

The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

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My fellow alumnae and friends,

"Institutional memory is not a moment in time, not the perspective of an individual, or even a peer group, but the far-reaching arc of a community's collective experience. Our Founders' Day speaker, Dr. Dwana Waugh, assistant professor of history, challenged us to approach our reflections on the College, our traditions and our history through this nuanced lens.

After all, in a span of months, the world has changed, and so too has life at Sweet Briar. Yet as we evolve to rise to the challenge, our community is responding with the hallmark devotion and resilience that have characterized the College for generations.

Our traditions endure, although they have been transformed for the times. Our students find joy in the moments that transcend individual experiences and connect them to something larger. Last week's Step Singing, for example, was socially-distanced, but nonetheless uplifting, as seniors stretched from Gray to Randolph to the Golden Stairs, soaking in tributes from the Classes of 2022 to 2024.



On Thursday, students also joined a special lecture by former Sweet Briar Dean Lynn Rainville on the "invisible founders" of our College, the people who labored on Sweet Briar's farm in the 19th century. Friday ushered in an outdoor presentation of Founders' Day with a speech by Professor Waugh, followed by two sequenced processions to Monument Hill with sister classes to allow for social distancing. With each procession, students paused to place bouquets at the gate of the monument and then lingered to reflect on the beauty of Sweet Briar and the College's distinguished and complex history.



In these unprecedented times, together, we are writing a new chapter in Sweet Briar's history. We have the benefit of an extraordinary campus and careful plans and protocols that can support in-person learning in the midst of this pandemic. We are looking closely at our values and role in the world. Likewise, our students feel a sense of responsibility to the College and to one another to do what it takes to thrive. They sense a connection to the College's legacy, are taking on leadership roles, and are letting nothing stand in the way of making their days at Sweet Briar their own.

After 119 years, the true essence of the Sweet Briar experience endures. During this very challenging year, your support of the Sweet Briar Fund will make a difference unlike any other time in our history. Therefore, our students and the College will indeed continue to thrive.

With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson

Vice President for Alumnae Relations, Development and Communications

Make a gift online at sbc.edu/give.

Visit sbc.edu/founders-day to read more about these events.

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Make a Convenient IRA Gift in 2020

Congress has recently passed several acts related to the COVID-19 pandemic that may make it easier for you to make a planned gift in 2020. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act waived the requirement to take a required minimum distribution (RMD) in 2020. This closely followed the SECURE Act, which changed the age for RMDs from 70½ to 72 for anyone who had not turned 70½ by Jan. 1, 2020.

The RMD applies to most retirement plan owners over age 72. Because the 2020 RMD was calculated based on the Dec. 31, 2019, value when the markets were at a high level, Congress decided RMDs should be waived for 2020. The 2020 RMD waiver also applies to inherited IRAs. The RMD for IRA owners over age 72 will resume in 2021.

Fortunately, the IRA charitable rollover is still available for IRA owners over age 70½. While it does not fulfill the 2020 RMD because of the waiver, there are reasons many loyal donors will make IRA charitable rollovers, also known as qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) in 2020.

An IRA charitable rollover is a convenient way to make a gift in 2020. Many friends of nonprofits have IRA balances that have recovered from the March downturn. By fall 2020, these IRA balances may be an attractive source for loyal donors to use for charitable gifts. IRA owners may contact their IRA custodians to arrange a transfer directly to a favorite non-profit, like Sweet Briar College.

Each IRA owner over age 70½ may give up to \$100,000 per year in QCD gifts. The gifts are made to public charities for the general fund

or a designated purpose. They may not be made to a donor advised fund, supporting organization or life income plan.

The QCD is not included in taxable income so there is no charitable deduction. It is simply a convenient way to support a favorite nonprofit. Many donors have made QCD gifts in past years and will choose to make the same IRA gift this year. In a year when the nation needs all of the services of the nonprofit community to help those in need, an IRA charitable rollover gift is an excellent way to help.

It may take your IRA custodian a few weeks to process your gift. If you are thinking about making a gift at the end of the year, be sure to give your custodian enough time.

Let Us Know

If you have decided to make an IRA rollover gift to Sweet Briar College, please let us know. More often than not, IRA custodians send a check without any indication as to the source of the gift. If we know your gift is coming, we can be sure to give you credit for your gift and say thank you.

Thank you for considering a gift to Sweet Briar. Please contact Claire Griffith at cgriffith@sbc.edu, 434-381-6131 with any questions or for additional information.

This information is provided for educational purposes. It is not intended as legal advice. Please consult your own advisors who alone are aware of your individual situation and thus in the best position to provide an individual analysis and help you accomplish the best result. ■

Sweet Briar has a Podcast!

This spring, Sweet Briar launched a podcast produced by Caperton Morton '85 called "Sweet Stories in the Dell." The podcast explores Sweet Briar's history, its community (including President Meredith Woo, faculty members and students), the College's curriculum, and what the future has in store. Be sure to visit sbc.edu/podcast to listen to the six episodes we've released so far.



Celebrating 100 years of the women's vote with Elaine Jones



On Aug. 18, we hosted a webinar with a very special guest speaker, Elaine Jones, a true hero of the civil rights movement who has done extensive work in expanding the right to vote to all Americans. Together, we discussed women's leadership and civil rights in honor of the 100th anniversary since Tennessee became the final state to ratify the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote in the United States.

In case you missed the live event, you can still watch this extraordinary discussion at sbc.edu/videos/elaine-jones-speaks-about-ratification-of-the-19th-amendment.

Elaine is a trailblazer. She was the first African-American woman to enroll and graduate from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1970 and later to be elected to serve on the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association. In keeping with her pioneering course of life events, she was among the first three African-Americans to serve in the Peace Corps in Turkey, and after joining the Legal Defense Fund, she became the first woman to be appointed president and director-counsel of the LDF in 1993.

The LDF—a national civil rights law firm established by Justice Thurgood Marshall in 1940—spent a lot of time and resources on the initial adoption of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and has been involved in every Supreme Court case interpreting it since that time. In her role at director-counsel, Elaine expanded LDF's litigation into new areas such as health care and environmental justice, while keeping the organization focused on its core work in education, voting rights, economic access and criminal justice.

When asked about people that have impacted her career and life, she did not share a list of prominent, notable influencers, rather, she reflected on those she served at the LDF, "our brave and mistreated clients who endured hardship and ostracism in allowing LDF to represent them as they sought 'equal justice' under the law. These clients range from death row inmates to employees in class action lawsuits seeking pay equity, nondiscriminatory hiring, promotion and training opportunities for both women and minorities, as well as age discrimination, school desegregation, health care, environmental justice and voting rights."

"LDF represented John Lewis and the Freedom Riders: those who sat-in at the lunch counters, bus stations and other places. And, we represented those students who initially desegregated public colleges and universities," says Elaine. "Ever since our founding, securing and

protecting voting rights has been a staple on our docket. Also, criminal justice issues have been, and continue to be, a litigation area. LDF also plays an important role in the public policy arena for civil rights and social justice legislation."

In 2004, after 34 years of service, Elaine retired from the LDF.

Elaine is the recipient of numerous awards and accolades. She has received over 300 honors of various types, 16 honorary degrees as well as UVA's highest honor, the Jefferson Medal in Law. She was presented with the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award from President Clinton, and during President Obama's second term, she received the Phoenix Award from the Congressional Black Caucus.

We thoroughly enjoyed our talk with Elaine and hearing about her civil rights work and inspirational messages. One message was about the importance of educating oneself about both past and current events. In that spirit, here are some resources to learn more about the 100th anniversary of women obtaining the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th amendment:

2020 Women's Vote Centennial Initiative:

2020centennial.org

Women's Vote Centennial: womensvote100.org

Women's Suffrage:

history.com/topics/womens-history/the-fight-for-womens-suffrage ■



Griselda Vasquez Ramirez '22 (left), Young Democrats, and Elizabeth Sanford '23 (right), College Republicans

The student voter drive, organized by the College Republicans and Young Democrats clubs for Aug. 25, was a huge success with students lining up to register or request their absentee ballot. Fun buttons were handed out to remind students how important it is to use their voice. It was the perfect way to celebrate Women's Equality Day!

SWEET SPOTLIGHT: Analyzing statistics with Sydney Campbell

Senior Sydney Campbell (Amherst, Va.) transitioned from field player to goalkeeper last lacrosse season and caught up with Vixen Athletics over the summer to discuss lacrosse, statistics and more.

Vixen Athletics: Last season you transitioned into playing goalkeeper for the back-half of the season, what was that transition like?

Sydney Campbell: It was incredibly hard at first because I had to change my entire lacrosse mindset, but I am so thankful for the experience. Goalies play a unique role in the game of lacrosse, they serve as both a player and a cheerleader. My favorite part of being a goalie was being able to cheer for my team the entire game.

VA: What were your thoughts looking back at this past season, the games that happened and then the season being cut short?

SC: When I think about this past season I am instantly happy, the team shared so many amazing memories even though our season was cut short. Our team is a family so it's really hard being apart from them for this long.

VA: How did it feel to get the opportunity to honor and recognize the seniors with a makeshift senior day?

SC: Our makeshift senior game will be one of my favorite Sweet Lax memories. We were able to celebrate all of the hard work our seniors have done for the past four years even though our season was cut short. The best part about it is that Coach Newman and Liz [Phaup] played with us too!

VA: With the season-ending earlier than anticipated, what are some of the highlights looking back at the games and road trips you did get to have?

SC: Right before our season was canceled, we were on a road trip in North Carolina and Georgia traveling for games and seeing cool things along the way. My favorite part of the trip was driving on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Asheville and having lunch at one of the overlooks.

VA: Being from Amherst - what was it like finishing the school year at home, but very close to campus?

SC: Finishing up the semester at home was challenging to say the least. In the beginning, I was still processing all of the changes—moving home, our canceled lacrosse season, and not seeing my friends every day. I am a mathematics major so it is nearly impossible to teach over a PowerPoint, so my professor, Dr. Stephen Loftus, set up his computer in front of a whiteboard so we could watch as he lectured. I also spend a large amount of time coding for statistics, so it was interesting trying to troubleshoot code over Google Meet, but we made it through.

VA: What drew you to statistics?

SC: Growing up I excelled in the STEM field, and as a junior/senior in high school I attended the Lynchburg Governor's Regional STEM Academy. STEM gave me my first introduction to statistics, but I didn't fall in love with it then.

It wasn't until my first year at Sweet Briar when I realized my true passion for statistics. Statistics is ever changing and benefits the world in many ways we do not see. I think it is the perfect way for me to make a positive change in the future.



VA: What are some things you've learned about lacrosse through statistical analysis?

SC: Being in several statistics courses, I have had the opportunity to work with Sweet Briar lacrosse data several times. This past semester I used regression to model what variables (ground balls, red/yellow cards, etc.) can predict if Sweet Briar lacrosse will win a game. It was very fun working with this data because I actually participated in making it. The results were also kind of surprising—the two variables that help predict the outcome our game is the number of ground balls and the number of shots Sweet Briar takes.

VA: Outside of school - what were you up to after campus closed down during the spring?

SC: I spent most of my time away from campus working. I worked from home for about two months and now I am working in the office.

Other than that I have been hiking a lot!

VA: Have you been binge-watching or reading anything during this time?

SC: This is sad to say, but I have almost finished all of Greys Anatomy (from start to finish). I think I started it a month after Sweet Briar closed its campus.

I have also been reading a lot. I just finished Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens! Amazing.

VA: How did you use your time away from campus to prepare for the 2020-21 school year and lacrosse?

SC: I have been working through the summer lacrosse workout packet to stay conditioned through the summer. And have also been hiking a lot which tests my mental toughness sometimes. ■

Sweet Briar again named among nation's most innovative schools by U.S. News & World Report



Sweet Briar College has once again been named as one of the nation's Most Innovative Schools, according to the 2021 Best Colleges rankings by U.S. News & World Report. Sweet Briar tied for 24th place with Bryn Mawr, Middlebury and two other institutions in the National Liberal Arts College category. The University of Richmond is the only other school in Virginia to make the list. This is the second time in three years that Sweet Briar has been singled out for this distinction, in recognition of its academic and institutional innovations.

For over a century, Sweet Briar College has educated women who have gone on to serve as pillars of their families, communities, and societies, exercising a particularly democratic form of leadership that is collaborative, supportive and ethical. Today, Sweet Briar is building on this educational legacy to redefine leadership for the 21st century, in which women will increasingly lead the way forward.

In the past two years, Sweet Briar has created and honed its new leadership core curriculum, whose 10 courses are designed to give its students the knowledge and skills they will need to understand global environmental and technological challenges and devise solutions to them that are socially, politically and economically sustainable.

In educating the next generation of women leaders who can meet the demands of the new century, Sweet Briar brings many assets. Its 2,800-acre campus, one of the largest and most beautiful in the nation, is a natural canvas and laboratory for the academic

program. It contains lakes, vineyards, an apiary, wildflower meadows, a state-of-the art 26,000-square-foot greenhouse and the Sweet Briar College Historic District, comprised of 21 Georgian Revival academic and residential buildings. The College's award-winning riding program is one of the oldest equestrian programs in the country, and its engineering program is one of only two ABET-accredited engineering programs at a women's college in the nation.

The College's president, Meredith Woo, said, "Sweet Briar's selection as one of the most innovative colleges recognizes its ability to foster and educate women leaders who will be able to conserve and steward our world in creative, responsible and sustainable ways. By extension, this recognition is also an affirmation of the creative possibilities inherent within the time-honored tradition of the liberal arts."

Sweet Briar's ranking was determined by top academics who participated in U.S. News & World Report's annual peer assessment survey conducted in the spring and summer of 2020. College presidents, provosts and admissions deans were asked to nominate up to 15 colleges or universities in their respective ranking categories that are making the most innovative improvements in terms of curriculum, faculty, students, campus life, technology or facilities. A school had to receive seven or more nominations to be listed. U.S. News & World Report states that the top-ranked schools are those the public should be watching because of the cutting-edge changes they are making on their campuses. ■

Know a young woman who may be
interested in Sweet Briar? Visit
sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student
so she can receive our
admissions materials!

Like Father, Like Daughter: Leaving a Legacy for Sweet Briar through the Nancy C. White '79 Pre-Med Scholarship Fund

This year, Sweet Briar was delighted to award a new scholarship from Thomas White, father of Nancy White '79. The White family of Larchmont, N.Y., has a long history of creating academic scholarships to transform the lives of promising students.

Aubrey White was Thomas White's father and was also the inspiration for this generous gift to Sweet Briar. He attended the University of Virginia in the 1920s on an academic scholarship and repaid the college many times over by establishing an endowed gift to his alma mater that continues to help deserving students to this day.

Knowing how cost-prohibitive medical school can be, Nancy's father wanted to ease the burden of expenses for a student at Sweet Briar pursuing a career in the medical field. The scholarship he created in honor of his daughter covers the last two years of tuition, room and board for a deserving student with a promising future. Gifts of this kind are a joy for us to receive and to award to our students. By offering this, the White family hopes to clear a path for continued learning that does not include the added concern of student loans.

This year's recipient of the White Scholarship, Tatum Wallis '22, shared the tremendous impact this award will have on her career. "I am beyond honored to receive this scholarship and to know that my accomplishments here at Sweet Briar had not gone unnoticed. As I grew older, I came to understand the struggles women face in the medical field, both as a patient and practitioner. I found that a large portion of women in this country feels unheard and dismissed by their physicians, and after I found a love for the subject in my high school anatomy class, I knew that this was a change I wanted to be a part of. I currently plan on pursuing a career as an OBGYN and hopefully owning my own private practice where



Nancy White '79 and her father, Thomas White

I can ensure that all women feel heard and respected. This scholarship has placed me another step forward on the track to reaching this goal and accomplishing change.

Although Nancy graduated with a degree in art and admits to struggling with her required science classes, she is overjoyed to have her name on this scholarship. She states that the gesture by her father is both a gift to Sweet Briar and a gift to her. Their shared love for our school and the investment they have made in our future is another example of how we continue to thrive. ■