



THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER JUNE 2019 | VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 6

My fellow alumnae and friends,

Several weeks ago, right before graduation, Sweet Briar lost a legend, Charles “Chuck” Kestner, a stalwart and dedicated servant leader for Sweet Briar who was head of Buildings and Grounds from 1968 to 1990. A veteran of WW II, Kestner was an Eagle Scout who climbed the ladder of responsibility after his military service and then later coming to Sweet Briar after completing his education as a civil engineer from Virginia Tech.

“Mr. Kestner,” as those of us who knew him would always say, went about his responsibilities and stewardship of this campus without a complaint and always maintained a keen interest in what was best for the College.

Mr. Kestner’s achievements at Sweet Briar include the design and installation of the steel frame that holds the bells in the Quad, ensuring their security in the cupola of Gray for years to come. What a daunting thought — for all of us — to know the importance of the Sweet Briar bells and the iconic bell tower where many a celebration has occurred. The constant, sometimes mundane, but always melodious strike on the half hour is dependable and bold.

Mr. Kestner was a bold leader at our college, who stayed under the radar and had a quiet fortitude, approaching his service to our alma mater with humility.

It was for all of us that the bells were secured by Mr. Kestner’s careful oversight because he cared deeply about our foundation, our infrastructure and our future.

When you next hear the bells at Sweet Briar, please pause and reflect on Mr. Kestner’s selfless dedication, which has ensured that all of us — including future generations of Sweet Briar leaders — will hear that constant toll, which serves as a call to action to continue strengthening our college.

Thank you for your constant support of Sweet Briar!

With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson ‘83

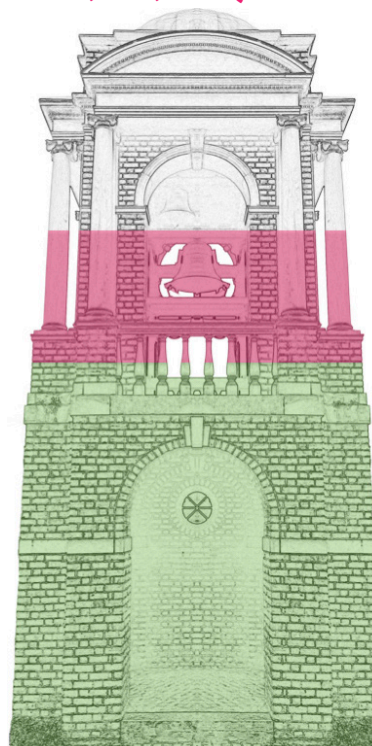
Vice President for Alumnae Relations and Development

Help us ring the bells in
celebration on June 30!
Make a gift to the
Sweet Briar Fund today at
sbc.edu/give.

SWEET BRIAR FUND FY 2019

GOAL: \$10 MILLION

RAISED: \$7,015,521 (70% OF GOAL)



Pledges:
\$1,743,859

Received:
\$5,251,672

as of 05.17.2019

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S&P Global raises Sweet Briar College bond rating for third straight year

by Melissa Richards, Vice President for Communications and Enrollment



Students on their way to class in front of Sweet Briar's Mary Helen Cochran Library, one of the College's 21 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.

In May, S&P Global Ratings raised its long-term rating to BB- from B+, and revised the outlook to positive from stable on bonds issued for Sweet Briar College.

"The rating upgrade reflects our view of the college's successful implementation of various measures intended to stabilize the college's operations," according to S&P's release. "In fiscal 2018, the management team has reset tuition to aid student affordability and solidly reduced operating expenses and the full-accrual deficit compared with the previous year."

This is the third straight year the New York-based financial information and analytics company expressed confidence in the College's management and fiscal operations. In 2017, S&P raised the rating to B+ from B.

"While I am gratified by the upgrade based on our managerial actions, I am deeply mindful that it was really an effort that involved the entire community," Meredith Woo, president of Sweet Briar College, said. "At Sweet Briar, it is always about the students. The upgrade gives us confidence that we are on our way to serving our students to the best of our ability." ■

Alumnae Clubs: Start planning your Back to School event now!

The Alumnae Relations & Development Office will help you plan your event, including:

- pulling area lists,
- sending invitations,
- tracking attendance,
- sending Sweet Briar printed materials,
- providing nametags and more!

Contact Rachel Pietsch, Alumnae Relations Associate,
at rpietsch@sbcc.edu or 434-381-6163.

Capstone project with UVa gives Sweet Briar engineering seniors field experience

by Amy Ostroth, Director of Communications

Students in Sweet Briar's ABET-accredited Margaret Jones Wyllie '45 Engineering Program have plenty of opportunities for hands-on learning — both in required internships as well as the program's senior capstone course, the culminating experience for engineering majors.

"Capstone is a chance to hone and develop skills on a project for an external client," says director Bethany Brinkman. "The yearlong experience involves all aspects of the design process with the end result being a working product ready for mass manufacturing."

In this year's capstone, Charlotte Green and Anne Meyer created an autonomous robot that measures soil respiration, which Meyer describes as the carbon dioxide that soil naturally "breathes" out. "Good soil respiration is indicative of healthy soil," she says, "so measuring respiration gives agriculturists and environmental scientists a better understanding of the condition of the soil." The robot communicates the data back to an unmanned vehicle that's being designed by students from the University of Virginia. So, not only are the Sweet Briar students getting to solve a real-world problem, they're also gaining experience working on a team.



Anne Meyer takes a closer look at the wires.



Engineering majors Charlotte Green (left) and Anne Meyer with their robot, which measures soil respiration on Sweet Briar's campus.

Meyer and Green are developing and testing their robot at Guion Science Center as well as at locations near the new vineyards on campus. The final project will be tested and utilized at a vineyard near Charlottesville, Va.

Meyer says the project has allowed her to push the bounds of her knowledge about computer programming. "The most challenging part of this project has been converting mathematical equations into computer code and incorporating the multitude of sensors required to obtain all of the necessary data for calculating the equations," she observes. She also says it's been rewarding to see the hard work come together in a functional product.

For Green, the capstone project has allowed her to discover an interest in soil mechanics. She had been considering a career in bioengineering in the equine industry, but has decided to focus on soil mechanics instead. In fact, Sweet Briar's engineering program has helped her refine her career goal a great deal from when she first arrived on campus. "When I first started at Sweet Briar, I thought I might be a chemistry major," she told us. "However, thanks to this program, I have found a career that allows me to bring in my passion for chemistry, biology, mathematics and business into one. This program has really shaped me into someone who can better understand the bigger picture involved in creating something."

Like Green, Meyer says Sweet Briar's engineering program has prepared her for the capstone project and for her future career. "Throughout each of my four

years, I have been required to develop projects using critical thinking, as well as all of the information that I have been taught in class," she says. "This continuous culmination of education, critical thinking and hands-on development made this capstone project very approachable because I already had experience with this type of project development." After graduation, Meyer will head to NAVAIR in Patuxent River, Md., and plans to pursue a master's degree in aerospace engineering.

Eventually, Meyer hopes to become a test pilot for NAVAIR on their fixed wing platforms.

"This capstone project has taught me so much about the autonomy of systems," she says. "This is vital in aerospace because the majority of modern flight systems are autonomous in some fashion. The emphasis on critical thinking and education will remain with me throughout my career. These are vital in every aspect of quality engineering." ■

Sweet Briar announces two new faculty hires in economics

by Janika Carey, Assistant Director for Content Strategy

Sweet Briar College has announced the hire of two new faculty members: Assistant Professor of Economics August Hardy and Assistant Professor of Economics and Leadership Daniel Lee. Both will start on July 1.

August Hardy comes to Sweet Briar from George Mason University, where he completed his master's and Ph.D. in economics. His dissertation focused on "Rationality on the Fringes." He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia. Hardy's research and teaching focus primarily on applied microeconomics and political economy, with a secondary interest in industrial organization.



August Hardy

Specifically, his recent research has focused on the application of price theory to non-market interactions.

"I am interested in the ways in which the interactions between individuals create emergent institutions to sustain exchange and increase welfare," he explains. "By viewing human behavior as

fundamentally purposive and recalling the extraordinary value of markets as a discovery process, economics sheds light on things once thought mysterious. With this foundation, my research seeks to illuminate and explore the determinants of human behavior where others do not look."



Daniel Lee

At GMU, Hardy has taught such courses as Introductory and Intermediate Microeconomics, Public Choice, Money and Banking and International Economic Policy.

Daniel Lee recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship in entrepreneurship and innovation at Rice University, where he put his training as a behavioral and experimental economist to the test in the applied environment of a business school. Lee holds a Ph.D. and a master's in economics from Georgia State University and a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics and economics from Emory University.

As a teaching assistant and guest lecturer at Georgia State University, Lee taught a variety of courses, including The Global Economy and Microeconomics. He looks forward to Sweet Briar's innovative liberal arts environment and to collaborations with the business program.

For more information, contact the dean's office at 434-381-6205 or deansoffice@sbc.edu. ■

Register for our 5th Annual Sweet Work Weeks!

Join alumnae, faculty, staff, retirees and friends of Sweet Briar to help us steward our natural and built environment!

August 3-17, 2019

Projects include painting, trail maintenance, outing cabin cleanup, library assistance, admissions assistance and more!

Register today at sweetbriar.imodules.com/sweet-work-weeks.

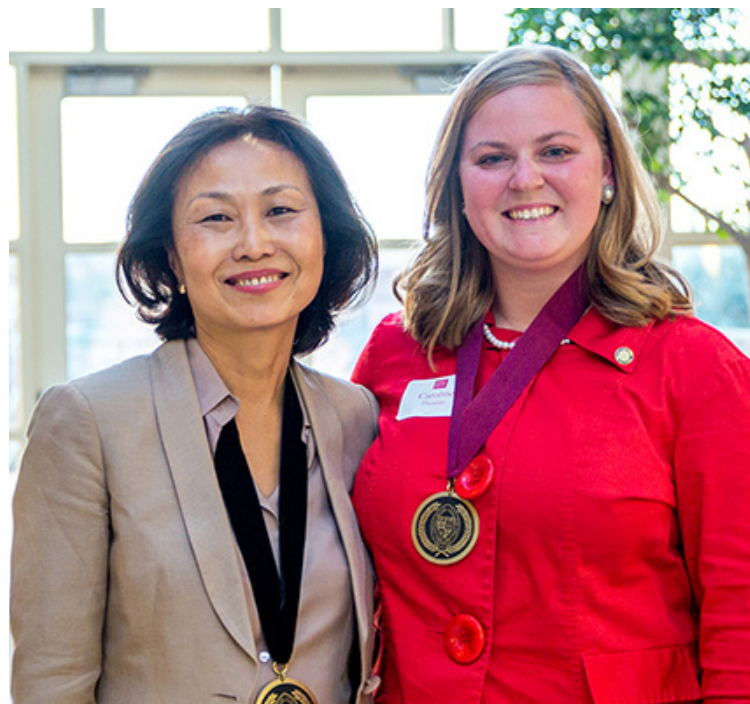
For questions, please contact Rachel Pietsch, Alumnae Relations Associate, at rpietsch@sbc.edu or 434-381-6163.

A Note from Caroline Thomas '19

Caroline took some time before Sweet Briar's Commencement ceremonies, which took place on Saturday, May 18, 2019, to write down some reflections of her four years at the College.

As my time at Sweet Briar is coming to an end, I am taking my time to breathe in everything that is around me. I don't want to forget any of it. This has been my home for four years and it has always been an adventure. As an admissions ambassador, I have been asked many times why I chose Sweet Briar. As for many others in my class, our story is a little different than most. A personal connection to the new soccer coach got me onto campus a week before college was supposed to start. As my mother and I drove onto campus, I felt that feeling that everyone else had talked about feeling before they choose the college they wanted to attend. I was overcome with emotion. It was as if I could feel the power of the campus and the soul of each woman who had touched this campus since 1906. I wanted to be here. I saw this amazing group of women who had the courage to stand up for what they believed in and I was astonished. This legacy that they were a part of was something that I wanted to be a part of. The next day, I called the other college I was enrolled in and told them I was going to Sweet Briar instead. From that day on, I felt that it was my job as a student to continue a legacy of excellence, passion, and commitment.

I value the idea of a tight-knit community and everything that comes with it. While on campus, I have dedicated myself to being involved, from athletics, to academics, the admissions office, and student government. With that, I have also coached soccer in my hometown of Appomattox, Virginia for three seasons, driving every day to encourage and inspire young girls to grow as athletes and as good members of society. I have learned many valuable skills at Sweet Briar, one being my ability to lead. Sometimes it means having to make personal sacrifices and other times



Presidential Medalist Caroline Thomas '19 (right) with President Meredith Woo.

it means leading by example. I believe that Sweet Briar has also taught me that you can't wait for others to make the first step; sometimes you have to be the catalyst for change, even if it is the unpopular opinion. The Sweet Briar that I entered in the fall of 2015 is not the same Sweet Briar that I will be graduating from. This new Sweet Briar is ready for the change of the future and I truly believe, is a leader in innovation and sustainability. I couldn't be prouder to be a fierce Sweet Briar Vixen. ■



The Courageous Class of 2019

Student Profiles



Business major **Heather Lakner '19** from Waldorf, Md., has accepted a position with Morgan Stanley. "I will be working with an alumna as a client services associate while studying to attain my stock trader's license, and after a year I will enter the FAA program to begin working toward becoming a financial advisor," Heather tells us. "Sweet Briar has had a profound influence on the way I see the world and express my opinions," she says. Three lessons Sweet Briar has taught her? "One: Let the little things roll off your back. Done is better than perfect. Two: Conflict isn't always bad; when handled carefully, it leads to tremendous growth and a better understanding of the world around you. Three: Your comfort zone is a much smaller place than you realize."



"When you surround yourself with powerful women, you become one," says senior **Nicole Sabovik '19**, who will join the Enterprise Management Training Program in Richmond. "I can proudly say that my life has changed for the better because of the lifelong friendships I've made," adds the business major from Ridgefield, Conn. "At Sweet Briar, I learned my value and found my voice. I'm excited to apply everything I've learned from my in-class and extracurricular experiences to the real world."



"I found out in October that I was accepted early decision to William & Mary Law School!" says philosophy major and economics minor **Cece Mahan '19**. Congratulations, Cece! The Massachusetts native followed her aunt, Trish Dolph Fallon '84, to Sweet Briar. "I've learned from Sweet Briar and our wonderful alumnae to work hard and never give up on the things you want in life, and to always believe in yourself," Cece says. "Why not you?! I also learned about the value of asking for help, especially in a place like SBC, where professors want you to succeed and be happy. And many times, I learned how amazing things turn out when you don't back down when things get tough."