

The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

Dear Alumnae and friends,

As we ring in 2017, all of us find special meaning in what Sweet Briar College has navigated over the past 21 months. The tenacity, purpose-driven actions and selfless dedication that navigation required are necessary to stay the course toward a vibrant future.

Staying the course demands that we continue to give our time, treasure and talent until we reach our path to sustainability. And for 2017, we should focus that time, treasure and talent by committing to several New Year's resolutions:

1. Continue to love and support Sweet Briar.
2. Stay focused on the outcome and relevance of women's leadership.
3. Make Sweet Briar the leading women's college in the U.S. and abroad.
4. Support and nurture our network of alumnae around the U.S. and the globe.
5. Recommit to setting Sweet Briar apart as an institution that attracts women who go on to lead lives of great significance.

Indiana Fletcher Williams laid out in her will in 1899 that the women of Sweet Briar "be useful members of society." Ahead of her time, Indiana projected a new leadership role for women and today we build upon and enhance that vision.

In President Stone's speech of commitment (see text to the right) that he delivered in the Quad in March 2016 while planting a new Sweet Briar rose next to Gray, the pledge to our college must resonate at the beginning of every year if we are to succeed.

Your engagement in this year and beyond is making all the difference. YOU make the difference.

Happy New Year,

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83
Vice President for Alumnae Relations and Development
mpmhutson@sbcc.edu

Reunion 2017

Come home for the next all-class Reunion, June 2-4, 2017! All alumnae from all classes (and their families!) are welcome, and we will honor those classes ending in 2 and 7.

Our Commitment

President Phillip C. Stone delivered the following comments during the March 3, 2016 rose planting and dedication.

In dedicating this garden of Sweet Briar roses,

We commit

That just as roses must be tended, protected and cared for, so we will tend, care for and protect our College.

We commit

That this College shall never again be abandoned to perceived difficulties and challenges, but shall continue another 115 years and beyond.

We commit

That generations of young women will continue to be educated here as leaders, with a liberal arts education, to prepare them for lives of fulfillment, service and meaning.

We commit

That the women of Sweet Briar, who miraculously saved their College, will remain bonded in boldness and unified in common mission, to protect their College from all peril and danger.

We commit

That the fervent prayer of Indiana Fletcher Williams to create a lasting memorial to her daughter, Daisy, by enabling young women to be educated on this beautiful and historic property will continue to be fulfilled.

We commit

That we will keep faith with the founder and the generations of women who preceded us, who refused to surrender in the face of personal tragedy and trying external circumstances of their own day, but who heroically passed on this beloved college to our generation.

We commit

That we will be a diverse, civil and engaged community delighting in the variety of our gifts; with courtesy, civility and consideration for each other's views we



Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

*The Honorable Teresa Pike
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*Phillip C. Stone, Esq.,
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Allison "Allie" Stemmons Simon '63

Marcia Thom-Kaley

Georgene M. Vairo '72, Vice Chair

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Elinor "El" H. Warner '85, Secretary

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Alumnae Relations and Development Staff

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Vice President for Alumnae
Relations and Development*

*Priscilla Newton Carroll '87
Director of Alumnae Relations*

*Donna Dodd '15 and PA '01
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*Paula Eanes
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*Claire Dennison Griffith '80
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*Sarah Lewis
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*Bonnie L. Seitz '01
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*Clélie D. D. Steckel
Assistant Director of the Sweet Briar
Fund and Editor of The Briar Wire*

*Wanda Vest
Data Coordinator*

*We have a position open in our office.
Visit [sbc.edu/human-resources/
faculty-staff-job-openings/](http://sbc.edu/human-resources/faculty-staff-job-openings/) to find
out more.*

*For more information about
Alumnae Relations and
Development staff, please visit
sbc.edu/alumnae-development/staff/.*

(800) 381-6131

*PO Box 1057
Sweet Briar, VA 24595*

will be kind to each other, and we will show respect for the dignity of each member of the community, not seeing others as mere caricatures of our cultural or personal prejudices but as fellow human beings worthy of respect and dignity.

We commit

That through our devotion to the highest aspirations of our common vision, we will demonstrate that at Sweet Briar College, roses shall forever bloom.

We commit

That today, March 3, with the eyes of the nation upon us, we accept our responsibility to preserve and nurture this school that we love and to transfer it strong and vibrant to those who follow us.

May the campus bells, which will ring out today and in the days and years ahead with beautiful sounds of joy and celebration, constantly remind us of our commitment today to preserve Sweet Briar College from all harm.

We hereby dedicate this garden of Sweet Briar roses as a symbol of this, our solemn and sacred pledge. ■

Planned Giving: Proposed IRS regulations could end valuation discounts for family entities

Extremely Popular Discount Planning Strategies

Family Limited Partnerships, Limited Liability Partnerships, Limited Liability Companies and other strategies have often provided a 35% or larger discount in the value of family entities and other properties and thus reduced dramatically the tax cost of transferring these businesses and properties to children, grandchildren and others.

Discounts Eliminated for Gifts Made After the Regulations Become Final

The rules apply to gifts made after the regulations become final. It is anticipated that the regulations could become final in December of 2016 or the first part of 2017. In some circumstances, even gifts made before the regulations are made final are affected if the donor dies within three years of having made the gift.

Estate Tax Discounts Eliminated for All Family Entities

The proposed rules apply to estates of decedents dying after the regulations become final. Valuation discounts are eliminated for business entities created prior to the date that the regulations become final if the person dies after the regulations become final.

Act Now to Minimize Tax

These regulations can result in an enormous increase in the estate tax on large estates. You might multiply one third of the total fair market value of your estate times 40% to obtain a rough idea of the increase in the estate tax that your estate could owe the government if these regulations become final. There are ways to avoid this result but you need to contact your team of professional advisors now.

Charitable Lead Trusts

Charitable Lead Trusts provide a zero-tax plan to protect family businesses and other assets from the burden of confiscatory taxation while providing income to your private foundation or other charitable interests for a short period of years and then transferring the assets 100% tax free to your children, grandchildren or others.

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.

For more information, please contact:

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**Don't forget to explore our
new planned giving website at
plannedgiving.sbc.edu!**

Tom Connors, Sweet Briar devotee and friend, returns to retirement

by Phyllis Watt Jordan '80

Tom Connors is retiring again. At age 79, after helping to right Sweet Briar's financial situation and introducing scores of donors and friends to the College's new leadership, Connors is stepping down from a job he calls a "labor of love."

Connors estimates this is the fourth time he has retired, and the second time he's left a job at Sweet Briar. He and his wife, Jocelyn Palmer Connors '62, have always made the college a part of their lives. Tom spent years on the board before becoming the top financial officer in the mid 1980s. Jocelyn served two terms as a leader in the Alumnae Association, revived the Friends of Art, led alumnae clubs in Charlotte, Winston-Salem and Roanoke, and helped decorate renovated dorms while living on campus.

"We served as a twofer," Connors said. "I couldn't go to Sweet Briar, but I feel much closer to Sweet Briar than my own alma mater, Colby. So it's my college, too."

Connors likes to say that four of the five most important women in his life went to Sweet Briar. The first was his aunt, Irene Beasley, class of '27, a musician and composer. Then came Jocelyn, whom he courted at Sweet Briar while he was a young Marine officer. His daughters—Katherine Connors Cassada '86 and Michaelle "DeDe" Connors King '87—followed their mother's example.

The Connors came to live on campus in 1986 when he succeeded Peter Daniel as Vice President and Treasurer. In their nine years living in the farmhouse, the couple was an integral part of the Sweet Briar community. Daughter DeDe joined the admissions team and became associate director.

The Connors were retired in Winston Salem when they heard the stunning March 2015 announcement that the college would close.

"It was like 9/11 for me," he recalled about hearing the news. "They're closing the college? Why?"

When alumnae negotiated a settlement to keep the college open, they asked Connors to serve on the newly reconstituted board of directors. Within two weeks, he had a new assignment: President Phil Stone wanted him to return to the chief financial post until Sweet Briar was on sound financial footing.

The audit for the fiscal year ending in June 2016—Connors' tenure—showed no material weaknesses, no spending from the endowment and, for the first time in many years, a small surplus. When Sweet Briar named a permanent vice president for finance and treasurer, Timothy E. Klocko, Connors shifted his focus to raising money from major donors. Jocelyn joined the Alumnae Alliance efforts to raise money.

From all of us at Sweet Briar, many thanks to Tom and Jocelyn for all of their work for the College. ■



Marcia Thom-Kaley, director of Alumnae Admissions Recruiters, goes back to teaching full time

After 17 months of training alumnae, calling prospective students, and long days at open houses and college fairs, Marcia Thom-Kaley is returning to teaching full time. As Director of Alumnae Admissions Recruiters (AARs) from July 2015 through December 2016, she led more than 500 alumnae in their efforts to recruit prospective students around the country.



Thom-Kaley is well known for her vibrant, effusive spirit. With a laugh that can be heard from a distance, she is a pillar of Sweet Briar's community. She has said that Sweet Briar is where she found her voice, but she has literally helped her students find their voices—and their home—at Sweet Briar as well. Prior to taking on her role in Admissions, Thom-Kaley was assistant professor of music and director of voice and choral studies. She now returns to those roles, conducting concert and chamber choirs and teaching applied voice.

Daughter Emma is a member of the Class of 2018, having transferred to Sweet Briar from the University of Virginia.

The office of alumnae relations and development thanks Marcia for her partnership and her leadership of Sweet Briar's AARs. May she help us lift our voices for years to come! ■

Admissions office welcomes Savannah Oxner '05 to the team

Savannah Oxner is the newest addition to the admissions team as senior admissions counselor. She is taking over as the AAR liaison (as Marcia Thom-Kaley returns to full-time teaching) and will also be working to recruit students from the broader Richmond and Central Virginia area. An alumna from the class of 2005, she studied English and Creative Writing and Anthropology and then went on to earn her Master of Arts in Teaching.



Oxner comes to this role with some unique qualifications. Several years ago, she worked in admissions, and she has also taught in the local high school and most recently worked in development at Randolph College. With this well-rounded background (which she attributes to her liberal arts education), she brings to the table a rare mix of qualifications that are a perfect fit for admissions and this full-time role.

Oxner is incredibly excited to be "home again," where she is part of the family who are working to ensure Sweet Briar will be educating young women for "at least another hundred years." Welcome home, Savannah! ■

AARs hit the road to talk with prospective students

For the past year, alumnae working as Alumnae Admissions Recruiters (AARs) or answering the call for volunteers have represented Sweet Briar at college fairs, high schools, and equestrian events around the country. Armed with passion, energy, and a knowledge of their college only alumnae can have, these women have not only recruited prospective students, they have been effective brand ambassadors. Below, several alumnae share their experiences of representing the College.

Norma Bulls Valentine '93 covered eight college fairs in the span of three days in South Carolina.

Norma: I went early to the college fairs and met with guidance counselors. I introduced myself, gave them SBC information, a pitch for the school, and my card. One thing that stuck with me was many of the professional college recruiters came up to me with huge compliments about any SBC women they meet, how lovely the table was, etc. It is so nice to know no matter where we go, people say wonderful things about Sweet Briar women.

Ann Kiley Crenshaw '76 worked a college fair with Erin Geiersbach '15, Admissions Counselor in Virginia Beach.

Ann: It was quite an age span between our classes: 1976 and 2015. We worked so well together. I was able to speak to the students about my career experience and my love for SBC. The parents felt comfortable speaking with me about the alumnae's dedication to Sweet Briar and our endeavors to secure the College in the future.

Amy Campbell Lamphere '80 worked college fairs in Nebraska for Sweet Briar before March 2015. Since then, she has continued to work fairs in Nebraska and Minneapolis.

Amy: Many have never heard of Sweet Briar, but those who have—and this, importantly, goes for other college reps who are in attendance—LOVE “our story” and will listen to our pitch, imagining themselves in our role as super-committed students/parents/alums. What I loved was standing next to Stephens College and really playing up the women's college difference. It is also a marvelous chance to educate on the value of a liberal arts education: that employers want workers who can think broadly, and not just “in their one narrow major field.” I think we have a ROCKSTAR opportunity utilizing alums in the booths. We are definitely on the right, real track.

Joan Collins Wyatt '85 and Jane Dure '82 worked a college fair in San Antonio, Texas for students attending private high schools.

Joan: We were positively branding SBC with our interactions with all who visited our booth, not just prospective students. We lured them in to tell our story: voted most school spirit, gorgeous campus, not-to-be-believed faculty-student ratios. Our booth was beautiful: flowers are a must for college fairs. It made a difference.

Jane: These kids were teed up by their high schools to want

liberal arts, so that half of the battle was over. They were articulate in what they wanted to study and why. One was interested in pursuing environmental science. Joan and I could talk to her about doing that at a 3,200-acre living laboratory. We were able to share with her the various environmental science projects on campus, such as the student whose honors project involved studying hydrilla in the lower lake. We also had students interested in STEM, pre-vet (it was so great talking about our acceptance rate to vet schools), and English—all very easy to talk up with the young ladies. Best of all, we had a sophomore and her mother drop by—she's been on the list receiving info about SBC for a year or so; they knew our whole story, and were happy to see us at the fair and be able to ask us about SBC's progress—SBC is still their number one choice.

The girls and their parents appreciated that we were alumnae—the whole conversation was different. I paid attention to what was going on at the tables on either side of us. It was different; our conversations were more personal. I told the story of Indiana and her husband and Daisy, and then Joan and I tied it into what the alumnae had done to preserve what Indiana had wanted—a wonderful tag team. The story resonated.

Rachel Renzy Meima '90 and Suzanne Petrie Liscouski '91 co-chaired hosting a recruiting booth at the Washington International Horse Show (WIHS), recruiting more alumnae—Phoebe Peacock '68, Edie McRee Bowles '74, Jane Frierson '74, Brendy Reiter Hantzes '81, Karen Williams '84, Christina Savage Lytle '88, Christina Mulvihill '88, Katherine Sutliff Cooper Hoffman '91, Barbara “Babs” Baisley '92, Mimi Wroten '93, Maren Leggett '95, Katrina Balding Bills '97, Alexia Redick Bartlett '05, Beth Goldring '05, Chelsea Capizzi-Walsh Lomicka '08, Sarah Gray '15, Celia Lee '15, and Victoria Wolfgang '16—from the Washington, DC - National Capitol Region to represent Sweet Briar at the booth from 7 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. over the five days and nights of the event. Also helping out was Barbara Baisley's daughter Maura, a future Vixen, hopefully!

An equestrian tradition since 1958, the WIHS is the country's leading metropolitan indoor horse show. More than 26,000 spectators attend the show, which includes Olympic-level competition along with community and charity events.

Rachel: It was an incredibly successful event, not only from the prospective student and admissions perspective but also, and equally if not more importantly, from the marketing and PR perspective. I believe we cannot quantify the value of having a presence at the WIHS this year to say, “We are here!” “We have survived!” and “We are thriving!” to an audience with which we have a strong and long history.

Suzanne: The WIHS served as an excellent forum from both a recruiting and a marketing perspective. Riding Director Mimi Wroten joined our booth, and of course, she thrived talking to packs of prospective young ladies. Sweet Briar was the only college represented at WIHS, and it was wonderful to tell students and parents alike that there is a “real” accredited institution where women could receive a top notch education AND be part of a nationally renowned riding program.

It struck a meaningful note with many parents and students that all of us at the booth were volunteers from Sweet Briar, not paid staff. We regularly underscored how much SBC changed our lives, and how we felt compelled to tell

“AARs” CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



A new year, a new class challenge

While #GivingTuesday was a tremendous success in its own right, it also accomplished another goal: launching the class challenges for this fiscal year. Beginning with Class Presidents and Fund Agents, the competition to reach higher participation rates and increased class gifts has begun!

To remind alumnae of all they accomplished in the 2016 fiscal year, we are including last year's participation rates and giving amounts as of June 30, 2016 below. Please note that this participation data reflects unrestricted giving to the Sweet Briar Fund only. We have already begun sending letters to the Reunion classes and will be sending them out to Non-Reunion classes in January and February. Of course, you don't have to wait on a letter to make a gift. You can make a gift online at sbc.edu/give or by calling (800) 381-6131. If you are interested in ways to make a gift besides credit card or check, please visit sbc.edu/alumnae-development/ways-to-give. Data for participation and giving in FY17 year to date reported as of December 21, 2016.

Year	FY 2016 Participation*	FY 2017 Participation, year to date*
1940	10.9%	4.5%
1941	13.0%	2.2%
1942	11.9%	1.8%
1943	21.6%	5.9%
1944	29.1%	9.8%
1945	21.3%	4.5%
1946	16.7%	5.0%
1947	13.5%	4.2%
1948	18.6%	7.1%
1949	22.2%	5.8%
1950	24.2%	6.7%
1951	38.27%	12.7%
1952	33.0%	11.7%
1953	34.0%	11.8%
1954	31.1%	11.0%
1955	38.32%	11.3%
1956	25.6%	7.1%
1957	32.9%	11.1%
1958	34.3%	10.2%
1959	30.8%	10.3%
1960	34.6%	10.3%
1961	29.1%	6.1%
1962	32.5%	10.4%
1963	37.3%	11.9%
1964	40.1%	9.4%
1965	33.2%	6.7%

Year	FY 2016 Participation*	FY 2017 Participation, year to date*
1966	44.6%	6.3%
1967	44.5%	7.9%
1968	38.2%	6.4%
1969	16.1%	3.0%
1970	36.5%	6.9%
1971	30.8%	4.0%
1972	31.0%	7.5%
1973	29.0%	6.8%
1974	31.1%	7.0%
1975	40.4%	6.6%
1976	25.7%	6.1%
1977	20.0%	2.9%
1978	35.4%	6.6%
1979	23.9%	6.4%
1980	27.4%	9.0%
1981	22.5%	3.2%
1982	22.7%	9.7%
1983	31.1%	8.7%
1984	25.0%	6.4%
1985	22.9%	5.7%
1986	36.5%	9.0%
1987	18.9%	7.5%
1988	24.4%	9.1%
1989	18.4%	3.7%
1990	17.4%	5.1%
1991	26.9%	15.6%

Year	FY 2016 Participation*	FY 2017 Participation, year to date*
1992	24.9%	7.2%
1993	37.1%	4.8%
1994	24.5%	3.9%
1995	26.8%	3.6%
1996	33.0%	5.0%
1997	23.3%	5.5%
1998	35.7%	5.6%
1999	35.6%	3.7%
2000	28.6%	5.1%
2001	26.5%	2.8%
2002	22.1%	3.7%
2003	25.9%	9.0%
2004	21.7%	4.8%
2005	23.0%	8.6%
2006	32.6%	5.0%
2007	19.25%	5.6%
2008	19.34%	3.3%
2009	17.4%	7.0%
2010	24.4%	2.7%
2011	22.5%	3.5%
2012	15.3%	3.0%
2013	18.9%	2.9%
2014	14.4%	2.1%
2015	17.8%	2.2%
2016	100%	4.9%

* Participation rates for both FY 2016 and FY 2017 year to date reflect unrestricted gifts to the Sweet Briar Fund only.

"AARs" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

others. It really resonated, and obviously was truthful.

A surprising number of young ladies liked hearing about the career successes of alumnae, as they know the horse world is expensive. They were fixated on being successful so that they could make enough money to always afford their equine lifestyle. Pretty impressive and an accurate realization!

From an awareness perspective, many had heard the closure story and inquired about the status and health of the college. Whether interested in attending or sending a child to the school or not, many stopped by to wish us well and congratulate us for turning things around. Overall, it was a very high-energy event, with a high return on investment, as we engaged hundreds of prospective students from a demographic that would thrive at Sweet Briar.

Christina Savage-Lytle: A few Hollins alumnae came by to say how fab the booth looked and that they wished Hollins would do this sort of thing. It was nice to feel that we were right where we needed to be!

AARs staffing the WIHS included (from left to right): Karen Williams '84, Suzanne Petrie Liscouski '91, Chelsea Capizzi-Walsh Lomicka '08, Mimi Wroten '93, Jane Frierson '74, Edie McRee Bowles '74, and Katrina Balding Bills '97.



Monika Kaiser '82 worked a National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC) college fair and a college fair at a high school in the Miami area.

Monika: I have done four college fairs so far. I have found that the Junior Year Abroad program really got their attention. I also told them about the alumnae network and the Sweet Briar sisterhood, which made quite an impression. I have also noticed that pre-vet and psychology are big in demand. I also had two parents who were especially interested in the riding program for their daughters.

Carol McMurtry Fowler '57 worked a fair with Megan Coffield Lyon '80 in Austin, Texas.

Carol: Ours was a regional fair with colleges from many states. I was impressed with the sophomores, who appeared knowledgeable about fields of interest, business, engineering. As a 1957 representative of essentially pure liberal arts days at Sweet Briar, it is striking to meet and engage young women at this academic level who express clear interest in a professional working life, centered on careers with long-lasting futures. The focus on value of a college degree with a successful career foundation offers a striking difference in my three-generation span. It is rewarding to me to realize how very much SBC is comfortably au courant with the desires and dreams of the future for women of tomorrow.



F Caperton Morton '85, represented Sweet Briar at the Shawnee Mission East High School College Clinic, in a Kansas City suburb, this past October, with Cheryl Bishop Gilman '90, Sarah Machinist '01, and Alexandra Blair '06.

Caperton: We spoke with young women from high schools all over the region. Their study interests varied from arts to sciences, law to pre-med and pre-vet, which had us touting our STEAM instead of just STEM. We told them that Sweet Briar students can create their own majors. This prompted a discussion within our group of how blending arts with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics makes Sweet Briar even more marketable for those women who want to blend their unique interests with their study focuses.

Jaimie DelMonte Galbreath '92 (l) and Kelly Gardner Headd '93 represented the College at the NASAC Performing Arts College Fair in Washington, D.C.

