

The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

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Honoring Sweet Briar's 13th President, Meredith Woo

Since its inception in 1901, Sweet Briar College has been a place where women lead. To elevate the College's resources to support the next generation of women leaders, Sweet Briar is embarking on a campaign to raise \$130 million. To read more about the *Where Women Lead* campaign, please visit sbc.edu/magazine for the electronic version of the Spring 2023 issue, which describes the campaign in detail.

During her time at Sweet Briar, President Meredith Woo has been an innovator and visionary, leading Sweet Briar to several accomplishments.

- Implemented a tuition reset that made a Sweet Briar education affordable for women throughout the United States and the world, allowing the College to focus its resources on providing the best education possible.
- Collaborated with the faculty to create an innovative women's leadership core curriculum to attract more women leaders.
- Created a five-year strategic plan that outlines Sweet Briar's future through a focused approach to lean into the College's strengths.
- Implemented an initiative to give students the experience of living with art, bringing the College's collection to use in residence halls and common areas.
- Revitalized Sweet Briar's natural assets for agriculture and sustainability by establishing a vineyard, greenhouse, and apiary.

Not only has President Woo set high sights for Sweet Briar, she also made a home in our community during her time on campus. She took riding lessons with Mimi Wroten '93, director of the College's riding program. She hosted countless speakers, friends of the College, alumnae, students, faculty, staff, and families in Sweet Briar House for dinners, gatherings, and conversations. She has roamed all of campus, and by her own admission, has even gotten lost doing so. She cultivated her own row of plants in Sweet Briar's greenhouse,



sharing her prolific dill supply with Prothro.

Mason Bennett Rummel '83, Sweet Briar's Chair of the Board of Directors, said, "President Woo's impact on this college cannot be overstated. She provided the insight, inspiration and vision that exemplifies the spirit of Sweet Briar, and we are eternally grateful to her for positioning our institution as a destination for future women leaders."

In the spirit of honoring President Meredith Woo and all that she has done for Sweet Briar, the College is offering alumnae and friends the opportunity to begin funding two key areas of the campaign to recognize President Woo's contributions to these priorities: **Pannell Fine Arts Center**, benefitting from historic preservation through rehabilitation; and the **Presidential Scholars Program**, an endowed program offering merit-based support to Sweet Briar's brightest future students.

To make a gift to these areas in honor of President Meredith Woo, visit sbc.edu/where-women-lead-giving. If you have questions about the *Where Women Lead* campaign, please call 434-381-6131 or email campaign@sbc.edu.

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ADMISSIONS

Help recruit the Class of 2028 (yes, really — 2028)!

Whether you have just a bit of extra time on your hands or you need something to keep you busy this summer, Sweet Briar has a volunteer opportunity for all alumnae: helping to recruit the next class of Sweet Briar students.

While much of the work that our dedicated Admissions Ambassadors do takes place in one-on-one communications with prospective students and families, the admissions process is influenced in other ways. Many of these efforts happen long before Sweet Briar receives a student inquiry.

Sweet Briar's Office of Admissions wants to connect with influencers who can share how extraordinary our college is by word of mouth. These influencers include:

- High school college counselors
- Independent college counselors
- Coaches and club advisers
- Riding instructors, trainers, and equestrian facilities
- and others!

Sweet Briar hosts open houses not just for students, but also for high school counselors. These events allow us to share all that Sweet Briar has to offer with professionals who can include the College in their work with high school juniors and seniors.

In addition to connecting Sweet Briar with influencers, recruiting students involves promoting upcoming open houses and other on-campus events. As we all know, the factor most students attribute to attending Sweet Briar is their campus visit (or visits, in many cases!).

For students living in Virginia, the Commonwealth offers all high school age students an excellent opportunity: Virginia Private College Week, July 17-22. Colleges in this network offer students the chance to see several colleges within close proximity to one another.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Ready to help?
Here's how to get started.

Connect
with
Heather!



Heather Colson Ewing '90
Admissions Ambassador Manager
hewing@sbcc.edu

In addition to working with Admissions Ambassadors, Heather works to promote Sweet Briar to counselors and other influencers. She can help you start with a list of prospective contacts in your local area.

Share Sweet Briar

Promoting Sweet Briar is as simple as talking about your experience. While some of the faces on campus may have changed since you were last on campus, Sweet Briar's culture and character are still made up of a supportive sisterhood where faculty and staff help students thrive. And thanks to those dedicated staff in Admissions and Financial Aid, a Sweet Briar education is affordable, too.

If you know a student who may be interested in Sweet Briar, be sure to share these events with her.

Admissions Summer at Sweet Briar

An overnight at Sweet Briar to give prospective students a taste of life in our classrooms and on our campus.

June 16-17
July 14-15
August 4-5

Open Houses for Students

A chance to meet current students, faculty, and admissions staff to get a glimpse of Sweet Briar during the school year.

September 29-30
November 10-11

Class of 2023

Senior Spotlights



Erin Bell Nelson '23

Greenville, RI

Erin (center) will be a field engineer for Schlumberger Limited in Pennsylvania. Holla, holla, Erin!



Ciara Kocik '23

Mechanicsville, VA

Ciara is attending the University of Virginia's School of Education and Human Development. Way to go, Ciara!



Colleen Goodly '23

Yorktown, VA

Colleen will join Compleat Kidz in Charlotte, NC as a registered behavior technician. She plans to pursue a Master's degree in applied behavioral analysis therapy (ABA) and continue serving in the ABA and autism field as a behavior analyst. Best of luck to you, Colleen!



Madison Williams '23

Franklin, VA

Maddie is attending the University of Memphis for a graduate degree in clinical mental health counseling. We're so proud of you, Maddie!



Class of 2023

Latin motto: *Spectamur agendo*

Translation: We are proven by our actions

Colors: Delft blue and black

GIVING TO SWEET BRIAR

Anonymous gift will help transform dance program

For more than a century, the arts have been a cornerstone of campus and curricular life at Sweet Briar. The College's performing arts major, with tracks for dance, music, and theatre, allows students to develop their artistic practice and skill, which is central to a liberal arts education. For students who choose to focus on dance, a Sweet Briar experience provides education in traditional and contemporary techniques combined with intensive training in choreography. The dance capstone, in fact, challenges majors to choreograph, produce, and perform a full-length concert for the community, an opportunity that most would not otherwise encounter until graduate school.

These unique components of Sweet Briar's dance program have led to a transformative anonymous gift to support the students, facilities, programming, and faculty connected to dance here at the College. This \$1 million gift from an alumna will allow Sweet Briar to enhance dance practice and recital space within Babcock Performing Arts Center by developing a "white box" theatre, an innovative and contemporary space common among leading dance programs around the country. This gift will also support guest

choreographers and instructors, summer dance instruction and programming, and, most importantly, scholarships to ensure that dance is accessible to students of all backgrounds.

Thanks to Betty Skeen '07, assistant professor for performing arts in dance, some of these initiatives are well on their way. For example, this past March, Sweet Briar hosted the 50th Annual American College Dance Association Conference, which convened more than 300 students and faculty from across the region who performed their works, adjudicated by a panel of nationally-recognized dance professionals in a constructive forum. The College has also established a relationship with Orange Grove Dance, a company that regularly uses Sweet Briar as a performance and workshop space.

If you read the recent alumnae magazine, you may have guessed by now that this gift is part of the Where Women Lead campaign — and you're correct! This gift makes a significant impact to the overall campaign goal. Sweet Briar is exceedingly grateful to our anonymous alumna donor for leading the way in dance education at the College.



Kaia Rokke '23

YEAR-END GIVING TO SWEET BRIAR

Ways to make a gift to Sweet Briar in the 2023 fiscal year

With the end of the 2023 fiscal year fast approaching on **June 30**, time is running out to make a tax-deductible gift to help Sweet Briar reach its fundraising goals. Even if you're not interested in tax deductions, now is a wonderful time to support our college. Here are some tips to make your gift even easier to give.

Every gift makes a difference to our students!

Make a gift **online** at sbc.edu/give. It takes less than five minutes and a receipt will be emailed to you. If you prefer to make credit card gifts over the phone, please call the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development at **434-381-6131**.

Please send **checks** to the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development at PO Box 1057, Sweet Briar, VA 24595.

For **IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)** or **Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)** gifts, please contact the Alumnae Relations and Development Office by phone or email at alumnae@sb.edu.

For gifts by **wire transfer**, please call the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development to obtain the instructions for the transfer.

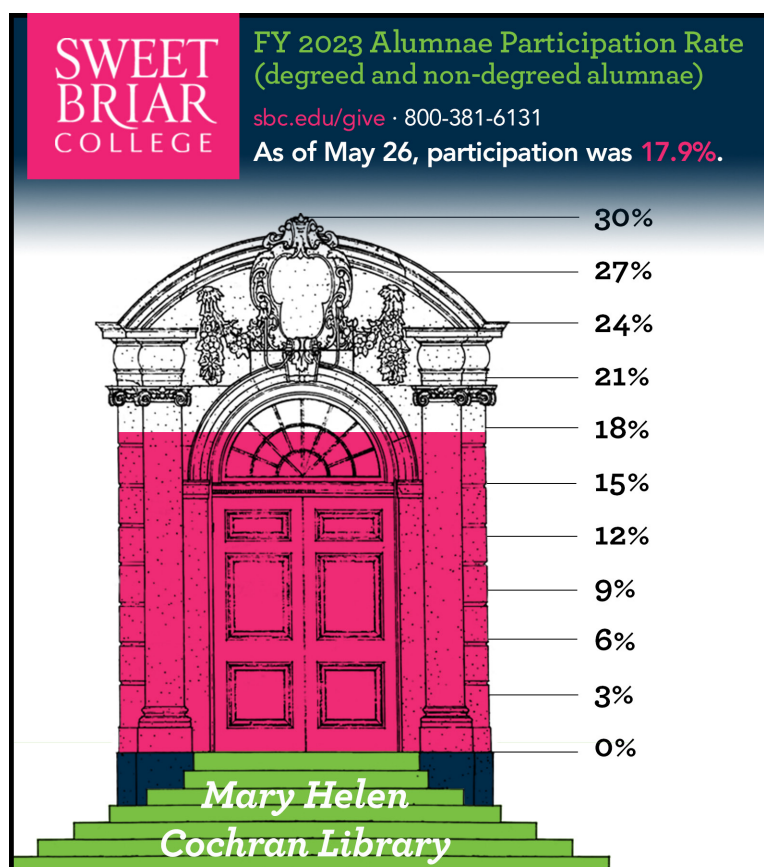
If you plan to make a **gift of stock** to Sweet Briar, please contact the AR&D office for stock transfer instructions for your broker. We will need to know the name of the stock and the estimated value.

Why give?

A gift to the Sweet Briar Fund makes a bigger impact than you may guess. You might think that impact of your gift is directly related to its size — but it's not. **Every gift matters!**

While gifts to the Sweet Briar Fund support scholarships, faculty and academic program development, and campus stewardship, they do much more for Sweet Briar. When alumnae make a gift — of any size — that action has a domino effect.

First, those funds directly impact the Sweet Briar Fund's areas of support. The action of giving itself leads to more. Your class leaders look to you



for support each year to help increase your class participation and giving rates. As a result, your gift is an act of leadership and can compel others to join you.

Next, your gift makes a difference to Sweet Briar's overall alumnae participation rate. While the conversation around college rankings is always in flux, these data points still provide prospective students and families with indicators of their potential success at an institution. Since alumnae participation is the only data point used to measure alumnae satisfaction with their institution, this has the potential to significantly impact Sweet Briar's reputation and visibility in college rankings.

The impact that is most frequently overlooked is the impact of philanthropy on your family and friends. Alumnae donors have an opportunity to educate younger generations about the impact that philanthropy can have on organizations they care about. Philanthropy is a way to leave a personal legacy, which family and friends will remember. Again, the size of your gift is not what matters — the act of giving each and every year is what makes the greatest impact.

2022-2023 ATHLETICS AND RIDING

Athletics and Riding Awards Ceremony recognizes student-athletes, community members

On Wednesday, April 26, Sweet Briar held its annual Athletics and Riding Awards Ceremony in Upchurch Fieldhouse in the Fitness and Athletics Center. Allison Wandling '23, president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), welcomed students, coaches, faculty, staff and families and then presented the Robert Barlow Award to Dr. Bryan Kuhr, assistant professor of engineering and physics. **The Barlow Award** recipient is decided by student-athletes and is presented to a faculty member for their outstanding service, support and devotion to athletics at Sweet Briar. Dr. Kuhr is known for being a vocal supporter of athletics, attending both home and away events throughout the year, and regularly participates in SAAC activities like the annual kickball game between students and faculty and staff.

Each coach also presents a member of each team with the **Crispen Award** at their own discretion. This award is named for Jennifer Crispen, field hockey coach from 1977 until her death in 2008. The recipients of the 2022-2023 Crispen Awards are:

Evie Sparacio '23, cross country
Molly Booth '25, field hockey
Amani Narang '25, golf
Sita Moses '23, riding (IHSA)
Kat Navarro '24, lacrosse
Kacie Freeburg '23, riding (NCEA)
Caroline Lewis '24, soccer
Victoria Tew '26, softball
Kass Carpenter '24, swimming
Kate Kotany '23, tennis

The Jean Pshcirrer First-Year Athlete of the Year Award honors a first-year varsity athlete who

demonstrates dedication, motivation, sportsmanship, and true love of their sport. This year's recipient was lacrosse player Victoria Schofield '26, who totaled 18 goals, two assists, 14 ground balls, seven caused turnovers and also accounted for a team-high 32 draw controls. She was also named to the Colonial States Athletic Conference (CSAC) honor roll in March of this year.

Abby Lindsey '25 received the **Class of 1977 Sportsmanship Award** for her team spirit and commitment to field hockey. Abby is known for lending a helping hand to anyone on her team who needs it.

Sweet Briar's former president, Harold Whiteman, and his wife, Dede, created the **Whiteman Scholar-Athlete Award** to recognize student-athletes with a high scholastic average (3.3 or higher), sportsmanship, and outstanding achievement in their sport. This year's recipient is Ingrid Kalwitz Blanco '23, captain of the field hockey team, a double major in history and political science with a minor in philosophy, who maintained a GPA of 3.947 while competing at a high level.



Naomi Dachis '26

The Susan Lehman Courage Award is named for Sweet Briar's chaplain from 1985-2001 and recognizes athletes who have made a courageous comeback after suffering a setback such as injury, illness, or personal tragedy. Naomi Dachis '26 received the award this year for her resilience in bouncing back from a traumatic head injury in the fall of 2021 to return to competition this spring as a key rider for the NCEA team. This season, Naomi saw immense success with a 5-2 record in fences and going 2-0



Amani Narang '25

2022-2023 ATHLETICS AND RIDING

at the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Single Discipline Championships and the NCEA Championships.



Wyette Felton '26

Wyette Felton '26 took home the **Rookie Rider of the Year Award**. Felton went 3-2 in fences and 4-1-1 in flat this past NCEA season and was named NCEA All-America Honorable Mention in flat. She was also named ECAC Freshman of the Year.

Kaylie Hudson '26 claimed the **Rookie Athlete of the Year Award** for her accomplishments in softball. She totaled a batting average of .456 with five home runs to lead the team, racked up a fielding percentage of .897 with 116 catches and 55 putouts, and closed out the season with 20 games where she recorded a batting average of .500 or better.



The 2023 Sweet Briar softball team

The Coaches Award is presented to a graduating athlete who participated in varsity athletics for three or more years and has demonstrated significant athletic achievement, has represented Vixen Athletics with integrity in the Sweet Briar community, and is dedicated to the advancement of the program.

Allison Wandling '23 received the award this year for her achievements in advancing the program. Allison has more than 100 career wins, holds the program record for most career singles wins and most single-season doubles wins, and totaled a 13-8 singles record during the dual season.

This year's **Athlete of the Year Award** was presented to Amani Narang '25, who earned two individual victories at the Knights Invitational with a score of 154 (+10) and at the Marlin Invitational with a score of 162 (+18) to bring her total career individual victories to three. She also ranked sixth in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) with a stroke of 78.3 this season, only two strokes behind the ODAC leader.

For the second year in a row, Katherine Atherton '25 was named Rider of the Year. Katherine was named to the All-America Second Team in Fences, All-America Honorable Mention in Flat, and recorded a 7-2 record in fences and a 6-3 record in flat.

Each year, the **Crysler Award** is the highest honor given to Sweet Briar's student athletes and riders. The award is given to a four-year graduating student who has demonstrated continuous commitment, sportsmanship and achievement in her sport. Ruth Borges de Souza '23 was this year's recipient. Ruth has well-surpassed 100 career wins while also holding the program record for career wins, career doubles wins, and single-season doubles wins. She appeared at the NCAA Women's Tennis National Championships with doubles partner Allison Wandling '23 in 2021, numerous ODAC All-Conference and Virginia Sports Information Director All-State Team nominations, a 2021 CoSIDA Academic All-District Team honoree, and a national ranking as high as 32nd in singles and 17th in doubles.

Congratulations to all Vixen athletes and riders — you all have achieved so much!



Ruth Borges de Souza '23

Make your gift to the Sweet
Briar Fund today at
[sbc.edu/give!](https://sbc.edu/give)

“Easy Beauty” announced as Sweet Briar’s 2023-2024 Common Read

Sweet Briar is pleased to announce that the 2023-24 Common Read is *Easy Beauty* by Chloé Cooper Jones. Cooper Jones, a feature writer whose work has been published in leading newspapers and journals and nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. She was born with sacral agenesis, a rare congenital condition that affects her mobility.

Her 2022 memoir, *Easy Beauty*, is a powerful, candid, moving account of the author’s journey through life in a body that is different, taking her from memories of childhood to discussions of the aesthetics of beauty, sexuality, body image, motherhood, meditations on how she is seen (or not seen), and on travels ranging from art galleries in Rome, to a Beyoncé concert in Milan, to sites of genocide in Cambodia, and more.

The book will grab you from its opening sentence, “I am in a bar in Brooklyn, listening to two men, my friends, discuss whether my life is worth living.”

Easy Beauty has received laudatory reviews. *The New York Times* named it a Notable Book of 2022, *Vulture* called it the “#1 Memoir of 2022,” and it made the Best Books of 2022 lists of the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, *Time*, *BuzzFeed*, *Publishers Weekly*, *BookList*, and the New York Public Library.

Sweet Briar students, faculty and staff will receive copies of *Easy Beauty* early in the fall semester, and the College is planning activities and events relating to it. *Easy Beauty* will also be available for purchase from The Book Shop this fall.

