

The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020 | VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 4

Dear alumnae and friends,

With the beauty of spring all around us here on campus, it is hard to fathom that our lives have changed so suddenly and so drastically. You, our students, our faculty and staff have been at the forefront of my mind for the last two months and I hope and pray that you all are safe and well.

Despite the changes around us, some things remain constant: the spirit and commitment we have to each other, the confidence in our first responders and health care providers and faith that, although things will never be the same, we will get through this pandemic and be even stronger than before.

We are experiencing everything through this new lens and like you, Sweet Briar has made adjustments to ensure that our students are safe, continue to be provided an excellent education and stay connected to their Sweet Briar family. As you have heard from President Meredith Woo, our faculty pivoted very quickly to remote learning for the second half of the 12-week session and the current 3-week session. By all accounts, students are rising to the occasion, but resoundingly say that they want to be here to do their learning. We miss all of our students, of course, but are particularly saddened that our seniors are not on campus for their final spring. We are making plans to celebrate them in the fall.

I am gratified by the response to my request that you engage with our policy makers by writing letters of support to help Sweet Briar access COVID-19 relief funds, which will mitigate some of the impact of this crisis that we anticipate over the next few years. There is still an opportunity to help with this effort as new stimulus packages are being considered.

It bears repeating that all revenue sources of the College will be affected in some way including: tuition, room and board; endowment impacts; auxiliary revenues from the Florence Elston Inn & Conference Center and our summer programs; and fundraising.

We have weathered significant challenges to the College in the past and with your help, we will also navigate these rough waters. This year will be a difficult year. You know it and we know it.

While we realize you will make serious choices for those areas that are your top philanthropic priorities – we hope

Sweet Briar will stay on or near the top as you make your charitable gifts. Every gift matters even more now.

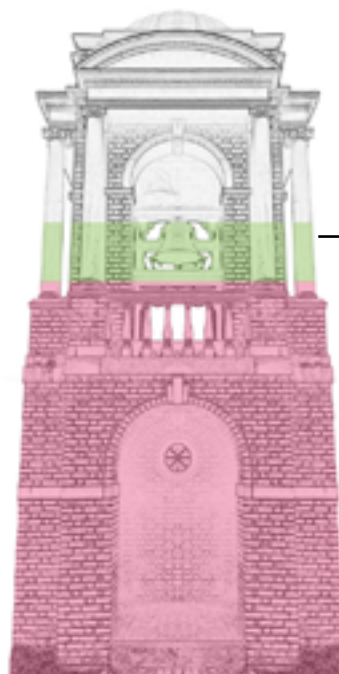
Sweet Briar was on a steady, upward course with our visionary leader, Meredith Woo, guiding us before COVID-19 and we will all continue to adjust with confidence and bold leadership as we continue to build a stable institution in times of uncertainty.

Young women thrive here now as they have for over a century. Help us continue to provide this amazing experience to them by making your gift today. I will continue to hope and pray that you stay safe and healthy in the coming months.

With gratitude,

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

2019-2020 Sweet Briar Fund Goal: \$6 million



— \$532,872 in current
year pledges
(to be converted by
June 30, 2020)

— \$3,518,537 raised

Make a gift online at
[sbc.edu/give!](https://sbc.edu/give)

as of April 15, 2020

Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

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President of the College
Andrew C. Benjamin, *Vice Chair*
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Karen Jackson, *Executive Committee Member at Large*
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Gillian Munson, *Executive Committee Member at Large*
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Mason Bennett Rummel '83
Stephen P. Smiley
Caville Stanbury-Woolery '06
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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, Development and Communications
Lea Sparks Bennett '83, *Alumnae Relations and Development Assistant*
Lee Anne MacKenzie Chaskes '83,
Alumnae Relations and Development Associate
Debbie Cochran, *Executive Assistant*
Emily Dodson '18, *Alumnae Relations and Development Associate*
Margaret McClellan Driscoll '92,
Major Gifts Officer
Paula Eanes, *Office Manager*
Claire Dennison Griffith '80,
Senior Director of Alumnae Relations and Development
Lea Harvey '90, *Director of Strategic Initiatives, Corporate and Foundation Relations*
Sarah Lewis, *Stewardship Manager*
Lisa Wray Longino '78, *Director of Major Gifts*
Julia Paris '99, *Director of Advancement Services*
Rachel Pietsch, *Assistant Director of Alumnae Relations*
Blair Redd Schmieg '83,
Campaign Coordinator
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 '88, *Major Gifts Officer*
Wanda Vest, *Data Entry Manager*

Engagement is Everywhere



Photo by Mary Pope M. Hutson '83

As this issue of the Briar Wire goes to press, we're beginning the 3-week session that will conclude the spring semester. Of course, this spring has been one like no other, as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

Just like students and teachers around the world, our students and faculty are engaged in remote teaching and learning. Everyone has been amazing, jumping into an area of instruction they didn't imagine just a few short months ago. Courses are being conducted over Zoom and Google Meet, enabling students and professors to interact virtually. Web-based tools such as Canvas are being used to further facilitate communication and provide a home-base for materials and resources. Video is being used to incorporate campus, classroom and lab resources and equipment to help foster the highly interactive environment that students have come to expect from Sweet Briar.

The heart of the College has always been deeply rooted in providing a hands-on, personal and tailored educational experience for every student. It turns out that this kind of instruction is also a benefit during these turbulent times. The well-established bond between friends, students, faculty, staff and mentors is serving everyone well as they embrace this temporary learning environment.

But we have to do more than teach. We have to ensure that Sweet Briar thrives despite this crisis. It's too early to say exactly what the impact of the crisis will be, but like businesses and institutions around the country, the costs will be real. To mitigate that, Sweet Briar's leadership team—including President Woo and Mary Pope Hutson '83, vice president of alumnae relations, communications and development, Luther Griffith, vice president for finance, operations and auxiliary enterprise, as well as Lea Harvey, director of strategic initiatives, foundations, and corporate relations—have been working closely with federal, state and local leaders to ensure that the College has access to funding that will help see it, and other colleges and universities, through this crisis.

Help Sweet Briar by Contacting Your Legislators!

Visit sweetbriar.imodules.com/contact-your-legislators for template letters to send to your policymakers and representatives to support COVID-19 relief for Sweet Briar.
Need help or have questions?
Call (800) 381-6131.

Now, Some Exciting News from Our Students

Although this semester has been unusual with the months full of uncertainty and classes moving online, good news still seems to shine through as our seniors announce their post-graduation plans.

In late March, Lashlee McCray announced her plans for after graduation. "I am very excited to be starting with Lifetouch & Shutterfly as a photographer beginning on May 18," she told us. "I will be working in the Richmond area and surrounding areas shooting school portraits, sports, recitals, and anything else that they assign me."

Kirsten Reinhart has also accepted a job. She will be working for the Columbus Zoo in Ohio in the section called The Wilds. "I will be guiding people throughout the safari on horseback," she said.

In continuing education news, Victoria Stacpoole announced through a virtual scroll game that she has been accepted into Georgetown University to study security studies in the fall. Lizzie Baker will be attending James Madison University to pursue a master's degree in school counseling.

Kaiya Taylor will be attending Duke University's School of Nursing. Kaiya said that many Sweet Briar courses reinforced her passion for healthcare, including Professor Brent Shea's Social Psychiatry course and Medical Sociology course. These courses affirmed her interest in healthcare, while also giving her information to create a stellar personal statement.



Lashlee McCray '20



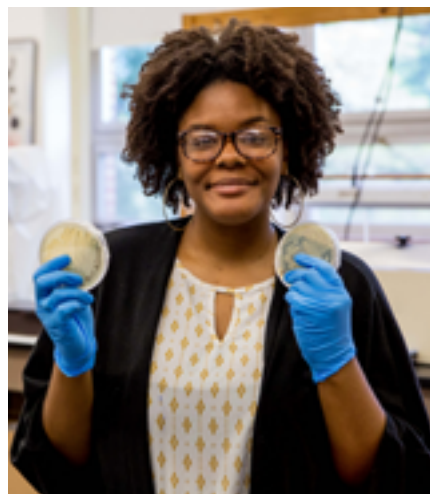
Kirsten Reinhart '20



Victoria Stacpoole '20



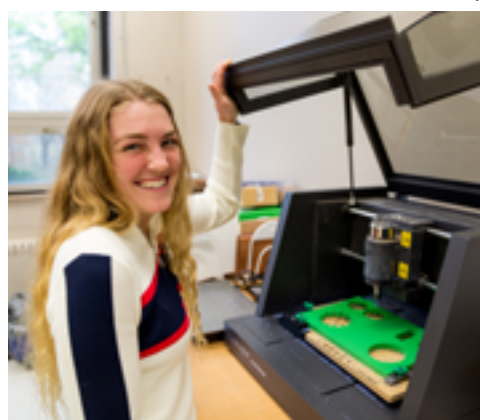
Kaiya Taylor '20



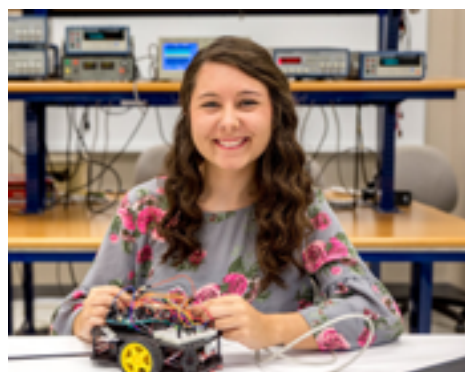
DeZané Cole '20



Victoria Lawson '20



Isabel Joyner '20



Rylee Runyon '20

Two students will be attending graduate programs at Ohio State University: DaZane Cole will be attending the School of Veterinary Medicine and Jordan Elliott will be attending the School of Law.

Alexis Culley announced she will be attending Austin Peay State University, pursuing a professional degree in biology, and Sophia Dessart will be attending Arizona State University's Thunderbird School of Global Management.

Several engineering students have also announced their post-graduate plans. Victoria Lawson will be serving the Navy as a nuclear engineer. Isabel Joyner will be working at the Boeing Company as a propulsion engineer. Finally, Rylee Runyon landed a job at Southern Nuclear Operating Co. as a digital I&C engineer at Plant Vogtle 3&4.

We are so excited for our seniors and wish them all the best! We look forward to sharing more great news in the future.

A Letter from Olympia Lehota '20

To the newest class of Sweet Briar alumnae:

I cried when I got the email about graduation being postponed this spring. I'm sure we all did, everything was so uncertain, yet our little community was determined to stick together. We all know that Sweet Briar creates a bond that is unbreakable, and as my final days of school counted down from 30, I realized a few things.



One, this is going to be the longest senior year ever—especially if graduation gets pushed back anymore. And two, this pandemic has only brought us closer together. Imagine our next reunion, or for us, our first one. Imagine Sweet Work Weeks or even Founders' Day. Sweet Briar sisters will flock home just to make up for lost time on our beloved campus. When we finally earn that rose, we will be inducted into the fantastic group of alumnae that we've heard so much about.

The Class of 2020 has seen a lot during our four years, so another curveball isn't exactly new news. We are a class full of leaders and problem solvers who are determined to keep the traditions alive for the younger classes. I can't remember a time where the Class of 2020 didn't step up to the plate and take on even more responsibility than expected of them. Because of this, I'm hopeful about the future. I trust that we will make up for lost time, and I'm certain that Sweet Briar will make sure we experience those spring traditions that we've earned, like lantern bearing, senior ride, and the fancy hat brunch. I'm confident that we all have the tools to step into the real world and take on any challenge that comes our way.

If a pandemic isn't a truer test of our Holla Holla, remember: "Here's to the class of 2020, there's nothing you cannot do!"

Your fellow Vixen,

Olympia LeHota '20



Streamathon 2020 Brings Alumnae and Friends Together — Virtually



At the end of March, Sweet Briar Forever Month, the Sweet Briar community came together virtually to tune into Sweet Briar's radio station, The Briar, to get down in their living rooms and shake it all night long with Streamathon! This event took on a new life with the implementation of social distancing, using virtual tools in creative ways.

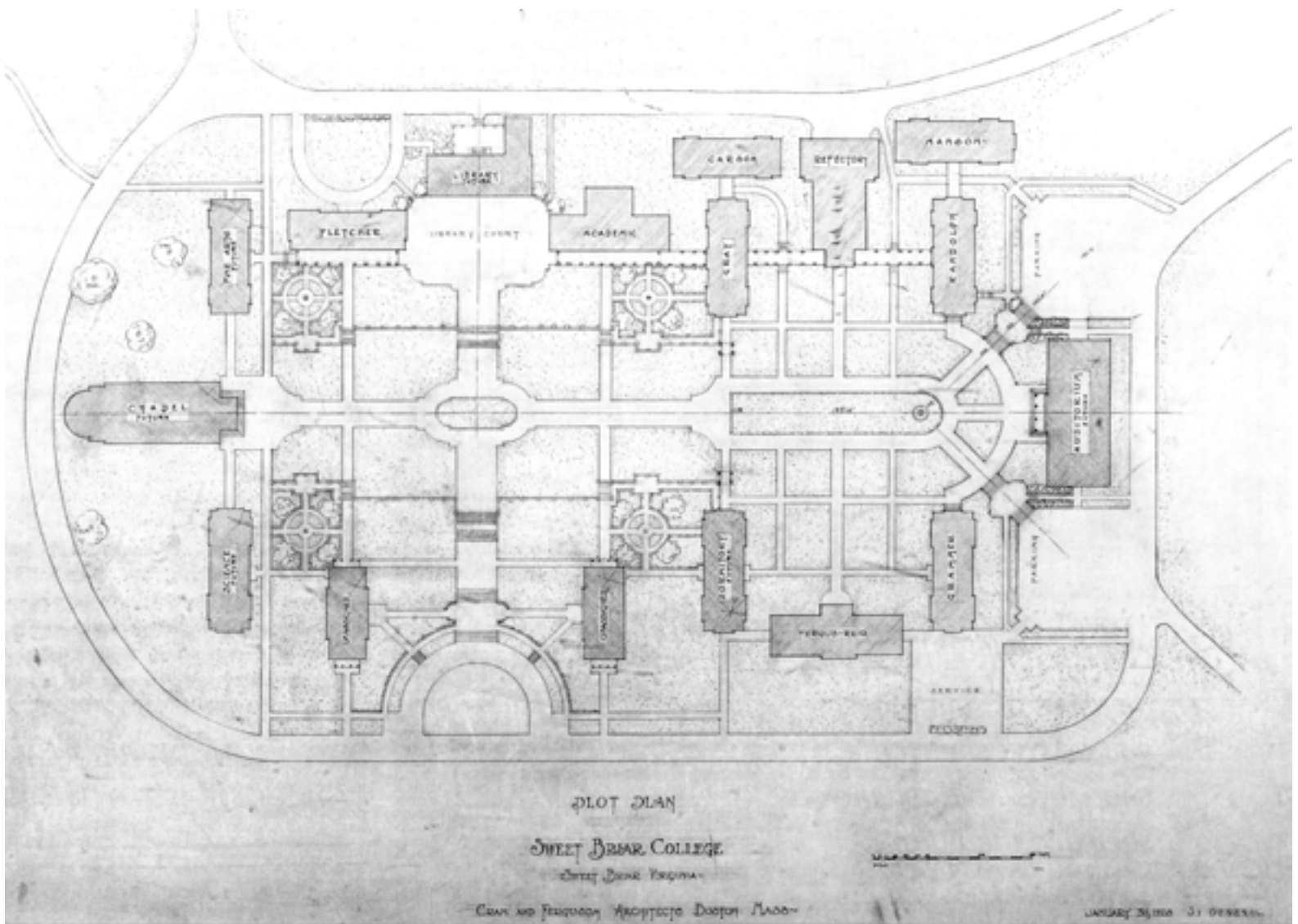
Over two nights, about 500 listeners tuned in to the radio station's livestream online, while DJs remotely joined the staff in the booth using video conferencing tools. The main purpose of the event was to bring alumnae and friends together, but we also raised more than \$4,000 for the Sweet Briar Fund, making the event a successful FUNdraiser.

Streamathon 2020 would not have been possible without help from our wonderful volunteers, including Sarah Clement '75, Katie Hearn '85 and El Warner '85, who served as DJs but did also so much more. El came up with wonderful ideas to help us promote Streamathon (before and during social distancing!), while Sarah and Katie came up with some great playlists and encouraged participation from alumnae across the country.

However, the most exciting part of Streamathon was having Riahn Holcomb-Selbert '22 join us as one of the DJs! Riahn, whose on-air name is Neon Riahn, is the president of The Briar and she joined us in the booth. While on air, Riahn shared what the students in The Briar have been up to this year and plans to work with alumnae on future Streamathon events.

To everyone who called in, made a request or a donation, and to our DJs, thank you for your support. Stay tuned for news on when we'll hold our next Streamathon!

Preserving Our History: Celebrate National Preservation Month



The Plot Plan drafted by Cram and Ferguson Architecture of Boston, MA, where Ralph Adams Cram created the plans for Sweet Briar's campus.

May is Preservation Month and in honor of that occasion, we thought we would share some excerpts about the construction of the Mary Helen Cochran Library from "Sweet Briar College and Ralph Adams Cram: Dreams and Reality" by Aileen H. Laing '57, professor emerita.

Sweet Briar's third president, Dr. Meta Glass, took a personal interest in the architectural development of the College. During her tenure as President (1925-46), she maintained a sustained correspondence with [Ralph Adams] Cram, and it is clear that they became personal friends as well as professional associates. In a letter to Cram she says, "Tell Mrs. Cram she has never given me a chance to have her in my house, as she so delightfully had me in hers."

Mary Helen Cochran Library (1928)

A library is the soul of an academic institution and rightly should be singled out. Today Cochran Library is elevated on a grassy ridge with Fletcher and Benedict [formerly known as "Academic"] acting as flankers to the main structure, but when the College opened, the library was housed in a room on the second floor of the Academic building. By 1921 the facilities in Academic (having swelled to three rooms) were totally inadequate, and in 1922 the "Little Green Hut" [now the Music Box]

was converted into the library. By the mid-1920's even this new space had become too cramped to hold the growing collections, and many departments housed their own.

...

In her later reminiscences Meta Glass said that Cram made "many trips" to Sweet Briar about the Library. But in January of 1928 it was Chester Godfrey from Cram and Ferguson who came to the campus to discuss probable locations for three new buildings: a library, a gymnasium and an auditorium. The result was the Plot Plan of 1928 showing the placement of the library in the position of honor, the spot that Cram had initially designated for the domed Commencement Hall. This plan retains the general symmetry of Cram's original design, but the Chapel has been moved to the western end of the campus and an Auditorium is located on the eastern end. Both are labeled "future" but as the correspondence between Cram and Glass in the 1930's indicate they were both very much "on the table."

...

In June 1924 President Glass asked the Board to approve plans for the new library "in general" so work could begin as soon as possible. They "agreed that

CONTINUED ON BACK PANEL

Preserving Our History, continued

plans approved by the donor, the administration and the architects, would be agreeable to them." Mr. Fergus Reid led the campaign and became the primary donor, naming the library for his mother, Mary Helen Cochran.
...

Architecturally, it is the richest building on the campus with faint echoes from Inigo Jones' Banqueting House constructed in London in the early seventeenth century. The central brick block enriched with limestone details projects above and slightly in front of the wings. Quoining in alternating brick and stone blocks reinforces the solid mass of the corners, Corinthian pilasters articulate the façade, and a balustrade across the top provides a transition between the solid mass of the building and the open space above. The Library is elevated on a podium base composed of a stone platform on a which the pilasters in the central section rest; a stringcourse carries this concept across the wings to the corners. Elaborate entrances in each wing announce that one is entering an important space. Semicircular steps entice one toward the doorway recessed within a richly embellished frame that is composed of Corinthian pilasters. It is surmounted by a segmental broken pediment penetrated by a cartouche hung with swags of fruits and flowers.

In May 1929 President Glass wrote to Chester Godfrey, "the brick work is approaching the second story and we are all very much thrilled over the looks...We are going to lay the cornerstone at Commencement time but the more interesting time to see it will be in the fall and I hope you will come down and take some satisfaction for all the hard work you have done."

We hope that when the COVID-19 pandemic has run its course, you will make a point to visit Sweet Briar's campus and enjoy the beauty of our National Register Historic District, which includes Mary Helen Cochran Library.

Nominations open for Outstanding and Distinguished Alumna Awards

Nominations for the 2019 recipients of the Outstanding and Distinguished Alumnae Awards are now open. To submit your nomination or view past recipients of these awards, please visit sweetbriar.imodules.com/awards or call 800-381-6131. Nominations for both awards are reviewed and recipients are selected by the Alumnae Alliance Council and the President's Council of the College. Nominations are invited from any member of the Sweet Briar family: alumnae, faculty, staff, students and the Sweet Briar College Board of Directors.

Distinguished Alumna Award

The Distinguished Alumna Award was created 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

This award 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.