado, Westfall was delighted to discover another world. She eventually returned to western PA armed with a master's degree in physical education—and a yearning for more.

It was another bulletin board posting (“...back when there still were bulletin boards!” laughs Westfall) that offered a new beginning. Winchester Thurston School was looking for someone to head its physical education de-



*Honorary Alumna Gaylen Westfall with then Board President Douglas Campbell (L) and Head of School Gary Niels (R)*

partment and Westfall, now steeped in new approaches for physical and movement education, applied and interviewed for the position. Head of School Eleanor Tucker wasted no time in contacting Westfall with her decision.

“I was in the pool, teaching summer swim camp at Grove City College,” reminisces Westfall, still incredulous at the memory. “We were working on strokes, and somebody came to me and said, ‘there's someone here to see you, out in the hallway.’ So I left the pool and went into the hallway in my swimsuit, and Miss Tucker was standing there, the Head of School! She hired me right then and there.”

Fresh on the heels of Title IX—the landmark law prohibiting dis-

crimination on the basis of sex in any federally-funded education program or activity—WT's new chair of the physical education department set to work in an exciting national climate of change that finally supported what WT had always promoted—physical activity for girls.

“I was able to implement many changes,” asserts Westfall. “I did not want to run a traditional physical education program; instead, I wanted to offer a variety of sports and activities for Upper School girls, instilling a joy of activity by letting them elect a sport from an array of choices such as golf, archery, fencing, running, and aerobic dance. Classes for younger girls focused on movement and skills that were developmentally appropriate. For example, instead of one ball for a class game, each girl had a ball to bounce, throw, or kick.”

## **New Opportunities for Girls**

In 1978, Jane Scarborough became Head of School; the following year, she asked Westfall to serve as project manager for a year-long, \$10,000 grant from the Pennsylvania



*Gaylen through the years, celebrating with alumnae/i, donors, and teachers*



Council on the Arts to expose students to dance. Westfall readily agreed; under her leadership, the initiative led to WT's dance program, a Pre-K–12 curriculum. Shortly thereafter, Westfall approached Scarborough with another idea: "I asked if it was all right if I applied for a grant for New Horizons to obtain funding for outdoor education, similar to Outward Bound, for Middle School girls." Not surprisingly, Scarborough—a dynamic forward-thinker—approved, and in early 1982, the New Horizons program blossomed with a grant that gave WT seed money to provide outdoor experiences that would help students learn to cope in unexpected circumstances through teamwork, leadership, and collaboration.

As department chair, Westfall not only taught 22 classes each week and developed special programming; she was also responsible for scheduling all games, referees, transportation, and more. Still, even though public school girls were now competing at high levels in WPIAL—thanks to Title IX—there were no formal leagues or championships for Pittsburgh's independent school girls. "So, I worked with the athletic directors from our neighboring independent schools to create ISGAL, the Independent Schools Girls Athletic League, which allowed us to have championships in field hockey, basketball, and lacrosse," explains Westfall.

### From Athletics to Administration

While Westfall was busy transforming WT's physical education and athletics program, she was also taking graduate courses at night, originally to earn an Ed. D. in physical education, but—inspired by her WT colleagues—she switched to a degree in Education Administration which led to then Head of School Jacqueline Clement to offer Westfall the administrative opportunities she'd sought.

"Enrollment was lagging and no one knew why," Westfall recalls. She quickly realized that WT's lack of a centralized admission office was not up to then-current best practices, and a stumbling block. Until that point, she says, "when people would come in, they would meet with division directors—or, before that, Miss Mitchell—have an interview, and they would either be admitted or not. I told Jackie [Clement], we have to have an admission office; we have to have a couch for people to sit on; we have to welcome them; we have to put pictures up." Clement appointed Westfall Director of Admission; with an assistant, Westfall implemented all of those ideas, and more, to develop marketing that was personal and direct.

Despite these efforts, enrollment continued to wane; the collapse of the steel industry coupled with Pittsburgh's declining population proved a ravaging one-two punch. "We looked to other opportunities to shore up the student body," says Westfall. "North Hills parents with daughters in our Lower School had suggested we establish a satellite campus in the North Hills, and we began exploring the possibility."



WT's 125th Anniversary Committee

Along with a committee of board members, Westfall and Clement spent Sunday afternoons driving through the area, hunting for potential sites—church basements, houses, empty buildings—before discovering the idyllic seven-acre property on Middle Road. "We traveled the North Hills speaking to groups of parents in preschools and in parents' homes about the school that WT was building," recounts Westfall. "It was quite a thrill when we opened the North Hills Campus!"

### "A stroke of genius...."

The debut of WT's North Hills Campus was a groundbreaking change, literally, but an even bigger change lay ahead for Westfall and WT. Judith Chamberlain was now Head of School and, by this time, it was clear that coeducation was necessary for the school's survival. Recruiting boys was at the top of Westfall's list.

"Gaylen had been slogging through admissions and trying any number of different ways to market the school," recalls Chamberlain. "I remember the first Open House when we realized that our female environment might appear hostile to the visiting boys. Gaylen encouraged several male spouses to wander the halls, appearing to be staff, to interact with the boys and make them comfortable. It was a stroke of genius and, I believe, a major factor in our successful recruiting of boys that first year."

## The Beginnings of IT at WT

With enrollment thriving once more, Westfall's role expanded yet again; now, as Director of Admission and Financial Aid, she supervised the Parents Association, ran a school benefit, and managed the school newsletter—all in an effort to increase parent satisfaction, key to a healthy and robust admission profile. She also developed the school's first database,



*Rappelling with the New Horizons program*

an innovation borne of practicality that laid the groundwork for IT at WT—and led to her next transition.

“When I started in the Admission Office, computers were just being used, and my assistant and I kept misplacing files,” Westfall chuckles, remembering boxes of index cards. “Eventually I went out and got a Mac, and I started realizing the potential of databases, so I created a database using a program called Fourth Dimension which we used for all of our admission purposes. It worked really well, so I thought, why not do one for the Development Office, too? And that’s how I got involved in development.”

## Unfamiliar Territory

With enrollment growing and school wide implementation of computers humming along, Westfall threw herself into development. She freely admits that this was unfamiliar territory (“I did not know what I was doing, to tell you the truth”) but, true to form, she wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity to try something new.

“I thank the heads I worked under—Linda Kelley, Denny Grubbs, and Gary Niels—for their trust in me and faith that I would eventually learn fundraising.”

Westfall did more than learn fundraising. Her contributions to various endeavors were important, if not instrumental, to their success: a feasibility study for Many Voices, One Vision, the capital campaign that would fund the new Upper School; establishing an EITC donor program at WT that, to date, has provided \$3.4 million in scholarship funds to WT students who

otherwise could not afford tuition; writing some of the first grants for City as Our Campus<sup>SM</sup>, as well as the grant securing the historic \$2 million Malone Foundation grant. After shifting her fundraising focus to alums, Westfall instituted WT On the Road, crisscrossing America to visit alums from Boston to San Francisco; in 2002, she launched WT’s planned giving arm, the Miss Mitchell Society; and most recently, she was an integral part of Celebrate WT, the school’s latest—and largest ever—capital campaign, bringing in \$21.5 million.

“In many ways, my fundraising efforts have given me a more comprehensive grasp on the large

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## Always there for us Gaylen, Gentle Warrior A tall Steel Thistle

— Haiku by Henry Posner III,  
Trustee and Alumnae/i Parent

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WT community and how it works,” muses Westfall. “From teaching Kindergarten for the first time in 1975 to working with alumnae from the class of 1931—now more than 100 years old—the experiences have broadened my perspective and helped me to realize how important each constituent is to the health of the school.”

Head of School Gary J. Niels makes it clear: Westfall’s contributions over 40 years are incalculable, and she is cherished. “Gaylen has been wholly dedicated to our community, answering the call whatever the need, and meeting the challenge. She has been the connection between WT and so many of our constituents—from applicants to students, parents, colleagues, and trustees,” states Niels. “Quite simply, she has been an integral part in all that WT has accomplished.”



*Honorary Alumna Gaylen Westfall with  
then Board President Douglas Campbell*



# We Did It!

Together, we undertook the biggest endeavor in WT's history: the campaign to raise \$20 million for a smart future. You responded with generous donations that not only reached our goal, but surpassed it: more than \$21.5 million raised for WT students and teachers, for educational innovation, financial vitality, preservation of our facilities, and a greener school. Thank you.

Learn more about the campaign and celebrate the milestones at [celebratewt.org](http://celebratewt.org)



celebrate**wt**  
CAMPAIGN FOR A **smart** FUTURE

Learn more about WT's bold plan for a smart future: visit [celebratewt.org](http://celebratewt.org)

# ALUMS TAKE CENTER STAGE FOR FALK AUDITORIUM AND BARBARA HOLMES

In October, WT proudly opened a transformed Falk Auditorium—upgraded with numerous technical enhancements that have turned it into a true theater.

In this storied space, hundreds of WT students have performed or labored behind the scenes to produce sophisticated plays, musicals, and concerts. So it was fitting that the Falk Auditorium dedication feature alums who remain devoted to the performing arts. Through panel discussions, performances, and an all-Alum Cabaret, WT alums wowed us once again. And they paid tribute to Barbara Holmes, who many recall as an inspiring force at WT, and who just began her 40th year as a member of the WT faculty.

At the dedication ceremony, Ian Gould '94 spoke about Holmes and her life changing guidance. "I earned two degrees in acting, and I've been in dozens of professional productions, but I was in a fragile place in high school, as so many people are, and it was the guidance and support of Mrs. Holmes that helped me persist in a career that often seems to have more pitfalls than rewards. Had we not met, I'm not sure I would have stayed with it. Barb Holmes changed my life."

The renovation of Falk Auditorium, one of the projects in the Celebrate WT campaign, was funded in part

by passionate alums who stepped forward early in 2015 to invite their peers to support the effort.

Lara Miller '04 spearheaded a young alum effort to raise \$10,000 in support of the project; the funds were matched by WT parents Robin Ziegler and Clifford Chen, so that the alums could name one of the new display cases in the refurbished lobby.

"When I heard that WT was renovating the auditorium, I knew I wanted to help," says Miller. "This space is where I became a performer, where I



became myself. I loved the torn green chairs, the tech 'booth' in front of the Dining Hall doors, and the stage lights anchored by cinder blocks. But it was time for some upgrades 10 years ago!"

Miller was motivated by the inspiration of Holmes. "Whenever I visit

WT I always head straight to the auditorium. It's where I have the most memories. It's where I always felt the most at home. It's where I met my best friends. And it's where I can usually find Barb."

Fellow alum Jason Shavers '00 agrees. Reflecting on last year's production of *The Laramie Project*, he says, "I sat in the room where my love for theater



was born and watched this moving production...The characters were portrayed honestly. The cast cared about these real people they were playing and wanted to effectively tell their story. I was almost dumbstruck by this high school cast but I knew that they were this amazing because they were led by Barbara Holmes, the woman who put theater in my heart."

Holmes uses theater "to teach life, to teach work ethic and responsibility, to teach expression and encouragement," Shavers continues. "Most importantly though, she uses theater to teach what it means to respect. She uses theater to expose the fact that everyone has a different life story. She teaches that it goes beyond the script and the stage. She makes sure her cast knows that and then lets them teach that lesson to the audience. That is true theater."



Alums Kerry Bron '84 and Kelly Hanna Riley '91 also wanted to honor Holmes, and undertook a separate initiative to raise \$40,000 in honor of her 40 years at WT. Responding to Bron's challenge to contribute \$20,000 which she and her husband, Robert Levin, would match, alums from an array of decades stepped forward. The backstage dressing rooms—home to so many memories—are now named for Holmes as a result.

Riley recalls Holmes seeking her out when she was a freshman, and asking her to try out for *Grease*. "I would never have auditioned had Barb not encouraged me to raise my

head up high and have confidence. I went on to be in all of the plays and musicals at WT, and performed all through college. Barb was instrumental in teaching me to believe in myself. Many alums share similar experiences, whether through speech and drama classes, performing on stage, or developing leadership skills in technical theater."

Bron adds, "Barb brings the best out of her students. Through her excellent instruction and encouragement, she made us believe in ourselves—that we could actually be the characters in the shows. I will never forget the thrill of performing on stage in *Pippin*, *Jacques Brel*, and *The Wizard*

of Oz. Among my fondest high school memories are the fantastic WT musicals and the joy and privilege of working with Barb."

For her part, Holmes enthusiastically describes how the renovations will enhance performing arts at WT. "Instead of worrying about whether or not the audience can see and hear the actors, dancers, and musicians, we will now be able to devote time and energy to designing lighting and sound that enhances our performances. Instead



of positioning cherry pickers to adjust lights that are too high for students to manipulate, faculty will now be able to stand alongside students and guide them as they safely manage lighting. Instead of shivering in their costumes in our drafty dressing rooms, actors will have a comfortable space to prepare for the stage. In other words, we will be able to focus on the artistic side of what we do as we are freed up from technical headaches. This means our students will be able to be more hands-on and more creative.

"Looking back over my 40 years on the WT faculty," she continues, "I appreciate so much that the school has always supported my colleagues and me in our pursuit of creative challenges. I've not only been allowed but encouraged to take artistic risks and to push the theater program forward to achieve what has proven to be limitless potential."



# EQT SCHOLARS BEGIN THEIR 14-YEAR ACADEMIC CAREER AT WT

When WT welcomed the Class of 2029 to Pre-Kindergarten this fall, among the children were Khalil Dixson and Sasha Neely, the first-ever EQT Scholars. These two curious and bright four-year-olds began their 14-year career at WT through the *EQT Scholars Program at Winchester Thurston*, which was established this year by the EQT Foundation.

The program is designed to provide children from the Pittsburgh community with access to outstanding Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 educational opportunities. It provides full tuition for two students at WT.

“The EQT Scholars Program illustrates the Foundation’s mission by providing meaningful educational experiences to children in the region who may not otherwise have the opportunity,” said Charlene Petrelli, President, EQT Foundation. “The first two students, Khalil and Sasha, embody what we are looking for in a Scholar – an eagerness to learn, curiosity about the world around them, an excitement to dive in, and a strong support network at home that will ensure their success.”

The students’ tuition is covered by an EQT Foundation-funded endowment that will support the EQT Scholars

program in perpetuity. Two new students entering Pre-K at WT will be named EQT Scholars upon the graduation of the current Scholars. The Foundation plans to establish programs in other local schools as well.

“We are honored to be the first beneficiary of the EQT Scholars program, and salute EQT for its dedication to expanding educational opportunities in the region,” said Gary Niels, Head of School. “Programs like this allow us to continue our long-standing commitment to socioeconomic diversity and to create a welcoming experience for children from many different backgrounds,” continued Niels. “Khalil and Sasha immediately felt at home here at WT. Like all of our youngest students, they’re focused on participating in a joyful, active, learning environment.”

The scholarship is awarded to students with demonstrated financial need who have already been accepted into WT’s Pre-K program. Beyond financial need, various factors were considered, including their performance on developmental assessment tests and pre-school teacher recommendations. The students must continue to demonstrate financial need and perform well academically to receive the scholarship yearly.



## NAMED SCHOLARSHIPS AT WINCHESTER THURSTON SCHOOL

The EQT scholarship is one of five named scholarships established by donors during the Celebrate WT campaign. Through the generosity of these donors, WT added more than \$4.5 million to its endowment specifically for need-based financial aid. Exemplary applicants to WT are eligible to receive need-based grants in the form of named scholarships. While such an award confers special recognition and honor, the dollar amount of the award is based upon family need calculated through the financial aid process.

### **Mimi Burke Endowment Fund**

The Mimi Burke Academic Scholarship was established by Charles and Patricia Burke in memory of their daughter, Marion (Mimi) Burke '73. The scholarship provides financial aid to a rising ninth or tenth grade student who demonstrates outstanding academic achievement and teacher recommendations.

### **The Catalyst Fund for WT Scholars\***

Established by the Porges family, the Catalyst scholarship supports talented, high-need students in Middle or Upper School who have strong academic potential and motivation to excel in a rigorous college preparatory program. The Porges family encourages other donors to support this fund.

### **Cyert Family Scholar\***

Established by Lucinda (Cindy) Cyert Steffes '69 and the Cyert Family Foundation, the Cyert Scholarship provides financial aid to an Upper School student who demonstrates high academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, a passion for learning, and interest in the dramatic arts.

### **EQT Fund for WT Scholars\***

Established by the EQT Foundation, this scholarship supports two students who have the potential for high academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, and ability to engage fully in a vibrant, increasingly rigorous academic program.

### **Malone Family Foundation Malone Scholars Program**

Made possible through the Malone Family Foundation, the Malone Scholarship provides need-based tuition

assistance to gifted and talented students in grades 7-12. To be considered, a student must present superior recommendations and demonstrate the highest level of academic ability and/or talent. A student who is chosen to receive the award is designated as a Malone Scholar and will retain this honor throughout his or her years at WT.

### **Connie Blum Marstine Scholarship Fund\***

Established by Sheldon Marstine in memory of his beloved wife, WT alumna Constance (Connie) Blum Marstine '55, the Marstine scholarship supports a Middle or Upper School student who demonstrates high academic achievement, a passion for learning, and intellectual curiosity.

### **Bee Jee & Perry Morrison Scholarship Fund\***

Given by Bee Jee Morrison '56, the Perry and Bee Jee Morrison Scholarship provides financial aid to an Upper School student for the student's entire four years. To be considered, the student must demonstrate high academic achievement, intellectual curiosity, a passion for learning, interest and involvement in the arts, and be actively engaged in the community.

### **Posner Financial Aid Endowment Fund**

Made possible by the Posner family, the Posner Scholarship provides financial aid to students who demonstrate the potential for outstanding academic achievement and leadership. The scholarship is open to a new student entering any grade level.

### **John A. and Patricia D. Staley Family Scholarship Fund**

Made possible by the Staley Family, the Staley Scholarship provides financial aid to new Middle or Upper School students who demonstrate exceptional academic achievement and can benefit from WT's performing and visual arts program.

### **Hilda M. Willis Arts Scholarship**

Made possible by the Hilda M. Willis Foundation, the Hilda M. Willis Arts Scholarship provides financial aid to a rising ninth or tenth grader who is new to WT and who demonstrates a high level of skill, ability, achievement, and interest in a visual or performing art form.

*\* Denotes scholarships that were established during the Celebrate WT campaign.*





# Henry Posner III and Anne Molloy:

## INSPIRING ADVOCATES FOR EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

"The greatest gift you ever give is your honest self." — Fred Rogers

Since 1993, Henry Posner III and his wife, Anne Molloy, have quietly supported WT with extraordinary generosity and service that place them among the largest donors and most selfless leaders in our history. From an endowed scholarship fund, to purchasing property that expands the City Campus footprint, to a challenge gift that propelled the recent Celebrate WT capital campaign to its finish, Posner and Molloy have set a rare example for leadership and loyalty.

Their commitment goes well beyond philanthropy. Molloy was a stalwart parent volunteer when the couple's children were enrolled, and she is still a frequent presence. Now an emeritus trustee, Posner served as a term trustee for 13 years (1998-2011), the last four as President. He has chaired a number of committees and task forces, including Development, Committee on Trustees, and Marketing and Enrollment.

"There really are no truer friends to WT than Henry and Anne," reflects Head of School Gary Niels. "In addition to their historic generosity as a couple, Henry has been one of the most active trustees throughout his 17-year tenure on the Board."

Posner is Chairman of Railroad Development Corporation, a railway investment management company with operations in the U.S., Latin America, and Europe. A regular world traveler, he is likely to be found heading to a WT meeting directly from the Pittsburgh airport after touching down from a transatlantic flight. His dedication to the school is boundless, his unique style of leadership legendary. Posner's approach as Board President was to be forthright, encourage robust dialogue, run efficient meetings, and offer sometimes surprising perspectives punctuated with vivid imagery and the occasional haiku.

What drives this commitment? According to Posner, WT's culture and governance set it apart and make the school a worthwhile cause. "The combination of these two things has made WT the school that it is," he says. He describes the culture as "both broad and inclusive, and unique in its ability to bring out the best in a broad range of students. This is not new; it's been going on for generations, which is why my kids went to WT."

The parents of Hannah '06, Ida '08, and Gus, who attended K-5, Molloy and Posner appreciate the individualized attention their three very different children received. "WT looks at the individual," says Molloy. "They don't operate on a broad set of rigid or all-purpose rules. They look at each child and decide what is best for that child."

"Winchester Thurston has the closest thing in Pittsburgh to a truly diverse urban student body," Posner adds, pointing out that diversity of thought shapes WT's inclusive culture and the Board's excellence. The work of the Board, he says, "has been a real team effort from a broad range of people."

Posner believes the Board has evolved to be more engaged, diverse, and committed than ever. "Nonprofit institutions are different from for-profit enterprises; there is a different set of challenges and different types of people. In business, it's more about building something that is valuable within a market; in nonprofit work it is just as much about mission as market performance. It's more complex. The evolution of WT's Board is a matter of great personal satisfaction. Every trustee acts for the good of the institution at all times, and that isn't always the case in nonprofits. We are truly actively engaged in governance for the long-term vitality of the school."

Niels credits Posner for much of the Board's effectiveness. "Henry continues to represent WT as a Board member of the Independent Schools Chairpersons Association, which gives us access to a vast network of other great schools, and a way to benchmark our own Board's engagement, decision making, and strategic perspective," he says, adding, "Henry's keen mind keeps us all on our toes. And he is always genuine—and he holds WT to that same level of authenticity."

"WT is an important part of Pittsburgh's educational landscape," says Posner. "In Pittsburgh we talk about education as a major driver of our economy, but for the most part, these conversations are about colleges and universities. K-12 education is just as important, and it's important to our regional character that there be not just alternatives, but models like WT."

Posner took his devotion to WT's long term vitality one step further when he joined the Miss Mitchell Society, having included WT in his will. "It's important to stand shoulder to shoulder with others who have made this lifetime commitment," he explains.

Moreover, he says, "Endowment is one of the key drivers of financial aid, which is more important than buildings. WT has a long history of being among the most generous schools, and endowment supports that. WT is not a homogeneous community. It is a diverse community. And financial aid is an important reason for that."

He hopes others will come forward to join him in the Miss Mitchell Society. "They should consider it if they see WT as valuable for our community. Because it's for the next generation."



In 2002 Winchester Thurston created the Miss Mitchell Society to thank and recognize the many generous donors whose bequests and planned gifts continue to expand the vision of Dr. Mary A. Graham Mitchell, Head of School from 1902 through 1947. The central tenet that governed every one of Miss Mitchell's written and unwritten rules, "Think also of the comfort and the rights of others," continues to reverberate in the hearts and minds of alumnae/i and serves as the ethical compass for today's students.

Miss Mitchell Society gifts can take the form of bequests, trusts, life insurance policies, charitable gift annuities, or other estate planning vehicles. Membership requires no particular giving or bequest amount. If you have made a provision for WT in your estate plans, we would love to welcome you as a member of the Miss Mitchell Society. For more information, or to let us know of your intentions, please contact Drew Chelosky, Director of Advancement, at 412-578-3746.

## Miss Mitchell Society Members

WT salutes the generosity and support of this very special group of alumnae/i and friends. Following are the current members of our community who have remembered WT in their estate planning. Please visit [www.winchesterthurston.org/giving](http://www.winchesterthurston.org/giving) and click "Planned Giving: Miss Mitchell Society" for the complete list and for more information.



Suzanne LeClere  
Barley '52

Loretta Lobes Benec '88

Barbara Abney  
Bolger '52

Marion Montgomery  
Colbourne '52

Judith Rohrer Davis '57

Anna-Stina Ericson '44

Robert I. Glimcher

Rosanne Isay  
Harrison '56

Eugene S. Kerber

Elsa Limbach

Louise Baldridge  
Lytle '51

Carole Oswald  
Markus '57

Gretchen Larson  
Maslanka '83

Marga Matheny '64

Pat Maykuth '69

Beverlee Simboli  
McFadden '55

J. Sherman McLaughlin,  
Honorary Alumnus

Kathleen L. Metinko '91

Frances P. Minno

Bee Jee Epstein  
Morrison '56

Henry Posner III

Kathy Zillweger  
Putnam '71

Susan Crip  
Santa-Cruz '60

Jennifer M. Scanlon

Sheen Sehgal '89

Molly Cannon  
Stevenson '72

Allyson Baird Sveda '84

Ruth Weimer Tillar '41

Gaylen Westfall,  
Honorary Alumna

Carol Spear  
Williams '57



# THE WONDERS OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

On any given day, Lower School students at WT's City and North Hills Campuses can be seen taking charge of their own learning: discovering physics in Kindergarten; creating systems for healthy communities in second grade; and launching new companies, writing proposals, and designing 3D printed prototypes in third grade. WT's longstanding commitment to student-led inquiry positions students as chief architects and explorers of their experience.

"Our outstanding faculty do a lot of listening and observation to learn more about what drives our students' passions," explains Ashley Harper, Director of Lower School.

Placing children at the center of their learning is key at WT. It is also a founding principle of the Reggio Emilia Approach, the topic of an international exhibit at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center this fall. The approach holds that children are endowed with a 'hundred languages'—they possess countless ways of self-expression and learning, and they learn and grow in relationship with others.

"The Reggio Emilia Approach is most evident in our student-led inquiry focus," states Harper. "The root belief that children are strong, capable, and resilient is deeply embedded in the ethos and expectation of WT's teaching. We recognize that children are innately creative thinkers and when the classroom opens learning to them, the sky is indeed the limit."

"Students are encouraged to question, engage, and help design the curriculum at all grade levels," affirms Laurie Vennes, Director of North Hills Campus. "Here, all of Pre-K's themes are based



Audrey Harris studies her handmade panda food.

on student interest. When Pre-K is ready to move on to a new theme, the students brainstorm ideas and vote. The classroom then transforms into whatever they are studying. For example, last year the students were

interested in pandas. The classroom had student-made bamboo hanging from the ceiling, panda figures in the sandbox, books, art projects, stuffed pandas, and more."

Those Pre-K students are only the newest generation of resourceful, creative thinkers to learn and explore at WT. The school has long been open to—in fact, was founded on—innovative ideas in education that complement and augment WT's core values and mission.

"Our dual approach—a love of learning combined with a rigorous academic and knowledge base—makes us different," notes Harper. "At our core is the belief that children are incredible thinkers and, when given support and direction toward the right resources, learn beautifully by doing."



Padraig McCabe proudly shares his panda mask.

# RAPID LAB ACCELERATES MIDDLE SCHOOL STEM EXPLORATION

“Middle School students have great problem solving skills, and this will push them to their highest potential,” declares Middle School Educational Technology Coordinator David Piemme of RAPID Lab, the new Middle School elective empowering students to investigate scientific principles, create inventions, and design solutions to real-world problems more deeply and vigorously than ever before.

“The objective is to motivate students to research, create, and design, and also to analyze the problem they are trying to solve,” continues Piemme. “We want the students to be thinking at a higher level as they use science, technology, and math throughout the process.”

Students in RAPID Lab—for Research, Applied Science, Prototyping, Inquiry, and Design—select their own research projects, then sustain their investigation for the duration of the academic year. Throughout, RAPID researchers implement technology such as CAD modeling, 3D printing, probeware for data collection, and multimedia tools to create podcasts, blogs, presentations, and video tutorials. Students also have access to Upper School science tools and other resources—including Science Department Chair Graig Marx, who co-teaches the course with Piemme, and whose Upper School Research Science students produce many of the eye-popping college-level projects, presentations, and prototypes at WT’s annual STEM Symposium. Indeed, the idea for RAPID Lab stemmed from the growing number of Middle



Seventh graders Mya Clark-Beadle and Mathias VanBriesen collaborate in RAPID Lab.

**“RAPID Lab is a bridge into the science and computer science classes that have been built in the Upper School, so we are making a perfect connection.”**

School students participating in the symposium over the last two years.

“RAPID Lab is a bridge into the science and computer science classes that have been built in the Upper School, so we are making a perfect

connection,” explains Piemme. “Not only will this class strengthen each student’s STEM knowledge base, it will help to prepare them for Upper School classes and make those experiences richer.”

“STEM is big buzz word in many school circles, but our approach is truly using STEM to teach content. We require our students to become genuinely involved in the learning process, and this makes their learning more connected and real. With the introduction of RAPID Lab, we have now instilled that process in Middle as well as Upper School, and it sets WT apart from other schools.”



# INNOVATIVE UPPER SCHOOL ELECTIVES BRING LITERATURE TO LIFE

Senior Ryan Seth contributing to the discipline of environmental writing through his nature journal.

Three groundbreaking new English courses, all WT faculty-designed and -developed, debuted in the Upper School this fall. Whether investigating the complex connection between humankind and nature in Environmental Literature; learning from Pittsburgh's literary arts innovators in Lit City; or analyzing creative expression of the human spirit in Song, Stage, and Screen, students in these advanced theme-based electives are exploring fresh literary territory.

"Through these courses students will understand that literature is a live discipline, that there are many people who, every single day, are perfecting their craft in a very modern way," asserts Director of Upper School Kristen Klein.

Environmental Literature students are critically reading and analyzing works by writers including Rachel Carson, Wendell Berry, Mary Oliver, and the Romantic poets—and that's just the tip of the iceberg, enthuses Klein. Along with "...poetry, novels, and nonfiction, (teacher and course creator) Sharon McDermott is using nature journals to demonstrate that this discipline is alive and well.

In Song, Stage, and Screen, students examine the constraints that a particular medium puts on their writing. Inspired by artists as diverse as Maya Angelou, Ingmar Bergman, and Shakespeare, students study how an actor's delivery adds to the



Environmental Literature students at Beechwood Farms.

meaning of the text, and they think about how the physical setting and camera angles contribute to a film's message. "When we put limits on our language, the results are often more creative, more revelatory, than we might expect. Students are challenged to go beyond words on the page to read these texts in the authentic and complicated context of performance," explains English Department Chair Dr. Christine Benner Dixon.

Rounding out the trio is Lit City. Created and taught by Dr. Judith Sanders, Lit City plunges students into Pittsburgh's vibrant literary arts scene with a tantalizing array of entry points. Writers both historic, like August Wilson, and contemporary, including Terrance Hayes and Jim Daniels, are fundamental to Lit City, where students explore genres from poetry and journalism to playwriting and political cartoons while attending local theater and filmmaker performances and screenings; touring Pittsburgh publishing facilities; and collaborating with artists.

"We're pushing our students to experience literature and writing as far-reaching, relevant concepts in our world. We are driving towards a varied set of essential questions about huge philosophical issues," reflects Benner Dixon. "That is really what makes teaching English so thrilling—these questions move us beyond mere existence to something richer, something that engages both intellect and character."



# BEARS MAKE STRIDES FALL SPORTS ROUNDUP

The fall athletics season at WT brought section titles, state playoff appearances, individual recognition, and even a brand new team to the WT line-up.

"We saw a lot of new faces, and even a new team jump into the mix this fall," reflected Kevin Miller, Director of Athletics. "Whether we were cheering for a team that was vying for WPIAL recognition, or celebrating efforts that will build stronger teams in the future, we were in it as a community, and our athletes were enjoying themselves—and that's what makes our athletics program stand out."

## CROSS COUNTRY TEAM IS SECTION CHAMPION

The varsity boys cross country team are section champs for the second consecutive year. They advanced to the WPIAL Finals, placing second as a team, and headed onto states where they tied for third. Out of 226 runners, three WT runners placed in the top 20 individually at states: sophomore Tristan Forsythe took 17th place, junior Ben Littmann took 18th, and senior Will Loevner took 19th place.

"We accomplished an awful lot and everyone performed at his highest level. With just two seniors graduating, and some strong freshmen joining the team next year, our sights are set high for an impressive 2016 season," noted Coach Bruce Frey.

## SOCCER TEAM MAKES FOURTH PLAYOFF APPEARANCE

For the fourth consecutive year, the varsity boys soccer team made it to the WPIAL Section A Playoffs. With a record of 9-7-1, the Bears faced section 5 winner Bentworth, and fell 1-2 in a hard fought battle.

Despite the first round loss, the Bears have much to celebrate. Five players were recognized by the WPIAL: All-Section Player of the Year, senior Jono Coles; All-Section Honorable Mention, senior Tyler Coleman; All-Section Finest 15: seniors Max Rogow, Tamir Frank, Andre Curtis, and Jono Coles.

Tamir Frank was also named *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Athlete of the Week.

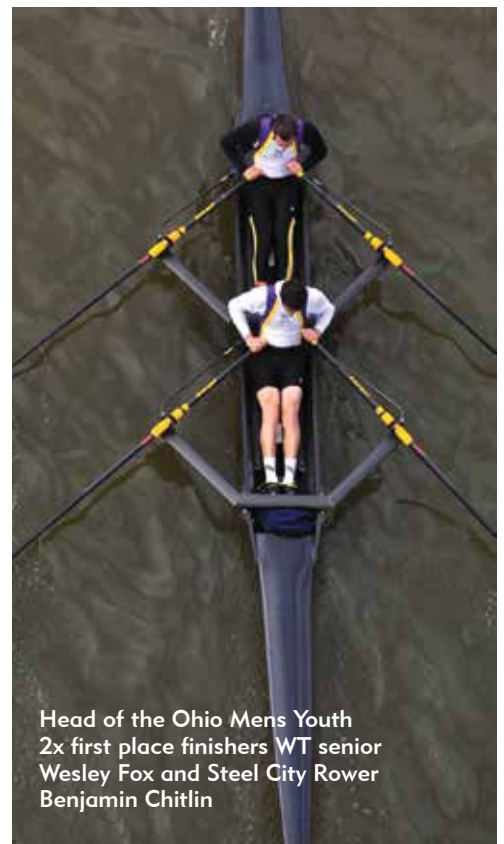
Head coach Adam Brownold, who celebrated his 13th season coaching the Bears, reflects on the team's legacy: "The 11 seniors have raised the bar for future teams. In four years, the seniors were a part of a team that scored a total 246 goals, allowing only 72. They are the first graduating class to appear in the WPIAL playoffs for four straight seasons. As freshmen they won WT's first WPIAL soccer playoff game. Their junior season, the team went undefeated during the regular season, winning Section A. They went on to win the WPIAL Championship and two state playoff games before losing in the state semi-final. They leave the Bears soccer family with not only an impressive four year record of 64-19-2, but also with a commitment to hard work and dedication."



Defender Tamir Frank



Senior Will Loevner and junior Ben Littmann at the WPIAL finals



Head of the Ohio Mens Youth 2x first place finishers WT senior Wesley Fox and Steel City Rower Benjamin Chitlin





Midfielder Fay Blelloch



Senior golfer Patrick Moore

## GOLF HAS REBUILDING SEASON

After losing three seniors from the five-man squad, the golf team had three freshmen step up to the tee this season. Big wins of the season include beating Riverview at Oakmont Country Club and defeating Summit Academy at WT's home course, Longue Vue Club. The team finished with a season record of 4-8.

## BIG WINS FOR CREW

It was an exciting fall season for the crew team, with many WT rowers placing in the top 10 at all of the races.

- At the Head of Occoquan in Fairfax, VA, eight boats finished in the top 10
- At the Head of the Ohio in Pittsburgh, PA, 10 boats finished in the top 10
- At the Head of the Welland in Welland, ON, four boats finished in the top 10
- At the Head of the Cuyohoga in Cleveland, OH, six boats placed in the top 10
- At the Head of the Schuylkill in Philadelphia, PA, two boats placed in the top 10

The team will head indoors for the winter as they train for what's sure to be an exciting spring season.

## FIELD HOCKEY EARNS PLAYOFF SPOT

The Bears made their fifth consecutive appearance in the WPIAL Section A Playoffs, facing top-ranked Shady Side Academy in the first round. Coming off a 6-6-0 regular season, they battled unsuccessfully on a cold, rainy evening.

Despite the loss, head coach Bill Fitch comments, "Our season was a very successful one. We started pre-season down a few players and with no goalie. After gaining more players and rotating field players to play goalie, we finished the year making it to the playoffs. The girls played for each other, not themselves, which made us a playoff contender. I'm excited about the future of WT field hockey and the returning players are already preparing for a stronger 2016 season."

The team also celebrated Senior Fay Blelloch, who was named *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Athlete of the Week.



Sophomore Anatea Einhorn

## GIRLS TENNIS: WINNING SEASON

The girls varsity tennis team had one of their winningest seasons in years. The team finished their regular season, 9-1, advancing to the WPIAL Playoffs. They faced South Park in the first round, which is where their season ended. Junior Emma Famili qualified for the AA Girls Singles Championship and lost in the first round.



## GIRLS SOCCER CLUB MAKES HISTORY

For the first time in WT history, the Upper School has a girls soccer club. The team was started by passionate students and WT teacher Lynn Horton. With a roster of 14, they played JV teams from the area, finishing with a record of 3-1-2. The season highlight was beating Obama Academy 2-1 at Highmark Stadium.

Sophomore Hannah Kwiecinski reflected, "We as a team have learned not only the game of soccer from our amazing coaches but also what it means to persevere, work hard, and to achieve success alongside our teammates. We hope to inspire other girls to take that initial step towards their goal just as we have done."





## COMMENCEMENT 2015

# *Class of 2015: Ready to cross into our futures*

On June 7, in front of a packed audience of loving families and friends, 56 seniors processed across the stage at the Twentieth Century Club in Oakland, becoming the 128th graduating class of Winchester Thurston School.

The emotion in the room was palpable as the audience switched from tears of pride to laughter and back again throughout the ceremony. The accomplishments of the graduates, from academic achievements, to WPIAL and sectional championships, acceptances to top universities, and impactful City as Our Campus projects, were regaled by proud members of the class and WT's faculty and staff.



Head of School Gary Niels began his tenure at WT in 2002, the same year this graduating class embarked on their WT journey as Kindergartners. Reflecting on the beginning of their school careers, Niels recalled a Town Meeting held at the beginning of his tenure that focused on answering the question



of what a WT graduate should look like. The participants put forth a vision of a graduate who leaves WT possessing the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed and thrive in the world, as well as a nurturing spirit that was truthful and courageous—a person who both does good and is good.

### **Well Done Class of 2015, Well Done**

Krithika Pennathur '15 welcomed the audience to the ceremonies and reflected on the incredible talent, passion, and

intelligence possessed by her fellow classmates, and the dedication and love of the faculty who “aspire to learn from us and strive to create an environment in which we thrive.”

Student Council President, Adam Berkebile '15 kicked off his speech with a bold statement, “Life is Like a Hamburger.” How? As Berkebile explained, each component of a perfect burger is a vital part of the whole. The components of the burger, the meat, rub, cheese, the toppings and the bun all represent a part of the Class of 2015's time at WT, from their academic endeavors, friends and caring teachers, to their extracurricular activities and most importantly, their families that hold all of the pieces together. Berkebile concluded with advice for his classmates, “As you go out into the world I encourage you...build your fullest burger, knowing that what we have learned here at WT, perseverance, knowledge, confidence, will carry us through our college years and beyond. Add your own flavor, your own rub...stand out against injustice, strive to help



those less fortunate, carry on the WT tradition: think also of the comfort and the rights of others.”

Addressing a captive audience, Maia Rosenfeld '15 reflected on the courage that it takes to cross bridges, both literal and figurative.







"WT has prepared us to cross our next bridge...Our community has helped shape our identity—the environment and examples around us have taught us to care about one another, and have constantly reminded us that we're all in this together."

Doug Campbell, then President of the Board of Trustees, shared the purpose of WT according to its bylaws: "To own, maintain, and operate a school for the education of youth as

appropriate in preparation for college or university," noting that while the purpose seems incredibly basic, there are no instructions for how this should be accomplished. During Campbell's 12 year tenure, he has watched the board, faculty, and staff work tirelessly to interpret this directive in a meaningful way that creates a vibrant culture that allows students to thrive.

## Winchester Thurston School Class of 2015

Rohun John Sundip Agarwal  
Katherine Claire Ashwood  
Adrian Gabriel Bayemi  
Adam Jonathan Berkebile  
Madeleine Joan Beyer  
Aleksander Herrmann  
Binion  
Britt Maren Bovbjerg  
Mieke Ann Bovbjerg  
Theodore James Boyd\*  
Maxwell Steele Calhoun  
Adam James Cohen\*  
James Christopher Counihan  
Landin M. Delaney  
Summer Marie Devlin\*

William B. Farnsworth  
Anna Pearl Ferry  
David Silver Friedman 🌐  
Lindsay Hanna Gorby 🌐  
Justin Kramer Hare\*  
Kathryn Foster Hazen\*  
Natalie Evette Heywood  
Sean Edward Holmes  
Noah David James  
Noa Katherine Jett  
Wesley Alan Johnson  
Ayeko Jordana Kauffmann-  
Okoko  
Maria Cristina Lagnese  
Anastasia Marie Landman

Azania I-Queen Lane-  
Majestic  
Mathieu Fernand Lebiere  
Emma Katherine Lee\*  
Alexa Marie Lehman\*  
Brendon Robert Maloney\*  
Manasa Krishna Melachuri  
Addie Rose Moritz  
Akiko Elaine Nace  
Nicholas Lee Pearlman 🌐  
Krithika Saraswathy  
Pennathur  
Emma Jarrell Place  
Max Louis Pollack\*  
Bridget Campbell Re

Hannalea Rachel Resnik  
Will Semenza Robinson  
Lucas Anton Rosenblatt  
Maia Lior Rosenfeld  
Elizabeth Maurides Siefert  
Joshua Michael Siktart  
Ariel Rose Stein  
Jared Francis Steinberg\*  
Alexandra Julieta Uribe  
Griffin Theo van de Venne  
Jonathan Carl VanBriesen  
Ansel Wang  
Daniel George Wittig  
Max Joseph Zissu  
Alexa Morgan Zytznick\*

\*WT Lifer 🌐 Legacy

## 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*

**Elizabeth Maurides Siefert**

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

**Summer Marie Devlin**

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

**Adrian Gabriel Bayemi**

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

**Noa Katherine Jett**

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

**Joshua Michael Siktart**

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

**Krithika Saraswathy Pennathur**

*The Jane L. Scarborough Award for teaching excellence was presented to*

**David Nassar**

*Upper School Computer Science Teacher and Department Chair. Nassar was recognized for his innovative and creative teaching and his and passion for his students.*

**Gaylen Westfall** was honored for her incredible 40-year service to WT by being named an honorary alumna. Read about her commitment to the school and the impact that she has had on the community on page 9.

# APPLEFEST 2015

A picture perfect fall day provided the backdrop to WT's annual Applefest celebration. A long-standing tradition of the Parents Association, Applefest opens WT's North Hills Campus to the entire community for a fall festival featuring apples, pumpkins, crafts, food, and fun. This year more than 600 attendees enjoyed activities including a local blacksmith and beekeeper, a petting zoo, and of course hayrides. Special thanks to Applefest Co-Chairs Angie Hubbard and Jenny Reddy, and the amazing Applefest Planning Committee for their leadership and dedication! Thanks to everyone who attended Applefest and a special thanks to all who volunteered to make the day so special.



**THISTLETALK GOES DIGITAL**  
See more photos at  
[winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle](http://winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle)





# TODAY'S DONORS FUEL TOMORROW'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Every WT Fund gift benefits every student by bridging the gap between tuition and the actual cost of an engaging education. As today's donors, we promote faculty enrichment, help produce musicals and plays, and immerse young minds in the languages and cultures of our world. We outfit classrooms with advanced technology and we boost pride in our athletics program.

**Demonstrate your belief in education with a gift to the 2015-2016 WT Fund today**

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Contact Michelle Wion Chitty

WT Parent of Octavia, Class of 2024

Assistant Director of Advancement

412-578-3748

[wionm@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:wionm@winchesterthurston.org)





Members of the Class of 1965 celebrate their 50th Reunion: (top row L-R) Claudine Cmarada Schneider, Rachel 'Vicky' Berg, Mary Sturm Albright, Catherine 'Kate' Crutchfield Swatek, Joan Clark Davis, Nancy Herron, Ellen Halteman, Samantha Francis Flynn, Marsha Powell Cable, Ronda Lustman, Carol Heape, Margaret 'Peggy' Stubbs, Carolyn Slease Frahm, (middle row L-R) Cynthia 'Cynnie' Pearson Turich, Shelley Hight, Susan MacMichael Zuntini, Emily 'Tabby' Amerman Vagnoni, Lucy Miller Stevens, Elizabeth Brittain Braun, (seated L-R) Judith Johnson Smith, Nancy Clever Middleton, Julie Hibbard Crittenden, Margaret 'Marny' Riehl Peabody, Mary Hamilton Burroughs

## REUNION 2015

The entire community came together to celebrate everything WT. Friendships, impressive faculty, performing arts, and athletics all made for an entertaining and inspirational Reunion 2015.

The Falk Auditorium Celebration emceed by Michael Booker '12 and Antonia 'Nia' D'Emilio '12 (with a special appearance by "Kate Monster" from WT's production of *Avenue Q*) featured an extraordinary panel of alums in arts and entertainment. Ian Gould '94, Hannah Grannemann '96, Andrew Santelli '00, Kate Rogal '02, Ilana Toeplitz '05, and Don Michael Mendoza '06 shared memories of their time at WT and words of wisdom. A host of alums from all over the country sent in heartwarming video messages. And the packed house enjoyed breathtaking performances by pianist Martha Locker '95, artist Ben Sota '99, and actor Jason Shavers '00.



Members of the Class of 1970 celebrate their 45th Reunion (top row L-R) Megan Hall, Linda Thiessen Bankson, Rose Sherman Lenchner, Elizabeth 'Liz' Lee Brinker, Mary Navarro, M. Anne Peters, (seated L-R) Susan Crump Hammond, Suzanne 'Suzy' Reed Gilbert, Sharon Simon Dunlap

Alums returned with a resounding message of thanks. The Falk Auditorium Celebration included a special tribute to Barb Holmes for her 40 years at WT and expressions of gratitude for the performing arts faculty who teach empathy, instill confidence, and help students find their own unique paths.



#### THISTLETALK GOES DIGITAL

Get a full gallery of photos from Reunion 2015 at [winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle](http://winchesterthurston.org/digitalthistle)



The Class of 1965, the largest class ever to graduate from WT, rallied to make a \$20,000 gift to the school to contribute to the renovations that transformed the Falk Auditorium where they put on student-run productions fifty years ago.

At the Cocktail Party, the celebration of performing arts continued with an Alum Cabaret and jam session with performing arts teacher John Maione.

Alums, faculty, students and their families kicked back on Saturday with games on Garland Field and enjoyed a taste of WT BBQ. The field hockey team boasted the most seasoned players, led by two members of the Class of 1965, Daryl Massey Bladen and Emily Amerman Vagnoni.



Class of 1995 members celebrating their 20th Reunion (L-R) Martha Locker, Martha 'Mattie' McLaughlin Schloetzer, Benjamin Brody, Sarah McLaughlin Lee, Sean Weaver, Tiffany Sizemore, Amanda Gardener



Alums, families, and friends attended the Falk Auditorium celebration



Sisters Martha 'Mattie' McLaughlin Schloetzer '95 and Sarah McLaughlin Lee '95 back from Washington, DC and Switzerland for their 20th reunion



Barb Holmes receives a director's chair in honor of her 40 years at WT



Alum panelists (L-R) Ian Gould '94, Ilana Toeplitz '05, Don Michael Mendoza '06, Hannah Grannemann '96, Andrew Santelli '00, and Kate Rogal '02 (not pictured) candidly sharing the successes and stumbles that led to achievements in their careers in the arts



Michael Booker II '12 and Antonia 'Nia' D'Emilio '12 with "Kate Monster"



Alums take the soccer field once again. (standing L-R) David Piemme, Mac Gray, Sierra Laventure-Volz '05, Joshua Andy, Ben Steiner '11, Nikhil Singh '06, Gabe Beru '11, Manoli Epitropoulos '14, Jack Harper '14, Adam Brownold, (front row L-R) Thomas Gray A'08, David Curtis '11, Jeff Steiner '11, George Epitropoulos '11, Parus Nischal '13



Margaret 'Marny' Riehl Peabody '65 and Susan MacMichael Zuntini '65 share laughs at the Reunion cocktail reception



Ben Sota '99 during his jaw dropping performance



Jason Cohen '13 (r), Falk Auditorium Dedication and Alum Cabaret stage manager



Don Michael Mendoza '06, Alum Cabaret producer and performer



Emily Amerman Vagnoni '65 makes a move to gain possession from an Upper School field hockey player

## REUNION

It won't be Reunion without you! Save the date: October 7 and 8, 2016. Class years ending in '1 and '6 will celebrate special reunion milestones.

**Save the Date: October 7-8, 2016**



### WELCOME BAT: HOME FROM COLLEGE LUNCH

Young alums on break from college are invited

to visit with friends and teachers at the annual Home from College Lunch. Mark your calendars: Tuesday, January 5, 2016.

### JOIN US FOR THE SIXTH ANNUAL YOUNG ALUM LACROSSE GAME: MAY 2016



The tradition continues! Join WT alumnae/i on Garland Field for the games. Get in gear or cheer on fellow alums as they take on the Upper School boys and girls teams. Stay tuned for details.



# class notes



Ruth Weimer Tillar '41 (L) and Marion Thompson Kerwin '42 (R)

1941

**Ruth Weimer Tillar** shares memories of being a WT student from 1938 to 1941: Being a boarding student was a wonderful and memorable experience for me. Every day was exciting—having the opportunity to live in Miss Mitchell's home that we fondly called "the house." Special plans were arranged for each afternoon following classes. There were trips planned by the teachers who also lived at "the house." The teachers were Miss Felix, Miss Bortman, and Miss Smart. We attended special events in Pittsburgh including visits to art shows, flower shops, museums, programs at Pitt and [Carnegie] Tech. Another highlight was ice skating at Duquesne Gardens. We were in fashion shows for fundraising events and participated in sports on the hockey field and in the WT gymnasium. We had dinner with Miss Mitchell each evening with celebrations for birthdays and other special events. We especially enjoyed

hearing Miss Mitchell speak about Scotland. There was a two-hour study hall followed by refreshments before we went to our rooms for lights out. **Marion Thompson Kerwin '42** and I were roommates for three years and have continued to see each other. At WT we made friendships that lasted a lifetime. There were visits to each other's homes in other cities many times, keeping up with each other while in college. We were bridesmaids in each other's weddings and attended WT reunions throughout the years. WT and Shady Side Academy had a theater production together each year and several social events. In recent years while serving on the Alumni Board at the College of William and Mary, I met another board member who is a graduate of Shady Side Academy. When we see each other he sings the WT alma mater to me, which he learned with the Shady Side Academy Glee Club.

1953

**Elisabeth 'Betsy' Riddle Ruderfer** plans to move to Pittsburgh next year and hopes to come to Reunion then. She hopes that something dog-friendly will open up in the Oakland area. Betsy is a vocalist, actress, and an alumna of the Pittsburgh Playhouse School of the Theatre. She was once a member of the Choral Arts Society of Washington but opted for the American Song Book and the music of the Gershwin Brothers, Cole Porter, Johnny Mercer, and Harold Arlen. Music matters, she says, because it so eloquently speaks of life and love in terms that anyone, of any generation, can understand. Her quest is to keep this music alive forever. Betsy was a vocalist for a 17 piece big band, and for nearly ten years was the regular Friday night chanteuse at a little Alexandria, Virginia bistro. She appears occasionally with the Not So Modern Jazz Quartet, a Washington, D.C. area Dixieland swing and jazz band.

1954

**Alice Gault Fuchs** loved seeing her classmates at last year's Reunion. She's busy writing poetry and fiction, having three novels and one book of poems as Amazon e-books. She dashes between Pittsburgh and San Francisco to keep up with five grandchildren, and will soon retire from her Washington County farm and move back to the Pittsburgh area. She asks herself regularly if she will ever get up enough nerve to share her piece about one of her dearest, most colorful WT teachers, Elmira Dunlevy!

1963

*Pittsburgh Magazine* named **Karen Wolk Feinstein** one of the 50 most powerful people in Pittsburgh. Recognized for her leadership in healthcare reform, Karen is the founding President and CEO of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and works to improve mental health care and health services through her work with the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative, Health Careers Future, and Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform.



Karen Wolk Feinstein '63

1967

**Heather 'Ruth Ann' Wishik** started a new position as Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for The Nature Conservancy at the end of September. The Nature Conservancy works throughout the United States and in 35 other countries to help conserve the land and waters on which all life depends. Ruth Ann writes, "I am excited to join the world's largest conservation organization in its work to help save our planet."

1968

**Janice 'Jan' Coco Groft's** new book, *Artichokes & City Chicken: Reflections on Faith, Grief, and My Mother's Italian Cooking*, has just been released. Part memoir, part spiritual guide, *Artichokes*

& *City Chicken* is a candid and poignant encounter with unresolved grief. WT friends may find the mention of the late **Mrs. Jan Widgery '37**, beloved WT English teacher, of special interest.

**Tanya Palmer** enjoyed time with WT friends **Joy Marks Gray, Kathryn Rich Sherman, Linda McKee Larkin, and Georgia McKee Holmberg '64** during a recent visit to Pittsburgh.



(L-R) Linda McKee Larkin '68, Georgia McKee Holmberg '64, and Tanya Palmer '68



(L-R) Joy Marks Gray '68, Kathryn Rich Sherman '68, and Tanya Palmer '68

## 1973

**Victoria 'Vic' Dym** released her first poetry chapbook, *Class Clown*, published by Finishing Line Press and available on Amazon. Victoria has been cast as Dr. Alice, the psychiatrist, in an independent film that she also co-wrote, *The Man With Elephant Hands*, to be released in spring of 2016. Vic now resides in Tampa, Florida and plans

to visit with her daughter, Sydney, in Paris to celebrate her 60th!



Victoria Dym '73

## 1979

**Kerry Walk** was appointed president of Marymount Manhattan College in New York City where she is inspired to maximize on the school's location in the city's Upper East Side to afford students with access to learning experiences and internships. During an interview with the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Kerry spoke of the inspiration she drew at WT from teachers like Mrs. Martha Cussler, Ms. Susan Browlee, now Executive Director of The Fine Foundation, **Ms. Virginia Sheppard '41** and Mrs. Mary (Cohen) Wactlar. Kerry is an educator who taught at Harvard University and Princeton University, and she held leadership roles at Princeton, Pitzer College in Los Angeles, and Otis College of Art and Design.



Kerry Walk '79

## 1991

**Alunda Grzybek Edmonds** completed her second Mario Lemieux Foundation's 6.6K Run and Family Walk. It was replete, she writes, with "two bridges, one tunnel, and a high-five from Mario at the start and the finish!"



Alunda Grzybek Edmonds '91 at the finish line of the 6.6K Run and Family Walk in October

## 1995

**Angela Hertz** co-founded a nonprofit Italian language school and cultural association, La Scuola d'Italia Galileo Galilei, which she runs with her husband Marco Marzulli, and colleague Derek Illar. In addition to language classes, the school hosts Italian film nights at WT.



Angela Hertz '95

**Sarah McLaughlin Lee** and her family have been living in Geneva, Switzerland for a year and a half. Sarah enjoys being a stay-at-home mom to two year old daughter Julia. She also loves taking advantage of the hiking and chocolate Switzerland has to

offer. In July, Sarah and her family enjoyed a holiday in Sardinia, Italy.



Sarah McLaughlin Lee '95 and her family on a holiday in Sardinia, Italy

## 1996

**Sarah Gross Fife** is reaching the mid-point of her studies through the Kohenet Institute, working toward ordination as a Hebrew Priestess. Through her experience as an emerging Kohenet, she has taken a new name, KeShira haLev, which means "song connected to the heart." KeShira has been busy! She recently became an Australian Civil Celebrant and is enjoying officiating ceremonies and rituals including weddings, vow renewals, baby namings, and Bar and Bat Mitzvahs (both in Australia and in the United States). She continues to build and guide Keshet (the Hebrew word for "connection") communities in Sydney (and sometimes Pittsburgh too) which are Jewish in origin but seek to welcome people from all walks of life into post-denominational, non-institutional, reflective, and joyful prayer gatherings.

KeShira and her husband, Tim, have had much to celebrate. In the past two months, they have become Australian citizens and celebrated 11 years of marriage! KeShira and Tim are beginning to plan for their sabbatical



which will take place in the second half of 2016 when they hope to be in Pittsburgh for the Class of 1996's 20th reunion. She hopes to see you there!

## 1997

**Casey McDaniel** participated in the commemoration of the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery where she photographed the 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" on the Edmund Pettis Bridge. She also captured the family of civil rights activist Reverend Joseph Lowery. One of her photographs will be used to create a bust memorializing the historic event. Casey is the founder and owner of Caselove Productions, a media production company based in Atlanta, Georgia.



Casey McDaniel A'97 on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama

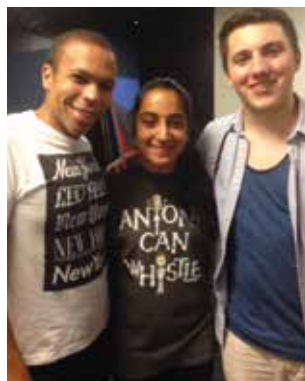
**Meridith Deluzio Pettigrew** started a new chapter as Dean of Students of Rutherford Academy. She writes that she has been proud to be a part of new and amazing things at the Center for Autism at The King's Daughters' School.

## 1999

An original show written by **Ben Sota** is being performed every weekend for a year at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. His play is the first ever performed at the museum, a national Canadian museum. Ben is proud of the unexpected honor. Ben teaches in the Physical Theater Department at Coastal Carolina University in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

## 2000

**Jason Shavers** is helping to establish a Gene Kelly Awards Alumni Association being formed for networking, performance opportunities, and raising funds for scholarship awards. Members of the group will join recent nominees and awardees in Gene Kelly Award performances.



(L-R) Jason Shavers '00 with Roshni Nischal Class of 2017 and Dan Wittig '15 during rehearsals for the Gene Kelly Awards finale

## 2001

**Alexander 'Alec' Karakatsanis** is continuing to fight the unjust imprisonment of poor and vulnerable United States citizens, recently winning two

major federal constitutional lawsuits. Equal Justice Under Law, the nonprofit law center that Alec co-founded, settled the suits in Missouri and Louisiana working with ArchCity Defenders in Missouri and the MacArthur Justice Center in Louisiana. The suits resulted in officials changing practices in their jurisdiction to end jailing people after misdemeanor arrests simply because they cannot afford to pay bail.

## 2004

**James Eversmeyer** entered medical school at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine this past fall, after years of working in nursing.



James Eversmeyer '04 visiting the pillared portals before heading off to Cleveland, Ohio

**Elizabeth 'Lizzy' Seguin** moved to Los Angeles more than a year ago and lives in Venice Beach. She is working as a freelance wardrobe stylist. She worked on two Taylor Swift music videos this summer, *Bad Blood* and *Wildest Dream*. The hours are long but she's met all sorts of big name celebrities and is having a great time getting into the California lifestyle.

**Ian Sullivan** is happy to be back in Pittsburgh, pursuing an M.B.A. at Carnegie Mellon's Tepper School of Business. Ian completed his first marathon this summer in San Francisco, and is looking forward to the Pittsburgh race calendar.

## 2006

While in Washington, D.C. our eighth graders and faculty chaperones who were visiting the nation's capital on their annual trip were treated to a musical performance by *La-Ti-Do* the weekly spoken word and musical theatre series co-produced by **Don Michael Mendoza**.



(L-R) Middle School Co-Director for Student Life and Performing Arts Department Chair Dan Sadowski, Dan Michael Mendoza '06, school nurse Beverly Jones, and science teacher Pete Frischmann

## 2008



Michael McCarthy '08

**Michael McCarthy** performed as a guest soloist with the All University Orchestra of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Michael is a second year violin fellow with the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Florida.



Alexa Vitalie Davis '08  
and her husband  
Maxwell Davis

## 2010

**Jimmyse Brown** is studying at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom where she will continue to play basketball.

## 2011

**Allison 'Alli' Kunkle** and **Adam Eller** celebrated their third graduation together! WT's Middle School in 2007, Upper School in 2011, and now Franklin and Marshall Class of 2015.



(L-R) Alli Kunkle '11 and  
Adam Eller '11



(L-R) WT friends Austin Lieber '13, Spencer Lieber '10, Isaac Rudich '11 and bride Paige Rudich, Brandon Canedy '11, Ari Schuman '11, and Barb and John Holmes celebrating Isaac and Paige's wedding

Ripe, the seven piece funk band managed by **Maxwell Stofman**, released its latest video *Downward* taped live at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. Ripe was recently featured on Radio 92.9 as the Jam of the Week.

## 2013

**Natalie Adams** is spending her fall semester in Washington, D.C. where she is interning in Senator Bob Casey's office. In January she'll return to the chilly tundra of upstate New York to continue her study of Comparative Literature at Hamilton College.

We want to hear your news! Send photos and notes to Linsey McDaniel A'96 at [mcdaniell@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:mcdaniell@winchesterthurston.org) or mail them to 555 Morewood Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

## WT WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT



Drew Chelosky brings more than 15 years of experience in development and alumni relations to WT. His background is a classic mosaic of nonprofit experience in education and the Pittsburgh community—beginning with his alma mater, Washington & Jefferson College, where he honed his skills working in the college's admission office, alumni relations office, development program, and later the Alumni Executive Council. From there Chelosky worked in leadership development roles at Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Pittsburgh (including the School of Law), and most recently he served as the Assistant Dean for Development at the Eberly College of Arts & Sciences at West Virginia University.

In the community, Chelosky was elected President of the Pittsburgh Planned Giving Council, ex officio board member of the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, and committee leader for the American Bar Association, American Association of Law Schools, and Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

At the University of Pittsburgh's School of Law, Chelosky led his team through the completion of a \$50 million campaign, and at West Virginia University he helped to transform the development program by extending Eberly College's fundraising goal from \$55 million to \$84 million.

"I am honored to be part of such a strong community—parents, alumnae/i, faculty, and staff—who are deeply committed to WT's mission. It is our combined efforts that ensure that each student is engaged in a challenging and inspiring learning environment," notes Chelosky. "I'm eager to connect with our constituents to play my part in fulfilling this mission."

## JOIN US ON THE ROAD

New York City alumnae/i, be sure to join us on February 2. Visit [www.winchesterthurston.org/ontheroad](http://www.winchesterthurston.org/ontheroad) for details on this and other events.

Interested in hosting a WT gathering in your town? Contact Linsey McDaniel A'96 at [mcdaniell@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:mcdaniell@winchesterthurston.org).

## STAY IN TOUCH!

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Access the Alumnae/i Directory by visiting the My WT Alumnae/i Portal at [www.winchesterthurston.org/mywt](http://www.winchesterthurston.org/mywt).



## NEW STUDENT AWARDS

“What we have once enjoyed we can never lose.  
All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.”

Helen Keller so aptly describes the loss of two very special members of our WT family—alumnus Nathan Hurrell '14 and English teacher Mrs. Jeanne-Anna Widgery. Through the efforts of family, friends, students, and faculty, our community celebrated their memories this past spring during Upper School Class Day by naming two student awards in their honor.



*H. Haydon Alexander,  
Class of 2017*

### **NATHAN A. HURRELL '14 PERFORMING ARTS SERVICE AWARD**

The Nathan A. Hurrell '14 Performing Arts Service Award is presented in memory of Nathan Hurrell, who died tragically just 11 days after graduating from WT. Nathan had a gentle and warming soul and brightened the lives of his fellow students through

laughter. He was known to lift your spirit if you were down and made a point to blindly tackle inequalities. Nathan's unswerving loyalty, generous heart, unflagging optimism, and devotion to the performing arts at WT exemplified the qualities of the award recipient: a student who is a full participant in the performing arts, who unselfishly gives time and talent to others, and who provides the “behind the scenes” support so critical to running an ensemble or producing a show.

The 2015 award was presented to H. Haydon Alexander. Haydon is currently a junior who acts as stage manager for the Upper School productions.



*Maia Rosenfeld '15*

### **JEANNE-ANNA WIDGERY '37 ENGLISH PRIZE**

The Jeanne-Anna Widgery English Prize is awarded to a senior who has distinguished herself or himself in both writing and literature, developing prowess and demonstrating intellectual rigor in literary analysis and criticism, and honing skills in creative or academic writing. Mrs. Jeanne-Anna Ayres Widgery '37 was a poet, novelist,

painter, mother, and WT English teacher who inspired her students with her passion for writing, as well as her keen intelligence, open-mindedness, deep caring, and fierce sense of what is right. She received WT's Distinguished Alumna award in 1985.

Mrs. Widgery's three daughters attended WT—Carolyn Widgery Silk '69, Catherine Widgery '71, and Claudia Widgery Stelle '73. With an initial lead donation from the Widgery family, and ongoing support from alumnae/i and friends, this prize helps to ensure that a WT student will champion Mrs. Widgery's legacy and passion for writing. The inaugural recipient of the Jeanne-Anna Widgery English Prize was Maia Rosenfeld '15, presently a freshmen at Brown University.

If you would like to make a memorial contribution to these, or other awards, please contact Drew Chelosky, Director of Advancement, at [cheloskyd@winchesterthurston.org](mailto:cheloskyd@winchesterthurston.org) or 412-578-3746.



### **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.

**Margaret Niedringhaus  
Palmer '32**  
**Jane Blattner Kreimer '40**  
**Shirley Seubert Chewning '43**  
**Barbara Weinberg Rackoff '43**  
**Rachel Heppenstall  
Shingler '43**  
**Stephanie Frank Mallinger '49**

**Mary McNaugher Marsh '51**  
**Patricia Smallwood Aiello '54**  
**Heather Cuckler '69**  
**Laura Mercer '70**  
**Susan Price-Livingston '73**  
**David S. Ketchum,  
former trustee**




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