As I read through this season’s issue of The Meeting House, a message tugged at the edges of my memory. I could not recall what it was exactly, or when or where I had read it, or if I was making it up? I had only two words that were certain, “lift me.” One quick Google search and the perfect sentiment to capture the year was in my grasp.

“Thee lift me and I’ll lift thee, and we’ll ascend together.” – Linda K. Burton, Quaker

Every issue of The Meeting House tells the Friends Academy story – news of the day, interesting pieces about the ebb and flow of the school year, and the usual features we count on – Fall Fair, Athletic records, Alumni feature stories, and Class Notes. This issue, however, is one to preserve. It will forever mark in time where we were and how we responded when the world was reeling due to a global pandemic, as well as worldwide reaction over racial violence in our nation. So, how did we respond? You will read about the indomitable spirit of our Quaker School and everyone in the community who refused to be deterred from its mission. Every day I was driven by one goal, “We must keep school and we must hold our mission at the center.” You’ll read about outdoor Meeting for Worship, the expansion of Peace Week, and our efforts to preserve, and in some cases, renew and strengthen our bond with our beloved Alumni Community.

Our feature story, one of the longest in the magazine’s history, takes a comprehensive look back in time, what is current and what is in our future in the areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Friends Academy is not riding the wave of a new trend. Our Quaker mission and reflective worship always have and always will compel us to assess whether we rise to the testimonies including equality and justice. It also challenges us to acknowledge when we meet the mark and to hold ourselves accountable when we do not. One quote Camille S. Edwards, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, comments in the article about our first two-week Peace Week celebration, “There should be no light between our Quaker mission and our work in DEI.”

The idea or word “lift or uplift” appears several times throughout this issue. I invite you to find these references. It was not our intent to create this pattern but the fact that it speaks volumes about our community. I know you will find moments within these pages that will lift you up, will bring you hope and inspiration. Your connection, love, and belief in Friends Academy have certainly lifted us during this unprecedented time. I have faith that we can ascend together.

Andrea Kelly
Quakers believe Meeting for Worship is not bound by a physical location or building. This year, students engaged in Meeting for Worship in so many new ways, including socially distanced on the Meeting House lawn, as the eighth graders are shown here.
The 1876 Society
Support Friends Academy through a Planned Gift

A well-planned gift sustains your generosity after your lifetime and makes a powerful statement about the legacy you wish to leave. Planned gifts can also be a tax-efficient way to achieve financial and estate planning goals while supporting Friends Academy into the future.

For more information on planned giving, please contact
Kevin Barry, Director of Advancement at 516-393-4269 or kevin_barry@fa.org.

FROM THE FRIENDS ACADEMY ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

A Message from the Director of Advancement...

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that I am well into my third year at Friends Academy, and as always, I am so proud of the accomplishments of our community. No one could have ever imagined the circumstances of the past year, and time and time again our community has come together to support and uplift each other. Whether it be through our virtual events, continued volunteerism, and financial support, the Friends Academy family has shown unparalleled resilience and generosity.

By the time you receive this issue, we will have held our second Virtual Benefit and Auction, “Friends Together.” If you were unable to join us that evening, you can visit our website at www.fa.org/give/auction to watch a beautiful evening of performances and features of life at Friends Academy this year. While we have missed holding this in-person annual auction and dinner, we are so grateful for the support of this year’s event, which raises critical funds for our students and programs.

As we press on towards the end of another great school year, it is so important that we all come together to support this year’s Annual Fund. This year, due to COVID-19, we are faced with expenses far exceeding our expectations as we work to provide a safe and healthy environment for our students to learn. We have made it possible for all of our students to be on campus five days a week, through leased modular classrooms and ongoing virus monitoring, with additional nursing staff, and saliva pool testing. These added expenses have put financial strain on the school.

Now more than ever, we need your support. I ask every member of the Friends community to make a gift in support of our Annual Fund. For those who are able, please consider increasing your gift. Your gift is important, no matter the size. Please, join our list of donors today!

Best wishes to you and your family!

Sincerely,
Kevin Barry

A Message from the Director of Alumni Relations...

Dear Alumni,

Greetings to you and your families! While it has been a challenge to be physically away from you for over a year now, I have been lucky to see so many of you join in our virtual programming from webinars to reunions, and coffeeshrines to virtual Meeting for Worship. It has been great to see new faces and old, and has been a special treat to connect with alumni across the US and abroad who may not have made it to campus.

Our goal is to help alumni stay in touch with classmates and friends, to provide updates on the latest news from Friends Academy, and to encourage alumni involvement in the life of the school. We hope that you will connect with us directly – by attending an event, (as we return to a “new normal”) by stopping by campus, by taking on a volunteer role and more. Please let us know how you would like to be involved. We want to hear from you—we want to know where you are and hear about what is happening in your life!

Stay tuned for alumni happenings, and send any ideas you might have my way!

Wishing you all the best.

Sincerely,
Christine Lunsford

Kevin Barry
Director of Advancement

Christine Lunsford
Director of Alumni Relations
This year, the Parent Council is reviving the tradition of a Friends Academy cookbook. The Friends Academy Archives contain two cookbooks from past years. The oldest cookbook, *Recipes of Our Friends*, was distributed at our Fall Fair on November 8th, 1919. *Recipes of Our Friends* is hardcover bound with notes and recipe alterations penciled in by the former owner. Sections include those listed in the image to the right.

Directions for recipes range from highly detailed to sparse and economical. For example, a recipe for “Cheese Rolls” by Mrs. William Post lists the following ingredients but provides no instructions:

- 1 cup cheese
- 1 cup flour
- Butter size of an egg
- Cayenne pepper

Even the more detailed baking recipes provide imprecise instructions calling for either a “slow” or “moderate oven.” Interpretation (and creativity) are key skills when recreating these recipes.

The second cookbook from the Friends Academy Archives is undated but can be placed after 1962 because of a reference to a document around then. The binding from this cookbook is more informal than the 1919 cookbook. Paper sheets with hole punches are held together by red yarn. Hand-drawn illustrations separate sections.

Perhaps the most intriguing recipe from the 1962 cookbook is a recipe for Tomato Soup Spice Cake by Julie Fatherley. Intrigued but skeptical, I decided to make this recipe along with a Chocolate Pie recipe from the 1919 cookbook.

My family and I first recreated the Chocolate Pie recipe by Mrs. Franklin A. Coles. Overall, we had no issues following this recipe although we had to temper the eggs. Salt was notably absent from this recipe. For authenticity’s sake, we opted to make the pie without salt, but its addition would have improved the flavor.

The filling of this pie was not overly sweet. Its texture was thin rather than creamy. The chocolate flavor was present but did not overpower the meringue.
Next up, we made the Tomato Soup Spice Cake.
Salt was also left off this recipe because the tomato soup provided the required amount. This recipe was easy to follow and did not require any adjustments.

To the surprise of my family and other taste-testers, this recipe was a complete success. The spice cake was firm. The moisture was perfect (neither too wet nor too dry). The cinnamon and nutmeg provided a good deal of flavor while the two sticks of butter made the outcome completely satisfying.

Recreating these recipes was a fun way to connect with the culinary heritage of our school. Thanks to the Parent Council, the tradition of a Friends Academy cookbook has been revived. Who knows, perhaps one hundred years from now, someone might recreate today’s recipes!
A RENEWED COMMITMENT:
THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
AT FRIENDS ACADEMY

By Andrea Miller P’22, 27
Director of Strategic Communications

The past year has been one of renewed self-examination and self-reflection in which the school reaffirmed its long-standing commitment to diversity efforts and to connect directly with alumni and students about their experiences while attending Friends Academy.

In the months following the murder of George Floyd, Friends Academy was inspired by the honesty of its community members and guided by its Quaker mission of integrity, respect, and peaceful resolution of conflict, to reflect on its commitment to justice. While we can celebrate a history of progress, we also must acknowledge that there are areas where Friends Academy can do more.

“I was moved and inspired by the dozens of conversations I have had with students, families, alumni, and alumni parents since last summer,” said Head of School Andrea Kelly. “Every person spoke out of generosity and care for Friends Academy, and hope for our future. Each story helped to deepen my understanding and I invite any member of our community to share their experiences with me.”

In this article, we review the school’s history of diversity efforts since its founding, share our current school-wide initiatives and take a look inside our classrooms at the student experience.

As we bridge the past, present, and future, we are compelled to ask this question: “What can we do as a school to bring our entire community closer together?”

To understand Friends Academy’s present, it is necessary to look into the past. Since its founding, our Quaker school has relied on its values to guide efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion. Over the years, Friends Academy introduced initiatives that, in retrospect, were revolutionary for their time and place. It began with a co-educational start in 1876 (uncommon at the time), to diversifying its student body with the addition of Catholic and Jewish students over the ensuing decades, followed by Asian, Latinx, and Black students by the late 1960s. Today, we are proud that Friends Academy serves a student body that represents a diverse spectrum of faiths, race, ethnicity, and country of origin.

Natural tension emerges

Throughout the years, and as the school gradually opened its doors to a more diverse community – by way of gender, religion, race, ability, class, and sexual orientation – a natural tension emerged. While some in the community embraced diversity initiatives, others expressed concern about a possible “new” direction for the school. For example, in the 1980s, differing points of view regarding the celebration of holiday concerts, curriculum, and religious observances began to arise. “In truth, there has always been one direction,” explained Kelly. “Friends Academy has always been committed to its core Quaker values and will remain so going forward,” she added. “Of course, we can always improve on how we pursue those values, and how we communicate to our Community about new initiatives,” Kelly stated.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the first Black Students Group and Black Parents Support Group were formed in response to issues that were confronting students of color, a precursor to today’s Black Student Alliance, and this year’s burgeoning Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Parent Group.

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PART 2: A REPEATED COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

In 1988, outgoing Headmaster Ted Withington recommended that an “area of high priority is to find minority teachers, particularly Black teachers.” In 2016, Friends Academy’s first female Head of School Andrea Kelly, refocused attention on the hiring process while considering Quaker principles of equity – holding workshops for school leadership and department heads with the Minority Recruitment organization, MEMNET, which is committed to helping schools recruit and retain diverse teachers, administrators, and coaches.

In the spring of 2015, just before Kelly’s arrival, the Board of Trustees adopted the school’s first Strategic Plan for Diversity, Vision 2020. That plan was developed by Robinson in conjunction with the Equity and Diversity Committee (EDC) and laid out recommendations regarding curriculum, student life, parents, school leadership, faculty and staff, and more.

Diversity Strategic Plan lays groundwork

Today, each member of a hiring committee participates in anti-bias training and each committee includes at least one colleague of color. Beginning in 2019, all faculty and staff participate in annual anti-bias training and new employees complete The Kirwan Institute’s implicit bias module series, which introduces the origins of implicit bias.

Kelly launched a school-wide curricular audit to ensure each discipline met standards of best teaching and most current academic practices, including attention to diversity and inclusion. In the spring of 2019, Friends Academy was awarded a $10,000 grant from Facing History And Ourselves, an organization that partners with schools to integrate ethics, social responsibility, and justice into curriculum.

In 2018, Kelly reframed the school’s DEI efforts

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by combining Diversity, Service Learning, Health & Wellness, and Quaker Practice within one structure (the Quaker Practice & Community Engagement Team), as well as hiring Camille S. Edwards as the new Dean of Diversity, Equity + Inclusion. Friends had used a similar approach in the late 1990s, when it established the Peace and Social Action Plan committee (PASAP), which was formed to “articulate a Quaker approach to diversity issues.”

Redefining and expanding “diversity”

Since 2018, Edwards has worked to create curricular opportunities, programs, and events that opened a wider door by inviting each community member to think of themselves as part of the diverse Friends Academy community with all-school family programs like Family Night, an evening of shared cultural cuisine, family origin stories, and cultural performances, and Holidays with Friends, an annual faith-exchange. For rising senior Nyah Thomas and co-clerk of the 2021-22 Upper School Diversity Committee, achieving unity through diversity is an important throughline for her. “Though people may have different backgrounds, you can come together and make change in the community for the better,” reflected Thomas. “I’ve also learned that you also may find that you have similar beliefs and connect with someone outside of your background in many different ways,” she added.

By the spring of 2020, Edwards and school administrators were meeting with stakeholder groups of students and families to hear the equity concerns of the school community. In response, and overseen by Edwards, the school launched new student affinity groups, including African-American/Black, Bilingual/Multilingual and/or New to English Language, Student-Athletes, East Asian, Latinx/Hispanic, and South-Asian – all to help foster a deeper sense of belonging for our diverse student body.

In concert, Edwards implemented student-led conversations that centered around civic engagement, community building, equity, and inclusion. At the adult level, affinity and alliance groups, including Colleagues of Color, White Affinity, and the Allies Group formed as communities that support both educational conversation and constructive allyship.

“Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts prepare our students to be thought-leaders and community leaders in our diverse society and multicultural workplaces,” emphasized Edwards. “Focusing on equity supports us in creating a unique experience for each and every child so that they can thrive in their academic journey and gives each a true sense of belonging,” she added.

Edwards also created a new framework for student alliance groups with the re-activated Asian Awareness Club, Student Organization of Latinos, the Sexuality & Gender Awareness Club and, following a hiatus from the 1980s, Friends Academy’s next iteration of the Black Student Alliance. Members of these clubs helped plan events during the school’s first two-week Peace Week celebration, Lunar New Year, and Black History Month.

“As a young South Asian and Muslim woman, I’ve learned that there are so many parallels between our different communities and identities,” remarked rising senior Savannah Mahmud, incoming co-clerk of the 2021-22 Upper School Diversity Committee, who as a poignant cultural storyteller at this year’s Peace Week shared her own family’s racial and ethnic challenges. “Through the years, I’ve learned that no matter what, people are going to discourage you from using your voice and power. However, if our ancestors and previous activists can persevere, so can I.”

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Director of Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Camille S. Edwards speaks at Family Night, a cultural exchange event, in January 2020.

1993

Goal informally established to “educate Board of Trustees on issues of diversity,” including using the NAS (National Association of Independent Schools) Multicultural Assessment Plan to examine issues of racial, socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender issues.

1994

Kevin Jennings, the founder of the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN), speaks at FA about his personal experience and the challenges faced by members of the LGBTQ community. Jennings recommends that the school create an environment in which members of the community could feel more comfortable with coming out publicly.

1995

The PMDE club starts, evolving into Gay-Straight Alliance.

1998

An Educational Policies Committee (EPC) determines that the school’s curriculum should include “non-traditional voices and experiences,” as well as emphasize “inclusion of non-European cultures in non-academic areas such as plays, music, and school holidays.” The committee recommends that “Friends Academy strive for greater diversity in our faculty and on our Board of Trustees.”

2002

The Peace and Social Action Plan (PASAP) is formed to “articulate a Quaker approach to diversity issues,” and authors “Diversity at Friends Academy: A Brief and Incomplete Overview.” School curriculum is revised to address diversity goals – extensive rewrite of the History curriculum; English courses in grades 5-12 expanded to include world literature; library curriculum focused on indigenous peoples and immigration stories.

2005-06

The school begins work on a strategic plan, which is published in 2006 and is committed to expanding efforts to create a school environment where all students feel welcomed and can participate fully, regardless of their personal or financial circumstances.

2009

The Diversity Committee develops a draft based upon a statement from the Parents and Students of Color Alliance, The Diversity Admissions Committee launches.
Challenged by past, and committed to change

A long-time member of the Friends Academy summer community, Session entered the school in his sophomore year in 2011 and quickly immersed himself in athletics and arts. “For many, Friends Academy was a home, a place where they felt safe and accepted. For others, it was a place that they attended in order to receive an exceptional education, but at a cost,” he recalled. “Many BIPOC alumni share similar stories,” added Session. “I can relate to finding myself being treated differently due to my race, or not having as much support as I needed and wanted. But on the other hand, I also found myself in the rare position where I also felt supported and accepted by my peers.”

This fundamental dichotomy would drive him during the summer of 2020 to develop, first, The Steering Committee, and then help co-found its next iteration — BAFA (BIPOC [Black and Indigenous People of Color] Alumni of Friends Academy) with fellow clerks Jessica Marie Rizzi ’09 and Maceda Alemu ’09 and working in partnership with Director of Alumni Relations Christine Lunsford, and Camille S. Edwards.

“Our mission is to develop an intergenerational network for BIPOC students and alumni within the wider community to cultivate belonging, celebrate cultural differences, empower each other to be culturally competent, and ensure equity for all,” explained Session.

For Jessica Rizzi, the road back to Friends has been challenging but also one that has strengthened her resolve to reconnect. “What was true for me, too, was that it was not enough to just talk in the moment and then move on,” she said. “We would have to be accountable and figure out how to do better, and not just for one summer, but all the time.”

In Summer 2020, Head of School Andrea Kelly shared a video with the Friends Academy community offering acknowledgement and action.
prompts me is not the great things FA did for me, but rather where FA failed me,” she shared. “Race was complicated then and still is today. As I look back on my experience, I find myself with no meaningful relationships with any of my white peers from the FA community, and yet, I have many lifelong friendships that have stood the test of time with my BIPOC friends. Why?” asked Rizzi, who has seen personal echoes within the experiences of other alumni from the 90s through today, including alienation and insensitive comments. “Why are these problems from previous generations still relevant today?” she asked. Instead of deterring her, Rizzi is determined to use this to achieve positive outcomes with BAFA. “Friends Academy provided me with so much, including many tools for success personally and professionally, and for that, I am eternally grateful,” said Rizzi, who is dedicated to helping future generations at Friends Academy. “I am here to build networks and community for everyone who is interested in making the BIPOC experience better for students at Friends Academy and to make it a home for every member of the community to want to come back to.”

Co-clerk Maceda Alemu, who joined Friends in fifth grade, sees her work with BAFA as an extension of gratitude, reflection, and growth. “I received a world-class education that challenged me to think critically about society’s biggest issues, imagine the role I could play in designing innovative solutions, and then use my agency to improve mine and other communities around the world,” began Alemu. “However, it was only when I reached college that I understood how failing to have a diverse faculty limited the lens through which everything was done at FA,” she added as she recounted experiences of racial insensitivity and her struggles with feeling that her individuality and perspective were equally recognized or valued. “I remember far too many instances where my peers were not held accountable for making culturally inconsiderate statements or thoughtless comments. I want to believe they were always said in jest, but I think it’s telling when I reflect on my time at FA or speak with other minority alumni across classes who recall similar experiences. They too, decades later, remember the weight of the jokes and remarks they internalized as students,” said Alemu, who counted herself as one of four Black students out of 60+ in Middle school and 90+ in Upper School. “That being said, I believe that going to FA changed the trajectory of my life, and I sincerely appreciate each person that helped me along my journey to graduation.”

For Alemu, the summer of 2020 became her turning point and a period of growth. “I spent a lot of time reflecting and introspecting on who I am, what I believe in, and how I handle adversity,” said Alemu, who became overwhelmed by the number of crises happening at once. “FA was one of the communities in my life that I knew I could intentionally give back and work to make better for future generations.”

“FA was one of the communities in my life that I knew I could intentionally give back to and work to make better for future generations.”

– Maceda Alemu ’09

Alumni conversations converge on race
At the same time, spurred first by the murder of George Floyd and later by testimonials of Black Friends Academy alumni, 1974 classmates Evette Beckett-Tuggle, a former Friends trustee, and Roberta de Araujo invited Director of College Counseling Ed Dugger to facilitate a series of three Zoom dialogues entitled, Conversations on Race that employed videos, personal anecdotes, and queries to help participating alumni explore the impact of racism. “To us, this feels like a natural outgrowth of our Quaker education,” wrote Beckett-Tuggle and de Araujo in an invitation to classmates. Inspired by the dialogue, members of the Class of 1974 drafted a letter to the school, authored by Mike Gordon, which encouraged the
administration to involve Upper School students in the process of creating a Code of Conduct. “At its core, it should insist on respect for the race, ethnicity, religion, and gender affiliations of our students, faculty, and administrators; but to be genuinely great, it should do more,” wrote the signatories. “It should require students to also be actively responsible for the well-being of their classmates, to intervene and seek help, not only if another student is being mistreated, but also if that person is suffering or in crisis for whatever reason. Finally, we feel strongly that this Code of Conduct not focus on punishing or ostracizing those who break it—after all, we all fall short of our ideals—but on helping those who violate it to become the best version of themselves.” (Excerpted).

While a similar Code of Character currently resides in the School Handbook, after speaking with a Class of 1974 representative, Kelly and Upper School Principal Mark Schoeffel will engage Upper School student leaders this fall to review its language and co-construct language that reaches a sense of the meeting and a commitment to adhere for all students.

For Session, success must begin and end in partnership with school leadership. “When it comes to diversity work, in any PWI (Predominantly White Institution), there tends to be a desire to support BIPOC students, but never any tangible action plan to do so,” remarked Session, who shared that thus far their journey has been positive and they hope is that all parents will join us and model how critical equity and inclusion is, not just to our own kids, but to the future families attending Friends.” This winter, BAFA launched an alumni engagement survey and information specific to the BIPOC student experience that plans to send out a follow-up survey designed to collect feedback.

For the DEIJ Parent Group, the school’s openness made me hopeful, as a committed parent, and family as partners in building a more equitable and inclusive school culture.”

Dedicated parents follow in footsteps

Following these conversations and workshops, the new DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice) Parent Group formed at the beginning of the current school year, and picked up the threads that the Black Parent group from the mid-1980s had first laid down. Stewarding by veteran parent, Rana Henderson, and new parent Jess Teutonico, the group is open to all parents. “Like all institutions, Friends found itself facing some tough truths last year and the school responded with an open and honest approach... The school’s openness made me hopeful, as a committed parent, that our voices are welcome and can have lasting impact,” said Henderson. Teutonico reached out to Edwards after participating in the DEI Family Summer Series and connecting with Henderson as a fellow 3rd grade parent. “DEIJ is a journey, not a destination. Our hope is that all parents will join us and model how critical equity and inclusion is, not just to our own kids, but to the future families attending Friends,” said Teutonico. “This is not a reaction to a current event, this is our legacy. Everyone has a responsibility and a role to play,” she added.

One of the group’s first community initiatives was to invite Nelson Mandela’s grandson, Kweku Mandela, to a “fireside chat” during Friends Academy’s Peace Week celebration, which drew over 100 attendees. Moving forward, Henderson and Teutonico hope to listen to what school stakeholders are already working on so that they can be an effective parent body. “Parent engagement is critical in helping to shape the culture of our community. The greatest asset we have is connecting with all parents,” shared Teutonico.

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PART 4:
A SUMMER AND SCHOOL YEAR OF LEARNING

Throughout the summer of 2020, Edwards focused on grounding the entire community in common language, practice, and goals around diversity, equity, and inclusion through new programming for employees and families. “The DEI Summer Series was an opportunity to welcome families across our community to engage in three workshops over the course of the summer to learn alongside one another...” The sessions built upon one another by: 1) defining the domains of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, 2) explaining the process of cultivating a growth mindset when it comes to DEIJ focused learning & thinking, and 3) creating a framework of understanding around faculty and family as partners in building a more equitable and inclusive school culture.”

Our hope is that all parents will join us and model how critical equity and inclusion is, not just to our own kids, but to the future families attending Friends.”

– Jess Teutonico, co-clerk DEIJ Parent Group

Continued on Page 24
Throughout the school year, across disciplines and divisions, Friends Academy faculty use the inspiration and practice of Quaker inquiry to ask important questions about the who, what, why, and how.

A look inside the classroom

In Director of Early Childhood Kristin Minuto’s Pre-K class, children build important foundational skills around identity formation that they use to see themselves and each other in their immediate neighborhoods and communities. “As children build awareness and understanding of various cultures, belief systems, and values, they, in turn, begin to recognize the power of diversity and inclusivity.” Minuto also works to teach her students a developmentally appropriate vocabulary, and also shifts and eliminates language that could be viewed as stereotyping, demeaning, exclusionary, or judgmental.

Every year, one fourth grade project involves students exploring their own family’s roots. The students interview family members and retell their stories to gain insight into their family’s journey to and through America. During their studies, students explore the history of who was “allowed to come into the country and who was not” by studying events like the Chinese Exclusion Act, which was enacted in 1882 and not repealed until 1943. Additionally, students take a look at the historical significance of New York’s Ellis Island and California’s Angel Island through the examination of primary resources, such as poetry that was carved into the walls of Angel Island by immigrants awaiting decisions, as well as the differences between modern-day immigration and refugees.

This spring in Middle School, fifth and sixth grade Science teacher Dan Kriesberg taught a series of student workshops with Camille S. Edwards that connected and drew parallels between the necessary strength of biodiversity in nature with the important value of diversity within human systems. “When we exclude people, we lose out on their gifts and achievements. It’s unfair to all of us,” shared Kriesberg.

A renewed Board commitment

On a parallel track, Friends Academy school leadership and several Trustees attended a joint workshop in August 2020 led by the Long Island-based organization Erase Racism. The workshop included a presentation highlighting the history of bias and racism in America and on Long Island. In addition, the Board of Trustees amended its by-laws to convert the Diversity Committee, which had previously been a sub-committee of the Quaker Life Committee to a permanent Committee, clerked by Board Vice President and parent David Gelfand. The Board’s Committee of Diversity has been working with Camille S. Edwards, Andrea Kelly, and others in furtherance of the school’s diversity efforts.

“Diversity and inclusion are central to our Quaker Mission at Friends Academy,” shared Board President Frank Ingrassia. “As a Board, it is paramount that we work from our vantage to strengthen Friends Academy as a place of belonging where every student is, in fact, and feels like a valued member of our community – where they can not only learn, but thrive,” he added. “Our goals include not only diversifying our board membership and our faculty and staff to better reflect our school community, but also to ensure that the school has the resources available to continue to invest in and embed diversity into our institutional strategies. Consistent with our Quaker history and principles, the Board remains absolutely committed to doing what is necessary for Friends Academy to continue to lead the way as an educational beacon of diverse thought and talent.”

“Diversity and inclusion are central to our Quaker Mission at Friends Academy,”

“...the Board remains absolutely committed to doing what is necessary for Friends Academy to continue to lead the way as an educational beacon of diverse thought and talent.”

– Frank Ingrassia, President
Board of Trustees

The Board remains absolutely committed to doing what is necessary for Friends Academy to continue to lead the way as an educational beacon of diverse thought and talent.”

– Frank Ingrassia, President
Board of Trustees

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PART 5:
DEI TEACHING AND LEARNING – ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND DIVISIONS

As children build awareness and understanding of various cultures, belief systems, and values, they in turn begin to recognize the power of diversity and inclusivity.”

– Kristin Minuto, Early Childhood Director
For the past 15 years, Ed Dugger has been teaching the senior-level "Narratives of African American Identity," a course that focuses on the role narrative has played in shaping the experience of Americans of African descent from the 19th century to the present. Dugger uses hands-on interactive projects and interweaves current Black guest speakers who speak with students about their personal experiences – from Councilwoman Yvika Russell of North Hempstead to Dugger’s 105-year-old Great Aunt Josephine Folkes, whose great-grandfather was born enslaved.

By using the narrative of slavery, Dugger hopes that this will help his students and others overcome their fear of talking about this part of American history. “There is a fear that it will trigger people, either through ancestral fear or guilt. Ultimately, we need to stop being afraid of looking slavery in its eye,” he said.

Elsewhere in Upper School, English teacher Cherkira Lashley has worked to open up the curriculum and engage her students in new ways by pairing traditional Canon texts with modern films and authors. One unit combines The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jordan Peele’s horror genre commentary on race, Get Out, and Sula by Toni Morrison.

“When you read and experience these three works consecutively, you are able to see through comparison where the gaps are and it really deepens and opens the learning up,” explained Lashley. “Diversity is essential to anybody’s learning and it is more rigorous and challenging.”

As the 2020-21 school year comes to a close, Friends Academy colleagues will be finishing their final chapter of the year-long all-school read Mindful of Race by Ruth King, which explores the emotional and spiritual impact of racism and offers a tender and multi-tiered meditative practice to help heal racial suffering in all. “I think about my own ignorance as a minority – we are all capable of prejudice and bias,” reflected Lashley. “But, the only way that people grow and change are if the dialogue is facilitated with love, empathy, and compassion.”

Looking toward the future

With attention focused on strategic DEI initiatives of leadership, recruitment, and retention, Andrea Kelly is convinced that the school’s Quaker mission will continue to lay the groundwork for a dialogue that is open to all members of the Friends Academy community. “In the last few years, we have worked to develop school leadership that is more representative of our student body and community,” shared Kelly, who since her tenure, has hired or added administrators of color to the Leadership Team from the offices of Admissions, Athletics, Auxiliary Programming, College Counseling, Communications, DEI, and Student Life. “And, we are not done,” she added. This fall, veteran Upper School Math teacher Tamara Clark will take on a new role as Dean of Faculty Mentoring, a position that will help advocate for all faculty.

“The one thing we knew is that we wanted an internal person, a long-standing faculty member, who possesses a high degree of institutional knowledge, understands school culture past and present, and one who commands the respect of her colleagues and understands how to support and advocate,” said Kelly, who counts Clark’s warmth, organization, and belief in others as critical to this role. “I am excited to be a welcoming face and supporter for our new colleagues and to be an advocate, listening ear, cheerleader, and coach for our current faculty. It is important to build stronger bridges and relationships between our colleagues,” said Clark. “I do not accept this position lightly. As a Black woman, I am fully aware that colleagues, students, and parents will be attentive,” reflected Clark.

“So some students and adults see me as an example of possibilities, some students and adults see me as an example of a long-needed change, and some students and adults see me as a role model,” she added. “There is a large body of research that demonstrates the important educational benefits – cognitive, social, and emotional – for all students who interact with classmates and teachers from different backgrounds, cultures, and orientations to the world.

I do believe my mere presence in the ‘room’ helps our colleagues remember the importance of diversity when hiring, creating practices, developing programs, and advancing the mission of the school.”

Kelly is acutely attuned to how the past, present, and future intertwine at Friends Academy and while she recognizes the efforts and accomplishments of previous administrations, she understands the journey still ahead for the school. “When you look over Friends Academy’s history, even if they did not always succeed, each generation was attempting to meet the school’s mission with strength and conviction – through programming, and affinity groups,” she reflected.

“All of these past efforts echo the very well-worn path we are on now and the goal now is to continue to listen, persist, and ensure we continue to move forward,” Kelly added. “Inequality mattered to us throughout our history and it matters now. And, at the end of the day, our Quaker mission is what calls us and empowers us to continue to work toward a culture of belonging and learning for all.”

– Andrea Kelly, Head of School

At the end of the day, our Quaker mission is what calls us and empowers us to continue to work toward a culture of belonging and learning for all.

New Dean of Faculty Mentoring Tamara Clark
Without a doubt, the 2020-21 school year has been like no other. Words like “nimble” and “pivot” have become common vocabulary when discussing how education—and the world—have responded to the COVID pandemic. At Friends Academy, our entire community has gone above and beyond to ensure that our students continue to receive the highest standard of education, including not only academic study, but also social-emotional well-being, community building, and, of course, living out our Quaker values. By the end of February, additions of modular classrooms on the Quad, allowed us to welcome all grades back on campus for in-person learning five days a week, making Friends Academy one of the first schools in the area to do so.

AROUND THE QUAD

During Quarter Three, students are delved into many academic projects. In 5th grade, students examined oral histories by reading Harbor Me by Jacqueline Woodson, and simultaneously interviewed a close family member for their Family History Project in Social Studies. 6th graders prepared diligently for their Science Share Experiment. 7th graders merged science and literacy studies in their recent storybook project. Our 8th graders dug into the concepts of voice and agency, and the responsibilities and opportunities that go hand-in-hand with these ideas. They explored these ideas across advisory activities, such as a gallery walk to think about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life, influences, and choices, class reflections on American History movements, reflections on the courage offered in To Kill a Mockingbird, and in a final advisory activity, researched someone they admire who uses their voice to make a positive impact on the world.

Finally, we offer gratitude for student leadership shared in our winter Peace Weeks and Lunar New Year celebrations. And finally, we rolled out our long-awaited leadership opportunities in Quarter Four – Admission Ambassadors for new families, student opportunities to meet with teaching candidates, and service learning opportunities, just to name a few!
**UPPER SCHOOL**

**KEEPING IT REAL**

By Mark Schoeffel P ’17, ’20, ’22

Upper School Principal

Our Upper School academic program responded to the challenges of managing distancing protocols while still working to remain engaged with the real world to retain the essential connections needed for relationship-based learning.

The Speech and Debate English elective did an “interview skills workshop” where students were given two local job advertisements to choose between and to apply for, and wrote a focused resume and cover letter, in preparation for a ‘real’ interview (Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Schoeffel served as their gauntlets); for a ‘real’ interview (Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Schoeffel served as their gauntlets); for a ‘real’ interview (Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Schoeffel served as their gauntlets); for a ‘real’ interview (Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Schoeffel served as their gauntlets); for a ‘real’ interview (Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Schoeffel served as their gauntlets); for a ‘real’ interview (Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Schoeffel served as their gauntlets); for a ‘real’ interview (Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Schoeffel served as their gauntlets); for a ‘real’ interview (Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Schoeffel served as their gauntlets);

Malachi Russell, a student in the Entrepreneurial Studies course, presents business ideas to Dan Gutierrez, co-owner of Glen Cove-based RADD Crossfit.

Students in Mrs. Newitt’s AP biology class published educational blog posts throughout the semester to educate the community about COVID-19.

Students in Mrs. Newitt’s AP biology class published educational blog posts throughout the semester to educate the community about COVID-19.

While the high school opened to be fully in-person, on-campus, every day in February, even with new modular buildings for almost all classes, clubs and activities, students engaged with the real world to retain the essential connections needed for relationship-based learning.

**LOWER SCHOOL**

**BRIDGING THE DISTANCE**

By Dot Woo P ’33, ’35

Lower School Principal

In an age when keeping one’s distance mitigates the health and safety for all, our young learners have continued to build upon the Quaker testimonies to bridge the distance. Building relationships, seeking to understand others’ stories and perspectives, working toward common goals whilst exploring one’s identity and role within the community, continue to be threads in the tapestry of Lower School. While we cannot gather in-person on a weekly basis, as per our tradition, or share silence in the Meeting House, we have been able to use technology on-campus to Zoom into each other’s classrooms, interface with notable change-makers, learn about one another’s passions and interests, and with others. Worship Sharing in the Meeting House, technology on-campus to Zoom into each other’s classrooms, interface with notable change-makers, learn about one another’s passions and interests, and with others. Worship Sharing in the Meeting House, technology on-campus to Zoom into each other’s classrooms, interface with notable change-makers, learn about one another’s passions and interests, and with others.

Malachi Russell, a student in the Entrepreneurial Studies course, presents business ideas to Dan Gutierrez, co-owner of Glen Cove-based RADD Crossfit.

Mrs. Weisbrod’s second grade class dressed in blue during Spirit Week, one of the many ways we helped preserve community in the Lower School this year.

Peace Week was evidence of this connectivity both within our micro and macro communities. Our Kindergarten through Fourth Grade students “met” with Ms. Helen Turner, Director of Education at the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center in Glen Cove. Ms. Turner’s queries and developmentally appropriate literature encouraged us to explore inclusion and the importance of celebrating our differences. Our students were also able to join Pastor Kim, whose service-learning opportunity – a basic necessities drive for migrant/refugee children – united all three divisions. Pastor Kim, based here on Long Island, is an immigrant advocate, and we felt fortunate to learn more about her experience of being in service to others. Changemakers Chandler Payne and Ahmed Badr Zoomed across grade levels to engage with our students about how they have taken action to be in service to others. Chandler Payne’s realization of creating urban farms to address urban food insecurity demonstrated how being a changemaker can come out of one’s passion to actively problem-solve around immediate issues that hit home. Ahmed Badr’s passion and commitment to creative expression that focuses on migration, identity and self-expression truly embodied this year’s Peace Week theme: Voice.

To close Peace Week, our young musicians shared their voices by giving us the gift of music as they sang “Light a Candle,” which was recorded and shared with families.

Our youngest learners in Early Childhood continuously grow in their understanding of each testimony and the many ways they can be lived day-to-day. The children learn how they can practice these values and recognize how others practice these values. They choose a testimony that resonates with them and also create a visual representation. During Peace Week, our youngest learners explored what it means to internalize and actively live peace, as well as recognize what makes them feel peaceful.

Children have the power to advocate for themselves and others. They do not have to wait to be changemakers; they can take action during their everyday experiences. Hearing others’ stories and witnessing stewardship living in the hearts, minds and actions of others inspires our inner lights to shine.
The spirit of community shone brightly this winter with Friends Academy’s first two-week Peace Week celebration.

An annual tradition for more than a decade, the celebration kicks off just after Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday – also recognized as National Day of Service.

A true planning effort between students and adults, events ranged from special speakers, student-run evening activities, Meeting for Worship, community film viewings, and an evening student-centered Coffee House.

“We were really thinking about community partnerships this year,” shared Director of Diversity, Equity, + Inclusion Camille S. Edwards, who helped plan the two-week celebration with Quaker-in-Residence Jen Cort. “From our programming with the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center to Pastor Kim Wilson, to our youth activists, and a fireside chat with Kweku Mandela, every guest speaker had a message for us about peace or our Quaker testimonies,” added Edwards.

Guided by the theme, “Uplifting and Amplifying Voice,” students explored the concept of peace and the impact of voice through daily queries and accompanying activities.

In Lower School, students first read about youth activists in history and current events and then had the opportunity to meet virtually with Ahmed Badr, 22, and an author/poet/social entrepreneur, who highlights the expression of young refugees; and Chander Payne, 18.

Continued on Page 34
an urban farmer who founded Urban Beet in order to create regenerative farms at homeless shelters across the country.

Themes of education, goodwill, gratitude and conflict resolution shaped the two weeks for Middle School students, as they took virtual tours of the Glen Cove-based Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center, and listened to the powerful life experiences of a survivor.

In Upper School, students grappled with how to use voice in the name of justice and peace and uplift the voices of others. Learning from each other, students involved in The Witness Project, an organization dedicated to passing on the stories of Holocaust survivors, presented their reflections on working side-by-side with survivors.

Guided by Edwards, Upper School students explored the building blocks of DEI allyship and identity, later translating this through the power of service after listening to Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Drum Major Speech.”

“So many of our faculty and staff reminded our students that Peace Week starts on MLK Day, not on the day that we get back to campus,” said Edwards.

Three different student clubs led service drives for children in need and marginalized communities. The Upper School Diversity Committee played an integral part this year, planning and launching a new series of evening events for families focused on cultural sharing through storytelling from East Asia, cooking from Spain, and Persian dance. “Our teachers took the lead from our students and created new curriculum and content based on some of the stories they heard in the diversity conversations,” remarked Cort.

In Lower School, students got to meet with Long Island-based Pastor Kim Wilson, who spoke about her work in unifying refugee families, at the same time as they were reading a book on the very same topic.

“Because we were virtual, we got to do so many things that we’ve never done before and it made me really feel that I was in community,” said Edwards. “It just really gives us the opportunity to see what is possible for the future.”

Peace Week provided three times for community Meeting for Worship, which provided powerful messages from students across all divisions. “One of my favorite parts of Peace Week were the student speakers,” recalled Edwards. “We had 47 speakers and performers across all divisions amplifying this message of how to use their voice.”

For Cort, the link between equity and peace is strong. “Though the process was new, the essence was the same. It was about listening to students of all ages in order to connect and partner with them. I hope Friends Academy will take away doing one thing at a time to be agents of peace in the world.”
CATASTROPHE THEORY

When Middle and Upper School Theater teacher Andrew Geha, confronted by the challenges of the pandemic, decided to film a TV show instead of staging a play this past fall, he was... “a mix of terrified and excited. We were thrilled to create an opportunity for students unlike anything we’d ever done before,” he said. “But that also meant there was a steep learning curve for each one of us (including me), which was daunting. Thankfully, everyone who worked on this project brought the very best of themselves to the table, wanting to make it the best it could be.”

By Andrea Miller P’22, 27
Director of Strategic Communications

The challenge of portraying the actors without masks and seemingly right next to each other drove Geha, the production staff, and the students to strategize filming in new and innovative ways. “There are some fundamental differences between acting on stage and on film,” explained Geha. “In theater, it’s 90% a back-and-forth relationship with your co-actor. With film, and especially in the middle of COVID, sometimes the co-actor isn’t there. Actors have to give and give without any return from fellow actors... And this group of students just gave and gave.”

An original script written by Geha and workshopped with a writing team of six students, the four-part series follows the zigzag paths of:

- **Kai Touré (Dominick Williams ’21)**, who as an online cultural influencer, preaches love and radical empathy after unintentionally picking up the mantle of his Civil Rights leader/father;
- **Chastity Cole (Sarah Wang ’21)**, a human rights activist who is on a crusade to find out how her father died;
- **Hewie Pascale (Luke Jennings ’21)** – Chastity’s best friend from middle school, a coder and hacker, who wants to make the world a better place; and
- **The Doctor (Julie Fine ’21)** who is overseeing the therapies of these three people.

“In physics and engineering, catastrophe theory explores how systems break down. How a natural state (like a mountainside) can turn into a disaster (like a landslide). There are certain variables at play, and a change in just one variable can shift everything towards its breaking point,” explained Geha, who was inspired by the events of the Summer of 2020. “Last summer, our country shifted,” reflected Geha. “In the wake of George Floyd’s murder, we saw 100 days of...”
The process of writing this story was different this time as well for Geha, who has authored several original musicals and plays for Friends Academy. “Typically, when I present a script to students, it’s in or near a final draft. This time, the students were seeing the initial work at a far less developed stage and we were able to workshop ideas about this world and these characters together.”

Five of the students who collaborated with Geha during the writing stages would go on to act in the film and Geha sees their involvement as pivotal to shaping the final script. “By having students bring their own experiences to the conversation, we were able to craft identities for these characters that I might not have done on my own,” shared Geha. “The students’ perspectives and experiences were invaluable in shaping our characters, their identities, and their points of view.”

The production, which involved 21 student performers, four faculty performers, and six students and adults behind the scenes, filmed in various locations around campus, as the student crew managed through COVID interruptions, transforming classrooms and conference rooms into bedrooms and laboratories. “COVID made it a lot harder because we could only film one person at a time. Anytime you see two or more people talking to one another in an episode, it’s fake. It’s a composite shot of two or three separate takes,” said Geha.

With all four episodes now available to stream, Geha is excited by the promise of a new way of storytelling for the future. “This project has been a wonderful and wonderfully challenging learning experience for everyone. It’s opened up different ways of thinking and storytelling for us. Will we do this again? Who knows. But the reaction so far has been amazing. We’re really proud of the work we’ve done and how that work has gotten to reach a wider audience than before. Catastrophe Theory is streaming now on Youtube! Tune in!!”
After years of hard work and storied high school careers, several seniors have signed to continue their athletics journeys at the next level. Friends Academy commends our college signees, as well as all graduating members of our athletics program, particularly after the challenges they’ve endured over the past two years.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS
HONORING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 2001 GIRLS TRACK STATE TITLE

By Louisa Garry ‘11, ’14
Varsity Track Coach

June 8 and 9, 2001 were big days for the Friends Academy Girls Track program. Twenty years ago at the NYSPHSAA Class C/D State championships held at Mitchell Field on Long Island, Candace Arthur ’01 won the 200 meters in 24.78 seconds, the 400 meters in 57.87 seconds and anchored the Girls 4 X 100 meter relay (with Brittany Garel ’02, Victoria Garel ’01, and Sophia Louis ’01) securing Friends Academy’s first State championship and qualifying for Nationals.

It was a busy week for the team and they had to squeeze in races in between prom on June 7 – they reminded me recently that they still have “prom hair” in the photo – and they threw on their robes over their uniforms to attend graduation after the meet finals on June 9.

Despite all the potential distractions and scheduling conflicts, these amazing young women competed well with speedy legs and flawless handoffs and achieved their goal of WINNING at the State level. It was a special day for them and for Friends Academy and they still hold the FA school record for 4 x 100m relay with a time of 49.27 seconds.

It is a pleasure to celebrate these fine young women and their accomplishments then and today. It’s not surprising that they transferred all that hard work, discipline, and passion that they demonstrated on the track to success in their academic study and careers.
Despite the challenges of condensed seasons and quarantine disruptions, the Friends Academy athletic program had one of the most successful years in recent memory. The perseverance, adaptability, and determination of our student-athletes and coaches proved absolutely remarkable in the face of adversity. The list here is a completely non-exhaustive snapshot of some of the incredible athletic accomplishments over the past year.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

**Newsday Top 25 on Long Island:**
- Mary Droesch ’21 – girls golf

**Newsday Top 100 on Long Island:**
- Adrienne Coleman ’21 – field hockey
- Billy Daal ’21 – boys basketball, football
- Marco Derly ’22 – boys soccer
- Alex Douglas ’21 – boys basketball
- Albert Panico ’21 – boys lacrosse

**Paris Panagopoulos ’23 – girls lacrosse**

**Boys Basketball:** Went undefeated, winning five games, in a shortened season

**Field Hockey:** Finished the regular season undefeated at 11-0; head coach Christine Botti named conference Coach of the Year

**Boys Golf:** Finished second in the County Championship, with brothers Sean Shallat ’24 and Zach Shallat ’22 finishing second and third overall, respectively

**Girls Golf:** Captured the conference title and advanced to county championships, where Mary Droesch ’21 finished 20th overall

**Girls Lacrosse:** Advanced to county quarterfinals

**Boys Lacrosse:** Claimed Long Island Class D Championship with a 15-14 double-overtime win over Port Jefferson, after winning the Nassau County Class D Championship with a 13-7 win over Oyster Bay

**Boys Tennis:** Finished the regular season undefeated at 9-0 and advanced to Nassau County tournament

**Track and Field:** Both girls and boys varsity teams captured the Division IVB championships and finished second at Nassau County Championships

Clockwise from bottom left: Varsity Boys Lacrosse team after winning the Nassau County Championship, Girls and Boys Varsity Track Team after capturing the Division IVB Championship, Mary Droesch ’21, who was named a Top 25 golfer on Long Island; the field hockey team went 11-0 in the regular season, boys golf finished second in Nassau County
BRAND-NEW TURF FIELD!

In the Fall of 2020, Friends Academy broke ground on a brand new, state-of-the-art turf field. Set to be completed by Summer 2021, the turf field will offer Friends Academy student-athletes a top-notch facility for soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey to remain competitive in the Nassau County Section VIII public school athletic league. The field will allow student-athletes to hone their skills and continue to train, rain or shine. The new facility will also offer an improved fan experience, with paved walkways surrounding the field and bleachers.
Congratulations to Upper School Spanish teacher Edgar Posada, who was one of nine educators who received the National Hispanic Literature and Languages Honor Award (NHLA) for 2020. Posada, who began his career at Salve Regina University in 2004, has made significant contributions to the field of Hispanic literature and language studies. "Edgar has been a leader in the field of Hispanic studies," said Provost and Dean of the College Susan Johnson. "He has been instrumental in developing and teaching courses in Hispanic literature and language, and he is a respected scholar and teacher." Posada was nominated by Devishi Narula ’20, who is now attending the university! "Edgar is a remarkable educator who has made a profound impact on my academic and personal development," said Narula. "He is not only an excellent teacher, but also a mentor and role model." Posada is known for his passion for Hispanic studies and his commitment to teaching and learning. "Edgar is a true scholar and a true teacher," said Johnson. "He is a true inspiration to all of us." The NHLA is an honor given to educators who have made significant contributions to the field of Hispanic studies. It is the highest honor given by the National Board for Language and Literature (NBLA). Posada is the first educator at Salve Regina University to receive this honor. "This is a tremendous honor," said Posada. "I am grateful to be recognized for my work in Hispanic studies." Posada is currently working on a book on Hispanic literature and language studies. "I am excited to bring my research to the classroom," said Posada. "I am looking forward to sharing my passion for Hispanic studies with my students." Posada is a member of the Hispanic Studies faculty at Salve Regina University. He has taught courses in Hispanic literature and language studies, and he is currently working on a book on Hispanic literature and language studies. Posada is a dedicated educator who is passionate about teaching and learning. "I am grateful to be recognized for my work in Hispanic studies," said Posada. "I am excited to bring my research to the classroom," said Posada. "I am looking forward to sharing my passion for Hispanic studies with my students."
Alumni on Campus

Alumni continue to play a vital role in the day-to-day life of Friends Academy students. Here are just a few ways in which alumni have shared their expertise, experience and sound advice with our students...

One of our newer FA traditions, this year our recent college-age alumni returned back virtually to offer tips and advice to our seniors as they come closer to the end of their time as FA students. Thank you to JD Baptiste '16, Jalijah Daniels '16, Sofia Patino Duque '16, Kaitlyn Hardy '17, Joe Horne '19, Julia Mariani '17 and Christina Yannello '16 for sharing their wisdom with us.

Laura Berke Mottel '08 talks to Upper School students about her work at NBCUniversal Media at Bravo! and Oxygen Media, working in both brand marketing and consumer marketing.

Nicholas Moretto '13 talks to Upper School students about his choice to study engineering, and his work as both an equipment engineer and a manufacturing engineer at Tesla, Inc.

At the height of the pandemic, alumni joined together to read “Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens for our first ever Alumni Book Club.

The Parents of Alumni Association organized a Wellness Webinar with FA current parents and entrepreneurs Michelle Wakath and Fran Paniccia, owners of Organic Krush healthy lifestyle restaurants.
BASEBALL ALUMNI INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

With their season halted due to COVID-19 last spring, baseball coach Mike Damm created a series of talks for his team, inviting alumni from various areas of baseball to speak on their careers.

Matt Feinstein ’15 (above, center) talked about his baseball career at Dartmouth College and his professional pursuits, signing on with the New York Boulders of the Frontier League.

Sam Menzin ’08 (left, second from right) talked about his work as Director of Baseball Operations for the Detroit Tigers, and his role as a team scout.

Alex Trautwig ’08 (left, center) talked about his work as a photographer for Major League Baseball, sharing insider tactics on securing incredible action shots, and the “best moment of his career,” when his photo of Aaron Judge graced the cover of Sports Illustrated. [Photo above by Alex Trautwig ’08]
FROM THE PRESIDENT

PETER STEIN ’79, P ’17, ’20, ’23

Dear Fellow Alumni,

I am writing to you in what is hopefully the wake of one of the most challenging times in our lives. At Friends Academy, we have persevered through the eye of the storm, shifting from virtual learning to hybrid instruction. I am proud to report that this past February we were able to welcome all students back to campus full-time, five days a week, with the help of a series of new modular classrooms in the Quad, lovingly called our “Academic Village.” As alumni we have joined together over the course of this trying time, with virtual reunions and classroom speakers, connecting in new and different ways.

During this time we have had an opportunity to re-examine and restructure the Friends Academy Alumni Board. It will now be guided by committees formed to make us more efficient and to help us represent a larger and stronger alumni community than ever before. We hope you will consider joining us on the alumni board or on one of our volunteer committees.

Our Parents of Alumni Association (POAA) affinity group remains united and strong, and held a wonderful Health and Wellness webinar this past Fall. They are looking forward to socially distanced outdoor gatherings this Spring/Summer. Our newest affinity group, BIPOC Alumni of Friends Academy (BAFA), is highlighted in detail on the following page and is a welcome addition to the branches of the alumni association. This group joins together Friends Academy alumni of color to share commonalities and provide support to students of color.

In conjunction with our ongoing efforts, if you have not already done so, we are asking you to complete our official 2021 ALUMNI SURVEY: bit.ly/2RNTUHS.

This survey will help us to understand who our alumni are – your careers, your interests, your passions, and the ways in which we might use your expertise to help us build a better alumni community, and a better Friends Academy. Even if we already have your contact information, we urge you to complete the survey so that we can hear your feedback and continue to enhance our alumni connections.

Last but certainly not least, in the pages that follow we have the pleasure of highlighting three alumni, each impressive in their own right. Melissa Korn ’02 has built a name for herself as a higher education writer at the Wall Street Journal, recently co-writing the book Unacceptable: Privilege, Deced, and the Making of the College Admissions Scandal. Her own story is one of perseverance, drive and determination. We then take a look at the work of Ed Page ’85 who, through his academic accomplishments and business acumen, has become President and COO at Relation Insurance. Ed takes pride in serving as a mentor and leader for the younger generation. Next, David Rosenberg ’73 shares his lifelong commitment to the homeless community in Los Angeles, CA after weathering a period of homelessness himself, rescued with the help of former Friends Academy Athletic Director Marty Jacobson.

I have always been inspired by our alumni and have seen that demonstrated in new and innovative ways over the last year. I hope that as the weather warms, and as the Coronavirus wanes, I get the chance to see some of you soon!

Peter Stein ’79, P ’17, ’20, ’23
David Rosenberg '73

"DAVE THE RAVE"

By Lauren Putter Menzin '81, P '13, '16

It is no wonder David Rosenberg '73 has been approached more than once to make a movie of his life. After the first few moments of speaking with David (during two hour-long interviews) and learning intimate details of his personal journey, it quickly became apparent that his story truly needs the more expansive platform of a book or film to do it justice. His life unfolds like a suspenseful page turner, with twists and turns and a plot line that evokes a plethora of emotions and life lessons.

Upon first impression, David seems to be a larger-than-life character who, after surviving a very difficult upbringing, internalized the unending gratitude he has for those who supported him by dedicating his life to help others. One might expect to feel intimidated by David's booming, confident voice, admitted muscular physique (a nod to his past as a champion powerlifter) and quick wit; however, his humble manner and friendly banter instantly puts one at ease. Delightfully engaging, David continuously resorts to self-deprecating humor (instigating many a chuckle) in a well-intentioned attempt to understate his many inspiring achievements. He works hard to appeal to others to see him as just an ordinary guy – but his experiences and actions suggest otherwise.

David first came to Friends Academy in the 9th grade, when a summer camp coach connected him with the school. From the beginning, he was involved with sports, playing football, baseball and basketball (eventually as captain). Unsure about the funding, he said, “I never paid to go there...and it was not a scholarship.”

At this time, his parents were going through a “nasty” divorce and were reportedly trying to get David, a young teen, to testify. Around the same time, his mother, Dolores, disclosed the fact that Charlie Rosenberg, the man who he thought was his dad, was in fact not David’s real father. He said, “Normally you would think such news would have a negative impact on a 15-year-old, but all I felt was relief.”

Soon after, on his 16th birthday, David found his mother, an addict who had made past suicide attempts, at 3 a.m. in her room “lying in a bed of fire.” He remembers frantically pulling her and his baby brother to safety, “nearly passing out from smoke inhalation.” Despite his efforts, David reports that his mother tragically walked back into the bedroom and telephone booths came to an end. I would stay with friends or "So my days of sleeping outdoors, in cars, you sleeping outside anymore,’ and that I could stay there whenever I wanted.” He recalled the critical day that Mr. Jacobson approached him in the cafeteria and asked, ‘where are you sleeping tonight?’ I acted cool and answered, ‘wherever I want.’" David recounted how Mr. Jacobson took him across campus to the gym, laying out blankets and pillows for him. “He gave me 3 lockers, towels, even clothing from the lost and found. That was some high-quality stuff,” he laughed. “He [Mr. Jacobson] gave me the keys to the universe – in my case it was the keys to the gym. He said, ‘I don’t want you sleeping outside anymore,’ and that I could stay there whenever I wanted.”

David Rosenberg was finally reached, he came to pick up his biological son (2-year-old Jason), but “it was not an option” for David to go live with him. He admitted, “We never got along even when I thought he was my father [...] to be very honest, my life was actually enhanced after my mom passed, because it was very challenging living with an alcoholic and drug addict. I used to have to come home (from school) and then care for my infant brother.”

At Meeting for Worship after his mother’s passing, David repeated the last lines from the Rudyard Kipling poem he had read called if: “...yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it, And - which is more you’ll be a Man, my son”.

David soon found himself without a home or family during a very pivotal time in a young person’s life. He remembers his friends, fellow FA students Vince Mazzeo, Brian Cresssey and Cliff Gardner who were good to him. “I stayed in people’s homes, sometimes garages. I lived in Queens briefly [and] I never broke in, but back in ’72 sometimes people would leave car doors open and I would go in to sleep.” Although many years have passed, David still marvels at the support he was given by the people around him, “All I know is there is no way that someone like me should have been able to stay at a place like Friends Academy.”

At this time, Mr. Martin Jacobson (the FA Athletic Director) had come to his aid, giving him guidance after David tried “to throw a ref out a window.” He replays the critical day that Mr. Jacobson approached him in the cafeteria and asked, where are you sleeping tonight? I acted cool and answered, ‘wherever I want.” David recounts his attempt to make a movie of his life. "Dave the Rave”

Promptly presenting his contact information, David insisted that the story should focus on Mr. Jacobson. "I always thought I was special because he helped me, but now I realize he is the special one. Who knows how many other people he has helped.”

Marty Jacobson, retired since 2005, lives between Florida and New York with his wife Claudia (who taught for 35 years in the Huntington School district and in the 3rd grade at Friends Academy). He was eager to talk about David and the special kinship they shared. "When David was a student in high school he had to deal with a tremendous amount of adversity, things were difficult for him at home, way beyond what
a normal teenager should have to go through. He had never met his [real] father and his mother was an addict. Many times, David brought his anger to school with him, but I was able to see a goodness in David, a kindness and inner strength that enabled him to overcome a lot of the sadness.

“At 16, he found himself homeless [...] and it was that inner strength that helped him get through and do so much with his life. He has accomplished an incredible amount. He took those tough times, learned and grew and has done so much for others.”

Mr. Jacobson, the first to arrive at work in the morning and the last to leave at night, would see David shooting hoops at all hours. “He loved athletics and was a basketball junkie.” They got to talking about the “dysfunctional environment” at home (when David still had a home) and it became clear why he was reluctant to leave school in the evenings. When Mr. Jacobson offered the option of sleeping in the wrestling room he made it clear, “what you can’t do is turn on the lights at night to shoot hoops” because there were a lot of people living on campus. He admitted, “I had only been working there five years; I was young myself...it was kind of risky to give a teenager a key to the gym, but it was a different time and place. David seemed to love it – he was a gym rat and this was a safe and stable space for him.” Mr. Jacobson noted, “The school was good to David. Ted Withington (headmaster at the time) knew he loved it there and let David finish without having money for tuition.” He referred to many others at FA who had helped, including the Mazee and Mennit families who had children in David’s class. Both Mr. Jacobson and David concurred that coach Cal Wynot had been very “kind and generous” as well.

Coincidentally, Mr. Jacobson’s own life experience at the school mirrored David’s in the sense that “Friends Academy had also been a beacon of light” for him. He began his 38-year career in 1967. “Ted Withington interviewed me in his kitchen offering $5,800 for a head coach and Middle School teaching position. Great Neck South was offering much more money, but Ted promised a 20-year plan including a chance to diversify the student and faculty body; the title of Athletic Director in three years and the opportunity to bring the women’s athletic department up to par with the men.”

Jacobson said, “I owe FA so much. I love the school.” He went on to share the story of how his first wife had left when his children were only five and eight years of age. “In that situation, I could not stay in our house in Huntington and take care of two small kids and was (luckily) given the opportunity to rent an apartment on campus.” Faculty housing was on the edge of the soccer field and Marty recalled how the students would come to play soccer with his children and the Upper School principal and his wife, Frank and Myrna Brogan, would invite the family to their home for weekly dinners.

“It was all good. Every Thursday I went to Meeting (for worship) and every Friday night I went to temple.” With exuberance he asks “How do you say thank you enough? The entire Friends Academy community raised my kids.” His boys Brett and Todd attended FA from Pre-K to 12th grade. “I am proud of them. They are both dads who do good things and teach their kids the right stuff. You hope they pass on what you taught them, that is our legacy.” He pointed out countless acts of kindness he witnessed at FA over the years, recounting stories like the time he and a colleague drove to a student’s home to assist a mother who was going to sell their furniture to help pay for tuition.

As humble as his mentor and friend, David also talked of several people at Friends who stood up for him, including Sarah Vuillet (his Spanish teacher and guidance counselor) who “helped him attend Villanova to play basketball.” David met his beloved wife of 44 years, Barbara, there, “I could go through life 10 times and never meet another woman like her.” They headed to San Diego after college where he worked for a year to save money for law school at the University of San Diego. In 1981, he built his law practice, now Rosenberg, Shpall & Zeigler, a full-service firm specializing in physician and healthcare provider defense. The first major “million-dollar” case David won was for an OB/GYN whose wife was a physician from New York. In a twist of fate, he asked if she might know Peter Sternlieb, another doctor from there (whose name: David’s mother had disclosed 10 years earlier as his biological father). He was “stunned” when the woman answered affirmatively that he was a brilliant internist who had actually been her mentor.

In his mid-30s David finally learned the truth and made the call to Dr. Peter Sternlieb. “He is gone now, but I will never forget, his words will stay with me forever. He said, ‘You are my son, you are my first-born child.’” When they arranged their first encounter, David discovered that his biological father ironically lived in Upper Brookville, only three miles from where he had gone to school at Friends Academy. “So that is how I met my father. We developed a very nice relationship. One of the very first things I did after reuniting with Mr. Jacobson was to have my father meet him, because I wanted my dad to know the man who made such a difference in my life. My father was very appreciative and I think a little embarrassed because he had been unaware of the type of life I had lived.”

David has spent his life lending a hand to others. “I am just an average guy with people around me who have been incredible, who helped take me from adversity when I did not have many choices.” Becoming a member of the Board of Directors for San Diego Youth Services at the young age of 25, he was instrumental in founding “The Storefront,” a shelter for homeless teens, which either reunites them with their families or provides safe placement. In 1984, just a few years out of law school, David helped to rent a storefront in downtown San Diego. “We got it started. I bought 20 cots and now the shelter has a $10.5 million annual budget.” He said, “I did it with Mr. Jacobson in mind. I wanted to thank him for what he had done for me. We have served well over 10,000 kids.”

As the shelter began to grow, David got the idea to fundraise by auctioning off autographed celebrity T-shirts, album covers, and other items. “I wrote to everybody, Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennet, Lisa Minelli, The Rolling Stones.” Bruce Springsteen signed several T-shirts each year and has helped to raise a lot of money. David refers to the Springsteen album, “The Ghost of Tom Joad” (based on migrant workers from the Steinbeck novel, The Grapes of Wrath), as embodying the underlying theme that people often treat “those less fortunate not only with disrespect, but with a lack of dignity.”

One of the songs on the album, “Balboa Park,” deals with a Hispanic, immigrant teenager who comes here to raise money to support his family and winds up becoming a prostitute—an ongoing problem in this area.” David is particularly concerned about the organization’s neighborhood outreach program, which works around the clock “getting the kids off the street and into the shelter...it means so much to me.” He continued, “I know what it is like to be homeless...So, I want to get these kids off the street.”

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David presented the stark facts: “If you get a teen off the streets within the first six months, you have a good shot that they can have a life. Six months to a year, you are fighting a different battle. Over a year, these teenagers become drug addicts, prostitutes, criminals and then they are dead. I have worked really hard every year, but the reality is there are always more kids. If you do a good job, the work is never done.” In a more somber tone, David disclosed that he, himself, has never tried a drink, cigarette, or drugs. “I grew up surrounded by [people using] narcotics, pills, and alcohol. It did not have a good ending – they were all very unhappy people...Charlie Rosenberg ended up putting a gun to his mouth and committing suicide.”

In 2005 (over 30 years after graduating from Friends) on a trip to New York with his two sons, David took them to campus, deciding they were old enough to learn more about his youth. “I had not seen Mr. Jacobson in all those years but always appreciated him. Sometimes you don’t realize the impact people have. Naturally, the first place I took them was the gym and it was a Saturday and no one was around.” As fate would have it, Mr. Jacobson was in his office and recalled “hearing the basketball and seeing David and his two kids.” They both remember that remarkable day they reunited with much fondness and emotion. Mr. Jacobson brought the kids down to the locker room to show them where David had slept, divulging stories about “Dave The Rave” (his nickname in high school).

Meeting up the next morning to play tennis, Mr. Jacobson recounted, “When David went to get some water with Daniel, I said to his other son, Joey, you must be really proud of your father and he answered, ‘Well, he is not really MY dad, he is ALL of our dads.’” When Mr. Jacobson asked what he meant, Joey shared that he had been homeless and that David and his family had taken him in. Mr. Jacobson said, “It brought tears to my eyes. Here is a kid who David and his daughter Jennifer – both Jennifer and David’s son Daniel are champions at steer wrestling and barrel racing. His wife Barbara ranks second in the nation in mounted shooting.

Bruce Springsteen (center) has visited David’s shelter, “The Storefront,” on several occasions, and gave some of the teens impromptu piano lessons.

“I have been blessed in many ways, financially as well, but how can one really be happy with their own success and not see the kids sleeping in the streets, kids who are abused – you’ve got to try to do something. Maybe you can’t change the world but we can each change it a little bit. I know what it is like to be looked down upon as a street person or in my jobs as a busboy, waiter, or valet. If you have not lived it, maybe you don’t understand the importance of doing something – whether it is donating money or getting involved in some small way.”

David, who also has given inspirational talks to high school students, is still very much involved in continued fundraising and legal work for the shelter. Over the years, he has developed a personal relationship with Bruce Springsteen and his family, having attended 181 of his concerts worldwide and has appeared in a documentary. The messages and philosophy behind the song lyrics have been a great influence to David throughout his life. Bruce has visited The Storefront, generously giving the kids impromptu piano lessons (and even front row seats to a concert). When he asked David what motivated him to do this work he answered, “You once said that individual freedom without a connection to friends, family and community is meaningless, and I took that to heart.” David added, “Bruce always says, ‘no one wins unless we all win.’”

Marty Jacobson was able to see David’s accomplishments firsthand when invited to the shelter and yearly fundraiser (they currently visit one another yearly and speak on the phone weekly).

“It was phenomenal. I am incredibly proud of David. One of my favorite movies is ‘Pay It Forward’ and that is what David did – he paid it forward! He knew what it was to be homeless, not have food or shelter, and he created a place that helped thousands of kids. I am so happy for him – he has a great family and is doing well.”

David even flew the Jacobsons out to attend a party intended to thank all of the people who had helped him in his life. Similarly modest about the ongoing impact he has had on others, Mr. Jacobson is remixes to mention the Friends Academy Sports Scholarship in his name (a thank you from other former students). He asserts, “This is David’s story, I am just happy to be a small part of helping him – I love him. I am very fortunate to know David and so many great kids who have come through Friends and done great things.”

David, who spoke at both of Mr. Jacobson’s retirement parties relates that he is almost 65 and still overwhelmed by the “kindness and generosity” he and others showed him. “To this day I don’t know why. I was not a star player on one of his teams, I wasn’t even very likeable – not the kind of kid parents would want their children to be around with my lifestyle and background.”

With his resonant, yet gentle voice he expresses his gratitude with conviction, “I want to convey my appreciation for the kindness people have given me at Friends Academy and tell others to take the time to reflect and count your blessings, because I have been so enriched (by them). Everyone should have a Marty Jacobson in their lives. Literally my heart is full of love and appreciation for what he and others throughout my life have done for me. I am blessed... beyond blessed.”

TOP: David brought his sons to Friends Academy in 2005 and ran into Mr. Jacobson. David and Mr. Jacobson continue to see each other regularly.

BOTTOM: David and his daughter Jennifer – both Jennifer and David’s son Daniel are champions at steer wrestling and barrel racing. His wife Barbara ranks second in the nation in mounted shooting.
MELISSA KORN ’02
WERE WOULD
A PARENT
GO?

By Laura Schoeffel P ’17, ’20, ’22

Melissa Korn can tell you more than you may want to know about college admissions—she has been in the thick of it for about six years as a higher education reporter for The Wall Street Journal.

When the Varsity Blues scandal erupted on March 12, 2019, Melissa knew immediately that this story was not just big news, it was explosive: the largest college admissions scam ever prosecuted by the Justice Department. What was striking was the scope of the investigation, the sheer audacity, and how so many successful, wealthy parents, including celebrities, were entangled in the indictments. From New York City to San Francisco, Aspen to LA, parents had been rounded up in early morning raids, investigated and scrutinized, along with college counselors and coaches from storied universities like Stanford, Yale, and USC.

“It was a circus,” and Korn and her WSJ colleague, Jennifer Levitz, were in the front row. “We didn’t break the story, nobody did. It came from the prosecutors.” But Melissa did happen to be first byline on the initial stories published by her paper, and when she and Levitz broke the news about the tipster who set the whole thing in motion, it propelled them into the national spotlight: “It snowballed in the best way possible.” Korn was instinctually drawn to investigating and writing the whole story. “I think every writer has a vague dream of writing a book…and the day the story broke, I heard from two literary agents.” She called up Levitz, whom she barely knew, and asked, “Do you want to write a book with me?” Korn and Levitz spent that weekend holed up, writing the proposal for what would become their acclaimed book, Unacceptable: Privilege, Deceit, and the Making of the College Admissions Scandal (Portfolio/Penguin, 2020).

“That weekend changed my life,” says Korn, describing a whirlwind year of reporting the story as it unfolded, crisscrossing the country, knocking on doors, trying to connect the dots. Her whiteboard looked like something out of a TV detectives’ crime scene diagram: a spider’s web of lines connecting people and places, and the details of the scheme, dating back to 2008: “We were kind of like detectives, trying to piece the whole thing together.”

The result of painstaking, hard work, Unacceptable is a riveting story that not only lays out the facts of the investigation, but digs relentlessly into the backstories of the players involved. For Korn and Levitz, it was important to do more than paint a picture of criminality. They wanted their account to humanize the people involved, which is why their book is so compelling and, yes, relatable. “You don’t want to believe you are like somebody who would cross the line like this, but we all have our insecurities as parents, our concerns, our competitiveness,” says Korn. It is the extent to which some parents were willing to go to give their children a leg up, that truly fascinated Korn. “Ultimately, I think many of these people saw what they were doing as buying a service”—like hiring a math tutor or a violin teacher. But then it became a slippery slope, an act of desperation, as parents crossed the line, committing fraud to get their kids into college. “As long as these admit rates are below 10%, there will be people willing to do anything to get there.”

So, how did a self-described awkward middle-schooler become such a tenacious journalist? “My parents got Newsday, FT (The Financial Times), The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times every day, so I was always surrounded by newspapers and news; I always loved to write, I loved English, reading.” Melissa gravitated to those interests at Friends Academy, joining in fourth grade. Her brother, Dan Korn (’99), was a few years ahead, paving the way at the school newspaper: “My brother was the editor of Inkwell my freshman year...there may have been a little nepotism with story assignments,” laughs Korn. She wrote her way to become Inkwell’s editor in her senior year. FA was

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The way Friends was there to support me was something I knew I could never get at any other school.”

not always easy for Melissa, and she talks about having ups and downs, even making the decision to apply to boarding schools in sophomore year. And then her mother was tragically killed in a car accident. Everything changed in that moment. “My mother had been a very active member of the parent community. Everyone knew her.” In her grief, Melissa chose to stay: “The way Friends was there to support me was something I knew I could never get at any other school.” She came to value the close-knit community, and the teachers who intuitively knew when she needed to talk, or sit silently in an empty classroom. She values that her teachers supported her in figuring out her own sense of self. “Looking back, I am so grateful for my Friends experience.”

With her deep understanding of the college admissions process, one might wonder what it was like for Melissa: “Stressful!” She was in love with Yale, and hoped to join her brother there, but was deferred and ultimately rejected. Ed Dugger was her college counselor: “Ed got to know me really well, and he helped me make tough decisions.” The best decision, she says, was accepting Cornell, where she joined The Cornell Daily Sun, a serious publication: “It was absolutely the best training I could ever have for this career.” On her junior year abroad at Oxford, she wrote for Cherwell, more of a tabloid, but a fun experience. Then it was straight to Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, which led to her first job at Dow Jones, and then a staff position at their premier publication, The Wall Street Journal.

No doubt, 2020 was a tough year to publish a book, but this may be just the beginning for Unacceptable, which has been optioned for a miniseries. While there is at least one related trial to cover this fall, for Korn, it is a bit of a relief to not be doing two jobs at once. It is enough right now to have a day job and to do right by her young daughter, who is only just beginning her own school journey.

Kim Miller had a long list of things she’d rather do. Perusing the Arden Fair mall, for one. Spending time with her boyfriend. Anything was more exciting than the heavy gray pages of a college application, for sure.

It was fall 1993, and Miller was sixteen. In upper-middle-class Sacramento, this was what you did at sixteen. You started planning to get into college. Though she was a good student, the prospect scared her. Those little fill-in-the-dot tests were just not her friend. She had already convinced herself she would bomb the SAT. And what would she study? She liked theater and fashion, but “I didn’t know what the hell I wanted to do,” she recalls.

But then a minor miracle touched down in her life, a force of nature.

Years later, she would still have his business card, imprinted with future stars, the royal blue letters in all caps with a star in place of the A.

Miller’s parents had retained Rick Singer as a private college counselor. She liked him straight off. He was in his early thirties, super fit, energetic, tanned, and conspicuously casual, often in shorts, running shoes, and a windbreaker. He was hired to help her study for the SAT, to weigh her college options, and to complete those intimidating applications. Singer led strategy sessions at the formal dining room table in her family’s pretty Mediterranean-style home on leafy Forty-Sixth Street in East Sacramento. Just as important as nailing the test, he told her, was shaping her image.

“What is going to really make you stand out on paper to these schools?” he would probe. “What are you going to bring to the table, Kim Miller? Who are you? Who is Kim Miller?”

No one had ever talked to Miller like that before. She liked it. His words, his coach-like “you got this, kid” attitude, empowered her. She discovered a growing strength inside, and a new, kick-the-door-down confidence that she could choose who she would be.
Ed Page ‘85 grew up in Uniondale, attending Friends from maybe first grade through 12th (please cut him some slack – at age 53, it’s hard for him to remember exactly!). After completing a bachelor’s degree from M.I.T., the native New Yorker headed West for graduate school – first for a master’s degree in Electrical Engineering from UC Berkeley, and then for a master’s degree in Business Administration from Stanford University. Ed has mostly been in California ever since, now residing in Oakland, where he works as the President and COO of Relation Insurance Services. Ed’s success as Relation’s COO includes growing the company from $70 million to $170 million in just eight years – and expects the number to reach as high as $300 million by year’s end. But the biggest part of his success, said Ed, is “the cultural aspect of it – people saying it’s a great place to work.”

Ed has been a leader in advocating for diversity in the workplace and for creating an environment that is friendly and welcoming to all. He credits his Friends Academy foundation for equipping him with the tools to handle the many educational and professional challenges he has faced. We talked about that, as well as jazz, cooking, and Kobe. Ed’s “Weimador” puppy, in an interview for The Meeting House, during which Ed also shared his advice for current students: “Don’t take it all too seriously. Your life is going to go in a different direction than you think.”

Nice to meet you! I’ve heard you remembered by former Friends students (thanks, Brian Doyle ‘86!) as being “quiet but brilliant, with a funny, dry sense of humor” and even as “early onset intellectual.” Accurate?

I do think I have a good sense of humor, so that one I’ll take, and probably the intellectual-brilliant part, there’s probably a little bit of truth in that as well. It’s interesting – I’m both an introvert and an extrovert. My natural tendency is to be more introverted and I’m actually someone who likes to spend a fair amount of time by himself, but there’s a whole other side of me that is very extroverted and very social as well. I tend to be the opposite of the people I’m around.

What activities were you most interested in at Friends?

Running track, which was really cool back then – not so much cool because I was super good at it, but it was more because we had a really good track team at the time. We had a graduating class of only around 80 people, but our track team was among the best in the state. A large part of that was because we had a couple people who were really good, like my good friend Bert Payne, who was one of the fastest runners in the state and helped carry us. Everyone was really dedicated and it taught me a lot about discipline and team sports – the whole team dynamic.

How about music? You’ve also been a jazz pianist for 30 years. What got you into that, and did you play at Friends?

One, music was always playing [in my house]. And two, I have a godfather who is also named Ed – Eddie actually – he was a jazz pianist and drummer. He played drums with the famous jazz singer Alberta Hunter ages ago. He was a music teacher in Brooklyn for an ungodly amount of years. He was part of the influence as well. I remember him showing me piano when I was really young.

I also played the trumpet when I was at Friends and even thought about becoming a professional jazz musician, but that’s a hard way to make a living, so I didn’t do it. Then I switched to piano in college.

When did your interest in jazz take off?

It was in high school when I really started getting into jazz – I played the trumpet. I always listened to jazz but I was more of an R&B kind of person. I listened to Earth, Wind and Fire, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder and that kind of stuff. I liked jazz, I listened to it growing up, but then one day it just clicked for me and I just couldn’t live without it. For me it’s a lot like wine. Wine is an acquired taste and one day if you get it, you get it and you just can’t live without it. It’s the same thing for me with jazz.

Which Friends teachers and experiences most influenced you?

First, Friends has had a lot of great teachers but in particular Doc Richardson, who taught science for many years. I know he passed away a few years ago, which made me sad. He was such a special guy and helped open my eyes to the wonders of science. He also was a guy who had a really dry sense of humor, which I appreciated.

Ken Austin was another guy. I was in middle school and I still remember an English class when he brought in lyrics to a song. It was a song written by Stevie Wonder, and for me, since Friends is primarily white, having something that kind of was my cultural background being shown and brought to the class made a real impact. I have a real strong black male role model – my dad, we’re super close and he’s a super guy, but having another black male role model at school was pretty cool.
It kind of always has been. Well, both of my parents are extraordinarily good. When and why did giving back to future generations become a priority to you? What was your experience as a student of color like at Friends? For me, working with kids and helping youth has always been something I've been passionate about. That's why I've worked with Flourish Agenda for such a long period of time. I like to find the opportunities to help people who are coming up. At Relation, I'm always on hand to help some of the younger folks to rise up, get into insurance and get into the company. I also did that when I was at Bain & Company—if you've been blessed, it's your responsibility to help others who have not yet been as blessed to take a step in your direction.

How did you give back to future generations and how can others do the same? Find whatever is passionate to you. For me, working with kids and helping youth has always been something I've been passionate about. That's why I've worked with Flourish Agenda for such a long period of time. I like to find the opportunities to help people who are coming up. At Relation, I'm always on hand to help some of the younger folks to rise up, get into insurance and get into the company. I also did that when I was at Bain & Company—if you've been blessed, it's your responsibility to help others who have not yet been as blessed to take a step in your direction.

How did Friends prepare you for your many post-high school academic experiences? Find whatever is passionate to you. For me, working with kids and helping youth has always been something I've been passionate about. That's why I've worked with Flourish Agenda for such a long period of time. I like to find the opportunities to help people who are coming up. At Relation, I'm always on hand to help some of the younger folks to rise up, get into insurance and get into the company. I also did that when I was at Bain & Company—if you've been blessed, it's your responsibility to help others who have not yet been as blessed to take a step in your direction.

Why did you go into the insurance industry? I stumbled into it like most people do. There are very few people who say, "I really want to be an insurance person—that's my life's calling." I had worked for a while in a lot of different industries. I am hired by private equity firms to help run companies that they own. After I helped turn around one company and sell it about 10 years ago, I met the guys who owned what was then called Ascension, now called Relation, and they asked me to come talk to them. I met the CEO, Joe Tatum, who was just a phenomenal guy, and I've always believed in the "who" versus the "what" and that the "who" matters more than the "what." When I met Joe, I could tell he was a great "who," so despite having another job offer that I was planning to take, I took the leap of faith with working with Joe. It's been fantastic and I consider him now like my fourth brother. We had some tough times when we got started and had to turn the company around, but we did something right. We are on a great path now and I'm looking forward to continuing that trend.

You have nearly 25 years of experience at improving companies’ operations, finances, strategy and development. As the COO of Relation, you oversee operations, information technology and human resources. What's a typical day like for you, and what do you like most? Nowadays the days are not that different because I feel like I'm just in front of my computer all day on Zoom calls. Before the pandemic, it was very different. Everything from working to hire new salespeople, which is a big part of our business, to recruiting and integrating mergers and acquisitions (M&A) candidates, to helping to fix operational problems, to getting better financial controls in place, to improving our technology—it's varied every day, which is the thing I like.

I like having a variety of different things to do. A lot of stuff I deal with is people-related stuff these days, which...
is a weird departure for me because I am a highly analytical, numbers-driven person. I've found that as you rise up in your career, what happens is the data becomes less and less important and it becomes much more about managing people. I've found that I'm actually pretty good at it, which is not what I would have expected early on in my career.

How big is Relation, and where do you hope to take it?

We're up to more than 700 employees in roughly 50 offices around the country. By the end of the year, we'll likely be at more than 1,000 people and probably around 75 offices. Our goal is to triple our revenue over the next five years while building a company that will thrive for 100-plus years. We're on pace for that. We're actually probably going to beat that. We're probably going to be triple the size by the end of this year.

Culture drives every organization and to make sure the organization lasts, it's really critical that we invest in the culture and build the culture. The way in which we're doing it is by making sure the levels of leaders below us have the same cultural values and bringing them up to take on more and more responsibility.

You've said that it's important to create a company culture that is fun. Why?

You only have one life, so you want to spend it doing something enjoyable and if you're not enjoying what you're doing it's hard to do a good job at. Companies are about people, process, and technology. Great people can overcome poor process and poor technology, but the other two can't overcome poor people. You have to have people who are excited, who enjoy the culture, and frankly, fun is what we all want to have. That's what we're here for, so if you're not having fun you probably should be doing something different.

You've been described as a leader in encouraging diversity in the workplace. Why is this a goal and how have you worked to achieve it?

One, there's a saying: 'Each one, reach one.' The whole idea of reaching back to bring someone along with you. I think one of the reasons for that success is to be an island and not think about the people coming up behind you. I'm always asking that I bring people along and helped developing, so it's important to continue that trend. Part of it is also that in the insurance industry there are literally almost no African American leaders. I'm committed to trying to change that. I think also just being upfront and talking about it is important. Just to give you an example, when we had the George Floyd situation over the summer and the Black Lives Matter movement, we hosted a town hall on what happened and I shared a presentation with the whole company about it. I think being able to be in that discussion. I think being able to be in a position to encourage people to talk and reflect and think about what is going on, is one of the things that I've been trying to do.

By the numbers, your success includes helping to grow Relation from a $70 million to $170 million company in just eight years. How do you define your success in the workplace?

I think by the end of the year, we're going to be somewhere between $250 and $300 million. From just that metric, we're doing well. But for me, the biggest part of success is the cultural aspects of it - people saying it's a great place to work. By creating a culture where people really feel that they can be and do their best...that's what success looks like, and I feel that that success drives the financial success. I focus on that first part and if we do that, I think all the other stuff will happen and I think we're doing a pretty good job.

What do you like most about your job?

Honestly, the people. For me, it goes back to talking about Friends and my experience being on the track team. I like being on a team that's winning and doing good things with good people. That's how I feel with Relation. It's a good set of folks that I consider not only colleagues but friends as well. Doing good things, having success with your friends, that's really cool and that's what I like. I also like the variety of things that I do every day. I'm also super excited about the path that we're going down. When you feel you're on a winning team doing something special, it's hard not to be excited about it.

What is your life like outside of work?

I like to cook. There's a spicy Asian salmon dish that's one of my current favorites. Lately, we've been making black truffle risotto with seared scallops while truffles were in season. I also collect wine - I've got about 1,100 bottles in my wine cellar these days. I try to stay pretty physically active – I ride on my Peloton fairly frequently and try to find other ways to stay in shape, like hiking. I also like fast cars but haven't been on a track for some time.

I like people trying to lift each other up instead of tearing each other down and that's what I felt at Friends.

Tell me about your puppy-office mate

She is a “Weimador,” a mix between a Weimaraner and a Labrador and she's super smart and super high energy. One of the reasons why I got her is so we could go hiking together. Her name is Kobe (named after Kobe Bryant), (and will be a year old) on June 20. She's my office mate during the pandemic, and she gets super excited when my girlfriend (Felicia) comes around

What advice do you have for today's students?

Don't take it too seriously. Your life is going to go in a different direction than you think. Enjoy the time you have in high school. It should be some of the best times of your life. The time in college too. And, it's too early to know what you're really going to be ultimately passionate about. Explore and try different things and see what grabs you.

Would/do you encourage students to pursue a career in the insurance industry?

Insurance is a great career, which is not what I would have thought. And it's also an industry where the workforce is aging out so there are great opportunities for younger people coming in. It takes a little while to get going, but like anything that's worthwhile, if you get into it and work at it for a while there are great long-term rewards. Frankly, it can provide a great lifestyle.

Last words about Friends?

I do think it's a special place. It has a special feeling about it. It's been a long time since I've been on campus, but the thing I do like is there's a sense of positivity there. Some places are dark and have negative energy, but Friends has a really positive energy, which I really appreciated. It really gave you the sense that you could accomplish things. I felt like I had a very strong foundation to build on.

Also, although I really couldn't call Friends a diverse place, what I liked about my class is everybody pretty much got along. Did everyone get along? No, but the different cliques kind of all clicked together in different ways. I like people trying to lift each other up instead of tearing each other down and that's what I felt at Friends.
VIRTUAL REUNIONS

-65th Reunion-

1955
Led by Art Geoffrion and Naomi Dempsey, the Class of 1955 joined together via Zoom to reconnect and reminisce. Alumni had a chance to view yearbook photos, digital archives, and current life at Friends Academy.

1960
Led by Bob “Boom” Powell, the Class of 1960 gathered via Zoom. It was great to see both alumni who were able to attend the 50th Reunion in person, and those that couldn’t make it, see each other again and hear where their lives and careers had taken them.

1970
In hopes of an in-person reunion in the months to come, the Class of 1970 reunited for a Pre-Reunion via Zoom. Stories of pandemic perseverance were shared, and optimism for the future.

-Pre-50th Reunion-

1985
Alumni from the Class of 1985, as well as other alumni from the 80s, joined together to talk about their days at FA while supporting their classmate, Tiffany Thomas-Smith ’85, who is running for Judge in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

-35th Reunion-
in urgent care. Balance is not what it once was.” Bob sent some great senior pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would pictures of things from our era. Many of you have Bronzed baby shoes? Remember the immorbid machine? Would
And like many others, we keep contact with our kids and grandchildren via FaceTime. Many good lectures are offered online so that keeps the brain alive. I’m not as crazy about Zoom — too many people at one time for me. And David Seeler and I are concentrating on keeping our 40-acre rental property in Sagaponack in good shape. We move to Amagansett for the summer season, and improve the 12-acre site there. We build ponds and natural landscapes. Great fun!

Don’t forget to support Annual Giving at Friends. That’s where we thank Friends Academy for getting us into college. That’s where we thank our teachers, gave me a strong foundation in three different languages, the curiosity this time: a bilingual, environmentally-unstaffed) role of Development Officer with five non-profits. All struggling at this time, a bilingual, environmentally-focused school in the mountains of rural Costa Rica; the Navajo (hard hit by COVID-19, as you doubtless know from the media); a Haitian school for 200 children who are deaf and/or blind and/or in wheelchairs; a chaplaincy at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and the Outreach Commission at my church here in New London. As I pen the newsletters, solicitations, acknowledgements, etc., I am eternally grateful to the Friends Academy English teachers, especially Mrs. Stubbs — and to the world view inculcated through the company that spurs me to be globally conscious. But I could not mention understanding emails in three different languages, the curiosity to work in different currencies and the sensibilities to different cultures. How fortunate are we to have had such mentors!

And Andy Merton writes: For Gail and me, it has been an uneventful year. Due to COVID-19 we’ve had to cancel two trips, one to Newfoundland and Labrador, the other to Durham, NC, to visit our daughter Rachel, son-in-law Matt, and grandson Kirby, now two (not necessarily in that order; we visit via Zoom, which, while hardly satisfactory, is better than nothing.) Also via Zoom I’m conducting a writing workshop with a nearby alternative school, and I’m doing a lot of editing and writing on the side, hoping for a fourth book of poetry in the next year or so. I look forward to属人的 letters from Mrs. Stubbs, who, among other FA teachers, gave me a strong foundation from which to grow into a writer.

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What a great time! I sent out for class notes, and suggested that everyone use “reply all” for their responses. Some replies were sent, then more, then even more. We shared many stories and pictures, back and forth, over a span of five weeks...

I have to start with Mike Bruce, who has become a legitimate ridin’ an’ ropin’ star. He replied that “movie stars don’t have a picture taken “at work,” and it was a work photo! He referred to his picture as “the bearded man of workfromhome.”

Steve Beslyti finally retired after several attempts. He spent years in England, working in marine insurance and moved back to the same house in New Jersey that he had left long ago.

I sent Barbara Kemp a note shortly after Sean Connery died. I was recalling the night that many of us went to see Goldfinger in Glen Cove. She remembered it too, and was happy to think back to that night. She wondered if we’d share and us ol’ fogies is anxiously awaiting the vaccine, and will promptly seek some California sun.

Marianne Dorbec Parahano has had several types of cancer through the years and found a new variety last year. I have had several enjoyable conversations with her, and she sounds as good as ever. She has worked in different parts of the banking system, and they live in Allen, SC. She describes it as just like Locust Valley, but warmer and friendlier.

Annamaries Van Tuyl Mazieka has been in Tampa Bay for decades, and recently moved a bit north to be close to one of her daughters. She has adjusted to Joe’s fishing, and is very content.

Wendy Miller Costlett is still on the Delmarva, looking across the bay at the busiest part of the world. She travels, but not this year. Like Mike, she is involved with riding therapy, and like all of us looks forward to seeing kids and grandkids.

Robin Neuscheit is still in Richmond, busy with the community, and rarin’ to go to Florida as soon as she gets her shots.
Liz Zoob checked in, apparently in good health.

As far as things around here, all three generations of us have been healthy and happy. I think the workshops and Donna and I work the garden and tried our Airbnb. I would have drawn a New Donna a map if she asked her to go to the chicken coop, but that’s OK because she does everything else and we are happy to live in Paradise. I feed the chickens, the chickens feed the garden, and the garden feeds us. Every morning I walk out the door, look at the sky and the hills, and proclaim, “Thank you Lord for another day in your garden!”

The last word belongs to David Pratt, a boy of many words long ago. Several others said the same thing. David says, “We see our local friends quite often to have normal visiting back and forth...”

1966

Helen Lotowycz Rising

Chuck Kaplanek sends this news: Beth and I live in Coral Gables, FL having moved last year from Miami and over 15 years ago from New York. Our four sons live within an hour or so in South Florida. Rather than going into a long history, here is my family. I would like to share my latest business news: we have received their vaccines yet, and I really don’t have any news to report. Just volunteering for things and getting along. My partner Ana and I, along with our daughter, have been holding out at my place in Vermont since last March. We had a very nice summer and fall. But, winter here is very long and cold with COVID-19 and we are not really doing that much now. But, looking out the window at snow, I’ve had that bliss about animals that I’ve never spent an entire winter here. We have always had a place somewhere else, eventually, when we go back and forth from, but we gave that up. But since nothing like this has ever happened in my lifetime, I think 2021 seems that the bugs were worked out, more or less, things have been moving along. We gave up our apartment up in May, and we don’t ever plan to return to NY. Well look for a place somewhere else in Seattle. We are in the best place. But, I am pretty upset with the non-response from VT, but eventually vaccines become available and we will see what happens. And, we were a bit calmer. As a matter of fact, we are looking forward to getting books and meeting with Chris Lockwood and Jim March ’67 and get some news about others from them.

Lockdown wasn’t all that hard for us, except for not being able to visit our kids and grandchildren. That was truly the worst. But, what fun it was to see the kids and grandparents and all the time we spent with them. And, get some news about others from them.

‘66

Part and parcel of years at FA is being able to see our oldest son and then back to CT to see the four and two new grandchildren. Maybe that’s why my new job relaxation isn’t in my cards.

Carol Edgeron Downey emailed something about a recent trip to Seattle and this past year, our lives have been quite uncertain. Thankfully, except for one classmate of Sarah’s who passed away from COVID last year, everyone we know has escaped and is doing well. Not all have received their vaccines yet, and they’re age and health, so hopefully they should happen soon, but seems everything depends on not just what state you live in, but what county in that state. But since nothing like this has ever happened in my lifetime, I think 2021 seems that the bugs were worked out, more or less, things have been moving along. We gave up our apartment up in May, and we don’t ever plan to return to NY. Well look for a place somewhere else in Seattle. We are in the best place. But, I am pretty upset with the non-response from VT, but eventually vaccines become available and we will see what happens. And, we were a bit calmer. As a matter of fact, we are looking forward to getting books and meeting with Chris Lockwood and Jim March ’67 and get some news about others from them.

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from classes. We both love the hiking around us, and getting ready for spring to begin the gardening again. Of course, up here, spring never really arrives until May. That’s hard! Very short days! Our son and his family, about 30 min. south of us, have all stayed well. He and his wife are very fortunate to be able to work from home. In Sept., the grandkids went back to Long Island the first of the month. We head back to Long Island the first of January 22nd. Dr. Dickson-Witmer has spent her entire professional career serving our Delawareans as a General Surgeon, Trauma Surgeon and Breast Surgeon. She established the Breast Center at Christiana Care and over the years brought cutting-edge techniques and program building to Christiana and Delaware. Techniques such as sentinel lymph node mapping and breast conserving surgery are just two. She established the Breast Multidisciplinary Center at the HFGCCRI which was no easy task. Through all of this she continued to publish in our little Whaler high impact journals, teach residents and students and become part of the Breast Cancer Research Program in the Caviency Center for Translational Cancer Research. Her accomplishments have been recognized nationally and internationally. She has led her to hold prominent positions in National Surgical Oncology Societies and was the person responsible for being appointed Chair of the Accreditation Committee of the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. This Committee sets standards for over 1,500 Accredited Cancer Centers and NC Designated Cancer Centers in the United States and surveys the programs every three years to assess the level of compliance with those standards. The latter position doesn’t give you much free time! Dr. Dickson-Witmer has served on the editorial board of Breast Diseases: A Yearbook Quarterly. She was an author on Operative Standards for Cancer Surgery. Her name is mentioned in surgical circles with the likes of Monica Morrow, Chair of Breast Cancer at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in NYC and Kelly Hunt, Chair of Breast Surgeon at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. I think it is also important to add that in order to know that Dr. Dickson-Witmer did her general surgery training in an era when she was told many times that women don’t belong in surgery. She survived in a challenging environment and no doubt opened the door for women in surgery. She also didn’t hesitate to help set up a nurse center in NYC to treat survivors of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center where she was attending a professional conference. Something I’m sure she will never forget. There is no question in my mind that Dr. Dickson-Witmer will bring the Breast Program at the Tunnell Cancer Center at Beebe HealthCare to the next level in an extremely short period of time. Of course, she will be missed, as many of you know Beebe/ Tunnell Cancer Center is a member of our small world of international renown. I can guess that breast cancer patient accrual on clinical trials will skyrocket upon her arrival. Diana, congratulations, Godspeed and thank you.

Didi also writes: Big news – my son, Hunter, got married Nov. 7, 2020, in a microwedding/reception at our house. He is a Surgical Resident at the University of Chicago, currently doing the first of two research years, and simultaneously getting an MBA at the same institution. His sister, Haley (both of them went to Wilmington Friends School, and have had the same friends since 12 years ago) works in a mortgage loan business. We have owned for 16 years a small townhouse a couple blocks from the beach, about 30 minutes south of Beebe’s main campus, and we are renovating it for me to spend 3 nights a week there. So, once there is a vaccine, you all can visit me at the beach anytime. Notbordering the beach house out anymore.

Diane Williams Murphy writes from sunny California of everyone in her family being staying safe and healthy and “wearing their masks.” On the personal front, big news is that my daughter, Meghan, is engaged and my son, Ian, is having another baby. Didi will love that this is the first time she will have two babies at the same time (though one is 24 and the other one is 2). I’ve learned a lot about COVID-19 in the last 6 months. So even though life is COVAXX, which is manufacturing a synthetic peptide vaccine. It’s safe and highly effective in our early clinical trials. On the fun side, I’m putting on the world’s first autonomous high-speed heated race car at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway next year. Think Indy 500 with no drivers in the gorgeous Italian Gallara design. In that race, 500 college students around the world are designing cars. So even though life is restricted right now, the giant colorful rainbow is on the horizon. Take care.

Candy Addelson writes: It’s been a long 2020 since you last heard from me. My husband of 17 years, Jerry Rossman, and I and our two rescue dogs, Buddy and Abby, are flourishing in Nashville, TN. Jerry has three grown kids and now 7 grandchildren (ages 6-17), so my family has expanded exponentially. I retired from my curatorial position at the Tennessee State Museum in June of 2019. I’ve had the best decade of my career. Now I teach yoga (for “mature” people like us) once a week on Zoom and am more dedicated to my personal spiritual growth and healing after 50 years of an exhausting - albeit often exhilarating - workaholic career. Until COVID-19 hit, I taught our weekly yoga class at the Nashville Friends Meeting House. It felt like I had come full circle. The grounding in tolerance and comparative religion that we received at PA continues to be foundational for me. If any of you out there would like to know more, please let me know.

Rising rainbows are on the horizon. Take care.

Sally Rising Dean ’68 has a house next door where she and our little Whaler high impact journals, teach residents and students and become part of the Breast Cancer Research Program in the Caviency Center for Translational Cancer Research. Her accomplishments have been recognized nationally and internationally. She has led her to hold prominent positions in National Surgical Oncology Societies and was the person responsible for being appointed Chair of the Accreditation Committee of the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. This Committee sets standards for over 1,500 Accredited Cancer Centers and NC Designated Cancer Centers in the United States and surveys the programs every three years to assess the level of compliance with those standards. The latter position doesn’t give you much free time! Dr. Dickson-Witmer has served on the editorial board of Breast Diseases: A Yearbook Quarterly. She was an author on Operative Standards for Cancer Surgery. Her name is mentioned in surgical circles with the likes of Monica Morrow, Chair of Breast Cancer at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in NYC and Kelly Hunt, Chair of Breast Surgeon at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. I think it is also important to add that in order to know that Dr. Dickson-Witmer did her general surgery training in an era when she was told many times that women don’t belong in surgery. She survived in a challenging environment and no doubt opened the door for women in surgery. She also didn’t hesitate to help set up a nurse center in NYC to treat survivors of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center where she was attending a professional conference. Something I’m sure she will never forget. There is no question in my mind that Dr. Dickson-Witmer will bring the Breast Program at the Tunnell Cancer Center at Beebe HealthCare to the next level in an extremely short period of time. Of course, she will be missed, as many of you know Beebe/ Tunnell Cancer Center is a member of our small world of international renown. I can guess that breast cancer patient accrual on clinical trials will skyrocket upon her arrival. Diana, congratulations, Godspeed and thank you.

Dr. Diana Dickson-Witmer ’67 has been appointed Chief of Breast Surgery at Tunnell Cancer Center at Beebe Healthcare.
1968

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Our class was glad to close the book on 2020. What a year of profound sadness as we said our goodbyes to: Ken Kroll, who has also been a respite from confining Covid. As it turned out, he gave it to five others who were there, but fortunately I was NOT one of them. In FL, I was able to walk every day and as it turns out I have more friends down there now than I have up here. Living in the Midwest means more friends; some frequency, including Brad and ikkyo. I got back north on May 23, the same day my sister, nephew and his wife, family plus brothers-in-law returned. I spent a week at my sister’s in NJ then I moved up to the CT house for several weeks and I’m not getting all that much through a long day of auditions for the new 2020-21 singers at the Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA) in Philadelphia, at which I was NOT one of them. In FL I was able to see some of ‘em, were Floridian, and I have now been more friends down there now than I have up here. Living in the Midwest means more friends; some frequency, including Brad and ikkyo. I got back north on May 23, the same day my sister, nephew and his wife, family plus brothers-in-law returned. I spent a week at my sister’s in NJ then I moved up to the CT house for several weeks and I’m not getting all that much...
France, with everything in the middle, out from Washington State to Nice, my gardening and hiking. Foundation fellowship. All travel the world's poorest countries by my Africa, for a first-hand tour of one of Patricia Brink: I look forward to getting back to that big dogs. My mother at 91 is living in a Houston in Brenham. We share three years, David, about 70 miles outside of and live with my husband of 35 finance which I have recently retired from high school until today, I went to Clare away in Los Angeles. Geoff and I his wife, Niki, and our granddaughter, from our home in Seattle. Cameron, our daughter, Catryn (FA 7 years), live about twenty minutes by dog Lesley and our grandson, McKinley (11.5 years), live about 70 miles outside of}
The Meeting House

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Terrence Carmack and Kathy Blechman write: What interesting times! Kathy is great; she added residential to her real estate business and that’s going well. Vanessa just turned 18, I remember when we turned 18 we could drink officially, so… Vanessa is a straight A student and waiting to hear back from college admittance offices. My oldest Tara had a boy, that makes me a grandpa again. (Funny, I still feel too young for that.) Jennifer, my middle daughter opened a puppy and dog supply store, Pups on Main, in Cold Spring Harbor; mention my name when you go. I recently wrapped up work on building SoFi Stadium; so beautiful and never a crowd I suck Kathy and Vanessa in for a private tour.

Doug Mallory writes: I can report quality time, eating crankers and thinking about comic books. It’s HARD to maintain healthy weight. But blame it on a sweet tooth. I remain a professional student. Retirement is good for you. Make a plan.

Ellen Fasano writes: I don’t have much in the way of current news. I have been working, as an asylum officer for more than 25 years. I plan to retire from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement as much as we were used to. That said, we did celebrate Kevin’s father, James Hagan’s 95th birthday. Unfortunately, everything is bittersweet as my father has been in hospice in Florida since November (the end is near) and of course we lost our little pug, Ollie. Don’t really have anything worth printing for class notes, but here is a quote that I think is an inspiration: “In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks.” - John Muir

Phillip Sih writes: Thank you for being so arroving, Tilde! I just want you to know that I appreciate the task you are doing and have enjoyed your emails throughout the year. As you may recall, I was supposed to have graduated HS at age 16 with the class of 1975 but did not actually graduate because I ended up going away to a different school. (I did manage to make it all the way from K to 8. And believe it or not, I’m still in touch with Bob Holtermann, with whom I went to K, even though we are separated by a continent!) He even sent me some pictures of the old K room recently. Go figure who would have a fond memory of that dungeon! Presently I am in the Northern NV/CA area deep in “fly over territory”. If anyone is out here between Reno and the SF Bay area and remembers who I am, I would be very happy to write or call and check in. 775-223-4455 cell. For those so interested I can teach them how to fly little airplanes like the kind that seem to crash all the time in the movies. Fortunately we’re not in the movies. May 2021 bring a better year for everyone.

From left to right: Jim, Kevin Hagan ‘73, James, Liz Hagan Schellhorn ‘77, Mark Hagan ‘79 and David Fasano ‘75 and her family.
Lost a few people I knew, but none that I loved. Convinced a good woman to marry me.

Howie Klein writes: Here’s my news: With the closing of the Commodity trading floor in 2018, I spent two years working for a friend who owned the Crown Trophy franchise in Manhattan. It was a great store with a steady flow of business that encompassed the sports world as well as education and local businesses. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the store is no longer operating in Manhattan. I will continue to enjoy my second job for the last 20 years, working as a baseball umpire in the city and Westchester. The city is one of the safest places to be right now, and Lisa and I frequently exercise along the East River. Our son Matthew works for an on-line education company, Coursera, in San Francisco. Our son Ben works in Financio at Cosmetic Executive Women, where Lisa is Vice President, in charge of Development. That’s my news – of course I look forward to seeing you all when we are all vaccinated and rid of this. For now, all of you please stay safe and I hope that all is well.

Sue Gravina King writes: I hope everyone is doing well, continuing to shelter in place and appreciating working remotely and not having to commute. However, the year has been bittersweet. We’ve lost some loved ones. Stan’s mother passed in October, my sister-in-law, Kate (married to gene) lost her mother in May 2020 as well. We celebrated my mother’s 100th birthday in July and feel blessed and fortunate to have her for 1 more year. She passed in early November. Our children, Nicole and Gary, are doing well and enjoying their 20s. The pandemic has forced them to curtail some of their “activities” (we don’t ask for details) but they are back in their respective apartments, enjoying virtual happy hours with their friends and learning how to live safely and have fun in this new normal. Gary and I are looking forward to visiting the islands with the goal of becoming snowbirds in the near future. Hope that we’ll be able to see all of you soon.

Chip Behal writes: During this past year, Jo-Anne and I spent a lot of time on Ancestry.com (which we have nicknamed “Cock-cest” because we can’t pronounce it). Once we are vaccinated and travel restrictions ease, we hope to take some trips to our respective ancestral homelands in Europe where we hope to dig back further and see where our forebears came from.

Vicki Chesler writes: We worked hard to make the best of a challenging year and felt grateful for all we have. I send deep condolences to those who have lost loved ones during this pandemic. I am blessed with a circle of good health to everyone in our class and in their circles of friends and family. It has truly been a time to reflect on our blessings. My husband Matt Kovner and I completed our only trip of the year the week the pandemic exploded in the US: a ski trip to Colorado, with a side trip to Seattle. During lockdown, we spent our time hiking in the Catskills and Zooming with friends. Our dog, Melissa, and I spent some days in New York. Melissa had moved from Brooklyn to Nashville where she and her husband bought a house.

Valerie Taylor Hamilton writes: We are all doing well, continuing to shelter in place, and can’t wait to get our vaccines. Just as Gary and I were beginning to enjoy being empty nesters, the pandemic pandemic put a stop to it. We are all together again, in the beginning, we binged watched our favorites on Netflix and Hulu, caught up on our real estate, completed some overdue house projects, and appreciated working remotely and not having to commute. However, the year has been bittersweet. We’ve lost some loved ones. Stan’s mother passed in October, my sister-in-law, Kate (married to gene) lost her mother in May 2020 as well. We celebrated my mother’s 100th birthday in July and feel blessed and fortunate to have her for 1 more year. She passed in early November. Our children, Nicole and Gary, are doing well and enjoying their 20s. The pandemic has forced them to curtail some of their “activities” (we don’t ask for details) but they are back in their respective apartments, enjoying virtual happy hours with their friends and learning how to live safely and have fun in this new normal. Gary and I are looking forward to visiting the islands with the goal of becoming snowbirds in the near future. Hope that we’ll be able to see all of you soon.

Here is my news: a picture enclosed of my new a dinner plate, and my beloved pupster). (I have a mini horse who I still able to go into work) and farm life. He is doing well and is staying safe! I hope everyone is doing well and is staying safe!
Betty Borer Polivy writes: I hope that anyone interested in our Class of ’75 and beyond have not had to suffer too greatly during this past year! It has been truly blessed and incredibly fortunate and even prayers are enjoyed living vicariously right now. Reading the stories of the small business owners allows people to take a small glimpse into a New Yorker’s world. My son was able to visit us from Salt Lake City in September for several weeks. It was so nice to be with him, but so sad to see him go. We are hoping that come the spring, both he and his wife will be able to return safely. So many of us have had to be separated from our family and friends. By the time we are reading this Meeting House, I hope that we will all have been vaccinated and able to reunite with those we love and to move on with our lives.

Robert Holtermann writes: Hi, we’re holding down the fort here in upstate NY during the second surge. All children are well – our daughter Leigh Ann lives in Burlington, VT, Nick is in Milton, N.H and Kait lives in Chicago. Details are for another time since I don’t want to ‘that alarm.’ We’re hoping for the resolution of so many crises in 2021. Stay safe ’75, this is gonna end.

Tilde Mariani Giacché writes: Hi to all my wonderful classmates! What a year this has been for all of us. I was lucky enough to travel back to Italy for the entire summer, two weeks of quarantine as soon as I got there were the Manns! Sadly, my adored big brother Augie (Class of ’72) passed away very suddenly and unexpectedly October 21. We believe he was the best brother, uncle, cousin and friend you could ever hope for. We were so much every single day and keep all of our wonderful memories together in our hearts. Jennifer and Josh with their two sons, Peter, 21, who is at New York University, and Lucas is a wrestler. We have a ways to go before we can hang in.

Nancy Toher Hawkins 123 Duck Pond Road Glen Cove, NY 11542 (516) 671-8977 nthawkins123@aol.com the most amazing women who have led incredible lives. I’m thinking of you all and sending you all a big giant hug.

Chuck Cooperstein 6729 Barcelona Irving, TX 75039 (972) 393-2160 ccogator@aol.com

Betty Borer Polivy ’75 with her book, Walking Manhattan Sideways - Side street businesses that have stood the test of time, which was published in November.

Tilde Mariani Giacché’ ’75 with her son Drieste out to lunch in New York City (above) and with her family (below)
names from Spinnello to Kenter right through high school. I was in the Navy for four years, then business, investing. Beth and I have been married for five years. Also, one son (NYU grad) is a film editor/ animator, another son just graduated University of North Carolina, and a daughter still at Ci Boulder University. We've followed COVID-19 style. And two small Hawaiian dogs!

Leslie Fromm-Hyder: I’ve been living in East Meadow for 35 years now. Was married 30 years, but happily divorced about a year and a half ago. I work in real estate but is quite sobering, but I’ve been busy and have come back from five years ago. Now I’m a suburban mom and have four children ages 17 and 10. My older son is at Stuyvesant High School and his girlfriend Matty live with us. Michelle and I are expecting this July. My oldest grandson was born in Berlin, Germany as she was born in Hamburg, Germany and I spent five years there to play and learn German. Rachel and family have recently relocated to Montreal so now I’m dusting off and using my French while forever thanking Madame Miro and Madame Hummerstone for teaching me so well! My husband Buddy and I will be celebrating 39 years of marriage this summer! Whaaaaaaaat!!! Whoa. We were married on Valentine’s Day and it’s been quite pulled off establishing a career before we started our family, and with four children, family became my full time job. I did squeeze in one hobby while my children were growing up. In 2000, I fell in love with Spinning when indoor cycling was in its formative years. I combined a passion for teaching along with a passion for Spinning and became a certified Mad Dog Spin instructor. Teaching group fitness led me back into sports and I learned that I loved to be running, and competed in every distance of triathlon racing. My biggest race was completing the Ironman World Championship Triathlon Operations in Amsterdam (a great European city). I still play regular guitar and sing. I am a part of a group of 150 musicians who gather twice a month to pretend to play music (that is, before COVID set in).

Amanda Walpin Leath: So, what have I been up to? I live, as you know from my last update, with my husband Andy. I was married a long time ago, and got divorced. I have two sons, who I raised on my own. I have had a not so normal career due to COVID, living at home. I’m fortunate to have had a solid 16 years of doing exactly what I loved doing! Now I am happy to do the things my grandfather taught me. I have the most beautiful 3-year-old grandson, and a daughter who is married and has one kid. We all are close and I hope to be able to see them all very soon. Life was great!! I just graduated from the University of Hartford business school, and am a grandma, each daughter has a child. I am grateful for my achievements, and am happy to have done it all. I have a career that I adore as much as I would like. I have a career as a singer songwriter. Never stopped penning when the days are long! I have an office in my studio, with a PhD in Clinical Psychology and integrative therapies (bringing meditations, music sound healing, mindfulness to the mainstream in the early 90’s, masters in Music therapy as well, as a Yoga Therapist teacher. I combine my research and work in the creative arts to create music and singing, and do counseling with women trying to conceive, all the way to being an end of life doula. Worked at Canyon Ranch Spa for 12 years as therapist and lecturer. I lecture and do work online and in person and do private consulting on film and music and at MBA records after school before beginning a therapist to support my creative life. I moved to NY a few years ago and Maggie has been a very successful real estate broker. Despite the pandemic, my two sons and 2 grandchildren are all well, and all our grandchildren, we no longer intend to send our kids to Fakult as time went on we realized that it was a better choice than the Port Washington public high school. My daughter Lizzy graduated FA in 2017 and is a senior at Univ. of Wisconsin. My son William just graduated in 2020 and is a freshman at Univ. of Pennsylvania. My daughter Alisa is a 10th grader at FA.

Each year the school gives out the FA Distinguished Alumni Award at 40/50/60/70 etc. days. It’s their “highest” honor to their alumni and it’s gone to some pretty cool folks over the years. Last year, I received the award which was quite humbling. I was the second class of ’74er to receive the award. Marja Branson received it several years ago and I saw her at 40th Honors when she spoke. She’s an educator of the deaf she’s a retired FA teacher, has a PhD and is now a head of school in i [illegible] and has done remarkable work.

Peter Stein: My dad is 93 and my mom is 86. My dad is an engineer in the aerospace field and my mom was a homemaker. They got married before I was born and we lived in Quakertown, PA. My dad was in the Navy right after World War II and then went to Cornell University Medical School. I did all my graduate training at various hospitals in NY, including Cornell in New York, before coming back to Long Island in 1993 and joined an orthopedic surgery practice in Manhasset. I do exclusively hand surgery and practice has been fun and successful, and enjoyable. I have been in practice for 28 years! Over the years, I have taken care of many high school/college students/parents and FA teachers so I’ve maintained contact with the school community. I also practice the “team approach” for the doctors for the school. When I started practice in ’93, I was single. Life was great! FA sent out a letter saying they were organizing a reunion in NYC for local alumni and I went. I met a gal from the class of 1984, Susan Wiltsick, and we started dating and were married in 1998. My wife is a co-owner of an office loved this story of attending a school called StrongMinds, creating a national board, and having a national services team. It’s pretty crazy. We are a non-profit and be a resource should anyone need help or just has a question. I’ve maintained contact with the school community. It’s their “highest honor” to their alumni and it’s gone to some pretty cool folks over the years. Last year, I received the award which was quite humbling. I was the second class of ’74er to receive the award. Marja Branson received it several years ago and I saw her at 40th Honors when she spoke. She’s an educator of the deaf she’s a retired FA teacher, has a PhD and is now a head of school in i [illegible] and has done remarkable work.

Peter was right, Marja Branson shared way back in the day when I was a sophomore 5 years ago when he was honored to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award at the event in Evanston, IL and am the Head of School at a small, young Montessori school. It would be good to have a school for kids to be happy to be a resource and should be a reasonable need among others.

The Danny Gileman story: I’m a 93 year old man. I was born in a town called New York for an oil company that ultimately was bought by Halliburton. So I’ve been in the oil business for the whole 38 years since college. Currently, I’m the Senior Managing Director of the company’s patent portfolio and associated processes, and our external technology (patent and open innovation) functions. My role encompasses technical, business, and legal aspects. It’s technically challenging, and of course has the boom and bust businesses. I have no oil and I am all well, I’ve been married 21 years – Wife Pauline Schlosser was a college prof.
a grandmother will definitely make me feel old. My second son, Ryan, ended up following in his older brothers footsteps as he played baseball at Saint Anselm in NH. (Dops forgot to mention, I still go and baseball at Georgetown.) Then he too went on to law school. First DePaul, then Georgetown Law. He’s also currently a lawyer but, in DC. My youngest Eric decided to forget the baseball route and got recruited as a QB for Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). He now works for NetSuite and lives in South Boston. So, yup, all three of my kids were into very sports so, you can tell what we did after school and every weekend as they were growing up. I’ve been VP and Treasurer for Seekonk Little League for 18 years this spring. I think it’s one of the ways of giving back to my community. Now that I don’t have kids in the house I no longer say “skin in the game” — I can lend an unbiased vote and with this many years I can say, “Been there, done that — it didn’t work.” I’m also very busy with the family business my brothers and I own. My job is the accounting/bookkeeping and property management portion. So, Nick and I get back to the Long Island area often.

Thank you again to all that responded. If you didn’t please email and we can catch up before the next edition! Stay safe!
Kelly Mackinnon has recently joined Neely in what they call the best Borough, although I may beg to differ. Kelly writes: After a decade in Hell's Kitchen, I moved to downtown Brooklyn in 2015 and have been loving the new neighborhood, especially the easy commute to Fried Frank, where I am the Director of Business Development. I have been in the legal marketing industry for the past 13 years and was named the 2021 Legal Marketing Association International President. I am still actively playing field hockey on the USA Masters Over 40 team and very much looking forward to getting out on the pitch for the Masters World Cup 2022.

Angelish Kumar reported some exciting news from last year as well. After finishing medical school at Tufts and residency at NYU, Angelish has been practicing urology for almost 10 years. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two daughters, ages 7 and 8. Last year, she finally decided to follow her dream of opening up her own urology practice, focusing exclusively on high-quality care for women with bladder and urinary leakage issues. Her father passed away in 2019, and her mother still lives in Mill Neck, 10 minutes from Friends. She loves pointing out the school to her daughters when they go to visit her mother. She has especially fond memories of the 9th grade outdoor ed trip, the fresh baked chocolate chip cookies from the cafeteria, tennis team, softball team, the ski trip to St. Anton junior year, and Madame Miro saying “dans la lune” when you weren’t paying attention in French class.

Neely got to see Angelish right before COVID hit as they both live in Brooklyn. She also spent time with Eden in Cape Cod, by chance staying at the same place. Josh Speisman was mostly cocooned in Port Washington with his wife, four kids and dog. She got to see him there and for a quick outdoor visit on the beach in Florida. Josh also got to see Adam Ronzoni out in Shelter Island, once, that I know of.

Mike Longo is continuing to enjoy life in Andover, MA with his family. He writes: We added a beagle named Parker to the gang last year. He has been a great motivation to get us outside to enjoy all the hiking trails that surround our home in Harold Parker State Park. Thankfully, Connor and Susie have been able to play hockey throughout the pandemic, so that has allowed for some semblance of “normal” throughout all of this. Connor is off to high school next year – and Susie middle school. Where does the time go???? To keep life interesting, I changed jobs in September, joining an expanding national personal injury law firm starting an office in Boston as a lead trial attorney. Yes, I know what you are thinking – but I enjoy helping my clients and conducting trials (when they are allowed again), I have, so far, managed not to appear for any Zoom hearings as a cat!

Much warmer than Massachusetts, Gavin Sleen has moved to sunny Florida! Here is what Gavin has to share: In late 2020, my job was reclassified as full-time remote, so I put my apartment in Yorkers on the market and moved down to Bradenton, FL. It is a suburb on the Gulf Coast, tucked in between Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota. I don’t miss the Northeast’s snow or the shoveling at all. The one month of winter was uncharacteristically chilly for this part of the Sunshine State, but the outlook is warm and bright from here on out. Culturally speaking, this area reminds me a lot of Long Island in the summer. There are some beautiful beaches, some wonderful class cities (Sarasota and the Dalii), some great food, and plenty to do when I can find the time. I even found a brick-oven pizza place run by a guy from New Jersey, with a pie that would be considered special even back home. And then there is this incredible fish taco bar overlooking Sarasota Bay! I love it down here and not just for the fresh, amazing eating back 2020 was a wild ride. Be well. And feel free to reach out if you are ever in the area.

Meredyth Kravitz kindly wrote in as well and reminded me about our great COVID group chats and texts with Kristin (Kelly) Pieper, Lara (Hirsch) Yanke, Rashmi (Shetty) Licht, Katie (Hsu) Hobern, Bethany (Siegent) Thomas and Devon Metz. After many years, the pandemic gave us all back in touch and it was fun catching up! Meredyth has seen Danielle (Lia) Van Riper, Philip Van Riper & Dana (Minutolo) Forbes regularly. Meredyth reports: Danielle, Dana & I had an outdoor girls’ dinner date recently. This past summer we took two family vacations with Danielle and Philip to Newport, RI and NH—still living in Cold Spring Harbor—world class museums like the Ringling and a cat! It was fun to catch up with at our annual tennis tournament with our daughters in NJ. Also, I love working for Beautycounter with Annie (Long) Sullivan ‘90, who is a great mentor. It’s always great catching up with and keeping in touch with FA alum! Thanks to everyone for writing in. Neely and I hope you all stay well, safe and healthy in the coming months and we look forward to seeing you in person soon!

94 The Meeting House

Spring 2021
2000
Meredith Mackinnon
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2001
Hadley Devon Morgell
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Courtney Devon Taylor joined Hogan Lovells as a partner in the Litigation, Arbitration, and Employment practice in Philadelphia and New York. She represents global and U.S. clients in commercial litigation and regulatory enforcement matters. She joins the firm’s Financial Institutions and Insurance Industry, and the Sports, Media & Entertainment team.

Sallie Touma writes: I’m so excited my company is rebranded!

2002
Lauren Bevry Kenter
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2003
Jessica Jakobson
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jess.jakobson@gmail.com

Jessica writes: In an effort to keep the Class of 2003 connected and engaged, we are asking for classmates to share their updated contact information. Please email your contact information to jessjakobson at jessjakobson@gmail.com. The Class of 2003 hopes to host an outdoor “mini-reunion” in the Fall of 2021.

Justin Shaffer writes: I recently joined Waypoint Real Estate Investments as a Senior Development Manager. I will be based out of their headquarters in Boca Raton, FL. Waypoint Real Estate Investments is a vertically integrated real estate investment firm focused on the U.S. multifamily sector. Since 2011, Waypoint has invested over $4.5 billion across over 28,000 multifamily housing units located nationwide. Please do reach out should you find yourself in South Florida.

2004
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2010
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Emily Hawkins
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2011
Holly Constants
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Gabrielle McPhaul-Guerrier
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2012
Katie Sands was featured on Forbes.com in an interview that began: “Kate Sands, the 27-year-old behind HonestlyKate, has spent her career defying the influencer status quo, ensuring that each post she makes and every brand she collaborates with works towards a greater good and inspires her audience to act with kindness. With more than 284 thousand followers on Instagram, ongoing partnerships with some of the world’s most coveted brands, and a gig as an On-Air Style Host for Amazon Live, Sands has seen continued success with her do-good approach to influencing, and she’s only just begun. Read on to learn how she’s staying true to her mission even as the influencer arena has changed, why she thinks it’s so important to give back, and what she sees as the future of influencing.”

2013
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2014
Simi Akinola
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2015
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Cameron Hellerman
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and celebrates students continuing their education past high school. This was a pivotal experience that motivated Sydney to pursue a career in education, championing equitable access to empowering learning opportunities for all young people and elevating student voice in decision-making. That summer, Sydney and the rest of her intern class had the unique and fortunate opportunity to meet then-Vice President Biden and hear him speak.

2016
Michael Jason Weiss
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michael.jason.weiss@gmail.com

Laura Yip writes: I wanted to share that I had a baby during the pandemic, my first. Her name is Clementine McAuley. We also learned to make beautiful bread this year! My husband and I have been working from our home in San Diego and taking care of the baby with no help. The struggle is real! We can’t wait to bring her to visit NY and meet my parents as well as our friends at FA.

Sallie Touma ’01 recently rebranded her tutoring company, salliemathtutor.com Since FA is family to that my company is rebranded!

Sallie Touma 01 recently rebranded her tutoring company.
Mackenzie Williams is currently working for Trusted Media Brands as a photo editor for The Healthy. Trusted Media Brands is home to some of the best-known media brands in the U.S such as Reader’s Digest and Taste of Home. She began her career at Trusted Media Brands as a digital photo assistant for Reader’s Digest and took on a new role with TMB’s newly launched digital vertical, The Healthy. She manages all visuals and creatives for The Healthy.

Javana Clark graduated from the Tulane School of Social Work with her Master’s in Social Work (MSW.) She started a new position as a Clinical Social Worker at Responsibility House (RH). RH is an inpatient addiction treatment center for homeless men.

Gabrielle Auerbach is working as a social media and digital marketing consultant. Jeffrey (Alex) Nagel is going into his second year of employment as a software engineer at Bloomberg L.P.

Roland (Carl) Afzelius successfully launched a new business venture last summer. Just months after the COVID pandemic brought many businesses to a virtual standstill, Oyster Bay Water Sports brought a safe & fun activity, generally reserved to far away vacation spots, right here to the North Shore. Learn to waterski, wake surf, wakeboard, or tube in beautiful Oyster Bay Harbor, or enjoy a dinner cruise across the Long Island Sound to Bartaco. No matter what your ideal day on the water is, they can make it happen. This year Oyster Bay Water Sports will be offering a private kids camp in which parents make a group of up to six children to participate in their five-day Monday-Friday water sports camp. Kids will spend the entire time on the boat and can wakeboard, wake surf, waterski, and tube. At OBWS, safety is the top priority, campers wear vests at all times and there will never be more than 6 children in the boat. Roland is a U.S. Coast Guard Certified Captain, and all employees at Oyster Bay Water Sports are certified in both CPR and first aid. For more info on Private Charters, Lessons & Dinner cruises please visit the website oysterbaywatersports.com or email info@oysterbaywatersports.com.

Many of you know Peter as the longstanding President of the Friends Academy Alumni Association Board. In addition to giving so many years of service back to our school, he is a renowned hand surgeon, having worked in the North Shore community for 30+ years. In addition to his practice, Peter is passionate about helping the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services responsible for providing health services to Native American Indians. He travels to Chinle, Arizona, on a regular basis to perform volunteer surgery on a Navajo reservation.

We are also pleased to announce that Peter will be joining us in another capacity in Fall 2021...teacher! He will pilot our first-ever “Solutions in Medicine” course, with a curriculum mirrored like a mini-medical school/clinic that offers real-world, complex problem-solving.
Dr. James Francis Castleman, 84, passed away on Monday, December 23, 2019, with his loving wife of 60 years by his side. A resident of Delmar, he was born in Brooklyn on February 17, 1935, to the late Reverend Lauriston Castleman and Mary Castleman. He was a graduate of Friends Academy in 1952, Princeton University in 1956, and New York Medical College in 1961. Upon completing his medical residency, he was drafted into the Vietnam War where he served from 1966-1968 as a captain in the United States Army. He was in private practice with privileges to St. Peter’s and Albany Medical Hospitals since 1965 and medical director of St. Peter’s Addiction Recovery Center (SPARC) from 1972. He was a member of the New York State Medical Disability Board since 1985 where he worked up until October 2019. A member of the Albany Country Club and the Fort Orange Club, he was passionate about spending time with his family enjoying various events, especially centered around golf and cards. Simply, he loved nothing more than his family and activities centered on golf and cards.

Van (Adelle) Hanford MacDonald ‘52
Van was born in Fort Washington on Oct. 4, 1934 to John Babcock Hanford and Adèle Johnston Hanford. She survived her brother John (Babcock) Hanford Jr. Van attended Friends Academy in Locust Valley, graduated with a teaching degree from Bennett Junior College, then taught elementary school in NYC. Van married Dan in 1956 and enjoyed an enduring marriage lasting 63 years. They provided love and direction to three children, while balancing a commitment to community service. Active in the Junior League wherever she lived, Van was appointed Head of the Long Island Junior League Provisionals. After moving to Ponte Vedra, FL, in 1993 she subsequently became Junior League chairman of the beaches. Van was an active athlete during her collegiate years and throughout her entire adult life. She played field hockey and lacrosse at Friends Academy and enjoyed competitive club paddle tennis and tennis for decades after. Van tirelessly studied and mastered numerous art forms. Her hobbies included oil painting, needle point, knitting, fine jewelry making, enamel work, watercolor, bronzing and gold leafing. In addition, she was a gifted interior designer who both oversaw and assisted numerous projects including home transformations and community projects.

Anne-Renée (de Fontnouvelle) Statson ’54
Anne-Renée (de Fontnouvelle) Statson, age 84, of Joyce Cit, TX passed away on December 20th 2020. She was born on October 13, 1936, in Paris, France to Charles Hippolyte Marie de Ferry de Fontnouvelle and Renée (Ripley) de Fontnouvelle. Her grandchildren affectionately called her “Nini.” Anne-Renée will be deeply missed by everyone who loved and knew her.

Van loved nothing more than his family and activities centered on golf and cards. Simply, he loved nothing more than his family and activities centered on golf and cards.

John “Fil” Graff, Jr. ’55
John “Fil” Filson Graff, Jr., 82, of St. Thomas, PA passed away on October 21, 2020 at Chambersburg Hospital surrounded by his family. He was born on February 9, 1938 in Long Island, NY to the late John Filson Graff, Sr. and Mildred Millar Graff. Fil was very active in The Boy Scouts in his youth. He retired from the Chinet Company after more than 25 years of service, which was highlighted by achieving several package design patents. After retirement he ran multiple antique businesses. He became an internationally known researcher and developer of Aladdin and other ceramic lamps. Fil is survived by wife of 55 years, Roberta-Hershey Graff and his son, David Scott Graff (wife, Christina). In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his son John Filson Graff III and his sister Karen Thompson. Kelso-Cornellius Funeral Home, Ltd. of Chambersburg has been entrusted with his care. Services will be private and at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to either Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter in Chambersburg or the American Lung Association. Online condolences may be made at www.KelsoCornellsFun.com

James Graham ’55
James Graham, 82, passed away peacefully on October 8, 2020 in Calfon, NJ on October 8th, 2020. Having forever made an impact on all who knew him, James was always there, and will be greatly missed. James was born in Jamestown, N.Y., but was a longtime resident of Hunterdon County and lived in Califon for over 30 years. James was the only child of Arv Heidell and Alfred Luczo. He is survived by his wife Diane Mattson; Anjarette Valiente and Angela Luczo.

James was the devoted husband of Gail Graham for 45 years and was the father of five children from previous marriages. He is survived by Lizabeth Luczo, Nina Heidell, and Gregory D. Edwards. Andrew Graham and his wife Daena, and Christopher Graham and his wife Sandra. James was predeceased by his daughter Carina Nowell. His children blessed him with four grandchildren, Sarah, Emily, Philip, and Dylan, along with a great-grandchild, Jameson. Contributions may be made in memory of James Francis Castleman to the American Cancer Society at www.donate.cancer.org. ApplebeeFuneralhome.com.
James’ marriage to Gael also gifted him five stepsons; Chris Laskey and his wife Linda, Steven Laskey and his wife Nancy, David Laskey, and Jimmy Laskey. He was predeceased by his youngest stepson Craig Laskey. James is survived by several grandchildren; Tatham, Caitlin, Erin, Braina, Peter, Brian, Erica, James, Hogan, and Declan. James was also the great-grandfather of Tyrus and Jacob.

James attended Syracuse University and joined the Air Force soon after. Having acquired a particular set of skills early on in his life, James went on to master many crafts. He was a broker for Paine Webber, an agent for Goldman, Sachs and Co., and a broker for Paine Webber, an agent for Paine Webber.

His many other passions included music. There were birthday parties, annual friends from the Antioch days, enticed by the Rey Davila Orchestra where he met his wife, Maria Kennedy. Robin took a job in a music store where he met Sylvia Siedentopf, whom he became close friends and in 1941, Robin grew up in Glen Head, Long Island. He loved sailing with his parents up and down Long Island Sound. As a boy, his mother delighted him with the gift of an accordion which led to lessons in the City where they explored Carnegie Hall among other cultural attractions. Thus began his lifelong love affair with music. His grandparents were senior editors at Random House and his adopted home state. Knowing Cow Hampshire, he loved the outdoors much as he loved to wryly poke fun at city pollution well, he reveled in New Hampshire’s fresh air, clean water, and his opinionated, known for penning wise and funny, grouchy, visionary, skilled, and opinionated, known for penning wise and often critical letters to the editor of the Burlington Free Press and VTDigger. While he often seemed to have serious bouts of depression. He said he moved to Colorado for the sunshine, choosing to try to help himself rather than seek assistance. Self-sufficiency was one of his core values.

Peter Bergh ’56

Peter Bergh of Edwards, CO, formerly of Charlotte, NC, passed away on June 3, 2013. He was born in New York City in 1938, the son of Henry Bergh and Frances Glasgow Bergh. He was the great grandson of the ship builder Christian Bergh and the great nephew of the animal rights activist and ASPCA founder Henry Bergh.

Peter grew up in Oyster Bay, Long Island, listening to the sound of an American Aircraft doing test flights overhead, swimming, fishing, and exploring the woods. As a teen, he got his pilot’s license and worked as a lifeguard. He graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in Forestry and the Harvard School of Design with a Masters in Landscape Architecture. As a good friend of his wrote, “Peter used his considerable talents to do his best to make things better.”

He was very involved in the communities where he lived, serving on the Planning Commission, School Board and Select Board in Charlotte, Vermont, and on the board of the Bard Center for Children and Families. Among the projects he worked on were Camel’s Hump State Park, Red Rocks Park and campus planning for the University of Vermont. He was an owner in the Sports and Fitness Edge and proud of his impact on the health of adults and children in the Burlington area. In Colorado, he served on the Berry Creek Metro Board, advocated for thoughtful land-use planning including public access to trails and playing fields, and inspired the planting of hundreds of trees. Peter’s relationship with art is a significant piece of his legacy. He greatly admired the work of the painter Ogden Pleissner with whom he became close friends and in 1984 he wrote the definitive book on Pleissner’s work. Spending time in Peter’s home was like visiting a gallery. It was brimming with paintings, sculptures, decors, rugs, furniture, and Inuit carvings of birds, otters, polar bears and other critters. His fireplace was flanked by two totem, his walls lined with collected works by Pleissner, Benson, Wengenroth, Kent and others. Masks, etchings and lithographs lined his stairways. His collection was truly an extension of his personality.

His many other passions included flying, baking, skiing, hiking, bird watching, reading, and letter writing. His ideal day might involve hopping in his seaplane, by his hand, riding in a remote spot on the ocean or a lake, catching, cleaning and cooking a fish, and enjoying the solitude.

Peter loved to engage in dialogue, whether in person, or via mail or email. He was intelligent, funny, grouchy, visionary, skilled, and opinionated, known for penning wise and often critical letters to the editor of the Burlington Free Press and VTDigger. While he often seemed to have serious bouts of depression. He said he moved to Colorado for the sunshine, choosing to try to help himself rather than seek assistance. Self-sufficiency was one of his core values.

Peter was survived by his son Graham Bergh, of Hood River, OR, his daughter Alison Bergh of Wilson, WY, his grandson Tabor Bergh of Portland, OR, and his brother William Bergh and his wife Linda Stinar of Pennington, NJ. Peter took great pride in his children’s endeavors and instilled in them a healthy sense of curiosity and adventure, a love of nature and the outdoors, a commitment to making the world a better place, and an entrepreneurial spirit. His children remember their childhood in the home he designed, “Mud Hollow,” as filled with art, crafts, vinyl records, books, explorations, possibilities and many, many pets, including ferrets, geese, cats, an injured great horn owl, two orphaned raccoons, guinea pigs, and numerous well-loved dogs. Peter did not wish to have a memorial service. His children plan to have a private service together. They encourage those who knew him to gather in small groups at safe distances to howl, yodel, recite poetry, fly planes, tell stories or whatever else moves them to remember him. Gifts in Peter’s name are welcome at the Charlotte Land Trust, Western Colorado Community Foundation, or the Climate Accountability Institute.

Robin Holske ’59

Robin Holske, father, pianist and jazz musician passed from this world to the next on April 11, 2019 after a long period of declining health. Born on July 24, 1941, Robin grew up in Glen Head, Long Island. He loved sailing with his parents up and down Long Island Sound. As a boy, his mother delighted him with the gift of an accordion which led to lessons in the City where they explored Carnegie Hall among other cultural attractions. Thus began his lifelong love affair with music. His grandparents were senior editors at Random House and his adopted home state. Knowing Cow Hampshire, he loved the outdoors much as he loved to wryly poke fun at city pollution well, he reveled in New Hampshire’s fresh air, clean water, and freedom of choice within his home.

Robin was the rare single dad who filled his life with his daughter’s lives and interests. There were birthday parties,
The Meeting House

Timothy James O’Connell ’59

Timothy James O’Connell passed away peacefully on September 10, 2020 at the West Haven VA Medical Center in Connecticut. Born in Rockville Center, NY, on June 28, 1941, Tim was the son of the late James and Eileen (O’Connell) O’Connell of Glen Cove, NY. He graduated in 1959 from Friends Academy of Locust Valley, where he excelled and loved sports. A natural athlete, he was invited to try out for the New York Yankees while still a teenager, a thrilling moment of his early life. Tim was recruited to play football for multiple Ivy League colleges. He proudly chose Yale, keenly aware that New Haven was where his father’s Irish predecessors had settled. At Yale, he lived at Jonathan Edwards College and was a member of Skull and Bones. He polished his Latin translating skills and developed a love of history. Known for his calmness under pressure, Tim was quartered of the 1959 undefeated freshman team. He also played on the 1960-varsity team. That team also won every game—and to this day, is Yale’s only undefeated and untied varsity football team since 1923. Tim also played baseball and basketball for Yale. He graduated in 1963.

A proud member of the Air National Guard, Tim was among the thousands of reservists mobilized in 1968 by President Johnson to back up U.S. demands for the return of the USS Pueblo, a spy ship with American sailors, that was seized at gunpoint in international waters. During his service, Tim relocated to Myrtle Beach, SC, with his then new wife Nancy (Freitas) O’Connell, formerly of Brooklyn, NY. The Pueblo crisis ultimately ended without a need to resort to combat. Upon his honorable release from active duty, Tim had considered following in the footsteps of his father, a trial lawyer on Long Island. He attended the law school of Laughter for Northern Kentucky, just across the border from Cincinnati, OH, while Nancy attended the University of Cincinnati for her master’s degree in education. Tim then worked at the University of Cincinnati law firm in Minocqua, WI. But Tim ultimately decided that law was not his calling and he moved into insurance and financial services, working at Transamerica. By 2008, Tim relocated to New Haven and he lived a retired and active lifestyle, enjoying many Yale football games and reunions with his football teammates. Living just blocks from campus, Tim often visited local restaurants, including Morry’s. He was jolly and positive, and so grateful to share happy memories with his son, Anthony, his daughter Vanessa and his grandchildren. Tim suffered several bouts of cancer, starting in his early 30s and until his death. He appreciated the doctors and other medical professionals who treated him over the years, especially at Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven and at the VA hospital in West Haven.

Survivors include three children, Patricia Gottesman of Potomac, MD, Vanessa O’Connell of New York, NY, and Andrew O’Connell of Rocklin, CA, as well as six grandchildren: Elizabeth and Christian Storck, Fiona and Savannah Hebert, Emma Rose and Isabella O’Connell. He is also missed dearly by his first wife, Nancy, who enjoyed spending time with him in his final years. He was truly an inspiration to his family. Tim was preceded in death by a sister, Jane Eileen O’Connell Thom, and by two brothers, James and Edward R. We are remembering Tim with donations in his memory to Yale College, Yale College Athletics, and the VA Connecticut Healthcare System.

Lesley Bush-Brown Gimbel ’72

Lesley (‘Les’) Bush-Brown Gimbel, 66, died peacefully on October 20, 2020 at NSLH-Manhasset, NY, surrounded by family. She is survived by her husband of 41 years, Thomas S. T. Gimbel, her daughters Lesley B. Gimbel and Hope K. Gimbel, her brother, David Bush-Brown, her sisters, Frances B. Thompson, and Martha B. Risom, her daughter-in-law, Jessica Resnick-Ault and granddaughter, Helen R. Gimbel. She was the caring and loving mother of four, including two sons, Peter and Tommy, both of whom had Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and predeceased her in 2016 and 2017. Family and friends were her life’s priorities. She was a loyal and selfless friend, devoted wife and mother. She was active in her community; a Board Member of her Property Association, Co-Head of the Altar Guild at St. John’s of Lattingtown, former trustee of the Ponte Vedra School, and member of the North Country Garden Club. She graduated from Bowdoin College with a BA in Art History, followed by banking courses. She began her career as a Trust Officer at Chemical Bank and served as a Manager at Loeb Rhoades, Horroblower & Company, but left to raise her growing family. She treated her children equally; yet, having two sons with Muscular Dystrophy demanded extra time and effort. She started lifting weights specifically to be better able to physically assist her sons. She organized successful fund-raising events for both the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy. Information about a forthcoming Memorial Service will be available on the church’s website sjtl.org. Contributions in her memory may be made to St. John’s of Lattingtown/ Memorial of Les, 325 Lattingtown Rd, Locust Valley, NY 11560. Let will be immensely missed by her many friends and family.

Kenneth G. MacHarg ’72

Kenneth G. MacHarg passed into Gods arms on February 12, 2019. Ken was a loving husband of over 40 years to his wife, Trish MacHarg, an exceptional father to his son Graham MacHarg and wife Cayenne, and daughter, Mackenzie Seely and husband J.P. “Pop” was known for his kind-ness, his great-ness, his selfless-ness and his en-dur-ing spirit. He was adored by his grandsons, Calvin, Ryan, Ethan, and Wyatt. Ken leaves an unforgettable legacy with his family and friends.
On October 21, 2020, Augusto (Augie) Mariani ’72, died peacefully at home on East 12th Street, New York City, above the former location of Asti, the fabulous, musically joyous restaurant that Augie brilliantly steered from 1980 to New Year’s Eve, 1999. Asti was founded by Adolfo Mariani, father of Augie, Lorenzo, Tilde and Angela. Augie Mariani came to Friends Academy in the fall of 1967, when we were in the 8th grade. He and I became fast buddies because I used to hand the football off to him; we were members of the 7th and 8th grade team, called the “Mid-Jens.” Augusto had starred at Buckely Country Day School the previous year. Matthew Stevenson, who came to Friend’s in 1968, was the quarterback of that 1966 Buckley team, which out-scored us, due to Augie’s cuts and drags, and Matthew’s accurate tosses. Just the other day, Mathew emphatically recalled Augie’s foot speed and wonderful running style. It was quite a relief the following season to have Augie line up on the FA side of the ball. At age 72 FA grad Kevin Glynn, who put on the pads with us in the 9th grade, remembered Augie’s aggressiveness and I imagine respected in any other context, Augie was indeed fierce and determined with the pigskin tucked away October 8, 1967. Eighth grade. Augie had invited me to go with him to Asti at age 18. Yankie Stadium to a New York Football Giants game. The G-Men were playing the New Orleans Saints, Augie’s brand new NFL franchise. The Giants overcame the upstart Saints, 27-21. Directly from Yankee Stadium’s historic “home” at 13 East 12th Street, between 5th Avenue and University Place – Asti Restaurant – for the rich cuisine of food and family... and a lot of fun! Sitting with Augie, his fork held close to a generous bowl of the best pasta around, I felt a strong, gentle hand on my shoulder. I turned and looked up. Mr. Mariani? Tall, charismatic, and very wondrously, my father-in-law declared and declared that: “That’s better than the spaghetti they give you at school.” Mr. Mariani, from Giuseppe Verdi’s “II Trovatore.” The electric, loving life force that pulsed through Asti wouldn’t allow you to be inhibited... you were just picked up and you soared; you were transported to an exotic place. Augie wasn’t just a talented athlete; Augie was smart! One afternoon in 8th grade, Augie and I were sitting in a sun-drenched third floor science classroom with two attic ceiling angles and dormered windows. Our instructor that afternoon was Robert Alkins, a soft spoken professional soul with longish hair, a tidy moustache, and, of course, wire-rimmed glasses. During this 1968 school session, Mr. Alkins led a discussion about space travel, and Augie and I proceeded out into the moon. (Keep in mind that on July 20, 1969, a bit more than one year later, Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin took a journey to and tread on that heavenly body.) Mr. Alkins was putting calculations on the blackboard, telling us of the key moons trajectories, things like that. Since I had not a clue about what Mr. Alkins was explaining, I assumed him to be into outer space apparently believing that they were of age to legally consume an adult beverage! I know Mr. Alkins is still teaching in Kew Garden, and he enjoys some dazzling summer days in San Terenzo with the Mariani Family. Augie Mariani would have to agree with Augusto. The place was hushed. Augie perked up, But Augie turned to the patron and quipped, “Giuseppe Verdi— Joe and I drove 500 miles for the Pittsburgh Steelers, from 1969 to 1979. Each game night Augie approached me at the bar and told me there was someone I should meet. (Both) Nunu came to Asti to dine. He got me a glass of wine, and what a pleasant visit we had! I cherish forever those last days with Augie— Augie was more so accomplished as son, brother, “zio,” husband, father, dog-lover, friend, athlete, musician, generous host, raconteur, entrepreneur, raconteur, seafarer, musician, director, restaurateur, mentor, entertainer and host and will be greatly missed by us all.

Rekha Desai Packer ’72

It has been a great pleasure and honor to have called Rekha Desai Packer ’72 my good friend for the past 52 years. We became best of friends in Mr. Cressney’s geometry class while he was teaching that class while he went over last nights homework problems (which we had gotten all correct). So he would send us out of class, and we would go for long walks around the FA campus, giggling about this or that and sharing a love of all things Jane Austen. Rekha graduated as Valedictorian of our class, and went on to graduate from Harvard University in 1976. Rekha met her husband and love of her life, Michael Packer, at Harvard. These two brilliant young people found another one in a chance encounter, and discovered a common love of music, travel, and learning. Rekha went on to graduate school at Harvard School of Law, and Michael went to grad school at MIT. Rekha became an accomplished attorney in tax law and labor negotiations, first in a Boston law firm (where she made partner at the tender age of 31) and then in Philadelphia.
In 1990 Rekha suffered a near-death rupture of a cerebral embolism, which caused extensive brain injury and paralysis. She retaught herself to speak, read and write, and remained the left side of her body to compensate for the loss of the right side. Her FA classmates played a role in her recovery. Rekha was supported by what she termed “her rock and her best friend.” Michael was her primary caregiver and shared many of the responsibilities of parenting and housekeeping.

Rekha lost her beloved Michael on September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center was destroyed. Michael was in a conference room at the top of one of the WTC towers, preparing to give a lecture to an audience of his peers. Rekha recounted to me that she was on a train to her office in Philadelphia that morning when she heard the news of the plane strikes, and promptly turned right around back to New York City to be with her children and to search for Michael. It wasn’t for many weeks later that she finally received confirmation of his passing. She was devastated at the loss of her great love and best friend.

Rekha summoned her enormous inner strength once again, and picked up the pieces of her life. Her two children became her primary focus. Rekha loved them both tremendously, and was proud of their many accomplishments. She beamed with pride when she talked about her daughter Emily’s talents as an accomplished singer and performer, and of her profession, Rekha never stopped working. Even after she retired from her legal profession, Rekha never stopped working. Jonathan’s cutting-edge genomic work was both end up laughing about the extent of our ignorance in the subject.

Rekha put together funding through Harvard’s Alumni Association, obtained speakers, and coordinated with the Yonkers school system to put together this annual program. Many of the participants went on to take AP and similar advanced classes in high school, helping to put them on a college-bound track.

Rekha passed away on June 28, 2020, in the Hartsdale home she had shared and renovated with Michael, and where her beloved children grew up. She will be sorely missed by her brother Rahul Desai '76, family, friends, her FA and Harvard classmates, and me – all of us missing her wit, her wisdom, and her Jane Austen quick quips. Rekha, I hope you are playing the piano once more.

—Pamela de Toledo '72

Michael Constantino, Father of Michael Constantino ’86, grandfather of Olivia ‘17, Penelope ’20, Clementine ’24, and Jemima ’26 Constantino

In memory of Michael Constantino who passed away at the age of 81 after surviving multiple cancers that began over 20 years ago. He proudly served his country as a United States Marine and was honorably discharged in 1957. He has been a Friends Academy parent of Michael Constantino III, class of ’86 and an active supporter, attending and supporting all the scholastic and sporting events. He was actively involved in the Fall Fair at its beginning contributing to a successful event for Friends Academy that continues today. In addition to being one of the founders of the “Kring’s Korner” boutique, he hand painted numerous signs that were used for many years. He was the proud grandfather of Olivia, class of ’17, Penelope, class of 2020, and still attending are Clementine, class of 2024 and Jemima, class of 2026.

Sharon R. Goldstein, former Lower School teacher and Assistant Lower School Principal

Sharon Goldstein passed away on October 6, 2020. She was the beloved wife of Burton; loving mother of Dan (FA ’88), Jane (FA ’86) and Matthew (FA ’90). Cherished grandmother of James, William, Sophie, Nathaniel, and Blake. Private Cremon. The Goldstein family asks that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Scholarship Fund at Friends Academy in her name where she worked as a teacher in the Lower School for twenty-six years. Donations may be made online directly to www.fa.org/SharonGoldstein or mailed to Friends Academy, 270 Duck Pond Rd, Locust Valley, NY 11560. Arrangements entrusted to the Charles G. Schmitt Funeral Home, Inc., Seaford, NY.

Thank you for your support!

This year, we raised over $4,500 in support of the Brian J. Hom Memorial Scholarship, and we couldn’t have done it without you!

The Brian James Hom Scholarship at Friends Academy was established in the spring of 2011. It honors students who embody Brian’s qualities and live according to his motto, “I am the me I choose to be” as coined by Sidney Poitier.

Brian, Class of 2011, left a lasting impact on all who knew him through his passion for social equity and justice, innate generosity and personal warmth, wonderful sense of humor and smile, and unparalleled commitment to excellence as a runner and a scholar.
CORRECTIONS

Corrections from the Fall 2020 issue
We inadvertently did not give proper photography credit to recent alum Kenny Silver ’20. His photos are reprinted here.

Due to an editing error, notes from Chris Baum ’71 were inserted into the 1972 class year. Chris was also misidentified as Class of 1972 in an accompanying photo.