

# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER MARCH 2020 | VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 3

## My fellow alumnae and friends,

An early spring this year has brought hope and excitement this March and we are reminded of the renewal and resilience of Sweet Briar. We are also reminded of and excited about where we are going as a college.

The recent news of Karlynn McCarthy, one of our seniors, reminds us of our resilience and the change that Sweet Briar has experienced over the last four years. Four years ago, after hearing about Sweet Briar from her tutor, Melissa Broderick Eaton '96, Karlynn traveled for almost 24 hours to Sweet Briar from Bend, Oregon, arriving at the Lynchburg airport at 11 pm. That night, Claire Dennison Griffith '80 picked her up from the airport and gave her a late-night tour of our campus. Karlynn said that even late at night, Sweet Briar seemed so safe. Now, Karlynn is an Engineering major and this past week, had the joy of experiencing her own "key game" in the Prothro Atrium (the key game is the modern iteration of the ring game, when students secure a job or internship after Sweet Briar; the graduate school version is called a "scroll game"). Karlynn had already been offered a job at Northrop Grumman, but last week she had even more exciting news — she is now headed to NASA's jet propulsion lab in Pasadena, California to work in quality assurance on the Mars 2020 project. We are all thrilled for Karlynn and proud of yet another Sweet Briar star...a woman who will be making history, like so many alumnae before her.

This month is Women's History Month, and it is also a very special month at Sweet Briar, when we also celebrate Sweet Briar Forever month. Our alumnae have made history and today — and every day — our students are continuing that tradition. Your engagement with Sweet Briar is producing extraordinary outcomes for our current and future students, and with your continued support, we will move forward doing so every day. Engagement is key to Sweet Briar's continued success and to that end, goes hand in hand with making a gift to Sweet Briar each and every year. Join me in making your best gift for March Days of Giving at [sbc.edu/give](http://sbc.edu/give) from March 2 through 10 to honor Sweet Briar in perpetuity, our alumnae and students — ALL women making history.

With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83  
Vice President of Alumnae Relations, Development and Communications

## Celebrate *Sweet Briar Forever*

### MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1			

#### March Days of Giving

March 2-10

March 2 Goal: \$500,000

March 3-10 Goal: \$500,000

Join us for these upcoming events  
and help us celebrate Sweet Briar Forever!

#### March 2

Rose planting livestream from the Quad

#### March 18

Common Read Speakers  
Madeline Miller, author of "Circe"  
and Emily Wilson, translator of "The Odyssey"

#### March 29-April 1

Streamathon (online)



**Board of Directors  
of Sweet Briar College**

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*Alumnae Relations and  
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Blair Redd Schmieg '83,  
*Campaign Coordinator*

Bonnie L. Seitz '01, *Assistant Director  
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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*

**Engage with Us!**



From social media to enrollment, to career advice and getting involved in your local alumnae club, there are many ways to get engaged with your fellow Sweet Briar alumnae! The Alumnae Alliance Council and the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development offer many opportunities for you to become involved.

**Submit an Idea**

From great minds come great ideas! Perhaps you have an idea for additional ways for Sweet Briar to recruit the next generation of FIERCE women. Maybe you have a contact that can provide Sweet Briar with an opportunity for auxiliary revenue. Whatever the idea, we want to hear it! Complete the "Submit an Idea" form at [sbc.edu/alumnae](https://sbc.edu/alumnae) under the "Engage" menu. All ideas are sent to the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development for consideration.

**Sweet Work Weeks**

You don't have to be handy to participate in Sweet Work Weeks! This fun volunteer opportunity gives you a chance to put your love for Sweet Briar to work with alumnae and friends of

the College from all generations. We're excited to offer a Sweet Work Weekend this April 17-19 to help get campus spiffed up for upcoming events. We'll still be holding Sweet Work Weeks this summer from July 26-August 10. Stay tuned to our website for registration and additional details!

**Admissions Ambassadors**

One of Sweet Briar's most popular ways to volunteer, our Admissions Ambassadors help extend the reach of our enrollment outreach to prospective students, high schools, and equestrian facilities. If you're interested in becoming an Admissions Ambassador, please email Heather Colson Ewing '90, Admissions Ambassador Manager, at [hewing@sb.edu](mailto:hewing@sb.edu).

**Social Media**

Did you know that the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development has a Facebook page, Sweet Briar Now and Forever? There, you'll find exciting updates about the College, news about gifts to Sweet Briar, and you can keep up with our fundraising progress on our days of giving. Visit [facebook.com/sweetbriarnowandforever](https://facebook.com/sweetbriarnowandforever) and "like" the page to get the latest news.

**Sweet Briar College and American Farmland Trust to Collaborate on Programming**



Sweet Briar College and the American Farmland Trust have agreed to collaborate on a number of programming initiatives that will support the future of women in agriculture, natural resource management and conservation.

The collaboration will begin with the 2020-2021 school year and plans include hosting a one-day conference on agriculture in Virginia and related issues across the Southeast, inviting program leaders from AFT to speak to students at the College, providing internship opportunities for Sweet Briar students at AFT, and using the College as a host site for an AFT Women for the Land Learning Circle for the Mid-Atlantic region. There may also be future opportunities to partner on scientific field-based and social science research.

"Agriculture is the leading private industry in Virginia and more women are participating in this business and managing farmlands," said Sweet Briar President Meredith Woo, in announcing the alliance. "The partnership with American Farmland Trust is an opportunity to work with a national organization that shares our commitment to educating women and giving them the opportunity to lead in an industry that has an impact on the lives of every citizen."

The partnership is timely. Women are an increasingly important part of agriculture in the United States. As of 2017, women made up 36 percent of all agriculture producers in the country. These female-operated farms accounted for 38 percent of U.S. agriculture sales – \$148 billion

annually – and 43 percent of U.S. farmland.

Over the last year, Sweet Briar College has established an apiary, planted a wildflower habitat and 20 acres of grapevines, and constructed a 27,000 square foot greenhouse. It is integrating these agricultural initiatives with its academic program and its new Center for Human and Environmental Sustainability to offer hands-on learning and research opportunities as well as demonstration projects. These activities will involve students, faculty, alumnae and the wider population of Central Virginia.

The College's interests in agriculture, sustainability and natural resource management provide a unique opportunity for young women who are interested in becoming leaders in those areas and complement its women's leadership core curriculum. Furthermore, in recent years, the College has seen an increase in the number of alumnae who are engaged in farming, ranching and other agricultural and environmental professions. "We are excited to offer those alumnae the opportunity to be a part of this collaboration as well," says Claire Griffith, senior director of alumnae relations at Sweet Briar.

AFT, meanwhile, has an established the Women for the Land initiative, which seeks to engage women who own and manage farmland and ranchland across the country. The program convenes special events and learning circles that assemble, train and support women farmers and landowners. ■



# Continuing the Tradition of Sweet Briar Days



Ohio



Seattle



Charlotte



Vero Beach



Arizona



Miami



New Jersey & New York

From December through February, alumnae clubs around the United States came together to celebrate with each other, current students, parents, retired faculty and staff, and friends of the College. This year, 35 clubs came together for Sweet Briar Days to connect, relive fond memories of Sweet Briar, and remember the bond that we share in our love for this college.



San Francisco



Triangle (NC)



Hunt Country



Atlanta



Dallas



# Jessie Ball DuPont Fund Supports Enrollment and Retention at Sweet Briar

Sweet Briar’s future depends on student enrollment and retention. In support of this dual goal, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund is partnering with the College to ensure that enrollment marketing activities and the campus experience connect with the needs and aspirations of students today.

Sweet Briar President Meredith Woo met recently with Jessie Ball duPont Fund President Mari Kuraishi and Senior Program Officer Barbara Roole to discuss the College’s progress and ambitious future plans made possible, in part, by the Fund’s generous support.

A long-time donor to the College, the Jacksonville, Florida-based Jessie Ball duPont Fund works to create opportunity by investing in people, organizations, and communities that were important to its founder, Jessie Ball duPont. Mrs. duPont was native Virginian, who moved to Florida after her marriage to Alfred I. duPont. For decades, Mrs. duPont personally supported hundreds of scholarships, faculty and libraries at colleges across the southeastern states. Churches of all denominations, major charities, children’s homes, historic buildings and art museums benefited from her gifts. Today, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund organizes resources to build the capacity of people, organizations, families, and communities, and to promote civil society.



The Fund has continued to support to Sweet Briar on its path to renewal across the past half-decade, with grant investments focused on enhancing the College’s fundraising capacity, developing channels for identifying prospective students, designing the “fierce” enrollment marketing campaign and related materials, and most recently, student success and retention activities. This latest grant, awarded in summer 2019, supports access for the College’s faculty, staff, and administration to insights and programs from experts and thought leaders whose work addresses how higher education institutions can be most relevant, impactful, and successful in meeting the needs of a new generation of students.

Funded activities include an update of the framework for academic advising (with a focus on first-year student needs) and workshops for faculty and other staff that interact regularly with students on timely topics, such as understanding

the economic and social contexts of current students and strategies for engaging most successfully with the current generation of students, born after 1995 and called “Generation Z” or “iGen.”

## National Engineers Week Banquet Speaker Announced

The Sweet Briar College Margaret Jones Wyllie ‘45 Engineering Program has announced that Kevin Kochersberger of Virginia Tech’s Department of Mechanical Engineering will be the featured speaker at the National Engineers Week Banquet. The banquet will take on Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020, in Upchurch Field House. Hors d’oeuvres begin at 6 p.m. and the dinner and program will get started at 6:45 p.m.

Kochersberger, in partnership with UNICEF, opened the first African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA) in January 2020 in Malawi. ADDA provides a free 10-week course on building and using drones, with the goal of both strengthening tech skills among young Africans and increasing drone usage for humanitarian applications such as delivering medical supplies and supporting emergency responses to recurring problems such as flooding.

The banquet is the highlight of Engineers Week at Sweet Briar. Each year, engineers, high school and



college students, educators, and members of the public from Lynchburg and the Shenandoah Valley gather with us to celebrate engineering in our region and enjoy an evening of networking.

Sweet Briar’s celebration of National Engineers Week also includes an Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day event for high school girls.

# Join us for Reunion 2020!

May 29-31, 2020

We’ve filled this year’s Reunion with events you won’t want to miss! See the full schedule of events at [sbc.edu/reunion](http://sbc.edu/reunion).

**Friday**

Dinner for the Class of 1970, celebrating their 50th Reunion at the Conference Center

Dinner for the Class of 1995, celebrating their 25th Reunion at the Boathouse

Welcome Home Picnic for all other classes - Quad

Dell Party with music by the *Jangling Reinharts*

**Saturday**

Nature Walk

Breakfast with President Meredith Woo for the 50th and post-50th classes

Breakfast in Prothro for all other classes

**Saturday (continued)**

Reunion Convocation, featuring awards and an update on the College for President Meredith Woo

Alumnae Alliance Festival and Lunch Alumnae Colleges

Tours of Campus

Tour of the Greenhouse

Wine Tasting in the Vineyard and Apiary

Class Meetings and Class Leader Elections

Celebration Dinner and Dance with Music by *Another Level*

**Sunday**

Service of Remembrance Brunch

## Calling all Alumnae!

The Alumnae Alliance has added LinkedIn, a networking resource designed to promote your professional succes, to its roster of social media outlets.

**1. Join LinkedIn today**, create your profile and start networking with those in your industry and those with your interests, including thousands of Sweet Briar alumnae!

Creating a LinkedIn profile will help you expand your professional network, increase your job opportunities, and maintain connections with colleagues, recruiters, and our global Sweet Briar alumnae community.

**2. Already a member?** Be sure to keep your LinkedIn profile information current.

Keeping your profile updated is key! An updated profile helps classmates, colleagues and recruiters find you quickly, expands your network and increases your job opportunities. Update tips include adding a recent photo of yourself, updating your accomplishments and work history, writing an engaging summary, and adding keywords employers and recruiters search for.

### 3. Join the Alumnae Alliance Group on LinkedIn


Joining the Sweet Briar College Alumnae Alliance LinkedIn Group will provide you with a professional platform to network with alumnae and to stay current on important campus news.

### 4. Follow the Alumnae Alliance on social media:

 Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/sweetbriaralumnae](http://www.facebook.com/sweetbriaralumnae)

 Instagram  
[@sbcalumnae](http://@sbcalumnae)  
[www.instagram.com/sbcalumnae](http://www.instagram.com/sbcalumnae)

 LinkedIn  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/102313](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/102313)

 Twitter  
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[twitter.com/sbcalumnae](http://twitter.com/sbcalumnae)



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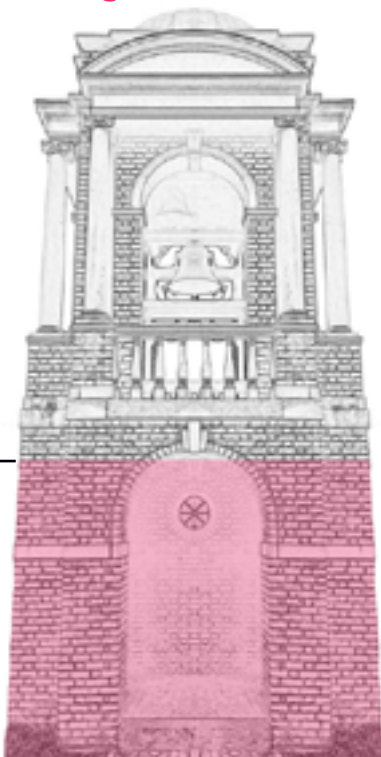
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**Register for  
Reunion now at  
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## **FY 2020 Sweet Briar Fund: Progress to Goal**

**\$2,370,139 —  
raised  
(39.5% of  
goal)**



Make your annual gift online at [sbc.edu/give](http://sbc.edu/give)  
or call (800) 381-6131!



This spring, President Woo is teaching the capstone course of our Women's Leadership Core Curriculum: The Consequential Citizen. Students have been visiting presidential homes, libraries and museums in Virginia to see what the commonwealth's presidents have to teach them about leadership. In her new blog post, President Woo tells us the story of a trip to Mount Vernon and how Gay Hart Gaines '59 inspired the course. Read the blog at [sbc.edu/president/presidents-blog](http://sbc.edu/president/presidents-blog) and leave a comment!