

# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017 | VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 9

## Dear fellow Alumnae and Friends of Sweet Briar,

**I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends and were able to enjoy a break from the pace of the world while also taking time to appreciate the bounty of life.** While you have undoubtedly had many things on your mind, I hope you have also had a chance to begin reading the latest issue of the Alumnae Magazine, including all the positive news and progress about Sweet Briar!

On Nov. 16, President Woo concluded an eight-week tour around the country, visiting 20 alumnae clubs and rolling out her new vision for the College. At every stop along the way, alumnae and friends have been exuberant about the changes. They have also been asking insightful questions about the new academic repositioning, the innovative calendar and the tuition reset that will be implemented in the fall of 2018. As we speak, the faculty are working closely with the president to design this new curriculum model and prepare for the future.

With any change of this magnitude in a college community, it is always felt closest to home. This is particularly true for the students, staff and faculty, who are feeling the changes in ways that are intensely personal. Even so, this time in our history is ushering in a new vibrancy for the College and feelings of excitement among many members of its community. The pace of change also feels so right and fitting to all of us who love the institution and want it to succeed.

For President Woo and her vision to be successful, it will be essential that you support the changes under way and do what you have done so well in the past.

### You can support Sweet Briar in a number of ways:

- Volunteer with the Alumnae Alliance: Engage with **alumnae clubs close to home** ([sbc.edu/alumnae-development/geographic-clubs-and-events](http://sbc.edu/alumnae-development/geographic-clubs-and-events)) or join a working group to help advance the most important needs of the College (providing internships, hosting events like Sweet Briar Days and Back to School Days or helping reconnect all generations of alumnae in your area with the College).
- Recruit new students: Spread the good news about the College to prospective students and high school administrators and counselors by becoming an **Admissions Ambassador** ([sbc.edu/alumnae-admissions-ambassadors-sign-up](http://sbc.edu/alumnae-admissions-ambassadors-sign-up)) or **referring a student to Sweet Briar** ([sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student](http://sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student)).

- Support the College financially: Make a gift to the Sweet Briar Fund at [sbc.edu/give](http://sbc.edu/give) to help us reach our goal of \$13 million by June 30, 2018. All gifts will support student scholarships, faculty and the stewardship of Sweet Briar's natural and built environment.

Our fundraising must carry us through the next few years while we recruit students and while the smaller classes affected by the attempted closure continue their Sweet Briar experience. As seen below in the budgeted revenues and expenses for this fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2018, we cannot be casual about the tremendous challenges in front of us. As the budgeted revenues from annual giving to the Sweet Briar Fund (\$13 million) indicate, we are clearly still an institution that requires a great deal from all of our supporters since we have only raised 4 million in gifts and pledges to date.

Two years ago, we made the commitment to do things differently in the future and made a promise to innovate for a stronger Sweet Briar. So far, we have done that without exception. Now as never before in our history has your engagement meant more to the College, particularly as we transition to a new vision. I am confident if we use all our energy, resources and enthusiasm, we can make Sweet Briar what it was always meant to be.

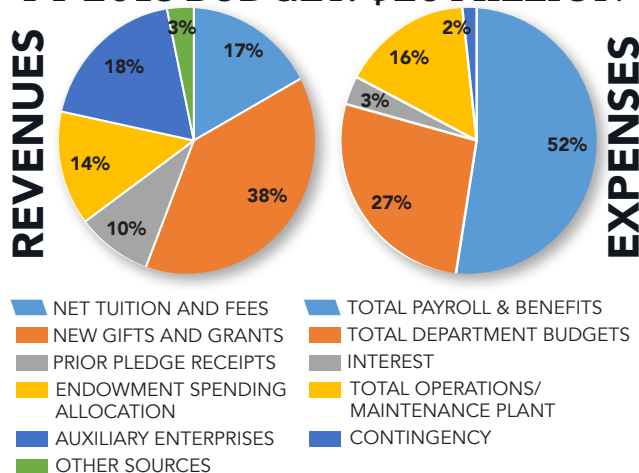
May the upcoming holiday season bring you joy and the promise of the New Year inspire and help shape a brilliant future for young women.

With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83

Vice President for Alumnae Relations and Development

### FY 2018 BUDGET: \$26 MILLION



## Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

The Honorable Teresa Pike  
Tomlinson '87, Chair  
Dr. Meredith Woo  
President of the College  
Andrew C. Benjamin  
Jacquelyne "Jax" Bullett '15  
Leah Solivan Busque '01  
Alice Dixon '82  
William B. Drake, Jr.  
Marianne "Mimi" C. Fahs '71  
Kelley Manderson Fitzpatrick '85  
Carol McMurtry Fowler '57  
Liza Lee  
Charlene "Sunny" Monk  
Gillian Munson  
Bernie Niemeier, Secretary  
Frank W. Roach  
Mason Bennett Rummel '83  
Caville Stanbury-Woolery '06  
Allison "Allie" Stemmons Simon '63  
Meighan Stone  
Georgene M. Vairo '72, Vice Chair  
CeCelia E. Valentine '95  
Elinor "El" H. Warner '85  
Marshaly N. Yeargin-Allsopp, MD '68

## Alumnae House Staff

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83  
Vice President for Alumnae Relations  
and Development  
Paula Eanes  
Office Manager  
Claire Dennison Griffith '80  
Senior Director of Alumnae Relations  
and Development  
Lea Harvey '90  
Director of Corporate and  
Foundation Relations  
Sarah Lewis  
Stewardship Manager  
Lisa Wray Longino '78  
Western Major Gifts Officer  
Julia Paris '99  
Director of Advancement Services  
Annette Pettyjohn  
Boxwood Circle Manager  
Rachel Pietsch  
Alumnae Relations Associate  
Bonnie L. Seitz '01  
Assistant Director of Advancement  
Services  
Clélie D. D. Steckel  
Director of the Sweet Briar Fund and  
Editor of The Briar Wire  
Katie Keogh Weidner '88  
Eastern Major Gifts Officer  
Wanda Vest  
Data Entry Manager

(800) 381-6131  
PO Box 1057  
Sweet Briar, VA 24595

## Planned Giving: Take advantage of the IRA Rollover

The Charitable IRA Rollover Gift is now permanent. You can make this type of gift anytime in 2017 or 2018. Your Charitable IRA Rollover Gift can provide the maximum support for Sweet Briar if you make your Charitable IRA Rollover Gift this year.

### The IRA Rollover Gift to Sweet Briar College

The charitable IRA rollover gift can be made in February or any subsequent month of 2018. It provides a donor who is 70 and ½ or older with the equivalent of a 100 percent income tax charitable deduction.

The gift also reduces the amount that a donor must take into taxable income as an IRA minimum distribution. A donor who is required to take a 5% minimum distribution from his or her IRA can instead direct the minimum distribution to Sweet Briar and reduce his or her taxable income.

### Direct from Qualifying IRAs

The Charitable IRA Rollover Gift is made directly by the IRA custodian to Sweet Briar. The gift is a completely tax-free transfer from the IRA to Sweet Briar. The gift is not included in the donor's income and the donor receives no income tax charitable contribution deduction for the gift. The completely tax-free transfer provides the equivalent of a 100 percent income tax charitable deduction for the gift.

Example: Susan Smith, who is 71, has a traditional IRA with a balance of \$100,000 consisting of deductible contributions and earnings. Susan can request the IRA custodian to distribute the entire \$100,000 to Sweet Briar. Under prior law, the entire distribution of \$100,000 would have been included in Susan's income. Under the new law, the distribution of \$100,000 is a qualified charitable contribution. As a result, no amount is included in Susan's income and this gift is a completely tax-free gift to Sweet Briar.

### Double the Tax Smart Gift

Susan and Robert Smith have separate IRA's and both of them are 70 and ½. Each of them can make a Charitable IRA Rollover gift of \$100,000 in 2017 or 2018 for a total 2017 or 2018 Charitable IRA Rollover gift of \$200,000.

Learn more about the IRA Charitable Rollover at [plannedgiving.sbc.edu/ira-charitable-rollover](http://plannedgiving.sbc.edu/ira-charitable-rollover). ■

### For more information, please contact:

**Claire Dennison Griffith '80, Senior Director of Alumnae Relations and Development**  
**PO Box 1057 | Sweet Briar, VA 24595**  
**Phone 434-381-6479 | Email: [cgriffith@sbc.edu](mailto:cgriffith@sbc.edu)**

*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.*

## Reunion 2018

### June 1-3, 2018

All alumnae from all classes (and their families!) are welcome, and we will  
honor those classes ending in a "3" or an "8."

Please mark your calendar now!

For more information, visit [sbc.edu/reunion](http://sbc.edu/reunion).



## Upcoming Sweet Briar Days

City	Date
Indianapolis, IN	December 19
Fredericksburg, VA	January 5
Amherst/Nelson, VA	January 6
Atlanta, GA	
Boston, MA	
Dallas, TX	
Michigan	
Milwaukee, WI/Northern IL	
Minnesota	
Orlando, FL	
Raleigh, NC	
Richmond, VA	
San Francisco, CA	
St. Paul, MN	
Charlotte, NC	January 7
Hunt Country, VA	
Louisville, KY	
Norfolk/VA Beach, VA	
Northern VA/DC	
Philadelphia, PA	
Portland, OR	
Denver, CO	January 8
Houston, TX	January 10
New York City, NY	
Cleveland, OH	January 13
Miami, FL	
TBD:	
Chicago, IL	

Planning for a few Sweet Briar Days is still in progress. Check [sbc.edu/alumnae-development/alumnae-events-calendar](https://sbc.edu/alumnae-development/alumnae-events-calendar) for updates.

## YOU CAN HELP RECRUIT THE NEXT CLASS OF SWEET BRIAR WOMEN!

Sweet Briar is asking alumnae and friends of the College to personally refer prospective students to the Admissions Office through a new referral form that can be found on both the Admissions and Alumnae pages of our website as part of a referral initiative. There is no time commitment or follow-up required, so please keep it in mind as a simple but significant way to help Sweet Briar's growth and renaissance. Visit [sbc.edu/admissions/referral-a-student](https://sbc.edu/admissions/referral-a-student) to make your first referral today!

## Gift the gift of Sweet Briar for the holidays!

Shop the Book Shop online at

[shopsweet.sbc.edu](https://shopsweet.sbc.edu)

or call 800-381-6106.

Find gifts, Sweet Briar branded clothing, books, and more for your classmates and friends!

## Seeking nominations for the Distinguished and Outstanding Alumnae Awards

In 2018, Sweet Briar will present both the Distinguished Alumna Award and the Outstanding Alumna Award at Reunion Convocation. Award nominations are reviewed and recipients are selected by the Alumnae Alliance Council, the Alumnae Relations and Development Office and the President's Cabinet of the College. These two awards honor Sweet Briar's alumnae for their service to the College.

### Distinguished Alumna Award

The Distinguished Alumna Award was established in 1988 to honor alumnae who have brought distinction to themselves and to Sweet Briar College through outstanding accomplishment in a volunteer or professional capacity.

### Outstanding Alumna Award

The Outstanding Alumna Award, established in 1968 in honor of Sweet Briar's first graduating class, the Class of 1910, may be given to graduate alumnae who have been out of college for at least 15 years in recognition of their outstanding service to Sweet Briar in a volunteer capacity.

Nominations for both awards are invited from any member of the Sweet Briar family: alumnae, faculty, staff, students, and the Sweet Briar College Board of Directors.

Make your nomination online at [sbc.edu/alumnae-development/awards](https://sbc.edu/alumnae-development/awards) or through the Alumnae Relations and Development Office at 800-381-6131. ■

## Meet Baldwin Scholar Ashton Mays '18

Nancy Baldwin graduated from Sweet Briar in 1957 and left to pursue a graduate degree. The following year, however, she returned and took what was supposed to be a one-year job as an admissions counselor — then known as “traveler.” That one year turned into 54 years of service to the College before her retirement in 2007. During those years, she served as director of admissions, editor of the Alumnae Magazine and spent about 20 years in the development office.



During her time at Sweet Briar, Baldwin touched the lives of hundreds — if not thousands — of students. When she passed away in 2013, the College lost one of its most devoted supporters. But through a scholarship created by her nieces, Sophia Godwin Crysler Hart '81 and Cannie Godwin Crysler Shafer '78, along with other devoted friends, her legacy lives on.

The Nancy Godwin Baldwin Scholarship has been given out since 2015. Ashton Mays '18 is one of the recipients.

Mays is the daughter of alumna Cathy Mays '84, who serves as the College's director of hospitality. The elder Mays has worked for Sweet Briar since the day after her own graduation, so her daughter has spent her whole life on campus, attending the campus preschool and kindergarten. As a Girl Scout, she sold cookies on campus, even setting up a table in Prothro. “I spent every day after school during middle school in Reid Pit or the FAC with my other friends, whose parents worked on campus, and I have been working here as part of the summer programs team (along with other roles) since the day after I turned 16,” she said. “To say that Sweet Briar is a major part of my life would be an understatement.”



As a high school senior in 2015, Sweet Briar was high on her list of colleges, although in the end, Mays accepted an offer to attend the University of Virginia.

She headed off to UVa, but quickly found that it wasn't the right place for her. She could have transferred to any one of a number of institutions in Virginia, but Mays knew in her heart that Sweet Briar was the place for her. “I think what really drew me back to SBC was the sense of community and sisterhood,” she said. “After seeing all of the hard work that

alumnae and friends of the College had put in to save the school, I wanted to go to a school that empowered women to be a part of something bigger than themselves.”

Once back home at Sweet Briar, Mays threw herself into the life of the College. She's a member of several tap clubs; this year, she's the vice president of the Student Government Association, president of the Sweet Tones, secretary for BAM and Aints 'n' Asses, the historian of the Chung Mungs, and a member of Taps 'n' Toes. She is also a member of the Sweet PEAs and the chair for the Sweet Spirits. She's a leader on campus in other ways too, serving as a resident advisor, orientation leader and tutor for the psychology department.



Because she grew up on campus, Mays knew Nancy Baldwin. “Nancy was like an adopted grandmother to my brother and me,” Mays said. She was honored to receive the scholarship started in Baldwin's memory. The scholarship has removed the financial burden of living on campus and made it possible for Mays to be as involved as she has been. “That means the world to me,” Mays said.

Asked what advice she would give to other alumnae considering supporting scholarships at Sweet Briar, Mays said: “Scholarships make college possible for students and families who can't afford the upfront cost of tuition, books and housing. I know I am eternally grateful for the scholarship I have received, and I think all students who receive scholarships would agree.”

Sweet Briar has 200 scholarships that have been created through donations from alumnae. These scholarships help the College recruit the very best students and also ease the financial burden college can place on students and their families. If you'd like to support scholarships at Sweet Briar College, contact Claire Griffith '80 in the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development at [cgriffith@sbc.edu](mailto:cgriffith@sbc.edu) or by phone at 434-381-6479.

Of course, all gifts to the College support students and faculty and help ensure that Sweet Briar will continue to educate fierce women for generations to come. To learn more about how your annual gift can help Sweet Briar, visit [sbc.edu](http://sbc.edu). ■



## Brewer Fund Grant is making a difference for Sweet Briar's environmental science program

In early 2016, the Judith Haskell Brewer Fund of The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia awarded Sweet Briar College a grant for its environmental science program and community garden.



*Sustainability interns and community members gathered in the Sweet Briar Community Garden before a celebratory dinner this past summer.*

There are essentially two grants: a three-year, \$500,000 grant that supports operating costs and a \$500,000 challenge grant that the College must match on a 1:1 basis. Altogether, the College will receive \$1.5 million, once it receives the full match.



*Sustainability interns get background information from Clemson investigators Jim LeMoine and Tom O'Halloran.*

The first part of the grant is having an immediate and significant impact on the program, providing research support for our two new environmental faculty stipends for summer sustainability interns, and support for the Explore Environmental Science weekends which bring high school students to campus. The funds are also supporting student participation in the community garden (this fall they provided the dining hall with cherry tomatoes, hot peppers, and sweet potatoes), and a student research assistant working in our pine forests and switchgrass fields on a USDA biofuels grant. As evidence of the Brewer grant's impact we see increasing interest in our environmental classes, a revitalized environmental club (now the sustainability club), and enthusiastic student volunteers in the community garden.

The challenge match will have a longer-term impact. The funds from the challenge can't be spent until the match is met, so plans for how those funds will be used are still being finalized. The grant requires that \$500,000 of the total \$1.5 million be designated for the endowment of Sweet Briar's environmental science program. The rest of the funds will support operating costs for three years.

The Brewer Fund has been providing the matching funds for each \$100,000 raised by the College. As of June 2017, the College had raised more than \$305,000 in matching funds and received \$300,000 in matching funds from the Brewer Fund. Since June, an additional \$17,500 had been raised toward the release of the Brewer Fund's fourth payment. The College needs to raise the remaining \$177,500 by June of 2019.



*Students in the Ecological Resource Assessment course conduct research on Sweet Briar's lower lake.*

Environmental science is one of Sweet Briar's most prestigious programs and this generous grant will not only help educate our students today, but will lay a foundation for the program's future. **To make a donation in support of the College's Environmental Science Program and help ensure that we meet the full match, please contact us at 800-381-6131.** ■



*Sweet Briar students analyze the fish population in the College's lake.*



**Save the date for Reunion!**  
**June 1-3, 2018**

## Families Weekend and Parents Council meetings strengthen the Sweet Briar Community

On the weekend of October 13-15, almost 100 parents, family members, and former parents came back to Sweet Briar. These valued members of Sweet Briar's community were treated to a wine tasting reception at Sweet Briar House on Friday evening, where they met President Meredith Woo and enjoyed offerings from Flying Fox Vineyard in nearby Afton, Virginia.

"It is a special joy to watch as parents share our beautiful campus with their daughters!" said Marcia Thom-Kaley, Interim Dean of Students and Parents Council Liaison.

The following morning, Thom-Kaley (also mother of Emma '18) hosted the first meeting of the reinvigorated Parents Council. Thom-Kaley gave an overview of the Parents Council's activities, including their strategic teams:

- Activities and Athletics
- Communications
- Career Readiness and Preparedness
- Student Recruiting and Retention

Each of these groups is led by a team of co-chairs of current parents and/or parents of alumnae. The co-chairs are working to elevate the presence of the Parents Council on Sweet Briar's website, are helping with recruitment efforts, and partnering with administrative staff to enhance the Sweet Briar experience for current and future students.

The Parents Council's overall mission is to facilitate a strong and collaborative relationship between Sweet Briar students, their parents and families, and the College.



Thanks to the leadership of the Parents Council Co-Chairs, Mary and Brendan Magner (parents of Aoife '19) and Lisa and Chris Clough (parents of Melissa '12), the group is "becoming an integral part of our success!" according to Thom-Kaley. She went on to say, "Becoming 'One Sweet Briar' has meant reaching out to some of our most important constituents—the parents who trust us with their daughters day after day."

All current parents and parents of alumnae are considered members of the Parents Council. To take a more active role with the Council, please contact Marcia Thom-Kaley directly by emailing her at [mthomkaley@sbcc.edu](mailto:mthomkaley@sbcc.edu) or by calling 434-381-6221. ■