

# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2018 | VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 9

## Dear fellow alumnae and friends of Sweet Briar,

**This week at Sweet Briar we celebrate the season with Vespers in the chapel, caroling in the quad and a gathering at Sweet Briar House with students, faculty, staff and friends of the college.**

The Sweet Briar community here on campus is stronger than ever and linked with so many families and friends all over America and abroad. We send you joyous greetings from the campus to you!

The alumnae magazine you have just received, the Briar Wire and the special letter from President Woo give us a reason to joyously embrace the advent of another year. Optimism and hope are ringing through the dell and throughout the classrooms. As we approach the new year, we also begin to formulate resolutions that will guide a new beginning for ourselves and for this year's seniors before entering the working world.

During the mid-November Board meeting, visionary members of the Sweet Briar community joined the Board, President Meredith Woo, student leaders, and senior staff of the College for a dinner to honor and thank those who have made remarkable gifts to Sweet Briar. These transformative leaders in philanthropy have rallied alongside all of Sweet Briar's supporters and together, we have raised more than \$53.7 million since July 2015.

As I looked around the room during the Benefactors Dinner, the importance of impact came to my mind. With the investment of these donors and all donors who make gifts to Sweet Briar, YOU are showing your belief in Sweet Briar College. You have made it possible to develop and refine our excellent academic programs and faculty, resulting in innovation recently recognized by U. S. News and World Report. You have provided funds for scholarships and have stewarded our natural and built environment. Many of you have joined our admissions counselors to recruit the next class of excellent Sweet Briar women.

Thank you for the tremendous investment of time, talent and treasure that you have already made in

Sweet Briar's legacy.

As we look ahead, with a \$10 million Sweet Briar Fund goal and a deadline of June 30, 2019, we can all make an impact on Sweet Briar and its students this year and for years to come by making a gift to Sweet Briar at [sbc.edu/give](http://sbc.edu/give). Every gift matters as we plan to meet our goal to raise the resources that are essential for the College.

May the blessings of Christmas and the holidays usher in a joyous New Year for you and yours!

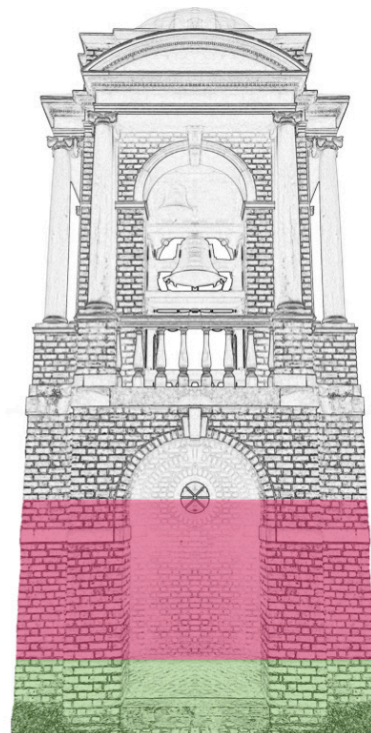
With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83  
Vice President for Alumnae Relations  
and Development

### SWEET BRIAR FUND FY 2019

**GOAL: \$10 MILLION**

**RAISED: \$3,260,483 (32.6% OF GOAL)**



Pledges:  
\$2,179,856

Received:  
\$1,080,627

\* Data updated Nov. 19, 2018.

## Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

Georgene M. Vairo '72, *Chair*

Dr. Meredith Woo,  
*President of the College*

John R. Alford, Jr.

Andrew C. Benjamin, *Vice Chair*

Alice Dixon '82

Marianne "Mimi" C. Fahs '71,  
*Secretary*

Kelley Manderson Fitzpatrick '85,  
*Executive Committee Member at Large*

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Karen Jackson, *Executive  
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Keenan Colton Kelsey '66

Charlene W. "Sunny" Monk

Gillian Munson, *Executive  
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Olivia Myers '17

Lynn Pasquerella

Holly Prothro Philbin '95

Mason Bennett Rummel '83

Caville Stanbury-Woolery '06

Claude Becker Wasserstein '82

Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp, MD '68,  
*Executive Committee Member at Large*

## Alumnae Relations and Development Staff

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83,  
*Vice President for Alumnae Relations  
and Development*

Lea Sparks Bennett '83,  
*Alumnae Relations and  
Development Assistant*

Lee Anne MacKenzie Chaskes '83,  
*Alumnae Relations and  
Development Associate*

Debbie Cochran, *Executive Assistant*

Paula Eanes, *Office Manager*

Claire Dennison Griffith '80,  
*Senior Director of Alumnae Relations  
and Development*

Alexandra Grobman '12, *Assistant  
Director of the Sweet Briar Fund*

Lea Harvey '90, *Director of  
Corporate and Foundation Relations*

Sarah Lewis, *Stewardship Manager*

Lisa Wray Longino '78,  
*Director of Major Gifts*

Beth Ann Trapold Newton '86,  
*Major Gifts Officer*

Julia Paris '99, *Director of  
Advancement Services*

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,  
*Major Gifts Officer*

Wanda Vest, *Data Entry Manager*

## Service to America Career Achievement Medal goes to Sweet Briar's Dr. Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp '68

By Janika Carey, Assistant Director for Content Strategy

Dr. Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp '68 is among a select group of civil servants to receive a Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal tonight. The "Sammies," also dubbed the "Oscars of government service," are awarded by the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission it is to make government more effective.

Sammies are awarded each year in a number of categories to individuals whose accomplishments are "making a meaningful difference to millions of people across our country and around the world," according to the organization. Yeargin-Allsopp, associate director for children with special health care needs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will be honored with the 2018 Career Achievement Medal.

During her more than three decades at the CDC, Yeargin-Allsopp "pioneered research to understand the prevalence of autism and other developmental disabilities, influencing the expansion of health, social and educational services for children with special needs," according to her Sammies profile. In 1966, Yeargin-Allsopp became the first African-American student to attend Sweet Briar College and in 1968, she was the first African-American woman admitted to Emory University School of Medicine. Last year, Yeargin-Allsopp received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the



American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine.

"I feel that I've done the best I can do with the gifts and talents that I've been given," she said according to a story in the Washington Post. "That's what we all should do."

Yeargin-Allsopp is currently serving a second term on the Sweet Briar College Board of Directors. In 1992, the College honored her with its Distinguished Alumna Award.

"I think Sweet Briar as a place matches my determination and willpower as a person," she said in a February 2018 profile on the Sweet Briar College website. "I hope that many more young women will find their way to Sweet Briar and take advantage of all the wonderful, transformative experiences they will have there. It can be life-changing. I am an example of that!" ■

**We Want You!** The Young Alumnae Squad is eagerly cultivating our alumnae network by encouraging engagement in our hometowns, classes and global Sweet Briar community. Coming soon, we are excited to launch young alumnae (and alumnae at large) local community events, crowd sourcing new ideas for communication and collaboration. YAS is looking at new ways to share updates, actions and opportunities to aid Sweet Briar in her path ahead. Through student networking, admissions ambassador

partnerships, community cultivation, class participation and more. We know that young alumnae are a powerful force to help drive the Sweet Briar community and are challenging our status quo by engaging with each other.

If you are a young alumna (0-15 years out) and are interested in volunteering in any capacity with Sweet Briar, complete the form at [sweetbriar.imodules.com/alumnae-alliance-council](https://sweetbriar.imodules.com/alumnae-alliance-council) to be part of the young alumnae leaders within our Sweet Briar community. ■



# Sweet Briar board member Alice Dixon '82 named to Richmond's U.S. Lacrosse Hall of Fame

By Casey Grogan, Sports Information Director



Sweet College alumna and Board of Directors member Alice Dixon '82 was named to the United States Lacrosse-Richmond Chapter Hall of Fame in October for her dedication to the sport of lacrosse in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Dixon, who came to Sweet Briar from Charlotte, N.C., was a three-sport varsity athlete for four years, competing in field hockey, basketball and lacrosse for the Vixens. Away from the field and court, Dixon served as the Student Government Association president, junior class president and freshman class president, while serving on the Judicial Committee as a sophomore. A QV and an Earphone, Dixon was named in the 1982 edition of *Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities*.

Dixon graduated from Sweet Briar in 1982 with an A.B. in biology, before earning a Master of Humanities from the University of Richmond. In Richmond, Dixon took a job in the pharmaceutical industry. Following a long career with Carter Wallace, she entered the field of residential mortgage lending, where she earned the prestigious Certified Professional Mortgage Specialist designation.

In the sport of lacrosse, Dixon has had her hands on many facets of the game since she left Sweet Briar as a collegiate student-athlete. Dixon continued to play the sport at the club level following her college career, and was a highly respected official for 23 years at the high school and college level. Dixon also spent 10 years as an assignor of officials for middle and high school and club games. Assigning over 400 games a year, throughout Virginia, Dixon helped

develop officials, while also recruiting and training new officials.

In 2008, Dixon was the recipient of the Lanetta Ware Service Award, which serves as a lifetime achievement award from the Blue Ridge Board of Officials.

Dixon's time in lacrosse also saw her as a member of the Central Virginia Women's Lacrosse Association, where she served as vice president of the organization, before being named an honorary member in 2003.

In 2009, Dixon assumed the role of President of the Richmond Chapter of U.S. Lacrosse, which had been dormant for many years. Dixon reconstituted and reorganized the chapter, which is now a thriving member of U.S. Lacrosse.

Most recently, in lacrosse, Dixon served as head lacrosse coach for Collegiate School's middle school girls' team, while also working as the head field hockey goalie coach. Dixon coached at Collegiate School for nearly five years.

Dixon joined the Sweet Briar College Board of Directors on July 2, 2015, and is chair of its Alumnae Committee. In 2017, she served as President Meredith Woo's Inauguration Committee chair. Previously, Dixon was active in the Richmond chapter of the Sweet Briar Alumnae Association (now Alumnae Alliance), serving as the club's president for a number of years. In her community, she has been active with her church and was a longtime member of the Junior League board, and a member of its executive committee. ■

# CLASS CHALLENGES

You and your classmates can make an impact by helping us reach our \$10 million goal this fiscal year ending June 30, 2019! See your class giving and participation statistics below.

**Make your gift now at [sbc.edu/give](http://sbc.edu/give).**

Class Year	Giving Nov. 19, 2018
1940	\$0
1941	\$0
1942	\$1,100
1943	\$19,296
1944	\$50
1945	\$1,000
1946	\$34,000
1947	\$100
1948	\$5,155
1949	\$51,033
1950	\$0
1951	\$600
1952	\$1,175
1953	\$6,200
1954	\$452,000
1955	\$300
1956	\$1,015
1957	\$10,655
1958	\$1,325
1959	\$1,550
1960	\$16,700
1961	\$2,300
1962	\$22,520
1963	\$1,315
1964	\$54,180
1965	\$10,615
1966	\$3,300
1967	\$2,850
1968	\$18,239
1969	\$850
1970	\$2,610
1971	\$845
1972	\$62,350
1973	\$350
1974	\$23,681
1975	\$30,945
1976	\$529
1977	\$0
1978	\$2,510
1979	\$5,624

Class Year	Giving Nov. 19, 2018
1980	\$9,332
1981	\$3,925
1982	\$11,430
1983	\$5,160
1984	\$21,003
1985	\$4,374
1986	\$1,525
1987	\$180
1988	\$1,725
1989	\$1,677
1990	\$250
1991	\$550
1992	\$6,605
1993	\$7,954
1994	\$190
1995	\$250
1996	\$11,357
1997	\$2,050
1998	\$1,480
1999	\$3,010
2000	\$1,257
2001	\$5,925
2002	\$2,470
2003	\$915
2004	\$900
2005	\$742
2006	\$661
2007	\$552
2008	\$492
2009	\$160
2010	\$1,025
2011	\$1,300
2012	\$420
2013	\$40
2014	\$0
2015	\$0
2016	\$111
2017	\$350
2018	\$0

\* Data updated Nov. 19, 2018.

## Sweet Briar math professor Raina Robeva receives VFIC award for excellence in undergraduate teaching

By Janika Carey, Assistant Director of Content Strategy



Professor of Mathematical Sciences Raina Robeva, who leads Sweet Briar College's Center for Engineering, Science and Technology in Society, has received the 2018 H. Hiter Harris, Jr. Memorial Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award from the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges. Robeva accepted the honor at a luncheon in Richmond today.

The award comes just weeks after Robeva received the 2018 Intercollegiate Biomathematics Alliance Distinguished Senior Fellowship, which honors scholars with outstanding contributions to mathematical biology. It's rewarding to be recognized for her scholarship and teaching alike, says Robeva, who is currently piloting Sweet Briar's Google-designed computer science course, Foundations of Python Programming.

"I am honored and thrilled to receive the VFIC Harris Award," Robeva said. "It is a recognition not only for my work, but also for the innovative and modern curriculum Sweet Briar offers its students to prepare them to join the workforce of the future."

Robeva is the lead author/editor of the books "An Invitation to Biomathematics" with the accompanying "Laboratory Manual of Biomathematics" (2008), "Mathematical Concepts and Methods in Modern Biology: Using Modern Discrete Models" (2013), "Algebraic and Discrete Mathematical Methods for Modern Biology" (2015) and most recently, "Algebraic and Combinatorial Computational Biology" (September 2018), all published by Academic Press.

"Dr. Robeva is that rare academic who combines thought-provoking research with compelling teaching," said Dean of the College Lynn Rainville. "Furthermore, she is a model citizen in her field, regularly winning nationally-competitive grants, distilling complicated bio-mathematical topics in textbooks, editing journals, and regularly presenting at conferences."

Robeva is the founding chief editor of the specialty journal *Frontiers in Systems Biology*, past chair of the advisory board of the National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis, and chair of the Chapter in Mathematical and Computational Biological Science of the Mathematical Association of America (BIO SIGMAA). Her research interests span a wide range of topics, including systems biology, random processes and fields, and mathematical modeling for biology and the biomedical sciences.

Robeva has received funding for her research and educational projects from multiple public and private sources, including the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, and has mentored numerous student research projects. Her translational research has resulted in three U.S. patents for assessment and diagnosis of attentional impairments. Robeva is a 2014 recipient of the Outstanding Faculty Award of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia—the commonwealth's highest honor for faculty at Virginia's public and private colleges and universities.

Robeva has a B.S. in mathematics and an M.S. in probability and statistics from the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski" in Bulgaria. She earned her Ph.D. in mathematics at the University of Virginia. ■



## New student ensemble Daisy's Harp bridges music and engineering

*By Janika Carey, Assistant Director of Content Strategy*

There's that half-hushed air of anticipation in Babcock 127 as students trickle in and take their seats — some pulling out instruments, others phones. And it's not your everyday class. These are all members of Sweet Briar's brand-new ensemble Daisy's Harp, and this is band practice — pretty much.

Corin Diaz '19 has settled in at the piano and is playing a few notes, while classmate Anne Meyer is fiddling, just a little, on her violin.

Two weeks earlier, Daisy's Harp performed its first concert in Memorial Chapel. "This is really like being part of a rock band," Assistant Professor of Music Joshua Harris, who directs the group, told the audience then. That first show was a colorful assembly of contemporary pieces chosen, arranged and performed by the students — from Neutral Milk Hotel's "In an Aeroplane Over the Sea" to "Five" by John Cage.

In just three weeks of class, the students had — through improvisation, rehearsals and rearrangements — put together their first big concert, with Harris serving as more of a facilitator than a director. But there was something else that impressed listeners in Memorial Chapel: an unusual instrument that can be played by waving one's hands over it.

"This is a light-sensitive harp," Harris explained. "These little bumps are phototransistors that react to light. When the light is blocked, they send a message to the computer that basically says: 'Play a MIDI note.' From there we can really do anything. ... In the case of the song you just heard ["Aeroplane Over the Sea"], we're controlling a synthesizer that students designed last spring in a course I taught called Interactive Computer Music. The glitches you hear correspond to the light levels being registered by the phototransistors."

That instrument and its development, Harris added, reflect exactly the kind of "Do-it-Yourself" ethos Daisy's Harp is trying to foster: "We believe that students need to have opportunities to be makers. Eventually, we hope to design another, larger harp with similar functionality, but with several improvements, and we're collaborating with engineering faculty on some of the design."

Meyer, the ensemble's violinist who is also an engineering major, was instrumental in building the light harp, Harris said. She took the prototype for the instrument and soldered the circuitry to a circuit board, then installed it in the enclosure box.

"My music colleague Jeff Jones and I have been thinking about 'Daisy's Harp' for a long time," he explained during the concert. "If you didn't know, Daisy Williams, the daughter of Sweet Briar founder Indiana Fletcher Williams, played the harp, and you can see her harp on display in the Sweet Briar Museum on Elijah Road. In naming this ensemble Daisy's Harp, we are seeking to make a connection between our history and our future. Having a kind of modern harp in this ensemble was important to me as a symbol of our respect for tradition even as we press forward with more experimental approaches to music." ■

