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SUMMER/FALL 2023

BRYN ATHYN

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



DREAM JOB

CHARA SMITH FEELS PINCH-
ME LUCKY ABOUT THE DESIGN
STUDIO SHE HELPED BUILD.

Dear Friends,

Dear Friends,

As January started earlier this year, I was happily retired for a little over six months and enjoying that life, when I was asked if I would consider serving as president of Bryn Athyn College for an interim two-year period. I agreed and am happy to be serving at this College, which I see as having a vitally important mission.

I began overlapping with President Brian Blair in February and formally assumed the position of president at the beginning of May 2023. Personally, I am grateful for the counsel and perspective Brian shared with me. Brian has given years of his life to serving Bryn Athyn College. His vision, his energy, and his deep love of the students and of collegiate New Church education has had a significant impact.

Over the last several months, I have enjoyed getting to know the faculty and staff and observing student life. I am inspired by the dedication of the faculty and staff to the mission of Bryn Athyn College. I look forward to working with them between now and when the next president can take up this leadership role.

The articles in this issue of the *Alumni Magazine* reflect the many aspects of campus life and highlight the College's effect for good. An alumna, Chara Smith, is featured for the design studio business she and her husband started. There are articles on how the college is working to prepare students for a useful life. Bryn Athyn College sports has a long history with significant achievements, documented here. You will learn about some of the research projects the faculty members have been working on. You'll read about the Pride Dance team, the College's trip to Greece, and the makeover of our Leo the Lion mascot. You'll also meet Tara Fehon, our Advancement and Alumni Coordinator.

I hope this issue reminds you of some of your own experiences at Bryn Athyn College. We value our connection to each of you and would gratefully welcome your contributions to support our continued work.

Best wishes,



Rev. Eric H. Carswell
President

BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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ERIC CARSWELL

INCOMING PRESIDENT

Bryn Athyn College has found its next leader in newly appointed President Eric Carswell. Since assuming the role in May, he's been busy helping BAC do what it does best: supporting students as they prepare for their future careers and build a solid foundation for their spiritual lives.

By Michelle Chapin

In many ways, Bryn Athyn College is where it all started for alumnus Rev. Eric Carswell (AA '73, M.Div. '79). Since then, he has held a range of roles within higher education, institutional leadership, the priesthood, school administration, and especially New Church education. When you look at Eric's breadth of vocational accomplishments, it seems the experiences he's gained have been providentially molding him for his new position as president at his alma mater, culminating this homecoming with a career pinnacle.

Where He's Been

Though Bryn Athyn's campus may look a bit different from when he was a student—there are certainly more buildings and majors offered now—Eric observes that the heart of the education and the connections made here remain the same: students' minds are still being broadened and challenged. "I really valued my many undergraduate experiences," he notes. "They truly expanded my perspective in my various liberal arts classes and deepened my understanding of the teachings of the New Church."

Bryn Athyn College encouraged his love for helping and caring for people. He felt drawn to psychology and obtained his bachelor's in the field from Penn State. While volunteering at a state mental hospital, he was impressed by the human resilience he witnessed there and gained an appreciation for the importance of preventative work in people's wellbeing. He realized he would be able to support people in facing the ups and downs of life as a pastor and enrolled in Bryn Athyn's Master of Divinity program.

It was during this time in theological school that the Executive Bishop of the General Church offered Eric an opportunity to study school administration at Lehigh University, so he juggled two masters simultaneously.

In hindsight, Eric is grateful he learned how to balance many pressing responsibilities during his graduate studies, as it prepared him for his subsequent roles as both assistant pastor and principal, moving back and forth between Pittsburgh, PA and Glenview, IL to serve their churches and schools for 23 years. On any given week, he found himself writing Sunday sermons, teaching subjects from math to social studies, counseling congregants, leading strategic planning or budget committee meetings, not to mention raising five children with his wife, Donna (Zeitz, BS '76).

In 2002 he returned to Bryn Athyn to lend his leadership to the theological graduate program. "When I was asked to be Dean of the Theological School, I thought that was going to be my peak career," he recalls. "I was very happy with that." But his time in the administration was just beginning, when a few years later he was tapped to serve as President of the Academy of the New Church. There, he oversaw both the collegiate and secondary school institutions and later became the Vice Chancellor of the Academy.

When the Bryn Athyn Church congregation was searching for a new head pastor, they chose Eric for the position. For nearly a decade, he and his team spearheaded numerous initiatives that have enriched the spiritual and social fabric of the com-



munity. His tenure was characterized by his exceptional leadership skills, compassionate nature, and profound knowledge of the teachings of the New Church. He formally retired in the summer of 2022. He'd already delayed a year to serve as Interim Assistant Pastor to

smooth the leadership transition. But his commitment to caring for people and serving a useful life apparently needed one more vocational venture.

"When I was asked earlier in January whether I was willing to consider the position of interim president for Bryn Athyn College," Eric recalls, "I agreed to be interviewed because I value highly what Bryn Athyn College can do." The Board of Trustees unanimously chose him for the two-year appointment, and the very next day he showed up to campus, ready to work.

Where We're Going

Eric is aware of the hard work awaiting him, noting that this is likely to be the most challenging endeavor of his career. But he's not daunted by the task. He recognizes the immense talent within the community and is eager to understand the current dynamics and ventures of Bryn Athyn College to ensure the best future for the institution. He knows collaboration is key and wants to value staff members' expertise and insights while offering his own where appropriate.

Excellent educators are essential to the success of Bryn Athyn. "This is just an amazing faculty," Eric beams, echoing the findings of the recent accreditation renewal team from Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Bryn Athyn's faculty works hard to ensure not only students' academic success but also a sense of fulfillment in life. "Almost every college and university views itself as transformational, while students tend to have the assumption that college is more transactional. They think, 'If I just take a certain set of courses it will guarantee me a good job,'" Eric observes. Bryn Athyn focuses on those broadening experiences which characterize a liberal arts education while fostering professional skills. "The things that em-

ployers are going to most appreciate are critical thinking, ability to communicate both orally and in writing, and the ability to anticipate better solutions. People will pay very good salaries for individuals who can do that, and likewise, people that can work together as a team. And that's where I have this sense that the College is on the right track."

Another area Eric is focused on is the sustainability of the College, which includes mindful spending and increasing enrollment in a saturated market. "In the northeastern United States," Eric explains, "there is the combination of limited demographics of students and a ferociously competitive environment for those students." He has confidence in BAC's admissions team, supporting their initiatives and looking forward to working closely with them to further enhance the College's reputation and expand its student community.

Clear messaging around the distinct offerings and mission of Bryn Athyn is crucial for enrollment and retention, which Eric has already noticed on campus. "So many people here on faculty and on staff seem to be really mission-committed," he remarks, noting this is true of those newly introduced to the New Church as well. "Apparently the MSCHE visiting team had an informal interaction while on campus: one of them talked to a young woman who said, 'I'm Buddhist. I think Bryn Athyn College is making me a better Buddhist.' If we realize that the Lord wants to build His Church in people's hearts, minds, and lives, this observation is a success for the College. If we're helping students with that critical thinking with making better decisions in their lives—as the mission talks about enhancing their civil, moral and spiritual perspectives—that's a huge contribution."

Eric's involvement in education in just about every age range—elementary, high school, college, and post-graduate—as well as in direct teaching roles and managerial oversight, has been profound. "I've been involved in school administration, essentially, my whole life," he notes. "But it comes back to this, I have taken huge fulfillment in working with teams of people to accomplish everything." He continues, "I love the breadth and depth of the college experience and what enrichment can be added with Bryn Athyn College's niche, which is that we're going to try and introduce you to the prospective life and values of the New Church. Hopefully that's a significant benefit, and we've got a great team of people to do it." ■

FACULTY RESEARCH

BAC's faculty stay on the cutting edge of their fields by publishing papers and participating in research projects, bringing their experiences and findings into the classroom to share with the next generation of scholars.

By Michelle Chapin, Wendy Closterman, Ph.D., and Monica Rose



Wendy takes notes in the crypt of the Basilica of Saint Seurin in Bordeaux during her research trip to France.

The Sarcophagus Across the Street

"In its lifetime, this sarcophagus was at least: A burial commemoration. A salt bath. A business opportunity. A collector's item. And now a research puzzle."

Wendy Closterman, Ph.D. (BA '91) has been hard at work during a sabbatical in 2022–23 studying a previously unresearched fifth-century Christian stone sarcophagus in the collection of Glencairn Museum, along with various other research projects.

The inspiration for her sarcophagus research came from unresolved questions about the history of the piece at Glencairn. In 1986, a few years after Glencairn Museum opened to the public, museum staff discovered the sarcophagus in an old crate in a corner of the Cairnwood Carriage House. Glencairn is the former home of Raymond and Mildred Pitcairn, and the Museum's collections include the art and artifacts that Raymond Pit-

cairn had acquired. This sarcophagus was clearly part of Pitcairn's collection, but when and in what circumstances had Pitcairn purchased it? Why was it still in its shipping crate in 1986?

When Wendy began her research, she did not know exactly what it would yield. Her broad goals were to learn as much as possible about the piece as well as about its broader context. Her pursuit of these goals entailed combing through archival materials, digging into the historical context of fifth-century France, and examining the large corpus of sarcophagi to which Glencairn's piece belongs through publications and, vitally, in person.

As part of her work, Wendy crossed the Atlantic to spend a week in southwest France where almost all sarcophagi of this type are located. She explains, "Part of studying material culture is seeing the real deal, seeing the real thing, not just reading about it and looking



The sarcophagus decorated with vegetal images at Glencairn Museum. Photo credit: Glencairn Museum.

at photos. You have to go and see the stuff.” During her trip to France, Wendy examined over 20 examples of other vegetal decorated sarcophagi in Bordeaux, Toulouse, Narbonne, Carcassonne, Béziers, and Maguelone. Some are now in museums, and others are displayed in medieval cathedrals and castles, where they had been moved during the Middle Ages and later periods. Some cathedrals had been built on the locations of the cemeteries from which the sarcophagi most likely originated.

The results of Wendy’s research endeavors are two interrelated studies. One delves into the fascinating history of Glencairn’s piece. Wendy has constructed an object biography of the sarcophagus at Glencairn, finding out as much as possible about the artifact from its creation to the present day. Highlights of her findings come from extensive research in the Raymond and Mildred Pitcairn archives and the Brummer Gallery Records of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Wendy examined correspondence between Raymond Pitcairn and prominent early-20th-century art dealer Joseph Brummer. These documents make clear that Pitcairn purchased the vegetal sarcophagus from Brummer in 1924, after which he had it shipped to Bryn Athyn to store. Pitcairn made a considerable number of other purchases of art from various dealers around the same time, and he had little space at that time in which to display his growing collection. But it appears that even after building Glencairn in 1928–1939 to house his collection, Pitcairn never removed the sarcophagus he had bought some years earlier from its storage location in the Cairnwood Carriage House, and there the piece remained until it was rediscovered by Glencairn Museum staff in the 1980s.

Wendy has pieced together other parts of the sarcophagus’ history as well. She has shown that a detailed description of a sarcophagus in a French article published in 1872 provides a very close match for the one at Glencairn. The Glencairn piece, then, is most likely the sarcophagus that the article describes as located in the basement of the Chateau de Massanès in France, a structure originally from the Middle Ages and renovated in

the 18th century. In the chateau, the sarcophagus had been reused for a time as a salt bath to cure meat. The location for its earlier, original use as a burial commemoration in the 5th century is currently unknown. (For more details about the life story of this sarcophagus, see the article she recently published in Glencairn Museum News by visiting glencairnmuseum.org/newsletter.)

Her second focuses on the meaning of the vegetal imagery used so frequently in the corpus of sarcophagi to which Glencairn’s piece belongs. Wendy presented this study in June at an international conference in St. Andrews in Scotland, sponsored by the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions and the School of Classics, University of St. Andrews.

These fifth-century sarcophagi, including the one at Glencairn, are frequently decorated with vegetal images: ivy, acanthus, and swirling grape vines. In her conference presentation Wendy explored meanings this imagery may have held, particularly for people from fifth-century southwest France. She derived these from what textual and archaeological evidence suggests about different ways the inhabitants of the region, particularly its aristocratic Christian elite, experienced nature.

Wendy is extremely grateful to Bryn Athyn College for granting her a sabbatical to pursue this project and professional development support to participate in the conference, to Glencairn Museum for encouraging her research on this piece in its collection, and to the Carpenter Fund for supporting her research trip to southwest France. She says of her experience: “The Glencairn piece is what got me into the material. Once you get started, the research sort of takes on a life of its own. The opportunity to have concentrated research time during a sabbatical to be able to read broadly and deeply, pursue this kind of research and thinking, and then be able to present and dialogue with others about it is really very rewarding.” She continues, “I feel invigorated by the work and the excitement of research and learning about new worlds. This is part of what the study of history is about—different people in different places and times are new worlds to explore.”

Where Virtual Reality and Concussion Prevention Meet

For Fernando Cavallo, Ph.D., research projects are a chance to mentor the next generation; he’s brought one of his recent projects to Bryn Athyn’s campus. He submitted a grant to fund research of concussions. “I already had an idea in my mind and it was more about using qEEG (quantitative electroencephalogram, which measures brain waves) and neurofeedback at Bryn Athyn College to both better identify concussions and then treat concussions,” he says. When he presented this idea to the Council of Brain Injury (COBI), he realized the group was looking for a quick and easy way to detect a concussion, like a swab test, so Fernando redirected his efforts to preventative measures. He discovered a virtual reality (VR) program called Crash Course, developed by Harvard University and Stanford University for the popular Oculus VR headset. What if he could combine the qEEG aspect with this prevention tool by measuring the effectiveness of this course? “So I did what I was taught to do when I was in graduate school,” Fernando explains. “You just reach out to the researcher. And they responded back, extremely interested. Before I knew it, we were on Zoom calls with Harvard, Stanford, the football coach at Stanford and the entire research team.”

Starting in the fall of 2021, together with Bryn Athyn psychology students including Alexis Mitchem (BA ‘22) and Shaina Childs (BA ‘23), the team gathered a sample of student participants to experience a VR program and gauge their responses to the course. In the Crash Course video, students are looking through the point of view of a football player, getting hyped with their team before a game, then playing on the field. Suddenly and startlingly they get tackled hard, which causes a concussion. The player comes to in a doctor’s office, their vision clearly affected by the impact, where they are addressed by Bryce Love, former professional football player. He teaches the player about concussions, the neurophysiology behind them, how they affect the brain, and preventive measures with fancy graphics and interactive questions. “They’re doing this through a virtual world kind of experience,” Fernando explains, “So it’s supposed to be more engaging. The idea is that if we can empower the student athlete with better knowledge, then they should be better able to be their own best advocates and not rely on coaches or teammates to recognize when they suffered a concussion.”



Alexis Mitchem (above) prepares the Oculus VR headset for the brainmapping study while Rose Glass (bottom right) is fitted for a cap with electrodes to map her brain activity using qEEG technology (top right).

The first phase of this pilot study was subjective, asking the participants to fill out questionnaires about their knowledge and perceptions about concussions before the VR experience, immediately afterward, and again two months later. Their second phase involved an objective physiological component, measuring brain waves as participants are in the 3D VR experience compared to watching a 2D video. Fernando brought in his colleague Bill Brubaker to help with the qEEG machine, and they gathered a few more BAC student participants plus alumna Rose Glass (BA ‘20) who wanted the experience while she’s pursuing graduate research opportunities. Bill hooked students up to an external cap with electrodes, and a polka dot travel pillow for comfort, then students took the Crash Course in either VR or 2D. They came back later to watch in the other form, while the machine gathered data on how their brain was physically reacting to the course in both sessions. They then sent the data to Harvard and Stanford for further analysis to gauge whether the two institutions would like to continue this study.

While waiting for Harvard and Stanford, Fernando and Bryn Athyn did not stand idly by. They decided to take a step back and conduct a study on the effects of just wearing the VR headset, whether just that act has an effect on the brain and what that effect may be. “We might as well answer that question now rather than later. Get a head start,” Fernando says. “We had mildly significant results for wearing the headset, as compared to not wearing the headset. Not just answering the question, is there a dif-



In addition to her diploma, Shaina Childs graduates with a byline in an academic journal and connections with leaders in the field at Harvard and Stanford.

ference, but how should people measure it? By doing this, we kind of standardized and came up with an approach that we're going to present to the field that anyone who wants to present data that says: this is what your brain looks like in VR, this is what your brain looks like when you're not in VR."

Shaina also got the experience of a lifetime writing the initial draft of a paper with Harvard and Stanford on the first phase of the project, which will be published in the peer reviewed publication *Neuro-Regulation*. Undergrads rarely get these sort of opportunities to write papers on this scale, or interact with



The Crash Course video features interactive questions.

such leaders in the field. "It was a very friendly mentorship," Shaina recalls. "A lot of what they emphasized was they wanted this to be a good learning experience for me, which was so cool. I wasn't just an instrument to get this published. They were like, 'I want you to understand what goes into this and I want you to be able to have this on your resumé, which was amazing.'" Her plans to pursue a Ph.D. program in psychology are already off to a great start; she now has experience actively collecting data with participants in a research study and has a byline in an academic journal.

"Bryn Athyn has been just so supportive in terms of the research and making any accommodations necessary. I feel super fortunate," Fernando says. As the project progresses, Fernando is excited about the implications of VR in other areas of psychology. As VR enters the world of treatments in anxiety and learning disabilities, he finds himself jumping ahead and asking, "Might VR have some sort of potential role in trying to immerse the brain in a way that we could have never imagined before?" ■



LEO GLOWS UP

By Michelle Chapin



BRYN ATHYN COLLEGE ROCKS!

Learn the history of the band in the *Alumni Magazine* Spring/Summer 2016 issue.

The 20 year old band played their 25th show this year. Though the musicians may have changed, the magic of the music remains. "The timelessness is that while it's new people, it's the same project and it's the same excitement," says long-time member Figge Bryntesson, Ph.D. (BA '96). "The band is bigger than any individual. There's no ego and it's something bigger than yourself." Guitarist Cole Graham (BA '18) has witnessed the audience respond to the bond the band creates through the music, "It's still music that all of us grew up listening to independently from each other. There's a unity in that." They look forward to continuing to make friends and music together. For drummer Jarvis Friesen (class of 2025) grew up attending BAC Rocks shows it's a dream come true, "I want it to be just as atmospheric, just as awesome as it was when I was a kid." To that we say, **ROCK ON!** ■



The band remembers Will Bostock and Nick Holm who played in the band and sadly passed away this year.

Bryn Athyn's beloved mascot, Leo the Lion, recently received a make-over that he revealed with the help of the Pride Dance Team this spring. The new mascot costume, created by Promo Bears, preserves the ferocity and friendliness of Bryn Athyn's symbolic lion. Leo celebrated his new look with students, faculty, staff, alumni and local community members during the halftime of the women's lacrosse game. The previous Leo mascot costume was handcrafted more than ten years ago by former professor Soni Werner, Ph.D. (AA '71), who took matters into her own hands because she wanted to see the lion symbol come to life on campus.

Having experience designing elaborate animal costumes for BAC theater productions and Halloween outfits for her daughters, Soni first had to figure out how to create a headpiece that was light enough to wear, solid enough to last, and able to let the wearer see without being noticeable. Using an ice hockey helmet, she and her husband Neil got to work using PVC tubes, nuts, and bolts to build a base for the head around the helmet. She worked with a material called Fosshape, a heat-sensitive, felt-like material, to mold the head. This required a lot of trial and error to get it just right. Then

she got to have fun creating Leo's iconic exterior look, shopping in the same New York City stores that many Broadway costumers and fashion designers frequent. "I surveyed about 20 athletes about whether the lion should show teeth and be ferocious looking or no visible teeth," she recalls. "We decided not to frighten the kids, so no visible scary teeth!" Armed with felt, fur, paint, rubber cement, hot glue, and lots and lots of feathers, Soni brought a two-dimensional logo to life.

Leo has spent the last decade dancing with students, high-fiving visitors, flying kites with children, cheering on the athletic teams, and bolstering the spirits of the Bryn Athyn community. While we are excited for a new chapter of Leo's role on campus, we are also sad to see the well-loved original character retire. There are plans to display the former mask in the College Center so the original Leo's spirit can live on.

Soni is glad she was able to add to Bryn Athyn pride. "I was hoping the mascot would be loved, but that is just the magic one hopes for after making such a fun costume!" ■

CSAC AWARDS

CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cross Country Individual: Rafe Williams
Women's Soccer Team
Women's Lacrosse Team

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Ashley Rivera - Women's Soccer
Rafe Williams - Men's Cross Country
Shea Gormley - Women's Lacrosse

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Sabrina Brock - Women's Lacrosse

COACH OF THE YEAR

Jack Crawford - Men's Lacrosse
Ramona Walters - Women's Lacrosse

SELECTED TO PLAY IN ALL-STAR GAME

Joel Shriver
Aiden Esack
DJ May
Tyler Cassidy

SCHOLAR-ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Ashley Rivera - Women's Soccer

ALL CONFERENCE

1ST TEAM

Rafe Williams - Men's Cross Country
Ashley Rivera - Women's Soccer
Maria Storck - Women's Soccer
Ciara Kiely - Women's Cross Country
Jamal Cannady, Jr. - Men's Basketball
Jamal White - Men's Lacrosse
Ryan Ovecka - Men's Lacrosse
Dylan Fesmire - Men's Lacrosse
Tim Ragan - Men's Lacrosse
Shea Gormley - Women's Lacrosse
Sabrina Brock - Women's Lacrosse
Kira Bradley - Women's Lacrosse
Chloe Munyon - Women's Lacrosse

2ND TEAM

Ava Fino - Women's Field Hockey
Terra Lewis - Cross Country
Declan Williams - Cross Country
Shea Gormley - Women's Soccer
Sabrina Brock - Women's Volleyball
Allyson Paul - Women's Lacrosse
Maria Storck - Women's Lacrosse
Annae Connelly - Women's Tennis Singles
Annae Connelly & Thea Keal - Women's Tennis Doubles

For full lists of awards, visit brynathynathletics.com

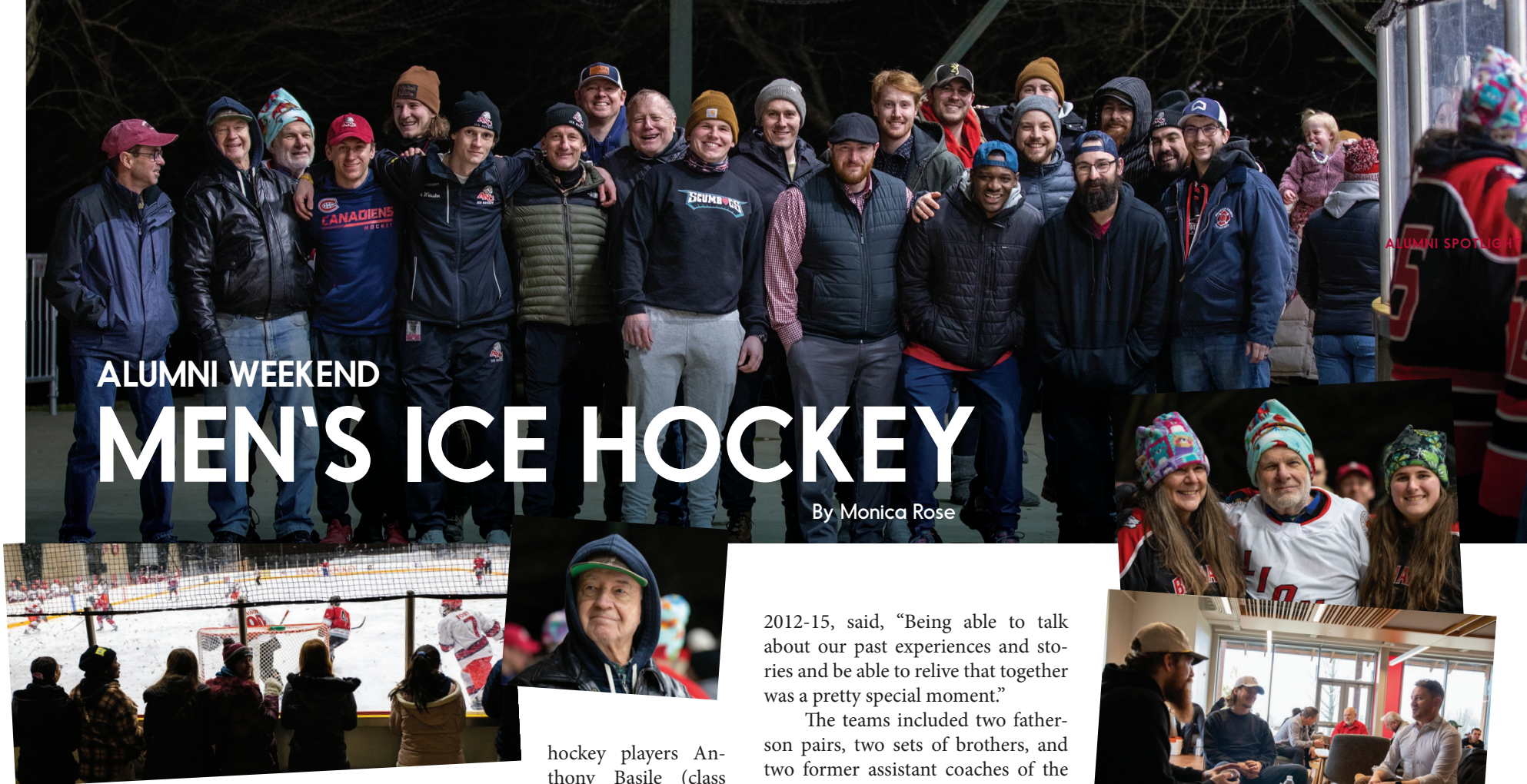


Ashley Rivera (BA '22, left) and Anthony Burr (BA '23, right) won Bryn Athyn College's Student Athlete of the Year awards, presented by Dean and Athletic Director Suzanne Nelson, Ph.D. (AA '80, middle).

ATHLETIC CONFERENCE MERGER



The Colonial States Athletic Conference (CSAC) and the United East Conference has officially merged as one entity and will operate under the United East Conference name and brand. In a critical and volatile time for higher education, conference leaders see the merger as forward-thinking and looking to sustainability within NCAA Division III. With 10 institutions from the CSAC and seven from the United East, the conference will boast 17 full member institutions. The new United East Conference will solidify competitive opportunities for and better support its student-athletes, expand its sport sponsorship, and provide financial stability for the conference. ■



ALUMNI WEEKEND MEN'S ICE HOCKEY

By Monica Rose



hockey players Anthony Basile (class of 2025) and Aidan Esack (class of 2025), and coached by alumni Brian Horigan (AA '76) and honoree of the weekend, Brian Schnarr. Brian said, "I was delighted to be on the [coach's] bench, bringing back great memories from early days."

On January 20 and 21, 2023, Bryn Athyn College hosted an alumni reunion weekend, including an exciting Alumni vs. Alumni ice hockey game, a social luncheon, and a celebration honoring alumnus Brian Schnarr (AA '63).

Brian founded the current BAC hockey team in 1967 and served as coach for over 15 years, leading teams to championship wins in 1972 and 1977. He also served as dean of BAC from 1989–1996, taught economics and history for over 40 years, and co-founded the Delaware Valley Collegiate Hockey Conference (DVCHC). He was honored in a ceremony at BAC's Alumni Appreciation game against Saint Joseph's University.

The Alumni vs. Alumni game was orchestrated by BAC hockey coaches Ryan Heickert and Salvatore Capone, refereed by current BAC

2012-15, said, "Being able to talk about our past experiences and stories and be able to relive that together was a pretty special moment."

The teams included two father-son pairs, two sets of brothers, and two former assistant coaches of the hockey team, Darryl Hasen (attended '99-'00) and Steven Gramiak (attended '02-'03 and '04-'05). Many alumni wore their old hockey pants and helmets, a visual homage to the ever-growing hockey community. Glenn Genzlinger (AA '75), who played '73-'75, reflects, "I don't remember much about the actual hockey, but the whole hockey culture I remember."

Brian's goal is for the College to have both women's and men's hockey teams, allowing them to play at a



wider scale. "The laughter and the conversation both days allowed me and many others to be reunited, and I hope that it will be continued in years to come," said Brian.

The icy weekend was a wonderful testament to the long-lasting bonds students can make at Bryn Athyn College. ■



SAVE THE DATE
Next Men's Hockey Alumni Event
will be January 20, 2024

A YEAR IN PICTURES



Left to right: Sol Laboy, Evelyn de Chazal, Chloe Panicker, Danaya Corbett, Danaja Overton



The team also performs their own routines at dance concerts (left, middle) and special worship services for the whole campus (bottom).

PRIDE DANCE TEAM

The student-lead club amps up the crowd at home athletic games, hosts study break events for fellow students, and focuses on providing an inclusive space for expression through movement.

By Michelle Chapin

You may have already seen them in action, with their perfectly coordinated pom-poms at a basketball senior night or during an emotive routine during a campus-wide convocation worship service. Or maybe you've spotted them hanging out on their way to class or enjoying a meal in the dining hall, laughing up a storm and clearly the best of friends. Wherever they go, Bryn Athyn's Pride Dance Team adds a fun enthusiasm with their dance performances, study-break events, and welcoming atmosphere.



When the Pride Dance Team was created, it wasn't that there weren't dance opportunities on campus, just not enough for Danaja Overton ('BA 21). Danaja comes from a strong background in dance—even turned down jobs so she could study at Bryn Athyn College—and she felt the campus was fertile ground for the excitement and camaraderie dance teams provide. She dreamed of an organized group of dancers among the crowds cheering on the Lion's athletic teams, amping up the

fever between plays and at halftimes, like she'd seen at other colleges. Bringing this vision to her dance instructor Jessica Bostock, she felt supported and taken seriously when Jess encouraged her to start just such a group with classmates Rayna Synnestvedt ('BA 21) and Mercedes Masciulli (attended '17-'18) who also had previous dance experience. The three got to work, creating a formal proposal and meeting with the College's president, deans, and student life coordinator. The pitch was for a club with two components: a dance performance cohort to support athletic teams and other initiatives, and a social element to sponsor

events and provide fun on campus. This would be a space where students could belong and express themselves through movement, no matter their experience. In the fall of 2019, the Pride Dance Team was born.

The team initially focused on their presence at a number of Lions' home basketball games and spent the fall choreographing and practicing a repertoire of dances to cycle through for the upcoming season. Armed with pom-poms and wearing matching red "LIONS" tank tops, the team took to the middle of the court and began making their mark with their upbeat dances. Their high kicks, impressive

splits, and fast spins were met with cheers and applause. The Bryn Athyn College community enjoyed the energy the team brought to the games, as well as the concessions they sold. This new Pride Dance Team was off to a great start. But then the Pandemic threw a wrench into their plans.

Just as the team was gaining momentum, they had to tailor their activities to a newly-remote world. Instead of practicing in the same space and performing for crowded games, they, like many, turned to an online presence. Team members put together videos for the College community, like game day makeup routines, vlogs

Left to right: Evelyn de Chazal, Danaja Overton, Sol Laboy, Kamiyah Jennings, and Janiyah Carter



The new College Center's dance studio is the perfect space for rehearsals and team bonding.



Students enjoy dancing, playing games, and eating snacks during the Cram Jam events.



in which they made Ramen while reflecting on their freshman experiences, and virtual dance parties. They continued to support each other as a team, especially when things got tough.

"There was a time where three of us had gotten COVID, including myself, during midterms or finals," recent team co-leader Sol Laboy (BA '23) recalls. "We were like, 'OK, we're all going to get on [Microsoft] Teams and we're going to study together, and we're going to talk, and we're going to play music—still feed off each other's energy so that we still know that we have each other without being right next to each other'"

When students returned to campus, the Pride Dance Team could resume their original plans, expanding their performances to outdoor games like soccer and lacrosse and dancing for worship services and other campus events. They were finally able to start planning events for students. The College Center, still a brand-new addition to campus, was

perfect for the team's purposes. The lower level included a new dance studio, the ideal place to practice and build the supportive space the group aimed to foster. The main floor of the Center provided a location for more informal community-building.

"I wanted to maximize that and use the whole space for dancing it out when people get frustrated and don't know what to do with themselves," Danaja explains. The team hosted a "Cram Jam" during exam week where students were invited to take a break from studying and writing papers to blow off some steam. They had games, snacks, and, of course, opportunities for students to dance their stress away. The Cram Jam took off and is an event many at Bryn Athyn look forward to amid exams or midterms.

While the team has a lot of fun, they take performances very seriously. "We laugh, we talk, we lollygag," Sol says. "But when it comes to time to learn, we know when to

focus." They maintain a rigorous practice schedule. Several evenings a week, the team gathers to choreograph and rehearse a few numbers at a time. It takes immense concentration and focus, even though they work hard to make it look easy. They don't compromise their standards, and they strive to make every performance polished and professional. It's a big job to juggle the performances, scheduling, event planning, promotion, and coordination with other departments—not to mention their own studies, social lives, and work schedules. Janiyah Carter (BA '23), recent team co-leader, reflects, "But other times, like when we dance, it doesn't always feel like work."

More than anything, the Pride Dance Team offers freedom for students to belong. During practice, students can form friendships and express themselves. "I can really be myself," Janiyah explains. "I can just be myself, unwind from the day because we usually have [prac-

tice] at night anyway, so it's a good way to end the day. Just let it all go." The whole team nods in agreement, including Danaya Corbett (class of 2025). "It's freeing, because life can be really crazy outside these walls. So coming here and letting it all out and being goofy—it's good vibes."

That was exactly what Danaja hoped to help build. "The number one thing with the Pride Team is not really about how much dance experience you have, but rather being your authentic self. Being yourself and being able to excel in that without having to have a grade for it—without having to feel like you're being judged." She continues, "An important factor about it is definitely inclusivity and being able to create movement for everybody, being able to allow them to shine. I think because it's such a small group as well that they have that opportunity. And then offering different things besides just dance, like leadership opportunities. You're learning how to run something that you're passionate about."

Sol feels she has grown, both as a leader and as a choreographer. She tended toward flowy modern and contemporary styles, so working with the Pride's high-energy dances initially felt like a stretch but now feels natural. "It keeps me on the edge. What else can I do? What else am I capable of?"

The team wants everyone to feel included in that confidence-building. The performance portion of the team does require an audition process, but anyone can become a member and join practices, event planning, and other bonding opportunities. Anyone. "It's not just for girls," Alana O'Grady (class of 2025) notes. "There are some men who ask me about it. I'm like, why don't you join us?" Janiyah agrees. "Oh yeah, we've had guys dance. If you want to dance, come dance with us!"

Danaja is proud of the team and her role helping it come to fruition. "The biggest thing that I've taken away from this opportunity to be able to create this, is the fact that it

does bring people together that you would never expect to be together. I think that's what dance does in general." She's keeping that momentum going in her life now. She's putting her dual degree in biology and dance to work in two jobs: she recruits travel nurses and works as an instructor at a dance studio, molding the next generation of dancers. "I teach my younger dancers now about body image, and how to really use your body as a tool and as an instrument, and how to appreciate what your body can and even can't do."

Dance lets people push past what they thought possible, allows them to express themselves, and especially brings them together. The Pride Dance Team harnesses that power on Bryn Athyn's campus, and their ripple effect influences students and community members. How could it not? At the end of the day, as Sol puts it, "Pride is just fun. When your serotonin just wants to burst out of your skin." ■



WORDSMITHING WITH HEART

By Michelle Chapin

Smith & Diction, the award-winning design studio Chara (Odhner) Smith co-founded, works with a variety of companies and projects to help them feel truly seen—through high-quality branding and a collaborative creative process.

Smith & Diction knows that each of their clients have a unique story to tell. The small design studio in Philadelphia is in the brand-building business, helping companies put their best foot forward. Architecture studios, coffee roasters, legal support firms, skincare products, venture capitalists, jewelers, art galleries, baby food companies, fitness apps, tech startups, breweries ... you name it, they've probably made a moodboard about it. And at the helm is Chara Smith (BA '06). She and her team



This wayfinding system for the Bok Building in South Philadelphia is a perfect example of Smith & Diction's approach to design—bright, elevated, and unexpected.

bring their one-of-a-kind spin to the world of design.

She and her now-husband Mike started the company together in 2015. Their meet-cute is a sweet, classic workplace romance at a Philadelphia advertising agency. She was the copywriter to his designer. They realized they complemented each other on a creative level, and after working together for another company in New York, they returned to their home city to venture out on their own. They created Smith & Diction (oh, and they were also engaged at that point). When trying to decide on a name, they wanted the business to feel like a good old-fashioned mom and pop business, where hardworking folks do reliable work for their neighbors. So the obvious choice would have been their last names at the time: "Smith & Odhner." But since Chara was soon to be a Smith herself, she opted to be represented by the word "Diction" as a nod to her propensity for words and the studio's emphasis on great copywriting.

Their team has grown since then with multiple designers, many successes including a recent award for Best Logo Designer from Best of Philly 2023, and a strong business model. "Mostly we try to work with

people who are really cool," Chara says. "It's really all about people who are doing stuff they're really excited about. And we're excited if you're excited." She continues, "We generally only take on clients that are amped about their mission. This year, for example, we're working with a small motel. It's right outside of a national park—it's beautiful and historic. And the team that's revamping it is so excited to make it nice, and they know a good brand is part of that. So we get to work on a new brand and then talk to the interior designer about colors and overall aesthetic, which is super fun. We love National Parks and hiking and adventures, and so do they, and so we all just get to be really excited about this little motel project together."

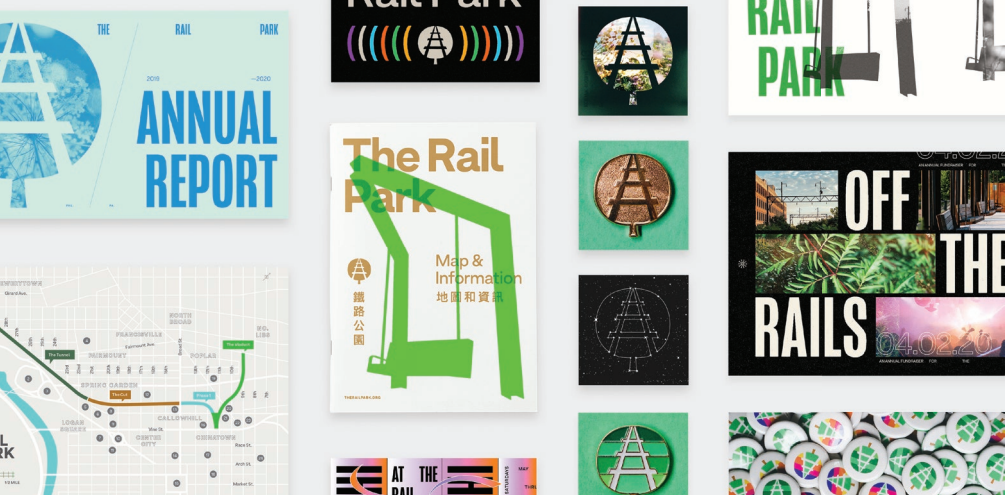
The agency is committed to maintaining a small-studio feel while delivering high-quality creative thinking and direct access to the creators. "You don't have to go through all these account executives in order to get an answer on like, 'Why did you pick that typeface?'" Chara explains. "The other thing that I think sets us apart is that Mike and I are the ones not just leading the creative work, but actually executing it. I love writing and he loves design. So we don't have this tiered agency

structure where the people making the decisions are not the people doing the work. We are still doing the work."

A big part of that work comes in the exploratory phase, in which they learn as much about the client as they can and try to capture their identity and passion before translating those qualities into designs, language, and branding. "The secret thing that you always want is for a client to cry," Chara laughs. "This happened the other day. We're presenting a brand, and the client was just like, 'I feel so seen!' It's that moment when you can make somebody feel like they've really been heard and seen, just by writing something beautiful or designing something that has just the right tone that captures who they are."

To be able to write such compelling copy for her clients, Chara gives a lot of credit to Bryn Athyn College's English program and faculty, especially Kristin King, Ph.D. Chara's education didn't just help her learn how to write well, but also how to analyze what she's writing about. "I study people the way that I stud-





One of the studio's favorite projects was their work for The Rail Park—a rails-to-trails project in Philadelphia. Smith & Diction built and evolved the brand over 6 years, helping create public support that turned this abandoned rail line into a public park.



We're super lucky to own our own business and manage an A-team. And it's super fun. It's a total dream job.

ied books when I was in college; you take a look at the whole thing and you also take a look at the details. You lay it all out and create a narrative. You know, it's exactly like writing

a paper in college. That's the same thing that I do now. I listen to my clients. I hear what they say. I study that and pick it apart and put it back together. That part is really advantageous for me, that ability to think and then craft an argument."

She entered the English major to follow her love of reading and because it felt like a natural progression of her interests. It wasn't until after she'd graduated and worked a variety of jobs that she fell in love with copywriting and advertising. While working alongside Andy Sullivan and Serena Sutton on Bryn Athyn College's marketing team, she saw a side of writing that was provocatively persuasive, and she started to understand the intriguing side of visual design. She also worked at the Swedenborg Foundation with Rev. Jonathan Rose, Ph.D., (BA '80, MDiv '84) which gave her a

great base for the business side of things, skills she's using more and more each day.

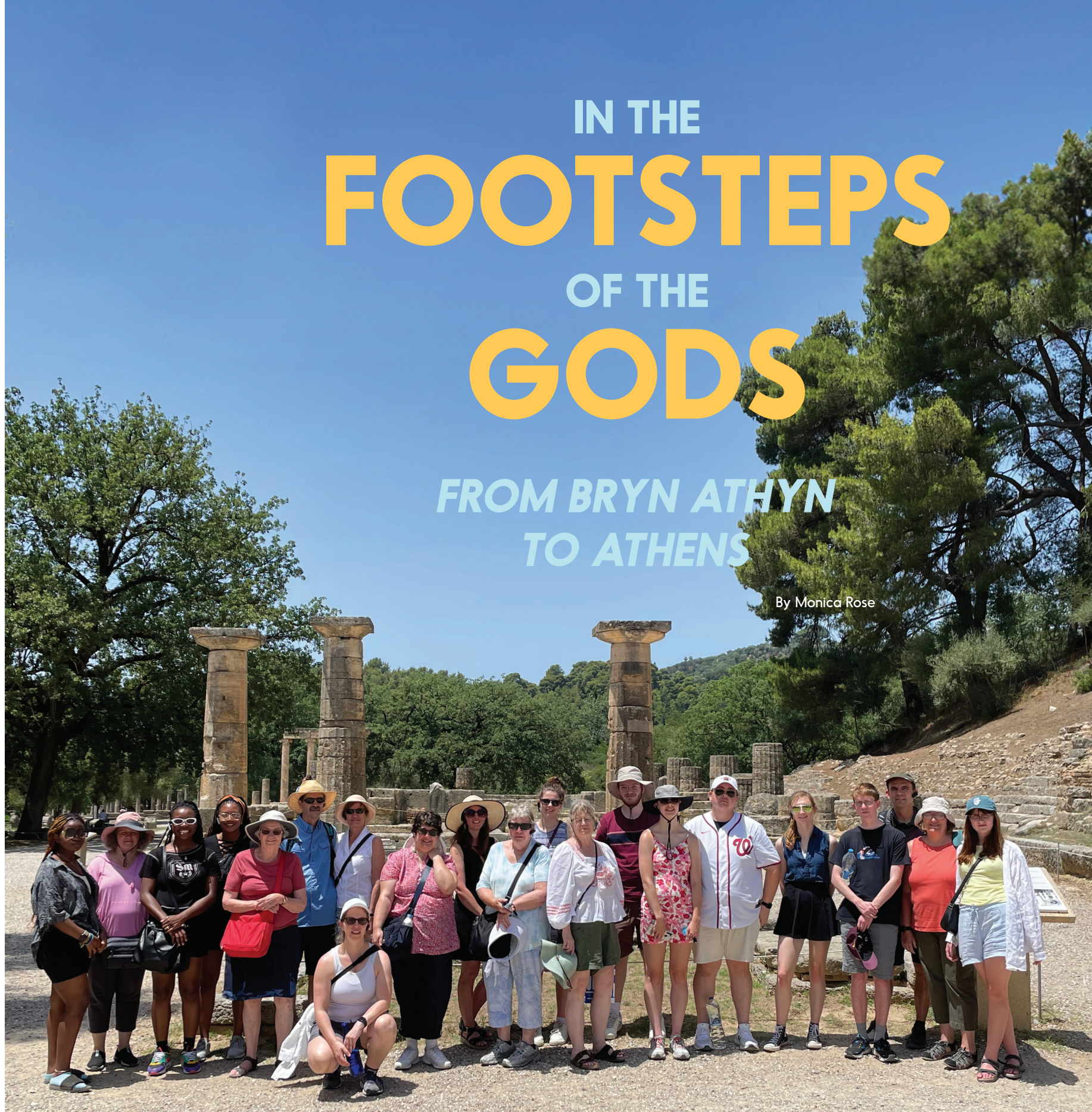
Chara is giving back to future creative minds in her own way now. "We don't gatekeep anything. Advertising is super competitive. Copywriters in general are also very quick to tear one another apart. It's a pretty brutal industry to be in advertising. So I try really hard not to let that be the ethos here. Our company is the opposite of that. Everyone is super nice, everyone is super collaborative. We're trying to build a different kind of atmosphere. And we try really hard to be pretty transparent about a lot of things." That includes their secret sauce, so to speak: Smith & Diction has made their process document public, giving everyone (including clients, junior creatives, and competitors alike) access to detailed insights about how they approach projects.

Thinking of her future, she feels a bit atypical among her peers. "I realize I'm never submitting my resume for anything ever again. I never plan on having another job unless, you know, I write my big-hit novel someday. Short of that, I don't have any plans to do anything else. This is it. This is the forever job." ■

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE GODS

FROM BRYN ATHYN TO ATHENS

By Monica Rose



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE GODS

Students, faculty, alumni, and friends took a long-awaited trip to Greece, where they visited awe-inspiring historical sites and experienced a bit of history.



A trip to Greece titled “In the Footsteps of the Gods,” originally scheduled for June 2020, finally took off last summer in June 2022. A number of excited students, alumni, and community members hit the skies to travel from Bryn Athyn to Athens. Wendy Closterman, Ph.D. (BA ‘91), history professor at BAC, excitedly led this trip after two long years of planning and re-planning. Wendy has logged over a dozen trips to Greece, between college trips, summer research, and graduate school abroad. She is a huge advocate for educational travel: “I think international travel is an incredibly powerful, educational, and personally transformative experience, so having opportunities like that for Bryn Athyn College students is really important. Leading trips abroad is something I enjoy doing, and I was excited to be able to have an opportunity to do it again.” Her strong love and connection to Greece drove her to ensure the trip went forward.

Wendy did most of the planning, working with a travel agent and the BAC alumni office. The group hopped around from site to site, following Wendy’s curated itinerary: Olympia, home of the Olympic Games; Delphi, host to the Sanctuary of Apollo, which she calls “perhaps the most important sacred site in Greek history”; Nafplio, the first capital of modern Greece; Akrotiri in Santorini, a prehistoric settlement once bur-

ied in volcanic ash; along with the Acropolis and Agora in Athens, the sanctuary of Epidaurus, and the Bronze Age citadel of Mycenae. During their stop in Mycenae, participants also visited what is known as the Tomb of Agamemnon and found its resonant pitch—F sharp.

Staff, alumni, and friends of Bryn Athyn College were welcomed to participate in the adventure, in addition to students. The trip originally was to serve as a grand finale to a course Wendy taught in the spring of 2020. Students prepared for the trip by studying all the places they would visit and writing a paper on their chosen site. Once they arrived in Greece, the students presented their research to the group at that actual location. One of the attendees, Danielle Hughes (BA ‘22), raves about the opportunity to give her presentation at Delphi, having studied the Temple of Athena there. “I really liked getting to talk about a site that I had done a lot of research on. . . . I’d seen pictures of it, and I’d read about it, but actually getting to be there—that was really, really cool.” Max Nelson (BA ‘22) presented on the well-preserved theater with amazing acoustics at Epidaurus, an ancient healing sanctuary.

Every participant has their own highlights of the trip, but two big favorites are the beautiful town of Nafplio and the bus rides between locations, which gave participants time to admire the mountains and changing landscape, chat with new and old friends, or

write in a journal while swaying with the bumps and turns of the bus. Wendy observes, “This trip not only allowed participants to engage with the archaeology but also to develop interest in the culture today. . . . Everybody found something different that they loved, and seeing the different things that lit people up was fun.” Students raced across the ancient Olympic stadium. Groups ate taverna-style dinners and climbed the citadel of Mycenae. Max spent an afternoon learning some modern Greek from the group’s tour guide, Akis, who gifted him a book of Modern Greek. “Greece was so much more valuable than I can really put into sentences,” says Max. “Being able to bond with friends old and new over delicious meals and travel with them across the breathtaking Grecian landscapes. . . . It was an amazing experience that I will absolutely never forget.”

Danielle recalls the impact of realizing how real the history is. “You learn so much about Greek history in school, but there’s a part of it that feels kind of unreal, or you feel kind of distanced from it. Being able to see the places that you learn about when you’re just sitting in a classroom in America, it’s like, ‘Whoa, this is actually here. I’m looking at the same things and walking on the same paths as ancient Greeks did at one point.’ . . . It gives you an appreciation for their everyday experience. They were just people. They lived thousands of years ago, but they were just people going about their daily lives living in buildings. It kind of humanizes them.”

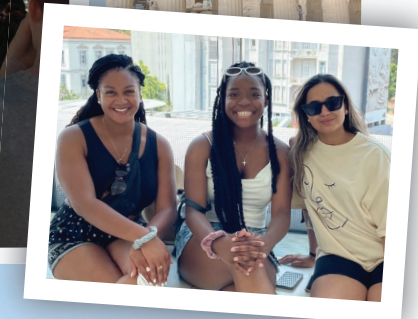
After a two-year delay, the trip was a huge success, thanks to the hard work of Wendy, the patience and goodwill of the participants, and the contributions of the many other people who made this trip possible. For their financial support of trip scholarships, sincere appreciation is extended to the Carpenter Fund, Glencairn Museum, and a generous donor couple who wished to share their love for the New Church and the College through their gift. Special recognition also goes to Dean Jonathan Kline, Ph.D., and head of study abroad Sean Lawing, Ph.D., for their invaluable support during the planning process. Finally, Wendy expresses deep appreciation for all her fellow travelers: “I’d love to thank everybody who participated, because the trip is really a community experience, shaped by the community of people on the trip. Every participant made a difference.” ■



The Bryn Athyn group on the island of Santorini.

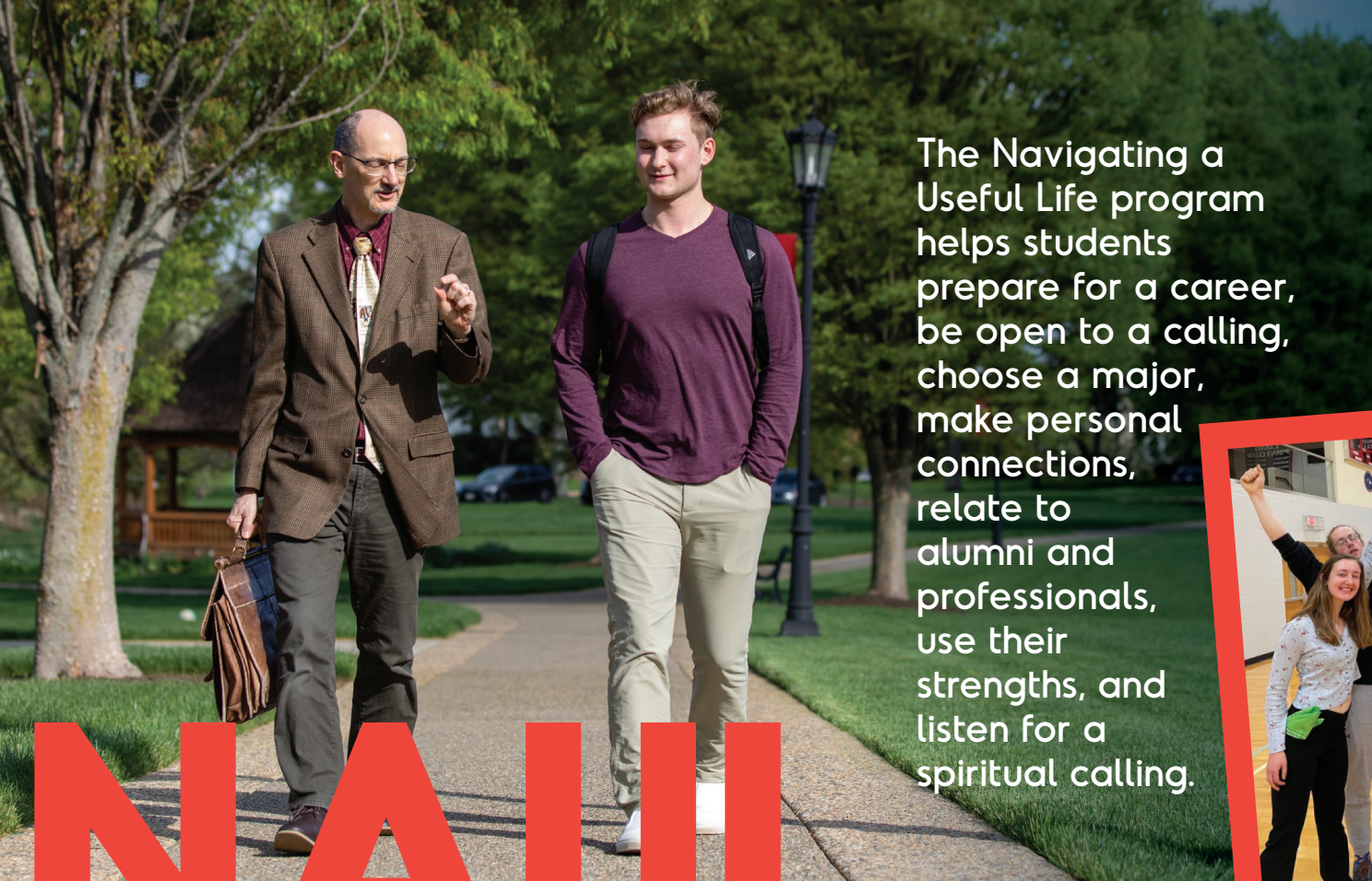


Danielle Hughes presents a research project to the group.



Trip organizer Wendy Closterman (middle) surrounded by beautiful scenery and her family.





The Navigating a Useful Life program helps students prepare for a career, be open to a calling, choose a major, make personal connections, relate to alumni and professionals, use their strengths, and listen for a spiritual calling.

NAUL

Navigating a Useful Life

By Dan Synnestvedt, Ph.D. (BA '86)

If you had to guess, what percentage of first-year college students rate the goal of being well-off financially as either essential or very important? By contrast, if you had to guess, what percentage of first-year college students rate the goal of developing a meaningful philosophy of life as essential or very important? According to an annual survey conducted by UCLA, the answer to the first question is 84% and the answer to the second question is 46%. Fifty years ago, these percentages were reversed! Despite this dramatic change, today's college students still think it is important to

help others in difficulty (75%) and raise a family (73%). So, how is the College meeting both the practical and idealistic interests of students? The Navigating a Useful Life committee formed around the educational outcomes COMPASS: to help students prepare for a Career, be Open to a calling, choose a Major, make Personal connections, relate to Alumni and professionals, use their Strengths, and listen for a Spiritual calling. The committee exists to prepare students for a career and, more broadly, for a lifetime of use. Being useful is a key New Church teaching and an essential

part of a life well-lived. The committee achieves its goals by partnering with academic advisors, career services, and other staff and faculty. Another partner is NetVUE. This non-profit organization was founded to establish a Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education. The term "vocation" is used here in its original Latin sense of "calling." This is a helpful term as it refers not only to a career, but more widely to the kind of life one lives. Significantly, it also implies a "Caller." The College has received two grants from NetVUE to launch programs that help students explore



THE NAUL PROGRAM PROVIDES A NEW CHURCH PHILOSOPHY OF VOCATION

- Creating New Church workshops on calling for Majors and Career Day
- Encouraging faculty to speak to students about how they discerned their calling
- Enlisting faculty and staff to function as vocation mentors for students
- Providing workshops on how to make a job a calling, and on virtues and the vocational journey
- Creating a sophomore vocational retreat
- Offering a new course, Philosophy 105: Work and Meaning



Dan Synnestvedt, Ph.D. and internship coordinator Laura Nash (attended '69-'70) collaborate at a NAUL event on campus.

the theological and intellectual aspects of calling. This is the final year of the second grant from NetVUE. However, the work of the Navigating a Useful Life committee will continue. In the future, we plan to link student participation in the workshops to a series of electronic "badges" that they can earn. Such a portfolio of badges can supplement students' resumes and encourage them to develop the "soft skills" that employers value. ■

New Church Career Network

The New Church Career Network aims to provide **career support** and opportunities for New Church young adults by **connecting** them with professionals in their field of interest. We are working to **build community** through professional connections, mentorship, and career development.

Networking
 Mentorship
 Building Community

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"Charity itself is acting justly and faithfully in our position and our work."
—True Christian Religion
422

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[@newchurchcareernetwork](https://www.newchurchcareernetwork.com)



Congratulations to the Class of 2023!

BUILDING ARTS

Raymond Bochnak
Huntingdon Valley, PA
Hannah Mejer King
Huntingdon Valley, PA

BIOLOGY

Leah Celine Antwi
with a minor in Psychology
North Brunswick, NJ

Aida Barry
Bronx, NY

Carling Brock
Huntingdon Valley, PA
Valedictorian

Anthony Burr
Cream Ridge, NJ

Brandon Cruz
Holland, PA

Liam Frederick Elphick
Huntingdon Valley, PA

Andre Terrance Fisher, Jr.
Townsend, DE

Priscilla Gyimah
Corona, NY

Katherine Marguerite Halle
Hillsborough, NJ

Lauryl Mergen
Corbett, OR

Allakemenin Mulbah
Burlington, NJ

Alisha C. Parnell
Upper Darby, PA

Jada Lee Waugh
Bristol, PA

BIOLOGY AND BUSINESS

Cheyenne B. Andrews
Troutdale, OR

BUSINESS

Michael Bastida Flores
Norristown, PA

Jency Glenn Brock
with a minor in Data Science
Rochester Hills, MI

Aaron Clark
Philadelphia, PA

Ava Heather Elder
with a minor in Dance
Rochester, MI

Rebeccah Homber
with a minor in Data Science
Johannesburg, South Africa

Thomas David Kozlowski
Olney, MD

Sol Angelica Laboy
with a minor in Dance
Philadelphia, PA

Terraé Imani Lewis
Newark, NJ

Alisha Mcknight
Reading, PA

Joseph Nugent
Philadelphia, PA

Colin Timothy O'Hara
with a minor in Psychology
Huntingdon Valley, PA

Chinecherem Victory Onwuka
with a minor in Biology
Sharon Hill, PA

Owen Ovecka
Philadelphia, PA

Ryan Ovecka
Philadelphia, PA

Kaitlyn N. Pierce
with a minor in Communications
Philadelphia, PA

Leonardo Pineda
with a minor in Communications
Fairless Hills, PA

Lauren Wood Schmittinger
with a minor in Data Science
Souderton, PA

Christian Smith
Franklinville, NJ

Cevin Spencer
Philadelphia, PA

William Addison Timbertlake III
with a minor in Communications
Reading, PA

Kevin Wisinski
Philadelphia, PA

EARLY CHILDHOOD & SPECIAL EDUCATION

Felicia Marlee Cohen
Philadelphia, PA

Payton Reese Gormley
Huntingdon Valley, PA

Gabrielle A.M. Lang
Clifton Heights, PA

Brandi Lynn Riffel
Huntingdon Valley, PA

Katie Noel Soulsby
Yardley, PA

Kevin Wisinski
Philadelphia, PA

ENGLISH & COMMUNICATIONS

Brandon Evagrio Rios
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

Monica Bryn Rose
Bryn Athyn, PA

Alexander Thomas Moffa
with a minor in Psychology
Berlin, NJ

HUMAN SOCIETY

Ursula H. Friesen
with a minor in Biology
Huntingdon Valley, PA

John Patrick Grumbach
with a minor in Finance
Glenside, PA

Elena Maria Clavijo
with a minor in Law & Society
South River, NJ

Chris Matera
with a minor in Law & Society
Delran, NJ

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Janiyah Carter
Dance/Psychology
Sharon Hill, PA

Heather Ann Kirtlin
Math/Business
with a minor in Data Science
Doylestown, PA

PSYCHOLOGY

Alan Kuruvilla
Philadelphia, PA

Jaryn Kamen Lee McCann
Auburndale, FL

Michael Antonyuk
Philadelphia, PA

Shaina Christine Childs
with a minor in Law & Society
Rochester, MI

Isaiah Louis Cureton
Princeton, NJ

Meerab Ishrat
Philadelphia, PA

Juleton Jean-Louis, Jr.
Philadelphia, PA



Commencement speaker **Susan deMaine** (left, attended '88-'90) spoke about the importance of stories as powerful tools to make sense of both the world and ourselves. Valedictorian **Carling Brock** shared her appreciation for her education that, alongside factual information, emphasized broader life lessons to her and her classmates.

ASSOCIATE IN ARTS DEGREES

Rachael Pendleton Cole
Pre-Nursing
Bryn Athyn, PA

Willow Orthwein
Education
Bryn Athyn, PA

Enrico Romano
Business
Hatboro, PA

Norma Thornhill
Psychology
Washington, D.C.



Nurturing Lifelong Connections for Lasting Impact

Meet Tara Fehon

Director of Advancement and Alumni Affairs Coordinator



I started at Bryn Athyn College in September 2022, three weeks before Charter Day. Planning an alumni event three weeks out was admittedly stressful. However, it meant that I immediately got to experience what I think is the best part of my job, and that's making connections. Being present at the Charter Day BAC Alumni & Friends reception was fun and energizing, and it made me recognize that coming out of the pandemic, we're all craving social interaction and in-person engagement. That is so

true for a college community that stretches beyond the campus, our alumni community.

My husband, Jason Fehon (AA '01), accompanied me to the event. His reaction to visiting the campus was pride and enthusiasm. The campus has changed so much in the 20 years since he was a student. There was only Pendleton Hall, Childs & Grant Halls, and the Swedenborg Library back then. After the event, held at the College Center, I showed him around more of the campus, he couldn't believe this was the same college he attended. He was so amazed by the changes that show that Bryn Athyn College is serving more and more students.

This is all to say that this set the course for my main objective as Director of Advancement & Alumni Affairs Coordinator: reconnection.

Some alumni haven't been back to campus in a long time, and distance (whether geographic or pandemic-imposed) is a challenge to reconnection. I'm lucky to work with creative staff and faculty as we work together to find the right balance of in-person and virtual events.

First and foremost, I invite you, as alumni, to reach out and tell me what you want to see, how you want to stay connected. There are so many ways to connect: guest lectures, panel discussions, workshops, volunteering, social events, reunions, networking, mentoring, financial investments, supporting scholarships, and more. ■

Please share your news!

brynathyn.edu/alumni or email an update to alumni@brynathyn.edu



As part of the Distinguished Speakers Series, Lance Pendleton (attended '94-95) spoke about ADHD and setting goals.



Kayne Lermitte (BA '07), Chloe Kund (BA '14), and Jason Fehon provided advice and guidance to current students at a Donuts and Discussion event on April 4, 2013.



Jay and Kaye Lermitte (AA '76) meet up with President Carswell at the Pints at the Pub event.



Karla Hyatt (BA '14), Michaela Boyeson (BA '14) and Sam Crittenden (BS '14) connect at the Pints at the Pub event.

October 12-15, 2023
For events and details visit brynathyn.edu/charterday

SAVE THE DATE FOR CHARTER DAY!



OUR HISTORY



The first ever BAC athletics team was the 1966-67 men's lacrosse team coached by General Ron Nelson (attended '50-51). Their first game was a win! This lacrosse season was an essential stepping stone for our college's athletics program. Brian Schnarr and men's ice hockey followed the next year. For 10 years these were the only sports offered at BAC until 1977-78 when Bob Heinrichs (BA '59) became the first BAC athletics director and men's soccer, and women's volleyball and lacrosse programs began.

THEN...



2003: Cheryl (Buss) Cooper (BA '05), Kim (Bowyer) Allen (AA '03), Kayla White (AA '03), Casey (Schauder) King (AA '03), & Emily (Glunz) Hasen (AA '03)

& NOW



Still friends in 2023: Casey (Schauder) King, Cheryl (Buss) Cooper, Kim (Bowyer) Allen, Kelleen (Schauder) Butler (BS '14), Kayla White, Emily (Glunz) Hasen

Submit your Then & Now photos to alumni@brynathyn.edu



IN MEMORIAM

Gwynne Bevan (BA '05) served as a member of the Swedenborg Library staff and was a beloved member of the Bryn Athyn College and local community.

Christopher Carter was a long-time supporter of the college—Chris arrived on campus in 1989 as Manager of Consolidated Plant Operations. More recently, he served as a member of the ANC Board of Trustees and on the Bryn Athyn College Board Committee.

ALUMNI MILESTONES

May 2022: Jettaka McWilliams (BA '22) started a new job after graduation as a contract specialist for the navy.



May 2022: Gioanna Romano (BA '18) graduated with her Master's in Education (M.Ed.) with a concentration in English from Arcadia University.

Oct 2022: Rayna Synnestvedt (BA '21) was promoted to Senior Consultant at Gagen MacDonald.

Nov 11, 2022: David (BA '14) and Rachel (Buss) Steen's (BA '15) son, River Thomas, was born. 9 lbs 5 oz. 20 inches. Rachel also started a new job in July as a therapist helping treating those with OCD.



Nov 17, 2022: Alexis Shirk Kolb (BA '16), Medical writer at Caudex, and her husband welcomed their daughter Parker.

Dec 17, 2022: Steven (M.Div '22) and Aaliya (Mapp) Gunther (BA '19, MS '21) welcomed their son, Holden Brooks.



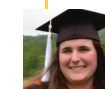
Dec 30, 2022: Cathleen (Curran) and Terrence Johnson (BAs '15) welcomed their first child, Camille Rae.



Feb 10, 2023: Coleman (BA '06, M.Div '09) and Anne Grace (Herd) Glenn's daughter, Violet Rebekah, was born weighing 8 lbs 7 oz.

April 22, 2023: Bennett (BA '21) and Alison (Cole) Buick (BA '11) welcomed their daughter Ingrid Elaine.

April 2023: Chloé Kund (BA '14) started as the Associate Director of Stewardship for Thomas Jefferson University.



Jan 2023: Aven-Leigh Schnarr (BA '21) graduated from Lehigh University with a Master's of Engineering (M.Eng) in Industrial and Systems Engineering.

M. Gregory Bierly (AA '88) retired after 25 years as Performing Arts Center Coordinator at Hempfield High School. The position entailed technical operations of the 1300 seat arts center, and for the past 15 years he also oversaw of the performance spaces and systems in 11 buildings in the district.