

Winter 2022

PROVIDENCE DAY

magazine

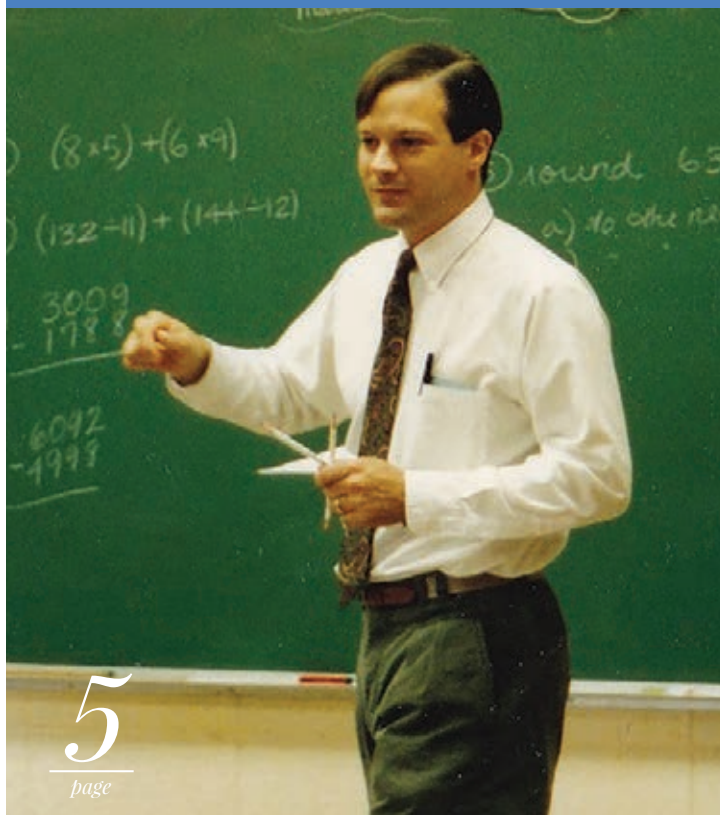
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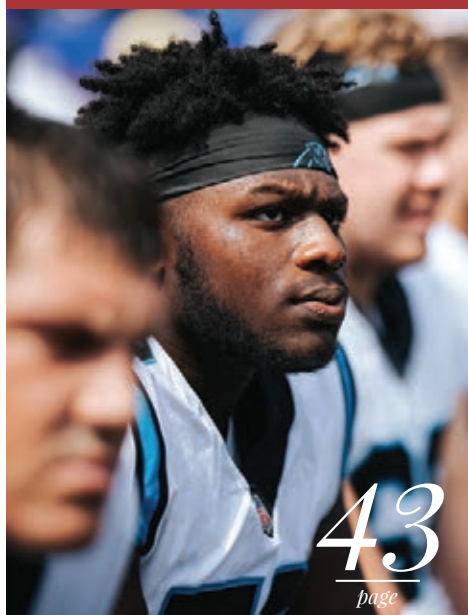
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On the Cover

PD's new IDEAS Xchange includes two 3-D printers that are available for student use. Middle School students recently took a break to view 3-D printed chess pieces. Photo by Mike McCarn.

PROVIDENCE DAY Magazine



Take a virtual
tour of PD's
new spaces!

HEADLINES

A word from our Head of School, Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw



Dear Providence Day School community:

Back in August, I launched this school year with a quote from popular Apple TV+ show *Ted Lasso*: “I believe in hope. I believe in BELIEVE.” We were inspired by the eternal optimism of that football (soccer) coach, and it summed up our hopes that this could be the best school year yet for Providence Day. Each classroom and office received a copy of the yellow-and-blue “BELIEVE” sign adorning the Lasso locker room.

And now, as we approach the halfway point of the year, our optimism was well founded. We

completed renovations that added or transformed over 22,000 square feet of our campus. Our gleaming new Dining Hall can seat up to 700 students indoors and can host new events outside. Our Performing Arts department is enjoying new spaces for chorus and orchestra. And our Dickson-Hemby Technology Center is now home to a brand new concept: the IDEAS Xchange, a collaborative learning space where faculty and teachers join together to learn about Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship, Analytics, and Sustainability. We celebrated IDEAS@PD with our fall Hackathon, which drew an all-time-high participation from 20 local schools. Additionally, we continued our streak of national academic recognition, with nine PD students earning honors from the College Board’s National Recognition Programs and five more being named National Merit Semifinalists.

In this issue we’re celebrating these accomplishments and much more. In the same pages, we’re paying tribute to both our first alumnus to be chosen as a top-10 draft pick in the NFL and our first to win Broadway’s coveted Tony Award. We’re taking a look at the concept of belonging through the eyes of two alumni who have been friends for nearly a quarter century and are also both on faculty here at PD. We’re looking at ways that PD supports student health and well-being. We’re profiling some of our top teachers and coaches. And we’re looking ahead to still more great news in Providence Day’s near future.

In a world where much remains uncertain and unsettled, one constant is that Providence Day is always innovating and always moving forward. I’m honored to be on this journey with all of you, and I look forward to much more good news to come.

Cheers,

Glyn Cowlshaw

Dr. Glyn Cowlshaw





PD NetWORK

Established by the Office of Institutional Advancement, PD NetWORK engages various constituencies of the Providence Day community to provide internship and mentorship opportunities in a range of industries for our alumni to develop their professional experience.

Thank you to the companies who partnered with us this past year! We are currently looking to establish 2023 summer internship opportunities.

For more information or questions about establishing an internship opportunity with PD NetWORK, please contact Rachel Ellis at rachel.ellis@providenceday.org or (704) 887-7058.

the *Board of Trustees*

Photo by Mike McCarn

Providence Day's Board of Trustees serves as stewards of the school who hold "in trust" its mission and reputation. As such, Trustees accept the obligation to not only preserve but also to advance the institution.



Their work begins with the fiduciary expectations of duty (due diligence on financials), care (executing decisions by prudent standards), and obedience (to laws and bylaws). Beyond these duties, Trustees focus on policies and strategies that are future-focused, leaving daily operations to the Head of School.

As with all nonprofit boards, the majority of the work takes place at the committee level. The Board of Trustee committees are Advancement, Buildings and Grounds, Finance, Investment, Risk and Audit, and Committee on Trustees. These groups study and assess in depth the needs, activities, and performance of the school and to make recommendations when planning, developing, and establishing policy in their respective areas to the full Board.

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Photos from the Charchives

Ted Dickson reflects

Now the Downing/Williams Endowed Chair for Teaching Excellence, the longtime teacher shares career highlights

By Ted Dickson



Left: Ted Dickson joined the PD faculty in 1991

department, coaching volleyball, tennis, basketball, skiing, and soccer. Being in Europe at a small school was a lot of fun. The school went on frequent four-day weekend trips to Vienna, Munich, Florence, and Venice, and I took ten students to Moscow prior to joining the rest of the school in Rome for spring break.

In the pre-internet age, it was hard to interview for jobs while overseas, so my second teaching position was teaching 3rd-5th grade math and social studies at the Pike School in Andover, MA (while also coaching soccer, basketball and baseball).

I intended to stay there for a few years, but was offered a job teaching 7th and 8th grade history at the University Liggett School in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. I was at Liggett for four years teaching history and coaching soccer and hockey. People are passionate about hockey in Michigan! I helped coach an all-star team that played exhibition games in Finland and Sweden. I also ran the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club's sailing program. The best thing about being in Michigan was when one of my soccer players introduced me to one of her club coaches – Melissa, my future spouse. We were married in August of 1989.

After our honeymoon in England, we packed up and moved to California where I earned a Master's degree in Modern American and Modern European history from UC Santa Barbara. I also served as a Teaching Assistant, teaching sections for a variety of US, European, and Public Policy classes. Melissa worked for the Army ROTC there as a civilian employee. I won the Graduate Student Association Teaching Award in my second year there.

In the spring of 1991, we decided to move back East to either enter a different PhD program or to return to teaching. I applied and was accepted to several PhD programs including UNC-Chapel Hill, Ohio State, and University of Georgia. I think Ben Topham, PD's Upper School Director at the time, interviewed every other possible candidate he could find before deciding to fly me out from California for an interview.

My high school basketball coach, John MacKenzie, was acting history department chair at PD that spring, which may have helped me get a foot in the door. While I did my day visit, Melissa looked at houses with a realtor and within a week I was offered and had accepted the History Department chair job, and we had bought a house in the same neighborhood where we still live. I promised Ben that we would be at PD for at least five years (ha!).

There is a tradition of educators in my family. My father briefly taught history before joining the Navy in 1940 and half of my maternal grandmother's twelve grandchildren are teachers (almost enough to start our own school!).

I do not know when I decided to become a teacher, but I was already coaching Little League baseball and teaching sailing while I was in high school, and I coached YMCA basketball teams in college. My first week at Princeton University, I went to an information session for the Teacher Preparation Program, and then I did my student teaching in the fall of my senior year.

My first teaching job was at a small international school in the mountains above Salzburg, Austria. I was the entire history department, teaching all of the history classes (and a 9th grade English class), and I was also the entire athletic

I have been the History Department Chair since I was hired and have taught AP US History and a wide variety of other history classes (Western Civilization, US History, Sixties, Civil War, etc.). We created a team teaching model for the Civil War and Sixties courses which enabled me to work with and learn from master teachers including Mark Fader, Chris Wallace, Roy Garrison, Hutch Bibby, Gordon Bynum, Adam Hastings, Mike Lindquist, and Derrick Willard. I am now working with Marcus Smith to develop a new African American Studies course.

I have been involved in promoting diversity and inclusion on campus since I was hired. In the early 1990s, I served on a diversity committee created by the Board of Trustees. The most memorable change we implemented was honoring the Jewish High Holidays with days off on the school calendar. Since then I have been involved in interviewing, hiring, and supporting many diversity coordinators as well as working to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff. I have also been working locally and nationally to diversify history curriculum. One impact of this at PD is how we have worked to broaden the AP US History survey to be more inclusive. We want every student to be able to see themselves reflected in the course.

I have worked in athletics my whole career at PD. In my early years I coached middle school soccer (with Roy Garrison) and JV Basketball (for seven years with several co-coaches, including Doug McCurry '90 and Mark Fader). Some of my players included Lee Tappy '94 and Ben Hovis '96.

Once we had three children of our own, I stopped coaching at school and started a long career of coaching over 100 recreational teams, including several PD coed high school teams. We had many PDS students help us as assistant coaches through the years, including Erin Reading '03, Grant Porter '00, Thomas King '02, Joe Mayberry '02, and Tyler Blackwell '02. We usually had the only girls in the MARS high school league, but since many of them went on to be D1 athletes (like Marissa Hart '14 and Emma Goldean '18) we did very well and more importantly had a lot of fun! Ickey Ekwonu '19 even subbed for us in one game.

At school, Melissa and I continued to be involved in athletics. She ran all of the Charger Club concessions for nine years, which eventually evolved into us running the Grill Team on Friday nights with other alumni parents (which we are happy to be doing again now for the first time in three years).

I also helped Ed Prisco and students such as Jonathon Hoppe '16 and Connor Thomas '19 to start the Providence Day Sports Network (PDSN), wherein we broadcast PD

games by live-streaming them over the internet. We even streamed a state final soccer game from Covenant Day's field. I have continued to co-advise the PDSN club with Ed and now David Olliver. When COVID-19 prevented spectators from attending home games, we ramped up production and tried to stream almost every sporting event with full broadcasts for as many varsity games as possible.

Melissa and I and our middle child Emily (stuck at home with us during the pandemic) became the play-by-play stream team for Soccer, Field Hockey, Basketball, Lacrosse, etc. We have been lucky enough to announce state championship wins in Field Hockey, Girls' Soccer, and Boys' Lacrosse. We continue to do this today and to help train student announcers (such as Jonah Dolgoff '22 and Holden Manna) who we hope will follow in Hoppe's footsteps and make a career out of their love for sports.

I have also been involved in the arts since I arrived. In my early years, I played trumpet in the pep band. I have also been in the ensemble for a number of PD theater productions.

In my first few years, I was in *The Music Man* and an all-faculty production of *12 Angry Men* directed by Lon Church. Once my own children started to participate in all-school productions, I got involved again and performed in *Guys and Dolls*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Anything Goes* (butchering a brief solo), and *The Wizard of Oz*. I also sang in the short-lived faculty chorus. At Libby Tilson's invitation, I started singing in the Upper School Chorus about eight years ago, and I continue to attend most rehearsals and perform in the concerts.

I have also been involved in other areas. I served on the Honor Council for a number of years, I coached the Academic Team, and I started the TK (now Lower School) Buddies program.

I also have been an organizer and participant in the Charlotte World Affairs Council World Quest Competition. Our faculty team, which has included star performers such as Tom Colt, Cathy Bard, Ann Parker, and Roy Garrison, has always been one of the strongest teams at this competition and has won several times. I also helped design the Senior Venture trip to Cape Cod (where we live in the summer) and usually serve as the support vehicle on the bike trail.

Prior to the 1992 election, I got involved with the nascent Kids Voting program, and through the years many PD students have worked as Kids Voting volunteers in precincts throughout Charlotte. This civics education project may have influenced the founding of SPAM at PD. The Students for the Political Advancement of Mankind



Above: Dickson has been instrumental in the Kids Voting civic education project over the past three decades. The program continues today as Generation Nation.

Right: Ted Dickson with Jennifer Fisher '96 and Dominic Ainscough '96 in a school publicity photo from the 1990s.





Above: Dickson led the ceremony for a burial of the school's 25th anniversary time capsule in 1995. He then led the capsule's opening for the school's 50th anniversary celebration during the 20-21 school year.

club was created by Brian Eichenbrenner '97 and other students to provide a lunchtime forum (with pizza) for students and faculty to discuss and debate local, national, and international politics and events.

Led by many capable students through the years (such as David Capper '99, Sam Hay '06, Cony Constantine '20, Caroline '18 and Katie Beason '21, James Seddon '17, Claire Miller '22, Nadia Wheeler '22, etc.), SPAM has sponsored guest speakers (such as Jeff Jackson, Mike Dukakis, and Bob Ray in the week that he completed the Clinton investigation), mock presidential debates in assembly, and larger discussions such as the Hyde Park style soapbox event in the Fine Arts Foyer after the invasion of Iraq.

When we had a US Navy Admiral visit and say that women were welcome in all parts of the Navy except submarines, one PD student challenged him as to why there was not a submarine with an all-female crew. SPAM officers Donny Banks '02 and Sarah Thorpe '02 were even featured on a national news piece! PD later served as a drop-off point for voting materials with many SPAM officers helping to count the ballots. I eventually served as the Kids Voting Mecklenburg County Board Chair for five years, wrote part of the national curriculum, and won the program's national teaching award. In the 2000s, this program evolved into Generation Nation in Charlotte, and PD has continued to be

involved.

I have worked through the years to push our school, community, and nation to see life through a more global lens. We have hosted international visitors through International House, sponsored WorldQuest teams, and updated our curriculum. I also helped Pam Brewer and others coach the PD Model UN team which competed in the MUN "Super Bowl" – The Hague International Model United Nations – several times. We were one of the only schools to offer the new AP World History course in the first year that it was created, 2001-2002. At the direction of former Head of School Gene Bratek in 2002, Ben Topham, Nancy Stark and I began the process of creating what would become our Global Studies Diploma and pushing the school to be more global. We began with a Global Speaker Series and then hired Anna Wilbanks to lead our program and to organize study visits to France, Germany, and Peru.

In 2003, I received the United States-Eurasia Award for Excellence in Teaching from the U.S. State Department and went on a State Department sponsored-trip to Russia to work and live with teachers and their students, with the goal of building understanding between the two cultures. In 2004, we began to create the actual Global Studies Diploma program and in the summer of 2004, we hired Katy Field to be the first Global Studies teacher,

and I worked with her (and her successors Kristin Glaeser and Jeremiah Rosenfels) to design the Global Studies Curriculum and the GSD Leadership course.

Nationally, I served on an OAH-AP Joint Advisory Board on Teaching the U.S. History Survey which commissioned essays from historians on teaching aspects of the U.S. History survey through a global lens. When we decided to publish them in a volume with accompanying essays on ideas for how to teach the concepts, I served as the co-editor of the resulting *America on the World Stage*. I have also made a number of presentations at history conferences through the years on globalizing the teaching of history, including a presentation at the National Archives on teaching the Declaration of Independence from a global perspective.

Providence Day has been our home for 30+ years. We love spending time with the students and faculty at PD because of the special people. Our three children were all lifers: Katie graduated in 2011, Emily graduated in 2014, and Nathan graduated in 2016. All three of them loved their PD years and went on to be very successful in college and after.

Emily is now back at PD working part-time in the library in addition to working as a freelance editorial consultant in children's publishing; Nathan is working in financial consulting in Dallas; and Katie is teaching Lower School in Germany. Most of our social life during the school year has revolved around school people and activities – either with other teachers or through our children's friends' families.

There are many PD alums who have become our close friends including Kristine Sowers '09, Rose '01 and Spencer Rhodes '99, and Liz Aker '12 (whose wedding we attended this summer). We have watched Marissa Hart '14 play soccer at Princeton, Adam Jones '92 play football at Davidson, Emma Goldean '18 play Field Hockey for Ohio State, Grant Williams '16 play his first home game as a Celtic, and Clay Nunley '94 coach college basketball, as well as Daniel Davis '99 directing a string ensemble. We also attended an MLS playoff game with Carson Porter '97 and a college lecture with Caroline Beason. We visited Katelyn Horne '08 and Reggie Love '00 in the White House.

And who doesn't think that a perfect 20th wedding anniversary celebration is grilling 400+ burgers and dogs with a few close friends at a PD football game?

To give you an idea of the changes we've seen: Melissa and I got married the same month that Tim Berners-Lee, a British scientist at CERN, sent a letter to his friends inviting them to join this new thing he had invented called

The World Wide Web. Two years later we arrived at PD, and a few years after that, a team of PD students including my advisees Whitten Scholtz '95 and Michael Fox '95 along with Stephanie Eichenbrenner '95 (now Vanderford) and Heather Johnson '95 won a supercomputing contest (designing a program to measure the effects of high winds on skyscrapers). The prize was that Cornell put PD on the internet! Technology is one of the biggest changes we have seen through the years at PD, along with the changes to the campus that have accompanied more than double the number of students.

Inventing and evolving the 1920s Prohibition Party is another favorite memory – many PD students have enjoyed this role-playing simulation while being serenaded by the Jazz Band, and several students singing with the Jazz Band in character. I always portray Bruce Barton and have fun trying to convince students to hire me to advertise for them. There are now a number of schools around the country who have duplicated this event.

One of my favorite parts of teaching at PD is seeing former students teaching on campus. Most of them remember the simulations fondly and at least two teachers at PDS – John Compton '04 and Courtney Inscoe '06 – portrayed Andrew Jackson (as did Michael Greshko '10 who now writes for National Geographic).

Because the administration at PD has always encouraged professional development, I have had some amazing opportunities. I served on the College Board's AP United States History Course and Exam Review Commission then co-chaired the College Board's APUSH Curriculum Development and Assessment Committee, which then evolved into the APUSH Development Committee where we wrote the new curriculum framework and the first few new APUSH exams. I was the only person who was part of the entire redesign process and even found myself caught in the culture wars of the time, working with leaders of the major historical associations to modify, defend, and promote the new curriculum framework, such as by being interviewed by Ray Suarez on Al Jazeera. Thomas Laub '15 replied to one online critique of me with a great blog post!

In 2017, I was awarded a professional development grant to travel to Europe to talk about history education with professors and teachers. This was a wonderful learning experience. I taught a class to future teachers in Belgium about Historical Thinking Skills, I met with and observed high school and middle school teachers in Belgium and England, and I participated in a graduate seminar with professors and teachers in Amsterdam.

All of these previous experiences influenced the content of the Historical Practices, Skills, and Course Themes Workbook for A.P. United States History that I was commissioned to write for Pearson/Savvas and that we now use in our APUSH classes. Not surprisingly to my former students, I included several family documents in the book!

I have been honored with a number of teaching awards, including PD's teacher of the year in 2001, the Organization of American Historians Mary K. Bonsteel Tachau Pre-Collegiate Teaching Award in 2002, the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution's Outstanding Teacher of American History in 2011, the North Carolina History Teacher of the Year in 2012, and the National Council for History Education Paul Gagnon Prize in 2015. Perhaps the highlight of all of this was delivering a speech at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC, in which I was able to honor my mom as being the mother of two sons who were finalists for this award. Then the next day, Reggie Love '00 invited all of us – including my mom – to see the July 4th fireworks from the White House south lawn.

I have many memories of particular class activities. My classes interviewed my father about his WWII experiences and interviewed Mr. Jones (of the Thompson-Jones Library) about his experiences in Vietnam. In the 1990s, we had a mock trial challenge to the dress code based on the First Amendment with a surprise witness, Gene Bratek, who explained the school was governed by contract law.

We had a number of guest speakers in the 1960s class over the years, including Senator Jesse Helms' estranged daughter who talked about going to eat at the Greensboro Woolworths in February 1960, the chief of the South Vietnamese Blue Water Navy (a friend of the Montross family), and Paul Ibsen and Pat McLaughlin talking about their experiences in Vietnam, which was an amazing class. Paul served in the Coast Guard and rescued Pat when his


Swift Boat was blown up (Pat earned a Purple Heart). Paul showed slides of that day that Pat had never seen before – it was very emotional. I also enjoyed hearing Anna Cockrell '16 identify her most memorable APUSH moment as when I teared up telling Daniel Inouye's story.



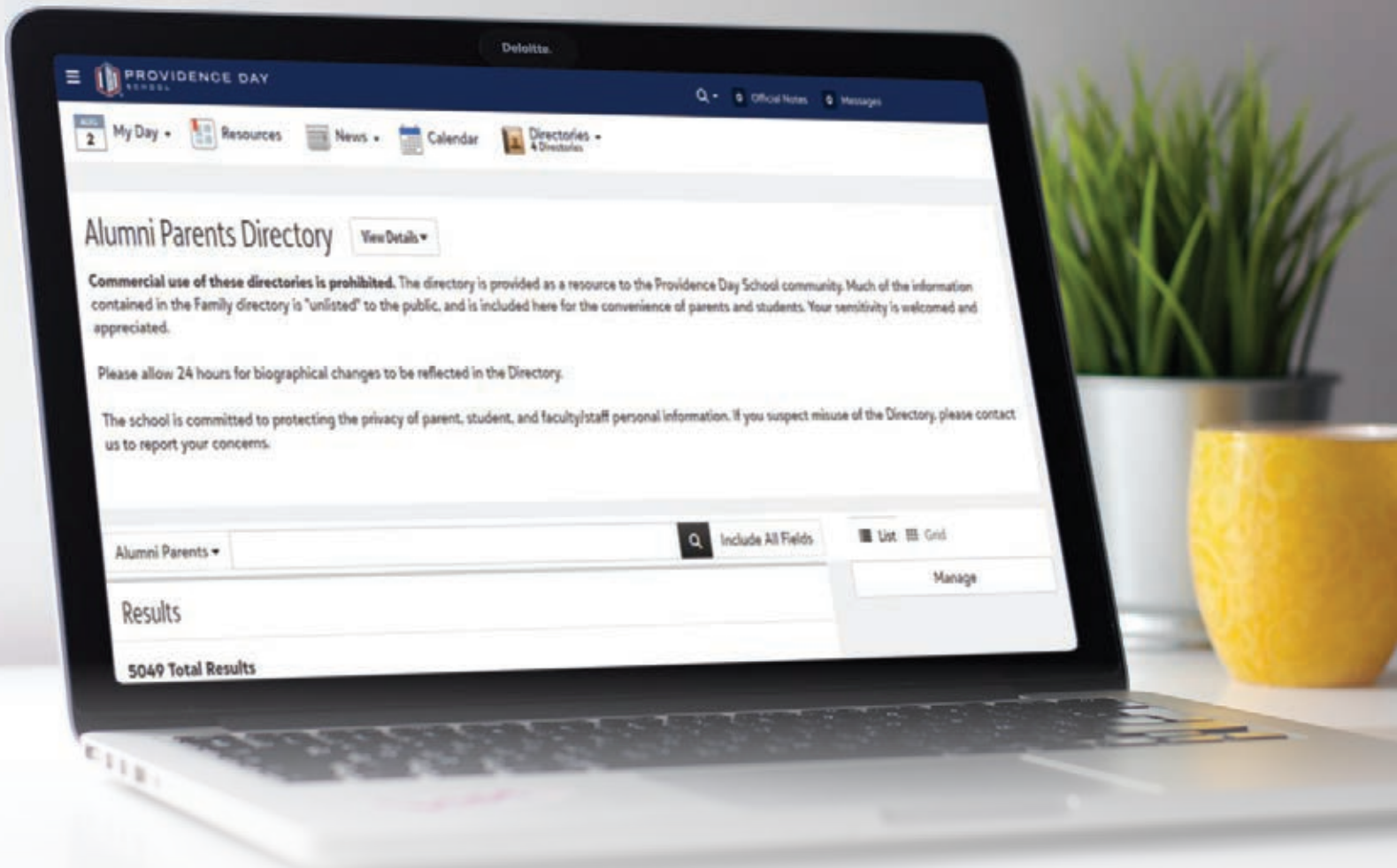
Ted Dickson in 2022.

When I heard my name called as the winner of this award, I was excited and honored to follow in the footsteps of the previous winners: Susanne Reid, Brian Li, and Randy Sienkowski, and to be recognized from our amazing group of teachers at PD. We have known the Downing family for a long time, and I made sure to give Nancy Downing a hug as she was leaving, and sent a special thank you to Glyn Cowlshaw, Michael Magno, and Eric Hedinger.

Melissa and I plan to travel to Europe in May. We want to visit schools and universities to continue our discussions about teaching history and teaching hard history. We also want to visit related historic sites such as Auschwitz. I have already been asked to teach a teacher-training class at the University of Louvain. We may try to connect with some PD alums as well including Christian Lund '94 and Julia

Sirowej '03. We also plan to visit our daughter, Katie, and her husband, Ryan, at their school in Weimar, Germany, and maybe see a few soccer games! 

Ted Dickson is the fourth person named to the Downing/Williams Endowed Chair of Teaching Excellence, a position he holds for the 2022-23 academic year. The title was established in 2018 with the philanthropic support of alumni parents Nancy and Bruce Downing, parents of four PD alumni (Yates '12, Charlotte '14, Tommy '17, and Michael '19). Endowed Chairs are synonymous with exceptional faculty and teaching excellence. The recipient receives a stipend and a professional development award.



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Questions? Contact Rachel Ellis at (704) 887-7058 or Rachel.Ellis@ProvidenceDay.org



Q



Two New Roles *For a PD Family Member*

By Sara Riggsby

Ryan Harper takes on Tennis Coaching, Middle School Student Services

Ryan Harper joined the PD family over 16 years ago as a Middle School English teacher and tennis coach. Harper served as the tennis program head from 2006 to 2016, claiming nine state championships as varsity coach. After a several-year break, Harper – now a father to three children with Lower School Head Erin Harper (Zane '33, Jax, and baby Elle) – Ryan Harper returned to his role as head coach this year.

Q: What roles have you had at Providence Day?

Throughout my time at PD, I was a 6th grade English teacher and a Middle School advisor. I've also been the tennis program head, varsity tennis coach, dabbled in a few Upper School English courses like poetry and English I, Improv Club Advisor, Middle School Honor Chair, assisted Middle School boys and girls tennis a few years back, and now I'm back to tennis program head and varsity tennis coach.

This fall, I've taken on a new position as the Middle School Student Services Liaison. What I like most about this role is that I have the opportunity, and really the responsibility, to get to know every kid in Middle School as much as I can. I am challenged to connect with kids so I can connect them with what they then need to be confident, adjusted Middle Schoolers.

Q: What was your path to working at Providence Day?

I'm originally from Maryland but got a master's in English education for grades 6-12 at UNC-Chapel Hill where I played tennis as an undergrad. When I first moved to Charlotte, I took a job teaching tennis at Myers Park Country Club.

I met a lot of parents at the various schools in the area and decided to interview for some tennis and teaching positions. After walking around the campus with Barbara Fricke and teaching a fun lesson in Mary Elizabeth Coley's 6th-grade class, I felt like I belonged at PD. I could see where all the things I like about teaching and coaching could be combined here.

Q: How has Providence Day impacted you and your family?

Let's just say there is no family without the PD family. I met Erin here after we had only known "of" each other for a good five or six years. We shared so many passions and interests, and the PD family was one of those things we both loved as well. The school brought us together, and now we get to come here together for our jobs and, for Zane, 2nd grade. It's very much the hub of our family, and PD can take credit for so many of our high points and for lifting us out of low points.

Q: What are some of your most memorable moments as a teacher?

Wow, I think for me it's just the day-to-day evolution of a student that excites me the most. It's when

I joke with a kid or use one of my worst (meaning best) dad jokes on them, and then the next day they are trying so hard to come up with one, and the next day they are trying hard to find the just-right word for a sentence, and then suddenly they are in my Creative Writing class talking about how much they get out of writing just to write.

It's those slow developments, those gradual payoffs, and delayed gratification that really makes being a teacher what it is. I always have a hard time just pointing to one amazing moment. I'm a little too biased toward everyday things.

Q: What is unique about the students and the community you interact with at PD?

I feel like our students and faculty genuinely care about whatever they are doing. Yeah, sometimes kids don't show this or even want you to know that what they are working on or working toward really matters a lot to them, but there is a culture here that eventually sticks to kids whereby they really respect each other for their passions and quirks and differences they have.

Q: What are you looking forward to as you become tennis program head again?


It's really cool to have the trust after this many years that I'll be able to give the program and kids and parents what they need while having fun and growing in lots of different ways. I appreciate the administration working with me to make this possible with a growing family and two tennis seasons.

I am looking forward to making a positive impact on all six of our tennis teams. I really want to increase the community aspect of tennis with faculty, staff, parents, and alumni playing with each other and the students. Although I want to win and expect to, it's great when the kids connect with each other. If you have a sixth-grader hitting with a senior, it builds connections like a web among all of the players. Then the young ones get excited about seeing varsity play. There are all types of players in tennis and no matter where you are on the spectrum you can help motivate others.

I have Erin's support, she's also an athlete, and we both like seeing Zane getting excited and looking up to the team.

Q: What do you enjoy doing outside of PD?

Outside of PD, while my family is my number one activity, my number one passion, I love to exercise in as many ways as possible, and along with that, compete in anything.

If you ask me to be on your darts team, I'd probably say 'When and where?' I really enjoy downtime to read and write. I also love unique podcasts, great comedians, and trying new foods. 



Left: Harper has taken on a new role as Middle School Student Services Liaison.

Right: In addition to heading PD's tennis program, Harper leads summer tennis camps.



Teacher, parent, coach, mentor...

Oglesby
does it
all

By Sara Riggsby



Kristie Oglesby has worn a lot of hats – literally and figuratively – in her sixteen years at Providence Day School. “Coach O” is the Physical Education department chair and a teacher, softball and volleyball coach, a diversity coordinator, leader of the Lower School Kaleidoscope club, an alumni parent to Kolby ’21, and a current parent to Connor ’23.

Oglesby was a three-sport athlete in high school and played softball in college. She started her teaching career and her family in Seattle where she lived for seven years, working as a PE and health teacher at a large public school. As the head softball coach there, her team won a state championship and earned runner-up status twice.

Soon, Oglesby and her husband James decided to move closer to their families on the east coast. “My family is all from Pennsylvania and my husband’s family is from High Point,” she says. “When we decided to move back east, we wanted to find a bigger city feel and Charlotte has turned out to be a really great place for our family.”

As an interracial couple with two biracial boys, the pair navigated many conversations about race over the years and watched their children deal with microaggressions (defined, as Oglesby has explained in her role as a diversity coordinator, as indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group). Kolby “had experiences throughout Lower and Middle School that were not always easy,” she says. “As a mom, it isn’t easy to see your kids upset about things that revolve around their skin color.”

Kristi Oglesby is Physical Education Department chair and a teacher.



Oglesby in one of the many hats she wears at PD – literally and figuratively.

Keeping her son’s experience in mind, and in partnership with Lower School Head Erin Harper and teacher/librarian Maria Blackburn who served as a fellow diversity coordinator in the Lower School, the Kaleidoscope club was created for fourth- and fifth-graders beginning in the 2019-20 school year. “I really liked the affinity groups that we offered in our Upper School and thought it would be really great if we could offer them at a younger age so that kids could have a safe space to have open conversations about shared experiences, similar to the experience that my son had,” she recalls.

Fifty students participated in Kaleidoscope during the 2021-22 school year, and the hope is to open it up to younger students in the future. “My goal was to educate our kids enough so that microaggressions don’t happen to our Lower School kids,” Oglesby says. “I want all of our students to feel accepted and confident in who they are.”

The sense of family at PD extends beyond Oglesby’s own children to the members of the PE department. During the early days of the pandemic when the campus was closed, “We were just laughing and making rap videos for our students on Google Meet. Those videos were the highlight of our week,” she recalls.

COVID put things in perspective for Oglesby and she relied on her “crew” of people to get through a hard time. “I don’t know what I’d do without them. I genuinely really like the people I work with and I feel very fortunate.”



Oglesby is mom to Kolby '21 and Connor '23. She is also the Girls' Varsity Softball Coach.




One of Oglesby's favorite PD memories is of the first Turkey Trot held in honor of beloved coach Gil Murdock, who passed away just after retiring from PD in 2006. For 15 years, this event has collected food and supplies benefitting Second Harvest Food Bank. "We decided to do it as a department and it was one of our first big events," she recalls. "It was meaningful to the community, not just that it was a food drive, but that it was in his honor and because people showed up."

Other favorite memories involve larger annual events including Grandparents and Special Friends Day and the annual field day at the end of each school year.

As PE department chair, Oglesby oversees curriculum changes, ensures software is up to date, manages events, observes teachers, and teaches her own PE and health classes. "I love teaching health," she says. "For fifth-grade human growth and development, I say every year that I need to write a book about the questions I get. It's a great conversation starter with parents and we tell the kids to have open conversations with their families because family values matter."

Despite all of the roles Oglesby takes on, she may be most well-known to students as the varsity softball coach and Middle School volleyball assistant coach. She and the softball team have enjoyed the field and facility upgrades underway including a new batting cage, upgraded fencing, a new brick-paved concourse, and changes to the stands so spectators sit behind home plate. Of her time coaching volleyball, she says, "I enjoy it and it gives me time to get to know Middle School kids."

Without a doubt, Oglesby loves her job. "The kids come in excited for PE," she says. "You could have a bad day and your TKers come in and it just changes. You can't be sad when they jump around and they're excited. It's a good pick-me-up!" 

MORE:

- Read Coach O's thoughts on health & wellness, p. 39.
- See Kolby Oglesby '21 talk about Equity & Inclusion at PD:





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PD Advances its Campus Vision



*More than 22,000
square feet of new and
transformed space opens in
2022 — with more to come*

Compiled by Leigh Dyer '88

Photos by Mike McCann





Dining

- Age-appropriate dining areas and servery
- Additional seating to be shared by Middle and Upper School
- Additional kitchen appliances and serving areas for increased efficiency
- Two new outdoor dining patios
- Overall seating for approximately 700



Innovation

- 8,200 square feet renovated in Dickson-Hemby Technology Center
- Creation of IDEAS XChange: TK-12 collaborative space for innovation, design, entrepreneurship, analytics, and sustainability.
- PC Desktop Lab, The Pitch
- Two new classrooms and reimagined offices
- Two redesigned biology labs





Arts

- New Orchestra Room: Increased square footage and student capacity
- Chorus Room: Increased square footage and student capacity
- Redesigned Lower School Music Space: Lower School visual and performing arts classrooms moved to the first floor
- Redesigned Middle School Art Space: Middle School art moved to the second floor



Old & new

Views of reimagined spaces before & after the 2022 construction project



Chorus Room



Dining Hall



Ridenhour-facing plaza





Makerspace



MS Art Room



McMahon Plaza



Orchestra Room



What's to Come


Athletics and Beyond

In Spring 2023, PD is scheduled to begin construction on a new, competition-grade multi-sport lighted field to replace the current Upper West Field and the practice field known to longtimers as the "West Wing graveyard."

The field will incorporate lighting, bleachers, artificial turf, and other amenities while relocating play areas for basketball, foursquare, and a gaga ball pit around the Levin Family Extended Day House.

"We are all very excited to have an additional competitive multi-sport field on our campus. Having another full-size turf field with lights means more flexibility with practice, scheduling, and game times," says Nancy Beatty, Director of Athletics. "I am so thankful to our school administration and board for this project. We can't wait to play on it!"

As previewed by the Head of School in the Spring 2022 *Providence Day Magazine*, the school's leadership and board will next turn its attention to improvements for Lower School.

This winter, the school will also launch a series of Strategic Vision dialogue gatherings. All parents, alumni, alumni parents, faculty, staff, and students will be invited to join sessions. Keep an eye on www.providenceday.org and emails from PD for further details. 





Rendering

Rendering courtesy of Little Diversified Architectural Consultants.



Preparing *for a* Global Future

Family brings an international perspective to their support of PD

By Leigh Dyer '88



From left: Ed Yu, Owen Yu '25, and Chen Wang. Photo courtesy of Ed Yu.

Educational opportunities brought Edward Yu and Chen Wang to the United States from China. Employment at banking giants brought them both to Charlotte.

After they met on a hike up Kings Mountain in 2002, fell in love, and married, it was a global focus that brought them to Providence Day.

And now, as parents of two PD students, Yu is in his third year on the Board of Trustees and Wang is an Annual Fund volunteer. The couple are turning their sights toward helping the school prepare for its future.

“We benefited from earlier generations of families,” said Yu. “It’s our time to contribute to benefit the next generation of students.”

FROM CHINA TO CHARLOTTE

Yu grew up in a small city in northeast China, about an hour’s flight from Beijing. Wang grew up in Shanghai. Both moved to the U.S. to pursue MBA degrees – he at Arizona State University, she at The University of Chicago.

Yu first worked for the Hershey chocolate company, but was hired away by Bank of America. Wang

began with an internship at what was then First Union bank, and continued building a career at what is now Wells Fargo.

Both relocated to a very different Charlotte in the early 2000s – it was far less developed and had far fewer international residents.

“Then, we just saw the city completely change. You see new people coming every single day,” said Yu. In particular, the South End and South Tryon corridor went from a little-developed area to a booming area full of young professionals once light rail moved in. “It just exploded.... You feel like the city opened up for everybody.”

Wang originally had a choice of working in New York, Los Angeles, or Charlotte. She chose Charlotte for its quality of life. “For me it’s more family oriented and more comfortable living here,” she said. “And I’d feel good to raise my [children] here.”

Soon after they married, both of them became heavily involved with the Charlotte Chinese Academy, which has been teaching Chinese classes since the late 1990s and has met on the Providence Day campus each Sunday since 2006. Yu was its Principal for a time, and Wang was Vice Principal – both as volunteers.



Above: A lifer, Owen Yu has participated in PD's summer programs from an early age. Below: Allison Ying '17 went to University of Washington after graduating from PD.



Yu remembers noticing the international flags on light poles throughout the PD campus. "You see every country's national flag. That's unique to our school," he said. And both of them liked hearing about the Global Studies Diploma and opportunities to hear international speakers. "Providence Day is really open minded and global," said Wang.

When the time came for Wang's daughter, Allison Ying, to enter elementary school, the family had missed application deadlines for the three largest private schools in Charlotte, but they were able to enroll her in Charlotte Preparatory School.


When it was time for Middle School, Allison toured Charlotte Country Day and Charlotte Latin along with PD. "She just fell in love with PD at that time. She told me it was the energy," said Wang. "She got so energized, she said that's the school where she wanted to go."

Allison was in the PD Class of 2017 and graduated from University of Washington, and is now pursuing a master's degree in Computer Science. The couple's son, Owen Yu, is a lifer who will graduate with the Class of 2025.

Ed Yu is now a real estate investor and Wang has recently retired from banking – and they're both thoroughly enjoying their son's time at PD. They named Brian Li and Ted Dickson as favorite teachers. "It has exceeded our expectations," said Yu. "We're really happy with the whole community at the school."

As a member of the PD Board of Trustees, Yu said his top priority is guiding the school through the process of updating the early 1970s Lower School buildings. The Board is scheduled to vote on a construction plan in early 2023.

And as the Board continues to plan for the school's future, the couple hopes PD's current families will continue directing their philanthropy to the school. "We all need to do our part," he said. "The Annual Fund, endowment – those are the resources we need to have to plan," he said. "It's not about right now, it's about 20 years down the road...."

"We benefited from families who came before us. We just hope the future generations will do the same, and keep it going." 

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT & PRIDE FOR PROVIDENCE DAY

The Providence Day School Heritage Society recognizes those members of the PD community who have included PD in their estate plans. Heritage Society giving includes planned gifts such as life insurance policies, bequests, and real estate.

Gifts to the Heritage Society are generally designated toward the endowment and secure the future of PD for generations to come. Its members are listed in our annual *Report on Philanthropy* and included in our donor recognition programs and events. Each new member also receives a set of commemorative coasters to show their "PD pride."

For more information contact Jeffrey S. Appel, Associate Head of School for Institutional Advancement, at (704) 887-6038 or jeff.appel@providenceday.org.



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Jill Ingram '04 &



Michelle Garrity '04

A Story of Belonging

Michelle Garrity '04 and Jill Ingram '04 met in 7th grade at PD and have been friends nearly 25 years. They are currently faculty in the Middle School Math Department.

By Jana Dorsey

What is belonging? Belonging is a feeling. Belonging is home. Belonging is feeling safe – whatever that definition of safety looks like on a personal level. Safe to dream, live, fail, exist, restart, refresh, learn, and grow.

In a world fixated on metrics, how do we measure belonging? Belonging to me is anecdotal. It is qualitative rather than quantitative; with storytelling as the throughline.

As documented at a recent Southern Association of Independent Schools conference by Brandon Jacobs of Carney Sandoe & Associates, “belonging” is a common word used to describe diversity, equity, and inclusion work across industries. At Providence Day, the



Michelle Garrity and Jill Ingram when they were PD students in the early 2000s.



team founded in 2001 as the Office of Multicultural Affairs has most recently added “belonging” to our moniker in 2020. With several variations and possibilities for naming the work, “Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging” acknowledges where we started, measures where we are, and envisions where we aspire to go as a community.

While “belonging” may be a recent addition, the essence of the word – the tangible feeling, the genuineness of it – served as a significant foundational moment for the 25+ year friendship between class of 2004 alumni and current faculty members Michelle Garrity and Jillian Ingram.

In 1998, Ingram arrived at Providence Day School as a new 7th grader. On her first day at her new school, she distinctly remembers

Left: When meeting up for a photo opportunity in fall 2022, Jill Ingram and Michelle Garrity decided to sit in the very same seats in the Dickson-Hemby Technology Center classroom where they sat when they first met as 7th graders. Photo by Mike McCarn.



Garrity (left) and Ingram celebrated their graduation together in 2004.

the significant role Garrity played as she navigated a new environment. “Michelle was the first person to invite me in. On the first day of school it was after PE. Lunch can be an awkward time. She came up to me after PE and invited me to sit with her during lunch. It went from there. She brought me into her friend group.”

For Garrity, it was something she did not think twice about. “I remember being in 7th grade and seeing Jillian as a new kid coming into school and also being athletic. My group of friends—we were involved in a lot of sports. So I said OK, she will probably like to hang out with us and join our crew. I knew how hard it was coming to a new school because I was new in 6th grade. Maneuvering at a school when our classmates have known each other since TK, kindergarten, and first grade. I remembered how hard it was for me those first few days and so that’s

why I reached out to Jillian. It just happened naturally.”

They remained good friends throughout their time at PD and have fond memories of sleepovers, sushi, Hornets games, pranks, and middle school dances (Jammin at the J, anyone?).

When they first arrived at PD, they were two of a small group of students of color. A significant part of navigating and surviving being new and being Asian and Black young women at a predominantly White school was the trust they found in each other. One of their favorite memories was the senior lounge. “It was a really inclusive space—a space where students broke social boundaries,” recalls Garrity.

After PD, Garrity’s undergraduate journey took her to Wake Forest University where she initially intended to follow her family’s path

in marketing. It was through working at Camp Thunderbird as well as coaching field hockey and lacrosse that she realized she wanted to pursue a career in teaching.

Ingram’s undergraduate journey took her to Georgia Tech where she played women’s basketball. Later, she played professionally overseas in Sweden. In between seasons, Jillian would teach as a substitute, through which she eventually discovered her own passion for teaching. With college and career aspirations taking them to different states and countries, they lost touch for a period of time. By 2012, both women made their way back to Providence Day School as faculty and not only became colleagues, but now work in the same department.

Garrity joined PD’s faculty first, but switched to Middle School faculty after Ingram. At that time, the tables were turned – Ingram was the one



Ingram (left) and Garrity are now both math teachers in the Middle School faculty. Photos by Mike McCarn.

to welcome Garrity to Middle School and help her feel she belonged, says Garrity. “It’s really cool to think about where our relationship started and where it is today. When I joined the Middle School faculty and math department, Jillian was one of the first people to reach out and make me feel a part of the Middle School community. She invited me to hang out outside of school and get to know more of my new colleagues.”


Nearly 25 years later, Garrity and Ingram continue to anchor each other in belonging. Ingram notes how impactful it is to have someone she trusts at work, and to help push each other forward as teachers. “Because we have known each other for so long, we have a mutual understanding; it’s almost like we are sisters,” said Garrity. Ingram adds: “I have a colleague who I don’t have to say much to—she knows exactly how I am doing and how I feel.”

When asked what they admire about each other, Garrity mentions her love for Ingram’s heart, her compassion and care for people; the way she connects, engages, and cares deeply for her students. Ingram regards Garrity as “the most loyal person you could ever know” and admires her intentionality and care both in and outside of the classroom.

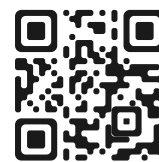
Garrity won the 2021-22 Blackwell Award for Teaching Merit in Math/Science in May; Ingram was elated. “(Everyone) got to see what I see in Michelle.”

These days, with Michelle teaching 6th grade math and Jillian teaching 8th grade math, their offices are next door to each other in the Dickson-Hemby Technology Center. When they aren’t teaching, tutoring, grading or coaching, you might find them trying out local eateries in Charlotte together, as they made a New Year’s Resolution to try a restaurant neither

has been to yet every week during the summer. Just the two of them.

Garrity and Ingram say they have seen positive shifts in equity and inclusion at PD. They both note that they are products of their environment, having grown up together and in the culture of the Providence Day community. They stress the importance of representation in hopes that more students at PD can form these types of lifelong bonds. Stories such as theirs anchor us all in belonging. 

Jana Dorsey is the Associate Director of Outreach for Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging at PD.



MORE:

Find more about Jill Ingram’s story on the PD website under “PD Profiles.”

Health & Well-being at PD

By Leigh Dyer '88



From left: Jay Barron, Emily Young, Easton Pransky '24, Kristi Oglesby, and Tom Caruso. Photo by Leigh Dyer.

Excerpts from a discussion recorded from a recent episode of “From the Horse’s Mouth,” the official PD podcast, hosted by World Language teacher Jay Barron. (Edited for length and clarity). Find it at www.providenceday.org/podcast or wherever you listen to podcasts!

JAY BARRON: We have an all-star panel to discuss this topic that I personally feel is extremely important and maybe we don’t talk about enough at PD, which is health and wellness and life balance. First is Mr. Tom Caruso. Tom is a certified strength and conditioning coach. Fun fact, he’s also a three-time Division One All-American diver.

Emily Young teaches upper school history. She’s also one of our Upper School learning specialists.

Kristie Oglesby is the chair of Physical Education and Health here at PD. Kristie played softball at Charleston Southern and has coached softball here for a little bit of time. She’s also the mother of two, including a senior and a PD alumnus.

And the star of our show is Junior Easton Pransky, who is kind enough to come out and talk to us about something that matters quite a lot to her: health and wellness. What can you tell us about the student group Thrive?

EASTON PRANSKY '24: Thrive is a club at PD which I started my freshman year. And it goes over a whole holistic well-being approach, from nutrition to exercise, breathing exercises, just that whole holistic approach to help a student reduce stress. High school, as you guys know, can be a stressful time.

BARRON: So we’ve heard, yes. And how did you get interested in this?

PRANSKY: I went through my own journey of holistic wellbeing, of improving my nutrition a lot, doing a lot more exercise for myself than I did beforehand. I noticed a lot less stress in myself and I wanted to help other students

with the stress, as I know so many students go through it. So it’s kind of how I’m helping other students.

BARRON: Well, in an amazing coincidence, all the people gathered here are joining you in battling student stress in one way or another. Tom, I’d love to ask you about this. All you do, by the way, is just help people get stronger, right?

TOM CARUSO: That is the hope. Yes. Get them stronger and prepared for any challenges that would come their way. I help with Thrive, and it’s not just a student thing. We’ve got stress as adults on campus as well. But yes, strength is the end goal hopefully.

BARRON: Talk to me about strength and conditioning for a minute because, you know, I obviously am an imposing physical specimen (laughs). What is it about strength and conditioning that really connects with what we’re talking about here?

CARUSO: The first thing that would come to someone’s mind might be an athlete. And we’ve had great ones come through our school during my 13 years of being here. But strength and conditioning is for everybody. And we offer so many different types of courses. And when somebody walks into the weight room that’s never touched a weight, never picked up a bar, they find they really like how it makes them feel to do something that’s outside their comfort zone, and how it helps them grow as a student to find that kind of avenue.

So strength and conditioning, it’s not only a physical strength and conditioning, but it’s a mental side as well. We use a lot of guided imagery within weight rooms around the world. If you are going to do a successful squat or



Yoga is a recent addition to the Upper School PE curriculum. Photos by Mike McCarn.

deadlift, science has taught us, or practice has taught us, that imagining yourself doing a successful lift gives you a far greater possibility of successfully completing it.

So we're training all aspects of the well-being or the human experience in the weight room. It's not just being an athlete, it's building their mental preparedness for what challenges they have that day.

BARRON: Kristie, let me ask you about this. As the chair of PE and health at PD, as a coach, as a mother, how does what Tom is describing fit into our overall curriculum here at PD?

KRISTIE OGLESBY: Our goal as a department is to develop physically literate students. When they graduate from Providence Day, they leave our school knowing how to be healthy. And that includes healthy eating, being able to work out on their own and have a respect for how often they do that, the consistency of that, so that it's a lifestyle.

Tom and I have worked really closely over the years developing our Middle School and Upper School classes in making sure that what we're doing in our classes complements what's happening at our school and vice versa. So starting in eighth grade, we start getting our kids into the wellness center to introduce them to some experience lifting weights. And then that also leads to our ninth grade wellness class where they are going to be lifting for the first time as a class.

Because of that, we thought it would be even better to start to get our kids in the weight room even before eighth grade. So Tom and I worked together and we open up the weight room after school to allow sixth and seventh graders to start coming in and training after school, which complements our PE program and after school program as well as their overall wellness.

BARRON: Emily, let me ask you a question. As an Upper School Learning Specialist, how does what you do to support students here at school fit in with some of these issues of balance, health, and wellness?

EMILY YOUNG: One of the areas of focus that we have is all about building good habits. That's where we start in my office. We know what we need to do in terms of the academic world, but sometimes we're not motivated enough to get there or maybe we have something that's impeding our ability to get started.

And so one of the areas that we talk about a lot is fitness

and athletic development in general. Especially because if you're exercising daily, you are helping build those endorphins and serotonin, and pushing yourself to be able to be more motivated to get classwork done.

We try to talk through those habits, talk through time management, how it can help when you're creating a schedule. If you're saying, 'Hey, I'm going to work out five days a week at this time every day,' everything else has to fit around that schedule, right? So if you can help to build that schedule with a student, then they can use that and apply that for what their academic needs are.

BARRON: Does this sound familiar to you, Easton, at all? When we talk about pressure and dealing with some of the realities of being a student at PD?

PRANSKY: Definitely. I feel like at PD, there are so many resources that you could turn to like Ms. Young, Ms. Mikszan, Coach Caruso and coaches like Coach O from a nutrition standpoint. And I know from an organization standpoint, that's also been something that's really helped me with reducing stress and knowing that I'll be able to get everything done.

Also I find strength training is something that I do for myself and helps me be more organized. And working with Coach Caruso after school in the wellness center is something that I feel like helps with the pressure. As well as just talking to your teachers and saying 'I can't get this done on time.' They are always so understanding when I come to them. So they're also amazing resources to go to as well at PD.

BARRON: Do you and your friends talk about this?

PRANSKY: It's in my daily life for sure. A lot of my friends do sports and balancing is something that we talk about because, you know, high school comes with a lot more homework, so everybody's trying to find a good schedule to make sure that they get everything done.

BARRON: Marc Bastos teaches our yoga classes. Currently we have 33 students in the Upper School taking yoga, and Ms. Young can speak to the importance and value of that.

YOUNG: One of the really neat parts about yoga is that it forces you to be in the here and now, to be really present, to focus on being aware of your own body and what your body's capable of in that moment. One of the things about yoga too is if you're in a position for a longer period of time, then your muscles become a little more nimble and

flexible. You start really understanding and knowing, 'Okay, now's the time that I need to breathe through this to get to the next position.' To me, yoga is something that could be good for anyone and everyone.

OGLESBY: And I will add to that, Marc has done a really, really great job with these classes. We started offering yoga and movement to eighth graders a couple years ago, and this is the first year that we are offering a yoga and mindfulness class. So it's not just yoga, it's also mindfulness where he's doing guided meditation.

The kids love him, love his classes, and I think his goals overall are to make sure that our students decompress a little bit so that they have a little bit less stress in their day and maybe his class will help them get through the rest of the day.

I love that about our PE program as a whole. It's not just sports, it's a very sequential program from Lower School to Upper School. It's more games based in Lower School, we want the kids to just get moving. In Middle School, we start easing them into more lifetime wellness type activities, which are the full focus in Upper School. We offer dance, yoga, and then we have our strength and conditioning classes, and we still have our international games class. So it's a great balance in our program overall.

BARRON: Let's wrap up with one piece of advice or maybe a new resolution that you yourself are setting. I'll go first. I

know I don't get enough cardio and so I'm trying very, very hard to make that a higher priority in my life.


CARUSO: I heard a quote, "If you don't want to be the silhouette, find your light." And as a teacher, I think that's my job. As a strength coach, anybody coming into the weight room, that light, whatever that person might want to achieve, that provides me motivation in what I'm doing every day.

YOUNG: I like to remind people who may feel like they're not doing enough exercise or enough cardio to try not to beat yourself up and remind yourself that physically walking places is an amazing opportunity that you have. Going out and doing a 15-minute walk is something to praise yourself for.

BARRON: That's how we all feel about climbing to the fourth floor of the AC. (laughs)

OGLESBY: I would kind of piggyback on what you're saying, just try to get at least 30 to 60 minutes every day of some sort of movement.

PRANSKY: A resolution that I have for this coming year is to do a lot more mindfulness exercises, as I feel like that is something to help really tune into yourself and how you're doing.

BARRON: Well thank you all. I hope some people have heard us today and maybe felt a little inspiration. 



Strong to the finish



Beginning with spinach, a group of PD alumni aim to grow crops more sustainably

By Sara Riggsby

Lorenzo Hernandez '12 wants to change the way we feed ourselves.

Working with his brother Nicolas Felipe Hernandez '09 and fellow PD alums Yates Downing '12 and Malika Rawal '20, his company agroco aims to sustainably feed a growing global population through increased food production. They're developing a self-sustaining modular system to grow crops more efficiently – starting with nutrient-dense spinach.

The group represents a strong and ongoing entrepreneurial tradition that sprouted its roots at Providence Day.

Hernandez, originally from Colombia, joined PD in seventh grade. “During that time I wouldn’t call myself mischievous, but I definitely didn’t always focus on academics,”

Growing in a modular environment. Photo courtesy of Lorenzo Hernandez '12.



Lorenzo Hernandez '09 (top) and fellow PD alum Yates Downing '12 (below).



Hernandez admits. Beyond his time on the PD soccer team from seventh grade through his senior year, “I’ve learned a lot from PD that I’ve taken with me throughout the years. Being able to learn and do anything, having that mentality, is definitely something I really enjoyed while I was there.”

After attending PD, Hernandez went to Appalachian State and double majored in international business and economics with a minor in supply chain management. In those four years, he traveled at every opportunity, including two study abroad stints in Germany. From there, he began a career in third-party logistics where “everything in the world that moves was right on my computer screen.”

The urge to live internationally struck again, so Hernandez moved to Asia and worked at universities throughout eastern China as a teaching assistant before moving back to Colombia.

His first entrepreneurial inspiration stemmed from his time in both countries as he pondered how to



Creating ideal growing conditions. Credit Lorenzo Hernandez '12

create water filters that would allow the population to safely drink from the tap instead of relying on bottled water. That particular idea hasn’t yet come to fruition, but his entrepreneurial spark has stayed active.

An opportunity with German international discount retailer Lidl brought Hernandez back to the U.S.

While a part of their expansion team on the international supply chain and logistics side, “I spent three years there really learning about the food industry,” he says. “What’s important to me now is that it’s a massive industry and very centralized, so at any moment a disruption could really impact how people feed themselves. It’s a problem.”

While Hernandez was advancing in the company, he didn't feel he could make the impact he wanted at a large conglomerate where things were slow to change. Two years ago, he decided to pursue a master's degree at Northwestern University in engineering with a focus on corporate sustainability and energy.

"I wanted to make an impact so I focused on the food sector. Coming from the food industry and seeing how centralized it was, I didn't see how we could sustainably feed a growing population," he says.

"In 20 years we'll have 9 billion people and that's growing the same amount of food we've done over the past years, so how do we do that? Then you take climate issues where 25 percent of the land is already degraded and 11 percent of the population is already adversely affected by climate change, with two-thirds of the global population expected to be in water insecure regions by 2025, and we are only going to demand and consume more."

Through his research at Northwestern, Hernandez learned about controlled environment agriculture through indoor, vertical farming. "Per square foot, we can grow three, four, or even five times more depending on how we stack it," he explains. "We use 90 percent less water, less land, and we're growing more food. That's where I started agroco."

The university provided resources for Hernandez and he competed in VentureCat, a Northwestern-specific competition for startups. That win resulted in the first investment of money into the company and subsequent competitions continued



A plant grown in an agroco unit. Credit Lorenzo Hernandez '12

to raise awareness among other investment groups.

Agroco is an agronomic solutions company with a goal of sustainably increasing global food production by growing more food with less land. The self-sustaining modular system works in a controlled environment as a vertical farming unit that can be shipped easily and runs on renewable energies. These units can be shipped anywhere in the world and grow food for that community so they don't have to depend upon an outside, centralized source anymore.

It was during his time at Northwestern that Hernandez

reconnected with Downing, his PD classmate and friend. Downing studied mechanical engineering at Virginia Tech and NC State and then moved into industrial design which offers more room for creativity and hands-on work. While completing graduate work at Arizona State University, Downing leads design and engineering for agroco along with an expanded team.

One of agroco's first projects is with a rural school in Colombia. Hernandez and his family are from Bogota, Colombia where 46 percent of the country is below the poverty line and can't afford food.

“We started thinking about how to increase the nutrition level for that community and the agronomic science behind what we’re trying to do is multi-faceted,” he says. “We’re producing more food and it’s also more nutritious food where people didn’t have access before.”

The goal is to create a pilot program where the community keeps what is produced, and as a nutritionally dense plant filled with vitamin A, spinach is the first product.

The units are designed to work equally well in urban environments. Using Charlotte as an example, “You’ll spend \$20 million on land, or you can buy a simpler system for that amount where you have 500 of our units dispersed throughout the city and you can give them to local communities,” he says. “It’s thinking about it in a different way.” The next planned test unit is in the city of Chicago where Hernandez has worked with the Chicago Parks and Rec department.

Competitors to agroco offer systems that are all around 40 square feet, but Hernandez believes the optimal size is smaller. “I want to show that we can still build that 40-foot unit in a competitive sense, but we can do the same thing better. I can have a 10-foot system and fit four units in one shipping container which can each grow around 6,000 plants on a monthly basis in different life stages,” he says.

Agroco’s price point is 60 percent cheaper than competitors because they use selective materials and have a renewable energy source to limit operational costs. While wind power may become a viable solution in the

future in certain areas, for now, that energy source is solar power which allows a more dynamic and modular way to ship out units.

The walls of each unit are made of 10-millimeter thick plastic that is cheaper and lighter than glass. The frame uses a lightweight and durable metal frame, allowing for drilling and building the outer shell quickly.

“The inside is where the complexity of urban farming lies,” Hernandez says. “If you think about a fish tank, it’s a similar thing. You are trying to recreate a biological ecosystem in a tank but you’re doing it for a plant. The plant receives nutrients through the soil, and we are trying to replicate that through the water solution.”

This system produces new leafy greens every three to four weeks using fertilizers in a controlled way. “We have the right balance with the fertilizer, so it’s more optimally grown with less residue going into our streams and causing fewer biological effects going into our bodies from those streams.” No soil is required, only the nutrient formula.

For those customers lacking a green thumb, “One of the main things we are doing is incorporating software that does it all for you,” Hernandez says. “It measures your nutrient levels and shows stages of growth. You are the manager of the plants so you can enjoy them.”


Ultimately, Hernandez hopes to see agroco units all over the world providing sustainable food access. The current priority is raising capital because “We are going to need engineers and people on the ground helping people have this in their home,” he says. “You can grow it for your house and neighborhood, and no

soil is required, just nutrient formula. I want to give that access to other people to grow and sell and I can just provide the technology to help.”

Hernandez is excited to welcome Rawal ’20 from Duke as one of agroco’s new business analysts. This connection was made through PDNetWORK which engages constituencies of the Providence Day community to provide internship and mentorship opportunities for alumni. Rawal will join Downing, whom Hernandez credits for his work and his friendship.

“It just shows how amazing the PD community is,” says Downing. “I would have never thought when I graduated from PD ten years ago that I would be working on this project with Lorenzo. You never know what the future is going to hold and even him finding Malika, it’s cool how it all came together because we all went to PD.”

“I come from a country with a huge divide and I’m fortunate because I went to Providence Day. I have an academic advantage and I want to pay it back,” he says.

Hernandez would like to connect with anyone interested in learning more, especially young engineers interested in joining the cause. “Anytime I do a pitch or talk to people, I want to first teach you what the problem is,” he says. “How do we feed the world? If you have questions, I’d love to talk.” 

MORE:

Visit agroco.farm to subscribe to communications, or email lorenzo@agroco.farm.



A Charger on the

PROWL

*Ikey Ekwonu '19
becomes a
Carolina Panther*

By Leigh Dyer '88

Last spring, all of Providence Day's eyes were on the NFL draft. For the first time a PD alumnus was set to be a top-10 pick.

To nearly everyone's surprise, Ikem "Ikey" Ekwonu '19 went to the hometown team, with the Carolina Panthers choosing the offensive lineman with their No. 6 pick.

Amid a rocky season for the Panthers, Ekwonu's selection has been generally praised, with USA Today's *Draftwire* declaring that "Ekwonu is a major part of Carolina's resurgence in the offensive trenches, and should be a cornerstone of the franchise for the next decade and beyond."

Ekwonu spoke recently about his time at PD while cooling down in the Panthers' locker room after a practice, saying he wants to express gratitude for the foundation his alma mater gave him.

"It's been a really cool experience over the last year, being able to come back to the city, being able to play for the local team. I've been having a lot of fun and learning as much as I can," he said. "It's definitely cool being able to be on the field playing instead of watching the Panthers."

And while his time as a star player at N.C. State was pretty good preparation for becoming a pro, he said, Ekwonu thanks PD for making his time at State more manageable. "PD prepared me for college. When I came in my freshman year of college, I was literally miles ahead of a lot of my peers just because of the preparation," he said.

He named Christine Marshall, Neely Gutierrez '92, Mike Lindquist, Paul Burnham, Joe Grabenstetter, and Libby Tilson among his most influential teachers and coaches.



Ekwonu was a standout Charger during his time at PD. Photo courtesy of the Charchives.

"I'm sure it's no secret, I was a little 'outgoing' at PD. Those teachers did their best at letting me 'live' a little bit, letting me breathe. I know I was a little bit of a troublemaker, but they let me be myself in their classes, which I definitely appreciate," he said with a chuckle as he recalled getting caught breaking dress code rules for shirts and rules on how much stubble he could grow on his face. "I definitely regret how much of a nuisance I could be at times. Something I appreciate in the long run is the freedom they gave me in class."

He credits Grabenstetter's AP Psychology course for motivating him to minor in psychology at N.C. State, and names AP U.S. History as a favorite class for the way he learned about the stories behind events – not just dates.

Ekwonu's parents were longtime fixtures at Providence Day, where they had four children attend – joining Ikey were his twin brother Osita '19, older brother Chike '15, and older sister Adaora '16. Now, they're cheering on their son at Panthers games.



Above: Ekwonu with Panthers teammates during his inaugural 2022 season. Photo courtesy of the Carolina Panthers. Right: Ekwonu with his parents after being elected Homecoming King in 2018.


“(My parents) come to every game. They were really good about getting to all of the games, even when I was in college. So I really appreciate them for that,” he said. “Now I get to have my grandmother (in her 80s) at the games. That’s one of the best things. She couldn’t really make that two and a half hour drive to Raleigh every week. A 25 or 30 minute drive, she can make easily.”

Ekwonu’s busy life includes 7 a.m.-to-5 p.m. days spent practicing, working out, and attending team meetings, and trying to furnish his new home in the off hours. His first break won’t happen until after the season ends in February, he said.

When asked what advice he might give a young Lower Schooler hoping to follow in his footsteps, Ekwonu took a few moments to think. “Be yourself. Don’t be shy when it comes to hard work. Put the work in, good things will come, but also have fun with life,” he said. “Math, history, academics, they prepare you for other things. Like the AP US History packet, if you break it down, is just a goal. Something you have to get through. Once you get through that, you’re going to feel good, you’re going to feel better, and then it motivates you.... That’s something I had to keep learning”

Ekwonu still enjoys reflecting on PD moments such as trips to New Orleans, where he got stuck in a lazy river, and Boston.



“I definitely cherished and appreciated my time there. I got to meet a lot of cool people and be in a lot of cool situations,” he said. “I appreciate the things I learned there, the people I met. I definitely appreciate that time in my life.” 



PROVIDENCE DAY SCHOOL
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Freedom School
Community Service



Alumni Zone BBQ



Cheerleading Reunion



Boston Roadshow



D.C. Roadshow



New York City Roadshow



Field Hockey Reunion



Football Reunion



Legacy Book Reception

Thank you to all of our alumni who made it out to our fall events! We welcome you to attend our upcoming spring events, more information coming soon!

From Providence Day to

Broadway

Thomas Laub '15 is PD's first Tony-winning alum

As told to Matt Spence



TEDxUofM

Thomas Laub's passion for theatre was evident at Providence Day, where he became one of the school's first nominees for the Blumey, the premier high school theatre award created by Blumenthal Performing Arts. After graduating from University of Michigan, Laub became a producer – naming his production company, Runyonland, after the first song he performed in his first Providence Day Middle School musical, “Guys and Dolls.”

Last year, Laub became part of the production team recognized with a Special Tony Award for David Byrne's “American Utopia,” a concert performance of songs from throughout the former Talking Heads front man's career (a film version of the show is available on HBO Max).

At the 2020 Tony Awards, which were delayed more than a year due to pandemic concerns, Laub was also a producer on “Slave Play,” which tied the all-time record for most Tony nominations for a non-musical, with 12 (it won two other theatrical awards but ultimately did not take home a Tony). The play by Jeremy O. Harris has attracted polarized reactions for its themes of race, sex, power, and trauma through the stories of multiple interracial relationships.

Laub recently spoke to his former teacher, Matt Spence, to share the journey that began at Providence Day. Excerpts from the conversation, edited for length and clarity:

Photo courtesy of Thomas Laub

I was lucky enough to work with a number of incredible educators at PD and in the Charlotte area as a whole. At PD, I had the privilege of working with (former Upper School Theatre teacher) Caroline Bower, and with Michael Hough. I can't tell you how many times I went into Dr. Hough's office and said, “You know, I don't feel great about this,” or “I feel amazing about this,” and Dr. Hough would really look at me and say, “Get a grip, enough, you're going to do this better.”

And I was someone who came in as unbelievably arrogant. You know, 14 years old. Dr. Hough said, “You're not going to decide that you are the

best in this 12-foot radius in south Charlotte. You're going to be better.”

I like to always say that I had the opposite college application experience as so many of my peers, because when I was going into my senior year, I said, “I'm applying to all business schools. I know what I'm doing....” I had decided exactly what program I was going to at NYU.

When I told my parents, my mother looked at me and said, “You're not applying for theatre?” And I said, “Well, no, I'm applying for business. I like theatre, but what am I going to do with that?” And she said, “No, no, no, no, no. You are applying for theatre.”

I owe it all to my parents of course, as everybody does, but me especially. She basically forced me, for lack of a better term, to apply to the top couple of musical theatre programs. I ended up auditioning at the University of Michigan.

I had no idea of musical theatre history, what I was singing, or why it was important. I just came in with my audition. It turns out that I was auditioning in front of the long-time, 30-plus year founder and head of the program at Michigan musical theatre, Brent Wagner. One of the best professors, and most brilliant folks, in our field.

I came in and performed, unbeknownst to me, his favorite song in the musical theatre canon. I messed up a lyric. He goes, "Um, Thomas, can you go to the piano and check that lyric?" I said "Oh" instead of "though," so, a layman perhaps might not have noticed, but you know, Professor Wagner certainly did send me to the piano.

I went home, and I sent him an email. "Hey, professor, you might remember me as the person who messed up the lyrics to your favorite song. It was still such an honor to come audition for you. It was such an honor to meet you. Thank you so much."

He sent me back a two-page note on why my saying, "oh" instead of "though" destroyed the dramatic choices available in the scene for the character and was frankly the worst choice I could have made as an actor. It disrespected the original lyricist and it was just a catastrophe for the musical theatre canon in general. So, I read this email and I was like, "Oh, great. So I'll see you somewhere else."

Then the next call I got from him saying, "You're in!" It was an incredible journey, and he is to this day, one of my favorite, favorite people on this planet, a close friend and mentor.

I think we learn by being the dumbest people in the room. Anyone who puts themselves in a position to be the smartest person in the room isn't learning, by definition. I've had the pleasure of getting my ass kicked by all of these amazing professors and mentors throughout my life in so many different ways.

As a producer, my job is to bring a bunch of people into a room who are

smarter than me, just like it would be as a CEO at a startup. An incredible writer with a story, and a director to funnel that vision and clarify that vision to an audience; perhaps a music team, if it's a musical, with a composer and a lyricist to work alongside of the writing and directing team.

Everyone from the top to bottom, both on the creative side with the writing team, the directing team, perhaps the choreography team, but also on the physical production side, bringing together a production manager who understands how to take that director's vision and construct it. Then to create a design team. Producers work with the production manager and general manager to turn it into something that is, you know, financially viable.

Also the advertising marketing sales side of things, the press side of things. The producer tries to secure one of those spots on Jimmy Kimmel or Stephen Colbert. We were lucky enough to have *American Utopia* on Kimmel, on Fallon, on Colbert.

I like to say when things are going well, you don't notice the producer is there. And when things are going poorly, the producer is the first person you look to, and that's the job, right? The job is putting out fires, and the job is putting together a team that is best suited to work with each other.

The producer raises all the money, of course, and the average Broadway play costs probably between \$3 million and \$6 million. And the average musical probably comes in between \$14 million and \$18 million. And that's before running costs. Every week it costs a play maybe in the \$400, \$500,000 range to run. Whereas a

musical's probably more like between \$700 and \$900,000 a week.

It's a large job and that's why the teams are so large. That's why there are multiple producers and co-producers who come on to alleviate that burden.

Building those teams and working with those teams is really why we do it. Nobody gets into theatre for their health. They get into it because they love the art form. They love to share these incredible stories. They believe in art, they believe in the power of it to change and bring together. And they love working with these incredible folks that we have the pleasure of working with. Like Jeremy Harris, like David Byrne, like all of these brilliant artists who we've been so blessed to even be in a room with.

American Utopia was actually the first Broadway show that I was lucky enough to produce on. That was part of a grant that my company, Runyonland Productions, in college was able to get during my senior year at Michigan. Part of that grant was earmarked to bring a couple of industry professionals from New York to Ann Arbor.

So we ended up 'cold emailing' three incredible Broadway producers who I really looked up to but had no idea who I was. They were generous enough to come to the University of Michigan. We flew them in, and I kind of trapped them in a room for three hours and had the privilege of talking their ears off and asking all of the questions.

Mike Isaacson, who's now my closest mentor, came in. And I had the privilege of asking him every stupid question I've ever thought of.



Left: Laub '15 in PD's production of "Guys and Dolls."



Right: Laub '15 in PD's production of "Into the Woods."





Laub '15 in PD's production of "Into the Woods."

He was so generous, so wonderful, so knowledgeable, so brilliant. And at the end of that talk, I said, "Hey, by the way, Mike, if you're ever looking for a co-producer, let me know."

A co-producer is someone who comes onto a show and has much less responsibility than one of the general partners, one of the lead producers, but raises a significant chunk of money. And is involved in all of the core decisions when it comes to, 'Let's talk through overall strategy, where can I be of use here,' et cetera, kind of the more broad strokes. It's an incredible way to get in a room and learn. I wanted nothing more than to get into one of those rooms, shut up, and take all the notes I could.

Then, two weeks later, Mike Isaacson shot me a note and said, "Hey, I think we have this incredible show. Let's talk about it." And, in that first conversation, he said that the amount to raise to get in on the project is \$250,000. And I had never raised a dollar in my life. And so I said, "Perfect. That low? Incredible! We'll sign on."

So I was so excited about this. I was kicking my heels together, all excited to work on my first Broadway show.

Meanwhile, I'm not raising a dollar. I graduate on a Sunday, drive from Michigan to the city on Monday, and start in the offices at Disney theatrical on Tuesday. On my first day of work, I get a text. It says, "How do you feel about getting in the money by Friday?"

Rather than saying, "Oh my gosh, you know, I messed up. I'll get a part of this to you by Friday and part a month later." It would've been fine. Instead, my answer was, "Of course, yep. All going well." So, I went a little bit overdrive in leveraging connections that I made in Michigan and connections that I had in the city. I also had some incredible mentors back in Charlotte with Blumenthal Performing Arts and (Blumenthal CEO) Tom Gabbard, so by Sunday, the full amount was all done and committed.

I'm so excited to say that all of those early committals have all made a significant return on their investment. It was so nice to be able to show a return to those first folks who believed in me when I was a completely unknown quantity saying 'I'd like some money by Friday, please.'

Slave Play is another experience that is still ongoing. I'm excited to see where we go with the performance opportunities yet to come, and making sure that whatever we do, just


like we did on Broadway, it is both artistically at a high level of quality and also accessible.

On Broadway, we released 10,000 tickets at \$29 or lower to make sure that if you couldn't pay the typical price for a Broadway play, you could still attend. We started the most ticketing initiatives for lower, no-cost tickets to New Yorkers in Broadway history.

It was great to see an audience that perhaps didn't look like the traditional Broadway audience and looked a little bit more like the community outside the theatre doors. I think that's what we were all most proud of on the show. Jeremy O. Harris is a brilliant playwright with a clear vision for how the piece will be released in the future. And certainly you haven't seen the last of it.

When we won the special Tony for David Byrne's *American Utopia*, that was a surreal experience. That's certainly not what it's about, but it's a celebration of the process.

Whenever something is able to be lauded like that, whether it's a review, whether it's an award, really what it is as a celebration of the folks involved. And another reminder of how lucky I was to be involved with those people who are true geniuses in every sense of the term.

If there's one central theme that pervades here: it's just the idea of being so grateful to be in these rooms with these people. I mean, maybe I know two percent of what I need to know. And I'm looking towards the 98 percent. My goal is to get to three percent, not act like we're at 85 percent. 

Alumni, join **PD Connect** today!

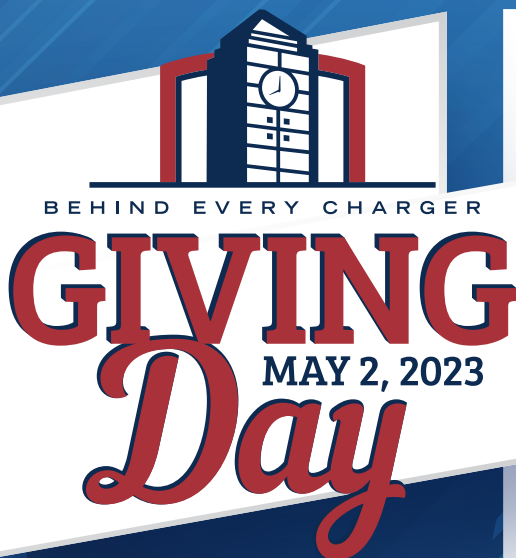
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Questions about PD Connect? Contact
Steve Bondurant '98 at (704) 887-6039 or
Steve.Bondurant@ProvidenceDay.org



Save the date for May 2, 2023—Providence Day's annual Giving Day—when we celebrate our amazing faculty, staff, and all those who are *Behind Every Charger*!

Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

News

1988

1 Boris Bunich has been named Chair of the Board of Directors for CRVA. The Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority is a trusted steward of Charlotte's visitor economy representing multiple brands and they operate venues including the Charlotte Convention Center, Spectrum Arena, Owens Auditorium, Bojangles Coliseum and the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

1991

2 Katie Largen Miller competed in a horse show with her horse, Counting on Winston. They competed in Sedgfield at a 3-day show this past May.

1997

3 Dan Hale is an Assistant Professor of Animation at UNC Greensboro in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Following a successful career in photography, Dan joined the UNCG faculty and created an Animation Concentration within the BFA in Studio Art. Dan teaches animation and concept art and his own animated work has also been recognized both locally and internationally.

1998

4 Erin Swanson Stone became a member of the Providence Day Board of Alumni in July 2022. Erin is an OB/GYN doctor at Tryon Medical Partners in Charlotte, NC.

1999

5 Amie Williams Caudle started a new position as Creative Director at SparkNC in Raleigh, NC. In this role, she is helping marginalized students learn, grow, and explore pathways to high-tech careers. Prior to SparkNC, she spent nearly two decades as a teacher, assistant principal, and director of professional development. In response to the pandemic, Amie helped launch a K-8 virtual school with more than 100 staff serving 3,000 students. Amie has received numerous awards, including being named Teacher of the Year, North Carolina Public School's Hero by the Department of Public Instruction for her work in professional development during the pandemic, and Discovery Education's DENY award in the area of for innovation in professional development.

2003

6 Drew Wozniak is a board member on the Executive Leadership Council for Stop Soldier Suicide. Stop Soldier Suicide is a veteran-focused virtual behavior health non-profit that provides personalized care and continued case management including mental health support, housing assistance, or any other services for veterans.

2004

7 John Williford is founder and managing partner of his new firm, Dogwood Pecan, in Dallas, TX. Dogwood Pecan is a real estate consulting firm specializing in consulting on unique public/private real estate projects for developer clients across the country.

2005

8 Marcus Hughes became a member of the Providence Day Board of Alumni in July 2022. Marcus is the Director of Finance for Hopper Communities in Charlotte, NC.

2008

Patrick McDonagh started a new position as Director of New Ventures at Redesign Health in Durham, NC.

2009

9 Dan Smith became a member of the Providence Day Board of Alumni in July 2022. Dan also graduated from the University of Florida's College of Journalism & Communications with a Masters in Mass Communication this past August.

10 Alex Widis Vakil started a new position as Program Manager for Global Talent Acquisition Operations and Technology at Atlassian in Charlotte, NC. In this role she drives transformation and continuous improvement within the Talent Acquisition space, with a focus on process optimization, tools and systems management, and technology innovation.



Submit a Class Note: Weddings, births, promotions, anniversaries, retirements or awards... Let us know about your major life events! Send them to Steve Bondurant '98 at steve.bondurant@providenceday.org.

Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

News *cont.*

2011

1 **Lara Gould** managed Experiential Marketing for Bumble and recently started a new position as Regional Experiential Manager for the Southeast at Anheuser-Busch in August 2022. Lara leads specific regional experiential priorities including regional sponsorship strategy, regional brand-led programs, branded mobile assets, and more.

2 **Price Litton** is serving as a Board Advisor for Youth Villages North Carolina in Charlotte, NC. Youth Villages North Carolina provides a range of services in North Carolina including strengthening families to prevent or limit the need for foster care, multisystemic therapy, and helping young adults make a successful transition to adulthood.

3 **Grant Weinzierl** started a new position as Vice President, Application Control Specialist at Bank of America in Pennington, NJ. In this role, Grant makes sure that new technologies that are released at the bank are following specific guidelines.

2012

4 **Liz Aker Bianco** started a new position as Assistant Director for Housing Services & Desk Operations at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. Liz oversees the day-to-day operations within the Housing Services Office and co-supervises a staff of 22 students. Her office assists with lockouts and access issues, room assignments and re-assignments, maintaining facility cleanliness and upkeep, and behind the scenes work for data processes with other campus partners.

5 **John Cambern** started a new position as Strategy Senior Consultant at Deloitte Consulting in Chicago, IL.

Jasper Fu was recently promoted to Director of Product Management for Core Technology and Web3 at Community Gaming in Naples, FL.

6 **Natalie Jones** started a new position as Regional Director at Inspirato for Good in Charlotte, NC. Inspirato for Good is an operating division of Inspirato that partners with nonprofit organizations across the country to offer branded, luxury travel experiences as fundraising items to drive multiple high dollar donations.

7

Neha Kukreja started a new position as an ESG Insights Associate at McKinsey & Company in New York, NY.

8

Katherine Schweitzer earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California in June 2022. During her graduate training, she worked throughout the Bay Area including San Quentin State Prison, and she completed her pre-doctoral internship in NYC at Bellevue Hospital and Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center. She is currently a postdoctoral psychologist with Kaiser Permanente's Addiction Medicine and Recovery Services Clinic in Oakland, CA.

2014

9

Cole Blum is a JD Candidate at Stanford Law School and he also served as a Rosenthal Fellow in OSD Policy's Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Affairs.

2015

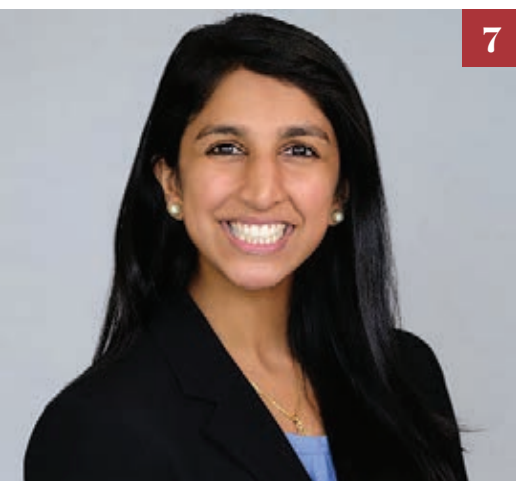
10 **Navin Balaji** is an MD Fellow for McKinsey & Company in New York, NY. He will be serving as a full-time consultant at McKinsey for a 2-year gap year position between his 3rd and 4th years of medical school. While he is at McKinsey, he plans to focus on advising clients in life sciences, healthcare, and private equity engaged in topics including R&D strategy, operations, due diligence, corporate finance, analytics, public health, and more.

11

Sandie Bonwinkor became a member of the Providence Day Board of Alumni in July 2022. Sandie is a Commercial Associate in Global Commercial Banking at Bank of America in Washington, DC supporting Healthcare, Education & Not-for-Profit institutions.

12

Mairead McConnell started a new position as Senior Manager in Patient Marketing at Ferring Pharmaceuticals in New York, NY. She leads Ferring's patient advocacy and marketing campaigns for infertility and in vitro treatments.



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Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

News *cont.*

2016

Dallas Caton produced the single “Numb Little Bug” by Em Beihold, which went platinum selling over 1 million singles.

Sarah Kathryn Clark started a new position as Architectural Interior Designer at Pursley Dixon Architectural in Charlotte, NC.

1 Sara Cotsakis started a new position as Senior Consultant at Oliver Wyman in New York, NY.

2 Nathan Dickson started a new position as an Associate at Riveron in Dallas, TX. Riveron is a business advisory firm specializing in accounting, finance, technology, and operations.

3 Michael Mulvey started a new position as an Associate at Dechert, LLP in September 2022 after his graduation from UNC School of Law this past Spring. He will likely be placed in the Real Estate Finance division assisting with structured finance including asset-backed and commercial mortgage-backed securitization.

2017

4 Reed Baker started a new position as Analyst at Audax Private Equity in Boston, MA. In this role, he does due diligence on new investment opportunities and works alongside management teams to execute add-on acquisitions and implement organic growth initiatives.

5 Jill Jacobson is a 2L at Boston College Law School and an incoming Litigation Summer Associate at Latham & Watkins in Boston, MA. She was featured in the BC Law Student Org Spotlight Series on leading The Federalist Society, a group for conservative and libertarian law students interested in questioning the current state of the legal order.

6 Gabe Montgomery started a new position as Clinical Medical Assistant at Queen City Ear, Nose, and Throat in Charlotte, NC. In this role, he escorts patients into rooms, takes patient vitals, schedules appointments, administers allergy injections, and assists with in-office procedures.

7 Samantha Savage started a new position as a Compliance Program Specialist on the Credit Card Compliance team at PNC in Pittsburgh, PA.

8 Deniz Yalcin started a new position as Risk Advisory Associate at Grant Thornton LLP in Atlanta, GA. In this role, she is responsible for delivering engagements ranging from business process and information systems controls assessments and testing to support regulatory, compliance and other strategic, operational and attestation engagements.

2018

9 Chad Ayers started a new position as FSO Staff Business Consultant at EY in Charlotte, NC.

10 Strachan Champagne started a new position as FSO Staff Business Consultant at EY in Charlotte, NC.

11 Hayden Clay will be starting a new position as Junior Risk & Compliance Consultant at Protiviti France in the Paris office after graduating from UNC with degrees in Business and French this December. He first fell in love with French during Madame LePage’s French A class in 6th grade and he credits Madame Bridgeland and LePage for much of his success in learning the French language.

Connor Hammond started a new position as Technology Consultant at EY in New York, NY.

12 Millan Henegar started a new position as Analyst in the Special Assets Group at Bank of America in Charlotte, NC. In this role, he handles the debt restructuring for Bank of America.

13 Lauren Levin started a new position as Business Analyst at Cicero Group in Washington, DC. Cicero Group is a boutique management consulting firm that implements data driven strategies to both the corporate and social sectors.



Submit a Class Note: Weddings, births, promotions, anniversaries, retirements or awards... Let us know about your major life events! Send them to Steve Bondurant '98 at steve.bondurant@providenceday.org.

Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

News *cont.*

2019

1 **Jack Linder** is an incoming Commercial Real Estate Analyst at Wells Fargo in Charlotte, NC. He is supporting the Commercial Mortgage Loan and Securities Finance group within Corporate & Investment Banking.

2 **Jackson Sicard** is an Incoming Investment Banking Analyst working in the Leveraged Finance Group at Bank of America in New York, NY. He is also a tour guide at UNC Chapel Hill.

3 **Connor Thomas** started his own production company, Thomas Film Productions, a film production company specializing in commercial, documentary, and event work. Connor originally started out creating videos at Providence Day, then progressed to directing and producing commercials for corporate clients for broadcast television, social media, and internal use.

2020

4 **Nandita Balaji** was selected as the winner of the "Maryland Inno Under 25" Award. The Inno Under 25 Awards highlights 5 entrepreneurs under 25 who are building ventures through innovation and tech-enabled business strategies; this award highlighted her work towards their startup, InfernoGuard, developing a solution for the growing wildfire crisis alongside PD alumni and co-founders **Kevin Kaspar**, **Zoe Sherman**, and **Shreyas Bhasin**.

5 **Kaila Dawkins** supported the Walt Disney World (WDW) Park Operations Team as an Industrial Engineering Intern this past summer. She worked on three projects at Animal Kingdom looking at efficiency, optimization, and maximization of guest experience, cast experience, and park flow.

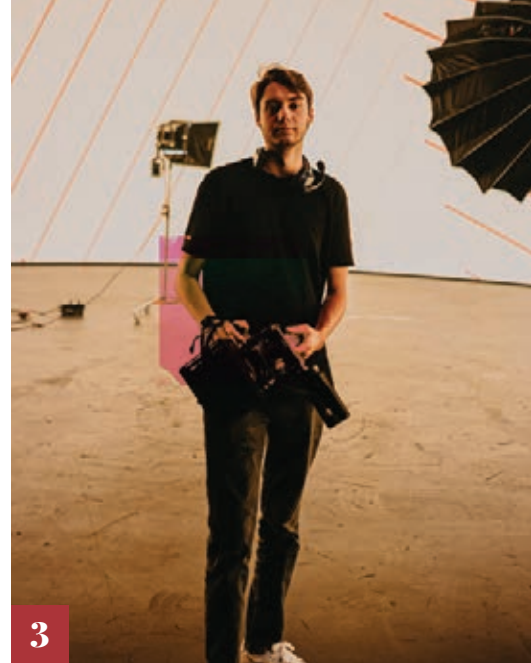
6 **Kevin Kaspar** was recognized in Chicago Inno's 25 under 25 alongside his peers at The Garage at Northwestern University. Chicago Inno 25 Under 25 recognizes the top 25 entrepreneurs under the age of 25 in Chicago.

2021

7 **Sophia Buoy** interned for the Carolina Panthers at their Training Camp in Spartanburg, SC this past summer. She assisted the Head Equipment Manager with day-to-day operations of the Equipment Department while learning how a professional football team equipment room operates. Sophia is a sophomore at Denison University where she is a member of the Varsity Volleyball team and works for the Denison Athletics department.

2022

8 **Congratulations to the Class of 2022! Good luck in your next chapter and you're #AlwaysACharger!**



Submit a Class Note: Weddings, births, promotions, anniversaries, retirements or awards... Let us know about your major life events! Send them to Steve Bondurant '98 at steve.bondurant@providenceday.org.

Save the Date!

Class Years ending in 2's, 3's, 7's and 8's
Saturday, May 20, 2023



Register today at alumni.providenceday.org/events.
More details can be found at registration and
#AlwaysACharger newsletters, social media,
reunion coordinators, and PD Connect



Save-the-Dates

for these upcoming Alumni & Alumni Parent events

YOUNG ALUMNI LUNCHEON

Tuesday, January 3, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Providence Day

MEN'S & WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ALUMNI REUNION

Friday, January 6, 2023

Providence Day

ALUMNI & ALUMNI PARENT RECEPTION

Friday, February 10, 2023 from 4:30–6:30 p.m.

Head of School's Residence

**Questions? Contact Steve Bondurant '98 at
(704) 887-6039 or Steve.Bondurant@ProvidenceDay.org**

Check your #AlwaysACharger e-newsletter for details.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU AND PD

Gift planning is the art of designing your charitable gift so that you realize your philanthropic objectives while minimizing your after-tax costs.

In addition to fulfilling your philanthropic goals, you can generally expect some or all of the following benefits depending on the kind of property you contribute and the type of arrangement you select:

- ✓ Income-tax savings
- ✓ Avoidance of long-term capital-gains tax
- ✓ Stream of income for life
- ✓ Increased cash flow
- ✓ Reduced costs and time in estate settlement

For more information about creating your own gift plans contact Jeffrey S. Appel, Associate Head of School for Institutional Advancement, at (704) 887-6038 or Jeff.Appel@ProvidenceDay.org.

Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

Marriages & Engagements

2007

1 **Sara Ohl** married Hedley Jennings on April 30, 2022 at Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte, NC. PD alumni in the wedding party included **Katy Ohl Moore, '05**, **Christopher Ohl '09**, and **Ashley Berman Ahearn**.

2009

2 **Christopher Ohl** got engaged to Cameron Bailey on July 2, 2022. They will be married July 15, 2023 in Winston-Salem, NC.

2010

3 **Kaitlin Laxer** married Adam Danze on September 4, 2022 at Carmel Country Club in Charlotte, NC. PD alumni in the wedding party included **Emily Orr** and **Liza Gershen**. Other PD alumni who attended were **Marian Barrett Versalko**, **Kelly Cox**, **Shim Laxer '09**, **Aaron Zucker '07**, **Keith Orland '08**, and **Emily Orland '19**.

2011

4 **Maddi Auten** got engaged to Joseph Burns at her best friend's house, where they first met, on August 27, 2022.

2012

5 **Liz Aker** married Sam Bianco on July 3, 2022 at the Wentworth Event Center in Belfast, Maine. PD alumni in attendance were **Savannah Kolodziej**, **Em Dickson '14**, **Claire Richardson**, **Nicole McEwen '14**, **Ted Dickson** (faculty and alumni parent), **Brooks Aker '10**, **Ryan Melton**, and **Erin Bailey Preston**.

2014

6 **Addi Berry** got engaged to Scott Standridge on October 9, 2022 in Charleston, SC.

7 **Carly Rainsford** married Joseph Sensing on October 14, 2022 at Camellia Gardens in Monroe, NC. PD alumni in attendance were **Melissa Cerbie Pomelow**, **Abbie Holly**, **Melvin Howie**, and **John Foley**.

8

John Velardo got engaged to Taylor Catha on October 16, 2022 in New York, NY.

2015

9 **Maddie Iverson** married Steven Latino, Jr. on October 15, 2022 at The Village Chapel Pinehurst in Pinehurst, NC.

10

Ross Vandemore and classmate **Emma Brown** became engaged on July 24, 2022 in Kiawah Island, SC.

2016

11 **Hailey Valeriano** got engaged to Chase Howard on July 15, 2022 at Grandfather Golf and Country Club in Grandfather, NC. They plan to get married June 17, 2023 at Carmel Country Club in Charlotte, NC.



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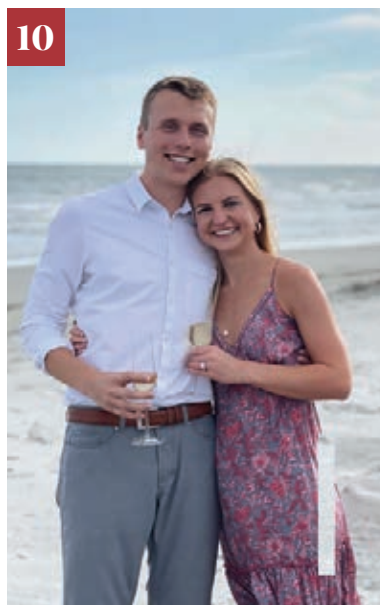
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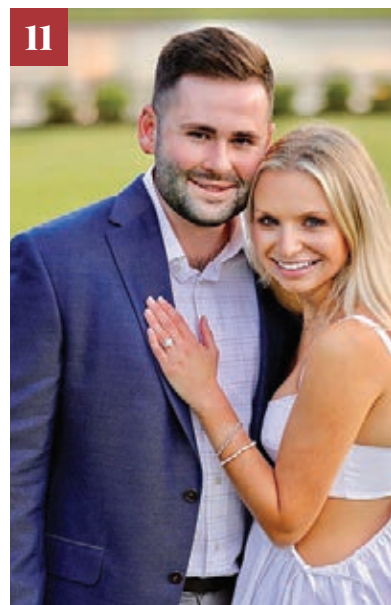
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Class Notes

Updates on Alumni Near & Far

Births

2001

1 **Trevor Cherry** and wife Catherine welcomed a son, Tate Cherry, on May 12, 2022.

2 **Matt Clewis** and wife Pattie Rhame welcomed a daughter, Lillian Clewis, on April 12, 2022. Their son, Everett Clewis, just started TK at Providence Day.

2003

3 **Harry Byrd** and wife Seti welcomed a son, Raphael Albert Byrd, September 26, 2022.

2004

4 **John Compton** and wife Taylor welcomed a son, Oliver Emerson Compton, on September 30, 2022.

5 **Virginia Pond Meskin** and husband Mickey welcomed a girl, Naomi Rose Meskin, on August 29, 2022.

6 **Jill Ingram** and wife Maggie welcomed a daughter, Collins W. Austin-Ingram, on July 21, 2022 weighing 9lbs 1oz.

2009

7 **Ryan Conrad** and wife Mady welcomed a son, Jack Ryan Conrad, on July 28, 2022 weighing 7lbs 12oz and he was born a Chargers fan!

2011

8 **Elyssa Gorelick Sturm** and husband Britt welcomed a daughter, Sophia Bradley Sturm, on July 5, 2022 weighing 6lbs 5oz.

2012

9 **Mahari Conston Freeman** and husband Demetris welcomed a son, Demetris Jamail Freeman Jr., on March 15, 2022 weighing 8lbs 9oz.

2016

10 **Kyra Swartz Ganezer** and husband Josh welcomed a daughter, Ashlie Sara Ganezer, on October 15, 2022.



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ANNUAL FUND FAMILY OF FUNDS



PD's Greatest Need



**Faculty Support &
Professional Development**



**Student Financial
Assistance**



Student Innovation



Health & Wellness



**Equity, Inclusion,
& Belonging**



The Arts



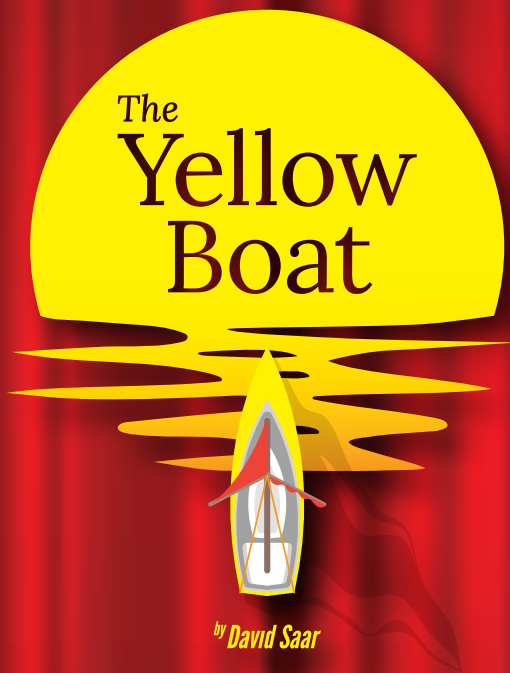
Athletics

The Annual Fund Family of Funds gives the entire PD family an opportunity to partner with us as we seek to inspire and equip the world's next generation of leaders. We invite Annual Fund donors to support the yearly needs of the school while also pursuing their personal philanthropic passions.

**Visit www.providenceday.org/annualfund to
learn more and to make your gift today!**

The Annual Fund Family of Funds supports our students and faculty in the current academic year through the school's operating budget. Should designated contributions exceed a designation's budgeted need, the school will direct contributions to the area of greatest need.

**Congratulations to Upper School Theatre
for recognition from the North Carolina
Theatre Conference regional competition!**



**Fall one-act plays *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*
and *Yellow Boat* won a combined five awards,
including Distinguished Play for *Yellow Boat*.**

The 2022–23 theatre season also includes:

Lower School Musical: *Disney's Frozen*, Nov. 4–5, 2022

Middle School Play: *The Thrilling Tale of the Three Musketeers*, Feb. 9–11, 2023

Upper School Spring Musical: *Once Upon a Mattress*, Apr. 20–22, 2023



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SCHOOL

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correct address at 704-887-7058.*

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