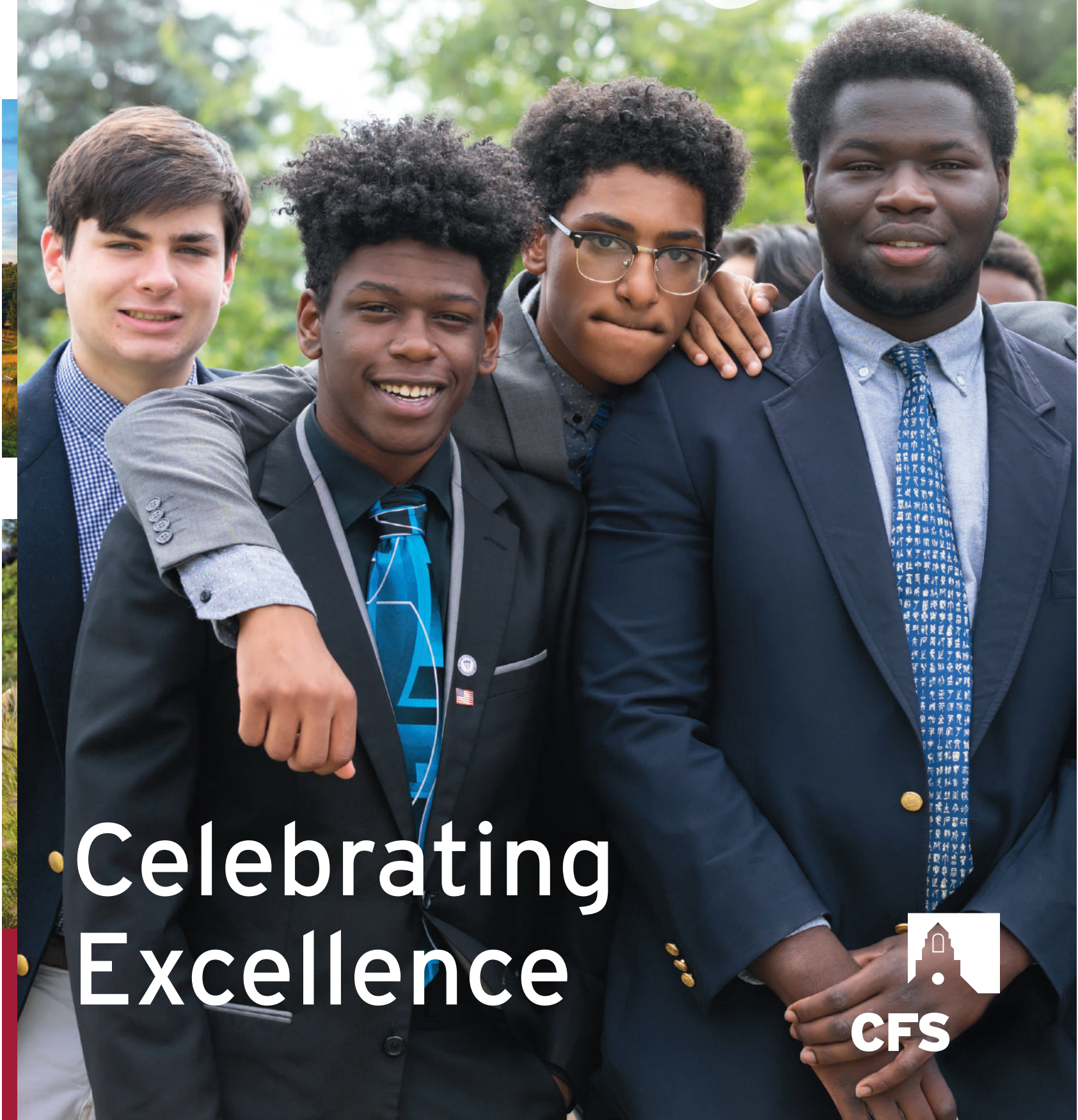


# MAROON & GREY

SPRING 2020

*The Magazine of Church Farm School*



# Celebrating Excellence



**CFS**



# CFS

#### MAROON & GREY

Spring 2020  
The Magazine of Church Farm  
School

#### EDITOR

Stefanie Claypoole

#### LAYOUT & DESIGN

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#### MISSION

The Church Farm School prepares a diverse group of boys with academic ability and good character to lead productive and fulfilling lives by making a college preparatory education financially accessible.

Support our mission at [gocfs.net](http://gocfs.net).

#### ADMINISTRATION

##### HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Rev. Edmund K. Sherrill II

##### ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL/ DIRECTOR OF ACADEMICS

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##### DIRECTOR OF ADMISSION

Lisa Reynolds Smoots

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Chet Blair

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Dear Alumni and Friends of Church Farm School,

This publication of the *Maroon & Grey* was conceived shortly after the start of the current school year as a celebration of continuing excellence at Church Farm School. We have so much to share with you about today's CFS, much like the lively stories so many of you have about the variety of ways excellence was initially discovered and pursued on this great campus in your time here, and many of you have sought to support its continuing reality through personal generosity. Good things happen here as we seek excellence in pursuit of our enduring educational mission and we are grateful that you make it possible. And of all the things to do and pursue here, at the heart of the matter and something that will be often repeated in each story to be found herein, is an excellence in relationships, the deep and abiding bonds of brotherhood and all the blessings that derive from them as life propels us forward.

Be that as it is, as I write this letter in anticipation of spring and all of the events that typically draw us back to campus and closer to one another at the culmination of a school year, the strength and quality of our relationships is being tested by the arrival and spread of the novel coronavirus, Covid-19. The singular uniqueness and significance of this pandemic challenges us in new ways particularly as health imperatives and government mandates have necessitated the suspension of campus operations for a time, perhaps through the remainder of the school year. It is antithetical and heartbreaking that a residential community designed to bring us together and foster relationships instead has to seek its wellbeing by maintaining a physical distance so as not to spread such a contagion.

Regretting this state of affairs and tested as we may be, I nevertheless know that challenges bring opportunities, courage produces effective responses, faith maintains an enduring hope and love generates selfless service to the vitality of our collective and shared humanity. Excellence is found in these things and as this school has in the past we are pursuing them vigorously. Count on it!

We benefit from our modern technological age and all the effort so many donors have made to provide our students with laptop computers and educational software that enhances their global learning environment. This asset is being employed more fully than ever before and school is open as a result, albeit through distance learning. Moreover, the relationships students have with one



another and their adult mentors continue to grow and reach for newfound and unimagined excellence. The essential CFS experience of brotherhood, the excellence of our relationships with one another, still remains at the very heart of the matter. Thanks be to God!

Finally, we are well-grounded in God's grace and favor knowing that the school began in the very year of the last great pandemic (1918) and has since endured other trials and challenges to which multiple generations of CFS students have responded so ably and well. Thus, my trust and confidence is that this publication will bring you joy and insight into our ongoing mission work and that you will know just how prepared our students are to meet the challenges ahead.

Stay well and stay in touch,

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

# NED SHERRILL: *Ten Years of Excellence*

## SKIPPING TO SCHOOL

From the very beginning of his tenure as Head of Church Farm School, The Rev. Edmund K. Sherrill II (Ned) has famously enthused to all, “Being head of this amazing school with its powerful mission is the best job in the world. I literally skip down the hill to my office almost every morning (it is downhill!), always excited about the day ahead.”

Ten years later, it’s fair to wonder: “Does he still skip down that hill?”

Ned came to Church Farm School in 2009 via some of the nation’s leading boarding schools, having held administrative positions at St. Paul’s School in Concord, New Hampshire; St. Mark’s School in Southborough, Massachusetts; and Wooster School in Danbury, Connecticut—his alma mater. He had also served concurrently as vicar and headmaster of St. John’s Church and School on the island of Guam in Micronesia.

With a B.A. from Macalester College and a M.Div. from Yale Divinity School, Ned was well prepared to assume leadership. He was joined in the Head of School's residence by his wife Lizette, two yellow labs and a cat. Lizette proceeded to make the residence a place of warmth and welcome to students, faculty, alumni, directors, guests and their families. Today, it is a favorite gathering place for all the school's constituencies. The couple's three children and grandchildren are also frequent visitors.

Ned answers the question: "Yes, I still skip to work! Here's why: Throughout the past decade, Church Farm School has remained steadfast in affirming its mission of making an affordable education available to deserving young men." He adds that, "My colleagues and I live as fully as we can into each day in order to enhance our students' lives, asking how we and our students can foster growth and goodness in one another and be of service to the greater world beyond our doors. Truly, our enduring mission continues to drive our purpose."

## SOME REFLECTIONS

### FAITH

Regarding Church Farm School's Episcopal identity, Ned affirms that, "The Church is a larger, living body that embraces our school and each person in it. Our faith that selfless love will best direct our lives is at the heart of all we do. It is not a call to conformity or even uniformity, but rather a call to love one's neighbor as oneself and respect the dignity of every human being, for they, too, are children of God. We must therefore be a Christian school without being exclusively Christian." He concludes that, "Goodness is manifest at CFS through the flowering of our diversity, a joy made known in the variety of our song. We should respect and work together according to that gift."

### STUDENTS

At the center of CFS is the strength for the present and future CFS is the strength and integrity of relationships students can build with one another and their adult mentors; relationships not just felt during their time as students, but throughout life. Promoting an ethical leadership initiative early on, Ned encouraged the community to articulate what have become the four core values of the school—Integrity, Respect, Responsibility and

Brotherhood—and he has persistently sought to focus any new initiative in program or physical plant on one primary goal—student success driven by strong relationships.

"Significant relationships are at the heart of the boarding experience, and we have created a variety of means to enhance ways the boys can interact, enjoy and learn from one another as well as from the faculty and staff." Ten years ago, nearly 80% of students were eager to go home



most every weekend and today, that same number are just as excited to stay on campus and take advantage of weekend activities and time together.

All faculty members are regularly in the cottages during the week and on weekends, providing extra-help and, more importantly, counsel and advice on a variety of topics shared informally and formally in a residential life curriculum that has social-emotional learning at its center. "We are more focused and intentional about these things today and it's heartening to see the boys respond so well to this greater effort to engage them."

Today's \$15,500,000 campus modernization project will significantly add collaborative meeting spaces and improve access to program resources and the adults who deliver them—all within a safer and purposeful physical environment. Ned says, "Complimenting this effort is the new CFS Strategic Plan that places student success first—right where it should always be. We still have many things we want to improve and we remain determined to do it."

## EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

### ACADEMICS

Restructuring traditional disciplines into the Humanities and a strong STEAM program, which remains open to experimentation, Ned is firmly committed to preparing students for college and the pursuit of lives of service to a greater good. “We ask every student to consider himself as a potential leader within his home and community, in order to earn a place at the decision-making tables that drive business and society. CFS ought to provide at least some of the tools needed to get there.”

He also remains equally committed to the school’s historic attachment to the land, “We have only one planet that is our home and we cannot be the agent that destroys it or one another in competing for or depleting its resources.” He sees this moral imperative developing in environmental programming and utilizing resources such as the school’s five-acre solar array and the four rain gardens that are part of the campus modernization project.



With these “platforms for learning,” the school will create a range of hands-on educational opportunities for students because, “Experience of the here and now imparts a sense of purpose, and in doing, we truly learn the most.”

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ned is also committed to the professional development of the adult community, explaining, “We are all learners, constantly growing and becoming.” Faculty and staff are encouraged and supported in their efforts to pursue greater education and experiences relevant to their fields—to that end, many attend workshops and conferences throughout the country, and most administrators, faculty, staff (and students) are

participating in an array of DEI (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion) activities. The importance of this work is demonstrated by the number of faculty and staff who have assumed leadership positions here at CFS and in other schools.

## A DECADE OF ACHIEVEMENT

2009

Navigating the financial crisis of 2008 to stabilize the school’s financial model led to the clarification of professional roles and responsibilities and a restructuring with faculty assuming greater responsibility for academics, athletics and residential life.

2011

The creation of the 2011 Strategic Plan, in cooperation with the Board of Directors and the entire CFS community, set the stage for significant academic and facility development through the next nine years.

Ned is particularly proud of the diverse composition of the administrative team, the senior leadership group of eight that now includes four persons of color and three women. “Our students must not only see, but learn from, a variety of voices and perspectives. This has made for some lively and important exchanges between us and we are better able to understand, lead, support and serve our school community as a result.”

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND DONORS

“I cannot thank the Church Farm School Board of Directors enough for its guiding vision and constant support,” affirms Ned. Not only do directors provide excellent leadership, they are committed to safeguarding and expanding the school’s resources, especially since only 15% of its annual income comes from tuition.

Indeed, he is humbled by all who have joined in a deepening partnership to support today’s school for, “They truly transform outcomes for children through the power of creating strong educational opportunity.”

Along the way, the Board has instituted term limits by which an increasing number of friends, alumni and others associated with the school can serve at this important level of leadership and widen the reach and influence such a school can have in the greater community. The school’s Leadership Council, composed of business and community leaders, and the Episcopal Mission School’s Council, which advocates for the Diocese’s mission schools—St. James School and Church Farm School—have helped to further broaden constituencies.



## PROFILE OF A CFS GRADUATE

- Curious and Passionate Learners
- Compelling Communicators
- Ethical Agents of the Common Good
- Healthy in Habits of Mind, Body and Spirit
- Persistent in the Pursuit of Excellence
- Committed to Global Responsibility



### 2013

A five-acre solar array to generate most of the campus' electricity was constructed and has resulted in considerable energy savings throughout the campus.

### 2012

Church Farm School joined the Bicentennial Athletic League of the PIAA in 2012. Sports offerings later expanded to include lacrosse (2014) and bowling (2015). Though relatively new, these teams are already highly competitive.

### 2014

The inauguration of an annual Gala, featuring the CFS choir, coupled with the creation of the CFS Griffin Scholars Program, has increased scholarship support and brought many new friends to the school.

## EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

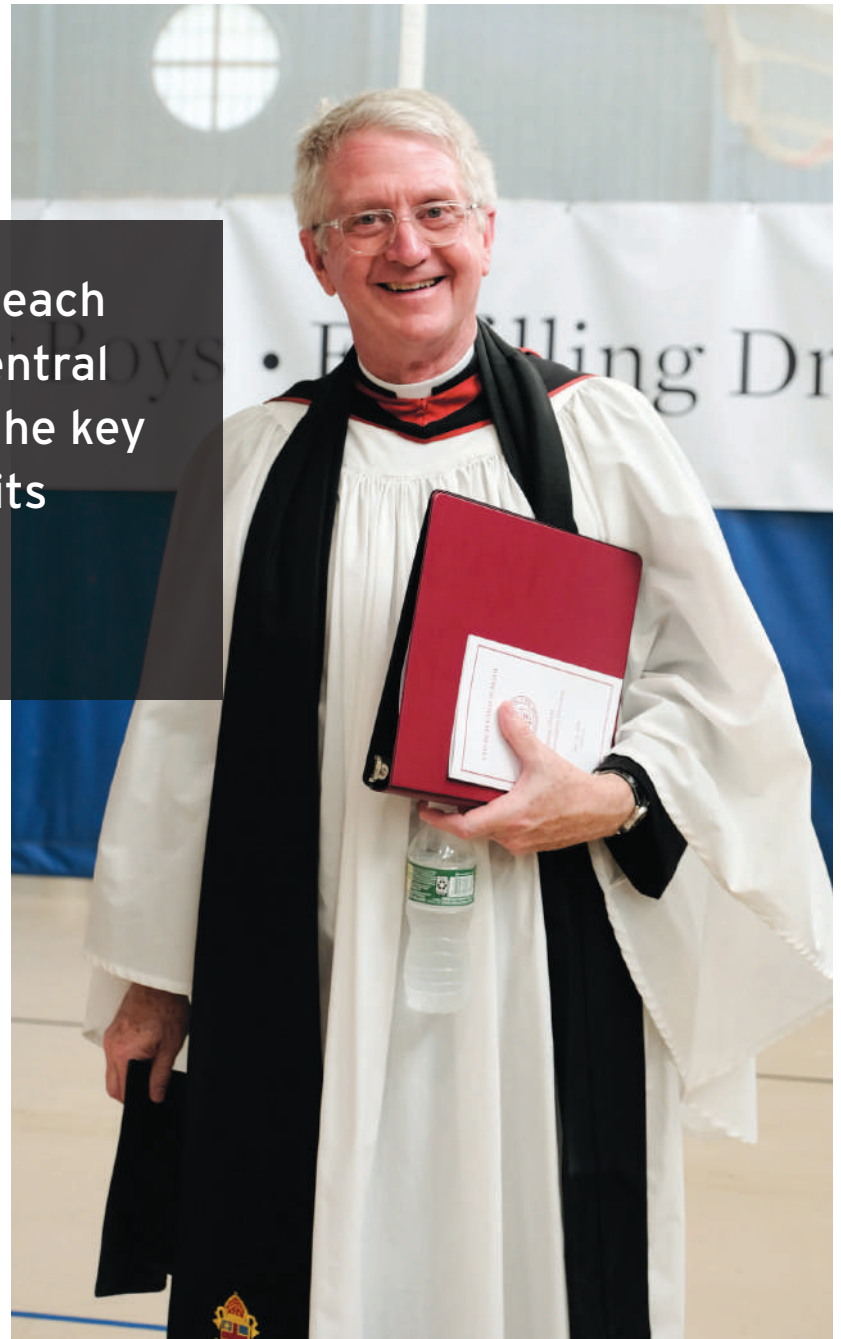
“We value our relationships with each other and know that they are central to our success. They really are the key factor of our experience of life, its hopefulness and joy.”

– NED SHERRILL

### WHAT OTHERS SAY

Ned’s instantaneous connection with Church Farm School’s mission first impressed former Board Chairman, Mark Carroll, who also led the Head of School Search Committee in 2008. Subsequently, the two worked closely together for the next nine years. “Ned has continually been the strong, effective leader we sought,” states Mark, adding that he has inspired the Board to grow beyond governance, taking on a philanthropic function as well. “With every day that went by, we became more and more convinced that we had made the right choice.”

Dean of Faculty, Eric Fulmer, adds, “Ned wants to see the faculty grow and thrive. To that end he has fostered a tremendous sense of professional support and takes every opportunity to open up dialogue with teachers and



#### 2015

The hiring of a full-time Director of College Guidance took an already strong program to new heights, bringing scores of college representatives to the CFS campus every year and resulting in increased millions in grants and scholarships for college-bound students. The landmark Alumni Success Program was created to help first-generation students navigate their way through college. Now, generously funded by the Oprah Winfrey Charitable Trust, this program’s success in effecting on-time graduation increases dramatically every year.



#### 2016

Church Farm School sought and received Middle States Accreditation in 2016, again maintaining this important designation for sustaining the highest standards.

#### 2018

The iconic Memorial Gymnasium was renovated inside and out and will host basketball games and other sporting events for generations to come.





administrators.” Believing that teachers come to Church Farm School because they desire a deeper connection with students and a close-knit learning community, Eric stresses that the school has become a very strong and vibrant learning community under Ned’s leadership.

According to Cecil Hengeveld ’64, “It has been 54 years since I graduated, and I have kept in touch with CFS. When Ned became Head of School, I knew his passion for helping our brothers to evolve into great young men would maintain the school’s legacy. Ned took time to analyze the current status of the total school environment. Then, with all the various CFS stakeholders representing all aspects of the school’s life, he helped to create a CFS Strategic Plan (in 2011) for the future. These efforts are

now paying off with important endeavors to modernize the campus and increase students’ educational experiences, all of which continue to prepare our young men for an ever-changing world.”

## THE FUTURE

As important as celebrating the school’s Centennial has been for CFS over these last two years, the future is unfolding. Ned remains determined to provide his colleagues and the students they serve together with the best in terms of wise planning and sufficient resources needed to fulfill what the school has always sought to be—a source of inspiration enabling each member of the community to realize their dreams. “We value our relationships with each other and know that they are central to our success. They really are the key factor of our experience of life, its hopefulness and joy,” he says.

“This is why I believe it is imperative that we endeavor to have the faculty, including administrators, reside on campus in and around the cottages whereby our living together is as instructive as our working together. This strengthens the essence of an educational community in full relationship and it is the foundation of any genuine residential program.”

### 2018

A yearlong celebration of the past and future characterized Church Farm School’s Centennial in 2018. The annual Alumni Dinner, which attracted more than 250 graduates, was the largest ever.



### 2019

Ground was broken in June 2019 for the landmark \$15,500,000 Campus Modernization Project, which includes the creation of a comprehensive arts center, the renovation of Greystock Hall and the construction of a new entrance road onto the campus.

### 2020

The adoption of the 2020 Strategic Plan, “Unlocking Potential,” created a road map for the school’s programmatic growth and development through 2025.

## MATT BURNS Board of Directors

Before Matt Burns became the board chair, he was a Church Farm School parent. In 2007, Matt and his wife, Teresa, were touring independent schools around the Philadelphia suburbs with their son, John, as an alternative to public high school. Beyond the appeal of the small classes, all-boy environment and focus on student success, Matt says his acquaintance with former CFS faculty John Kistler helped solidify their decision. “John and the other faculty took a very personal interest in my son, and all of the boys.” John graduated from Church Farm School in 2010, and in 2013, Matt was invited onto the Board of Directors for his experience not only as a parent, but for his expertise in engineering and construction (he is the president/CEO of Burns Engineering). “The school was just starting to plan the Campus Modernization Project. The school was terrific

for our son and I really believe in the mission; the Board level seemed to be a great way to get involved.”

After serving as vice chair for five years under the leadership of Mark Carroll, Matt took over as Chair of the Board in the spring 2018. “Coming in, I wanted to initiate a strategic planning process involving the board, faculty, administration and others—get everyone’s priorities on the same page in support of the mission. I’m very happy with how we have clarified our common vision. Our 2025 Strategic Plan creates a clear vision of the future for CFS where everyone is working toward common priorities.”

Another key area of contribution has been Matt’s strong leadership in making the Campus Modernization Project (Phase One) a reality. “We haven’t had a capital project or campaign more than 20 years, and I’m proud that the Board and administration are behind it.” Another goal is to increase the school’s donor base and admission applicant pool.

“The school has evolved in a very positive way under Ned’s leadership, with a real push for excellence and accountability in all areas of campus life. We are developing high-potential young men in ways that will carry them through college and life. And we are getting better at it every year.”

## DAVID ZIMMERMAN '88 Alumni Association

As the leader of QVC and HSN’s Customer Experience organization, David Zimmerman '88 is well-suited to the task of rallying excitement and engagement. His role as the president of the Church Farm School Alumni Association isn’t much different; encouraging alumni of the school to keep looking back, coming back and giving back. It’s a position that he loves, but it is not without its challenges. “People are feeling more connected than ever due to technology, so getting them to gather at a specific place and time as an alumni body is harder than it used to be. As an Association, we’ve tried to elevate our programming to create more interest and urgency to come back. The Alumni Achievement and Newt Disney Service awards are an example, and the Hall

of Athletic Honor inductions are always popular, too.” David promises the time together to share and relive memories will leave an “I am so glad I came back” feeling and renewed motivation to support the CFS mission.

“I continue to be impressed with the school’s ongoing transformation and drive for excellence. Our boys are filled with so much potential and they are eager and ambitious to make the world a better place. The Alumni Association continues to explore ways to engage directly with the boys—Alumni Soccer, Dinner and a Basketball Game, prep-ping care packages for alumni in college, mentoring—these micro glimpses into today’s CFS will confirm that the magic of the farm is ever present and that our shared mission is alive and well.”



## MORGAN BEEVER P'15, P'20 AND LAUREN MILLER Leadership Council

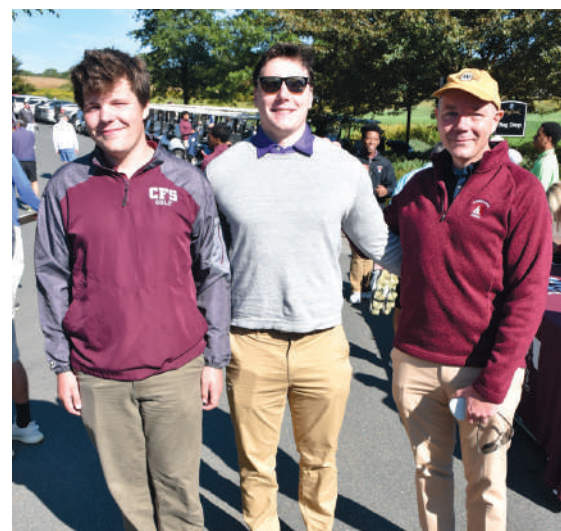
**A**s co-chairs of the CFS Leadership Council, Morgan Beever P'15 and P'20 and Lauren Miller lead a group of vibrant area business people and volunteers committed to helping spread the good work Church Farm School is doing for young men. Morgan and his wife Madeline Beever have witnessed this work firsthand as parents of Winston, who graduated from CFS in 2015, and Van, who will be graduating in May 2020. Currently living in Wayne and working in the commercial real estate lending group with M&T Bank, Morgan is enthusiastic about the transformative effect a Church Farm School education has had on his sons. “Even though it has been a physical fixture in this area for so long, few people understand what an exceptional academic institution it is ... how geographically broad the student population is and how many students benefit from the experience at CFS.” Van has thrived amongst his peer group of 180 other young men from many walks of life. “There is so much motivation here, whether it’s witnessing firsthand the other students working so hard and succeeding, the mentoring from upperclassmen and advisors or the genuine investment in our kids we witness from every adult on campus ... the attention and structure has been great for Van.”

Both Morgan and Madeline lend their time and expertise at Church Farm School, volunteering for Admission or Development events and committees, and this year, with Morgan co-chairing the Leadership Council. “One of the goals of the Council is to promote that Church Farm School is filled with exceptionally smart, self-motivated boys from a variety of geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds who offer local students an unparalleled peer group. We really appreciate that the school offers such an enriching opportunity to kids that have truly earned it.”

Lauren Miller has served as co-chair of the CFS Leadership Council for the past two years. She first learned about the school when she worked at a technology company adjacent to the school. “CFS was my neighbor for nearly a decade. My company would host students for lunch and the choir sang for us each Christmas. I always found the students to be very personable, bright and curious.” When CFS hired Lauren’s former colleague and friend Stefanie Claypoole as its marketing and communications manager and she learned even more about CFS’ mission, she soon became a dedicated supporter.

Lauren’s support has evolved from local donor to Gala committee member to Griffin Scholar sponsor to Leadership Council co-chair. “I joined the Church Farm School’s Leadership Council in 2016 to engage with the students as a role model, and diligently promote the school’s mission to generate interest and financial support from my circle of friends, the local community and beyond. As the co-chair, I have focused on creating opportunities for the Council members and students to mutually benefit by getting to know each other.” One such initiative is the “Griffin Meet & Eats,” where council members and their professional contacts gather with small groups of students over casual dinners to have open conversations about backgrounds, college studies, career paths, networking, social responsibility and more. “We have hosted 10 dinners with more than 70 students over the past 14 months, with each one ending with feelings of newfound camaraderie and exciting aspirations for all of the participants.”

Lauren’s broad professional experience and interests have spurred some great conversations with the Griffins; she holds a mechanical engineering degree from the University of Pittsburgh, has secured senior technical roles driving



collaborative innovation at high-tech software and hardware companies (including AGI, NASA, Bentley, TE Connectivity and currently, CommScope) and volunteers for a range of nonprofits.

“I hope by sharing real-world experiences with the students, including my own, the CFS Leadership Council can inspire these fine young gentlemen to be exceptional students, community members and global citizens. I am proud to be a part of the Church Farm School students’ journey toward excellence.”

## EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY



A community is only as excellent as its members, and we have been blessed with tremendously talented administrators, faculty and students over the course of Church Farm School's 102-year history. Here, we profile three devoted individuals that are indicative of the broad spectrum of excellence that can be found on our campus every day.

## ART SMITH Inspiring Excellence

Art Smith is the longest tenured Church Farm School employee—by a lot. And the community is beyond grateful to still have him contributing to the life of the school in such an abundance of ways. Whether he's teaching a new wrestler about work ethic, coaching a seasoned athlete toward State competition, mentoring young faculty members, teaching life lessons to his advisees, motivating his science students or working with young men on “the plan” that will keep them on the right track, Art continues to inspire excellence.

“The plan” is a term that is really important to Art, and he applies it to a variety of scenarios. “When we make a mistake—well, as I like to say, ‘suck it up, Buttercup!’ Let’s make a plan to be better. They’ll be able to use that plan their whole life. It’s a great way to take responsibility.”

While frequently driving between school and work, Art says he would pass by Church Farm School, wondering where all the students were. “When I was ready to look for a job, I saw an opening for a house parent at the school in the newspaper, and I called.” Art recalls that when he interviewed, he wasn’t sure what he wanted to do with his science degree, but that “after meeting Dr. Charles Shreiner and Jack Kistler, I knew Church Farm School was a place I needed to be.”

He was assigned to Taylor Cottage, which was filled with 11th graders. At the time, most house parents were still older women, but the 1980s under Dr. Shreiner saw the trend of more young people (and men) beginning to take on the role.

Art transitioned his first year to becoming an assistant wrestling coach under Joe Rhile as well as a science teacher a few years later. Today, he is the head wrestling coach and continues to teach, but also serves as the Dean of Students. “I like everything. Being in the classroom ... getting kids to try to create a plan on how to be better as the Dean of Students and I love coaching wrestling.”

Over the past 40 years, Art has seen many changes at Church Farm School. The ones that he holds in the most esteem are the advances in curriculum that encourage a higher level of achievement, the expansion of week-end activities for students and the increased level of athletic competition that’s resulted from joining the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA).

## LISA REYNOLDS SMOOTS

# Attracting Excellence

### ON TEACHING WRESTLING

“Any kid can wrestle, you just need that ‘work hard’ mindset. It’s not easy, that’s why it amazes me how many not only try it, but stay with it. And it benefits them tremendously. Many will tell me, ‘I’m so glad I got out of my box of comfort and did that.’”

### ON MENTORING TEACHERS

“As you get older, your job is to be available to younger people; to listen and to build camaraderie. But I am very direct. I will tell you honestly what I think.”

### ON STAYING CLOSE WITH ALUMNI

“I’m grateful if I’ve had any influence on our alumni. And I like to keep them engaged. I will drop them notes on our CFS Facebook group, letting them know I’m thinking about them or sharing our successes. And when they come back, and I get to see who’ve they’ve become—husbands, fathers—there is nothing like it.”

### ON THE CFS OPPORTUNITY

“This is a school of opportunity. It gives kids a chance to get out of their comfort zone, from the arts, to sports to leadership. Even if you give something up after a year, you’ve still learned something about yourself through the experience. The faculty get to know the kids on a very close level. Many of our kids need that. They needed it 40 years ago, and they still do.”

### ON HIS FAVORITE CFS TRADITION

Art says his favorite part of the year is when the community says goodbye to the seniors on the cobblestone steps leading up to Chapel. “The closeness of these kids and the way they show it. I love the spirit of that whole ceremony.”

Director of Admission Lisa Reynolds Smoots’ professional trajectory has propelled her from a highly technical vocation to one that touches her heart and fires her passion. With an industrial engineering degree from Northwestern University, it was once obvious that she would have an exciting career in her chosen profession.

First came jobs in aerospace engineering along with marriage and two daughters. After spending several years at home with her children, she wanted be a “mom who works sane hours” and experimented with different careers—health care, business administration and finally school finance. Employed at the George School, she was struck with an overwhelming realization: *In the finance office of a prestigious, preparatory boarding school, she witnessed the tremendous difference financial aid makes in the lives of low-income children from communities with underperforming schools.*

She resolved to use her considerable skills to maximize opportunities for these children. Moving into admissions, she held positions at Princeton Day School in Princeton, New Jersey, and the Cathedral School of St. John the Divine in New York City. During her tenure at St. John’s, she pursued a master’s in educational leadership at the University of Pennsylvania where she met Bart Bronk, then Church Farm School’s Director of Admission and a ’96 graduate of the school.

Bart’s description of Church Farm School, with its emphasis on inclusion and equity, were powerful and enticing. Several years later, she seized upon an opening and became Church Farm School’s Director of Admission. Now, after three years, her commitment to educational access is paramount. “Only a few low-income



students from underperforming schools receive financial aid from selective institutions, whereas Church Farm School provides significant aid to more than 80% of its students.”

“Families who can afford any school but who desire excellent small schools that provide individual attention and tremendous values also choose Church Farm School,” explains Lisa. She adds that, “Its diverse student body, including international students, offers opportunities for personal and academic growth that few others provide.”

An Advisory Board Member of the National Program for Educational Access, Lisa works tirelessly to assemble classes with the ability to take advantage of all that Church Farm School provides. While she loves travel, yoga, beaches and volunteering, she is most enthusiastic about providing the kind of exceptional educational opportunities for young men that will transform their futures.

## ANGEL VASQUEZ '21

# Modeling Excellence

**"How proud we are that you made the decision to step into the path of leadership! St. Martin's is the beneficiary of your decision. You lead with a steady assurance that you know where you want others to go. You make solid friendships. You are headstrong on some matters and flexible on others. We have grown to appreciate your patience, which is not always easy in your position. We see that you and your roommate have made a solid choice to work as a dynamic team as prefects. Continue to model leadership development, not only to students, but to the adults in our community."**



**T**hese words from Angel Vasquez '21's cottage parents on his most recent report card encapsulate what Church Farm School aspires to do each day: help unlock each student's potential to learn and lead. An honor student from the Bronx, NY, Angel makes the most of every minute at Church Farm School. He participates in multiple clubs (he is particularly strong in robotics and DECA), especially enjoys tennis and sings in the CFS Choir. An ardent photographer, he covers

events and scenes from campus for the school's marketing team.

Angel plans a career as a computer scientist or software engineer, and this year, participated in the AGI practicum, an internship with Church Farm School's neighbors who produce leading aerospace software used by the space and defense industries. He hopes to visit some of his top-choice schools—Cornell, Colgate and Middlebury—and he is applying to join a travel abroad program which would take him to Japan.

Coming from New York as part of the Prep for Prep program, which prepares high-performing students to attend the nation's finest high schools, Angel makes certain that every moment counts during the summer as well as the school year. He has attended a New York STEM Camp since 9th grade and All Star Code, an intensive six-week coding boot camp, which teaches basic coding and design; this summer, he hopes to be hired as a teaching assistant.

"The entire faculty at Church Farm School is driven to help the students," says Angel, adding that he also appreciates the community and brotherhood the school offers. His advisor, Mr. Dan Dratch, returns the compliment. Stressing Angel's leadership, he says, "Angel brings positive energy and his big smile to much of what goes on here at CFS. His footprint is everywhere whether it be leading a blood drive, being part of M Club and the Japanese Culture Club, traveling to DECA competitions, singing in the choir or playing Dungeons & Dragons with his friends on the weekends. He is everything that a Griffin should be and makes CFS a better place."



## The Blessing of Church Farm School in My Life

BY BROCK GIBSON

OVER THE SUMMER, WE RECEIVED A WONDERFUL MESSAGE FROM NON-GRADUATING ALUMNUS BROCK GIBSON ABOUT THE IMPACT CFS HAD ON HIS LIFE. HIS NOTE, EDITED FOR LENGTH, FOLLOWS.

**I** am writing to say thank you for the wonderful blessing that the mission of Church Farm School has been throughout my life. I attended the school circa 1975. While I only attended for about a year and a half, the people have had a greater impact on my life than anything else I have experienced since. For this, I am forever grateful and am thankful to see CFS continues to thrive, providing the same opportunity and experience for so many others.

As a wayward 14-year-old kid, I begged my Mom to allow me to attend CFS. She was raising her four children by herself while my father did five consecutive tours in Vietnam. Due to the strain of this separation and other complications, my father never

**Steve Loney '97, a Church Farm School Board member and alumnus, once remarked, "A Church Farm School alumnus is someone who is a leader, your best employee, your favorite person." We couldn't agree more. In this section, we highlight an alumnus who reached out to share the indelible impact Church Farm School had on him despite his short tenure at the school, a young alum already making his mark in politics and philanthropy and an alum who joined the faculty as a triple-threat in academics, residential life and athletics.**

returned to our family after the war. My mother did an incredible job raising us and would go to the ends of the earth to fill the voids without him. I was having difficulty in my first year of high school where we lived in El Paso, TX, and thought that if I escaped the bad crowd I was involved with at the time, I could do better. CFS filled the gaps of not having a father helping raise me and so much more that I would later discover. Little did I know at the time how far the life teachings of the school would carry me.

At the time, I believe my home in El Paso was next to the farthest from the school, second only to a student from Hawaii. I spent half of my freshman year and most of my sophomore year at CFS before becoming homesick and returning to El Paso. Dr. Shreiner was the Headmaster and Mr. Heller was his Assistant Headmaster. The love and dedication that the caring CFS staff had for each student, the educational environment and farm-life experience model was precisely what I needed.

Back at home, I continued to struggle but with an entirely different perspective and set of life-skills. Armed with the disciplined teachings from CFS, I obtained my GED and enrolled in college in 1979. I had missed several years of high school academics so was considered the most likely to fail in my year group.



However, the secret sauce of discipline and perseverance that CFS instilled in me was extremely powerful. I can't imagine what would have been possible had I stayed at CFS as I should have and graduated with the class of '78.

After struggling to catch up my first two years of college, I began to excel academically, joined AFROTC, graduated and was commissioned as an officer in the Air Force. I had a rewarding career as a pilot flying high-performance jet aircraft and retired after 21 years of service. Early in my Air Force career, I also obtained a master's degree in aeronautical science. Additionally, over the years I was able to obtain FAA civilian licenses for commercial multi-engine jet aircraft, airline transport pilot and experimental aircraft builder. After

retiring from military service, I began a second career with Insitu Inc., a startup unmanned aircraft company providing life-saving protection to our service members in harm's way. The company grew exponentially and was acquired by Boeing Aircraft. It became well-known and our people and aircraft have been an integral part of a multitude of high-visibility hostage rescue operations, including the rescue of CAPT Phillips off the coast of Africa when the US Flagship Maersk Alabama was seized by Somali pirates. In 2016, I retired from Insitu as the vice president of Deployed Operations.

However, the greatest achievements resulting from CFS is that of family, community responsibility and most of all, the blessing of our Lord and Savior. In 1982, while still in college, I was fortunate enough to marry my high school sweetheart. My wife Diana went to work to put me through my last year of college and we have been together for nearly 40 years. We were blessed with two wonderful daughters and now have a grandchild.

Thank you to each and every one of you at CFS for continuing to provide essential teachings and opportunities for our children in today's society.

In Christ,

*Brock Gibson  
CFS Laundry No. 408*

## FRANKY MILLS '12 Excellent Alumni

Franky Mills' story began in Germantown, Philadelphia. His father died and his mother was ill while he was still a young man, so he was grateful to follow his older brother, Bryant, to Church Farm School (today, Bryant is completing his doctorate at Michigan State University). "Church Farm School saved my life," declares Franky, echoing words heard many times from alumni, past and present. As a CFS student, Franky immersed himself in academics making excellent grades; school activities culminating in the role of the priest in the 2012 Pageant; and athletics leading to state standings

Agricultural and Technical State University, Franky sometimes took time off to earn tuition. He considered these periods an opportunity to broaden his experience and horizons, and will graduate on May 9, 2020, with a degree in business administration from LeMoyné-Owen College in the heart of Memphis, Tennessee.

As a college student, he continually and conscientiously gives back to the community in gratitude for all he has received. Chapter president of his fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha, he is also vice president of his Student Government Association. Devoted



who mentors younger students and is active on the LeMoyné-Owens campus and in the surrounding community. A donor experience intern, he is immersed in contributor relations for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, where he helped raise \$100,000 in 2019. He also works part-time for the Shelby County Government and has been active in a movement to recruit voters (see picture from *The Washington Post*).

An adventurer who is "always ready to pick up and go," Franky has traveled to 27 states. He continues to be a Distinguished Scholar of the Union League of Philadelphia.

The story continues with no end in sight. Franky starts a full-time management job working in finance with FedEx on June 1, 2020. Simultaneously, he will study for the LSATs as he plans to enter law school pursuing his passion for criminal justice reform. At this pivotal time in his life, with so much success within reach, he clearly expresses his feelings for Church Farm School: "Everything happens for a reason, and I thank Church Farm School with all my heart. I am elated to remain part of the CFS community and will always be in touch."



in track and cross country. Winning the 3200 meter district championship, he was the first CFS student to qualify for state competition. Joining an AAU team fueled his passion for travel, and he has never lost touch with his highly respected coaches Eric Horsey and Tony Wrice. A scholarship student at Susquehanna and later North Carolina

to LeMoyné-Owen College, he founded an organization, *Brothers Leading Opportunities for Collegiate Change*, to help students navigate the college experience.

"I love it here in Tennessee, the Volunteer State, for there are so many service opportunities," explains Franky



## THOMAS JOHNSTONE '09

# From CFS Griffin to Faculty

**T**hey say once a Griffin, always a Griffin (or Aggie!), but for Tom Johnstone, that mantra rings especially true. Tom grew up in Conshohocken, and his grandfather introduced him to the school.

“I was a pretty good student growing up, so we were really looking for a stronger academic culture. We didn’t have the money to look at most private schools, but CFS offered my family the opportunity for me to be challenged and engaged in lots of areas, without the enormous price tag.” Beyond the ability to compete in a variety of different sports, Tom says he really bought into the idea of brotherhood. “My favorite experiences were meeting and becoming friends with countless people from many backgrounds, most of whom remain my best friends today.”

After graduating from CFS in 2009, Tom majored in history at Elizabethtown College. “I wasn’t entirely sure what I wanted to do after school, but I fell in love with history at CFS because of great teachers (Joe Rhile, Eric Fulmer, Brian Keslick and Ken Rodgers, to name a few) and figured it was a good place to start.”

After studying abroad in The Gambia in West Africa, Tom’s decision to return to his alma mater was solidified. “While living there and trying to immerse myself in the Gambian culture, I started to realize the importance of giving back and the power that relationships have to shape communities. Both of these things took me back to my days as a Griffin, and when I heard that CFS had an opening, I knew coming back was something that I wanted to do.”

Tom is currently what we call a “triple-threat,” he is the head houseparent in Taylor Cottage, a history teacher and the assistant athletic director. The latter forced him to give up some of his coaching responsibilities, but he remains proudly committed to the school’s outstanding wrestling team. In this way, Tom has the ability to get to know the students in all aspects of school life, ensuring they are learning important social skills in the cottage, learning about inquiry in the classroom and pushing their mental and physical limits in athletics.

“Our academics, athletics and residential programs are all good. But what makes CFS great is the commitment of the community to making sure that each young man leaves a better person than he was when he arrived. The relationships that our students build with each other and with the adults around them allows for really powerful conversations and life-changing growth beyond what happens in other places.”



## PRISCILLA GABOSCH

# A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

**K**arl Gabosch '48 and his wife Priscilla, the only single man and woman working in the Pennsylvania Railroad office, began a long and happy marriage from their 1969 wedding in the Church Farm School Chapel of the Atonement until 2011 when Karl passed away. Since then, Priscilla has continued and extended the couple's involvement in the school.

They regularly joined other alumni and their families at annual reunion picnics on the campus and exchanged wry stories of school life in the fifties and sixties. "Socks were not considered dirty until they stuck on the walls," relates Priscilla, adding that, "The students rooms were separated by curtains rather than walls."

Outside of their jobs (his on the railroad and hers in a bank), the couple enjoyed raising and showing dogs—at first Rhodesian Ridgebacks

and later downsizing to Whippets. Karl preferred lure coursing, in which dogs chase a mechanized lure, while Priscilla favored obedience competitions. A dedicated volunteer even today, Priscilla organizes and judges dog shows, a volunteer "job" that keeps her ever busy and involves a great deal of traveling.

Having attended Blackburn College in southern Illinois where all students had campus jobs to subsidize their educations, she had a special affinity for Church Farm School's comparable working farm model. The couple always supported the school financially, and, after her husband's death, she vowed to continue her involvement.

Today, Priscilla sponsors a Griffin Scholar every year and attends almost all the Griffin Scholar luncheons, witnessing young men develop from tentative freshmen to assured seniors, and going off to college. "It is delightful to be around the students, for they exhibit so much politeness and grace," she enthuses.

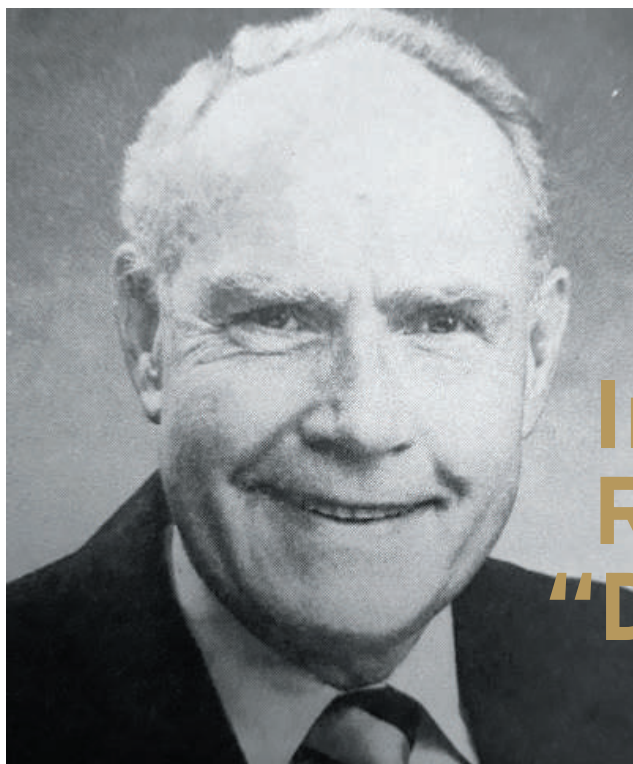


*Priscilla Gabosch with Newt Disney '48*

She is also a member of the Shreiner Society, having made a planned gift to the school. "I know that Church Farm School made all the difference in my husband's upbringing," says Priscilla, adding, "The school gave me a wonderful man, and I am going to be good to the school, for it still produces good men."

**"The school gave me a wonderful man, and I am going to be good to the school, for it still produces good men."**





## In Memory of Richard "Dick" Mulford

by Bart Bronk '96

**D**ick Mulford was a great friend to Church Farm School for nearly three decades. In addition to unfailing philanthropic support, he took a special interest in several generations of students, especially those who participated in the annual Union League of Philadelphia Good Citizenship Awards. Dick was a proud member of the League and volunteer on their Good Works Committee.

It was in that capacity that I first met Dick as a sophomore in 1994. He took a special interest in me during the event and subsequent scholarship process, and then kept in touch while I attended the University of Pennsylvania, which was also his proud alma mater. I was absolutely amazed, on my return to Church Farm as Director of Admissions in 2007, to find Dick still involved and as enthusiastic as ever. He and I enjoyed a number of rides down to the Union League in this second chapter of our friendship over the next six years. I last saw him at dinner at the Desmond Hotel just before I moved to Michigan, though he regularly sent me notes in the years since.

Dick wore his heart on his sleeve and made his true loves evident to all who knew him: engineering (he was eminently proud of having worked on the construction of Limerick Power Plant for PECO and was long a volunteer for the Engineer's Club of Philadelphia), Paoli Hospital (where he was a record-setting volunteer), Penn and, later in life, the Mormon Church.

Lastly, he deeply cared for Church Farm School and the boys he met there. The school is a richer place for that love, as are all of us who knew him.



### IN LOVING MEMORY OF ALUMNI WE LOST THIS YEAR

**RICHARD COFIELL '48**

**JON GOUAK '52**

**WILLIAM LUNDAHL '60**

**THOMAS PYLE '53**

**RANDOLPH J. QUARTERONI '81**

**JAMES RYAN '84**

**WALTER STEARNS '79**

**PAUL WEST '54**

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