

A photograph of the Sweet Briar College building, a large, two-story brick structure with a prominent portico supported by white columns. The building is set on a green lawn with trees in the foreground and background.

# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 4 | MAY 2021

## My fellow alumnae and friends,

### Everything is growing at Sweet Briar!

As you know, we celebrated Earth Week two weeks ago. The 51-year-old celebration highlights the importance of our natural heritage and raises awareness about our planet. During Sweet Briar's celebration, I had the amazing opportunity to see our students in nature with Professor Linda Fink. She is teaching a 3-week course called the Curious Naturalist and I wish you could have seen it—donned in a pair of mud-splashed wellies, clutching wiry flags with orange squares at the end, the students were seated on the ground, squarely focused on their area of study and intent on their plots in the wildflower meadow. Linda, who has been at the College for nearly 31 years, flashed her smile and gave a hearty wave encouraging me to walk over. She is a remarkable professor and all of the students try to get into her classes. She has guided students on to grad school, into ornithology and to important careers in environmental policy.

Professor Fink has been utilizing the vernal ponds to study the spotted salamander and using the 2,200 acres of forests—some of them old growth forests—to guide students in research projects and teaching on this extraordinary living laboratory that is Sweet Briar.

Fortunately for Sweet Briar, Professor Fink and Lisa Powell, our director of the Center for Human and Environmental Sustainability and associate professor of environmental studies, now have our 26,000 square foot greenhouse (made possible through the generosity of our donors). The greenhouse is laced with pink and green swiss chard, Russian Kale, carrots and beets. Classes are studying soil agriculture and growing arugula with the new hydroponics systems. Our engineering students have even built their own hydroponic system! The greenhouse is also preparing to host a new summer honors research program covering all the agriculture enterprises: the Willits Fellows Program supported by The Willits Foundation and Laura Evans '79.

We are coming into the third year—and our first actual

harvest this fall—of Sweet Briar's vineyards. All of this activity is part of a burgeoning awareness and focus on sustainability, not just here at Sweet Briar, but throughout the nation.

It is hard to believe that it was only three years ago that Sweet Briar engaged the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service to help the College come up with a conservation plan for its 2,800+ acres. They recommended we plant the wildflower meadow for the pollinators at the Brown Family Apiary and they also helped to identify invasive species throughout the campus.

During this past 15 months, we have been able to provide fresh vegetables to our local foodbanks, provide fresh vegetables in the dining hall and offer exciting classes in agriculture and sustainability. Funding from the Judith Haskell Brewer Fund has allowed Sweet Briar to hire outstanding professors in this area and also keep the community garden an active place for students, faculty and staff to get their hands dirty.

Our community is being transformed as we come together to celebrate the landscape and the "place," which is a central part of our experience at Sweet Briar. I hope you will come and see all we're doing now that the world is opening up because it serves as a tangible message for all that Sweet Briar is growing. We want you all to be participants in our progress!

I also encourage you to invest in this remarkable place (if you have not already done so) with its extraordinary opportunities for our future leaders and urge others to as well.

With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83

Vice President for Alumnae Relations, Development, and Communications

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

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*Sweet Briar Fund and Editor of*

*The Briar Wire*

Wanda Vest, *Data Entry Manager*

# GIVING TO SWEET BRIAR

## Making gifts of stock is easy and convenient

Donating appreciated securities, including stocks or bonds, is an easy and tax-effective way for you to make a gift to Sweet Briar College.

### Benefits of gifts of stocks and bonds

- Avoid paying capital gains tax on the sale of appreciated stock
- Receive a charitable income tax deduction
- Further the mission of Sweet Briar College today

There are special rules for valuing a gift of stock. The value of a charitable gift of stock is determined by taking the mean between the high and low stock price on the date of the gift. Mutual fund shares are valued using the closing price for the fund on the

date of the gift.

### How to make a gift of stocks and bonds

While the process for sending stock to Sweet Briar is the same, our account numbers have recently changed.

If you would like to make a gift of appreciated securities to Sweet Briar, please contact our office (or have your broker do so) at 800-381-6131.

### Contact Us

If you have any questions about gifts of stocks and bonds, please contact Paula Eanes at [peanes@sbcb.edu](mailto:peanes@sbcb.edu) or 434-381-6242. We would be happy to assist you and answer any questions that you have.

## Fundraising Progress to Goal

Thanks to the many alumnae and friends who have made gifts to the Sweet Briar Fund so far this fiscal year, we have made significant progress toward our fundraising goals. However, we still have a little more than \$1.3 million to raise before June 30, 2021 to meet our goal for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

In addition to our financial goal, we have a goal to reach **30% alumnae participation** this year. As of April 20, we have reached **19.8% participation**. The only way that participation will increase is if **1,285** more alumnae who have not yet made gifts this fiscal year do so before June 30, 2021. If you have already made your gift this year, an additional gift will not increase participation. So be sure to encourage at least two alumnae to join you by making a gift, which makes **YOU + 2!**

Visit [sbcb.edu/give](https://sbcb.edu/give) to make a gift online or call 434-381-6131 if you have questions about other ways to give.

### Sweet Briar Fund

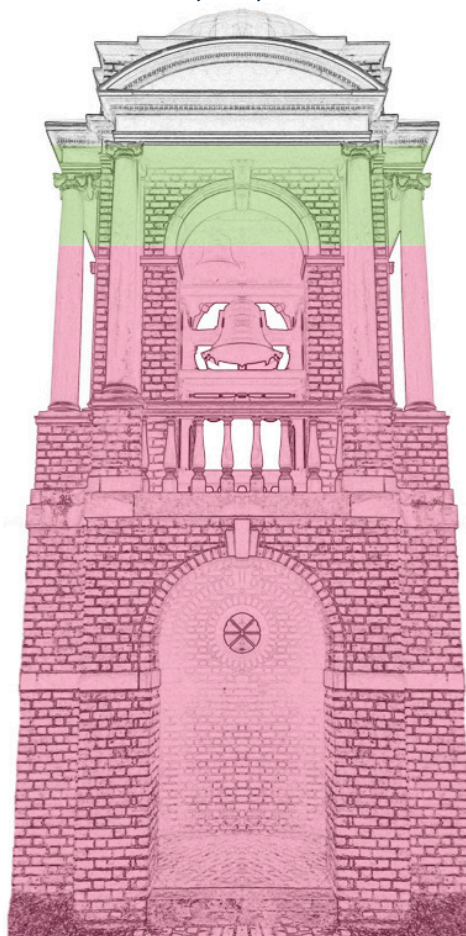
#### Goal 2020-2021:

**\$8,270,000**

Left to raise:  
**\$1,320,272**

Pledges to  
Convert:  
**\$868,157**

Total Raised:  
**\$6,081,671**



As of April 20, 2021.



# ALUMNAE

## On the flat: An in-house clinic with Olympian Lendon Gray '71

"Don't forget the whoa."

"More energy."

"Bend. Don't over-bend. Now straight."

"Drop your stirrups."

"Ride on a loose rein. See what he does without you."

"Down the centerline."

"Well done!"

Improving the horse and rider through clinics with masters of their sport never fails to offer valuable lessons that lead to growth. On April 7, Sweet Briar riders took advantage of the opportunity to learn from two-time Olympian and Sweet Briar '71 graduate Lendon Gray, who also serves on the College's Board of Directors. She spent the day at the Rogers Riding Center for an in-house clinic with riders of various levels and with the NCEA team. A renowned dressage rider, trainer and instructor, Lendon shared her extensive knowledge of the art and execution of working on the flat. No matter the equestrian discipline, correct and quality flat work is a vital part of foundational training.



Lendon's experience at Sweet Briar with the forward riding system is evident in her training, schooling and teaching. As she works with horse and rider, you see how she emphasizes self-carriage, connection and being one with the horse. You often hear her say how the most important thing you can do is nothing (along with many other catch phrases and unique teaching techniques that make clinicians both fun and challenging).

The morning began with several group sessions of recreational and competitive riders of various levels. In the afternoon, the NCEA team worked with Lendon in two groups. Practicing with an Olympian right before NCEA Nationals next week is certainly not something most teams can say they did!

Becoming an equestrian, like any education, is a lifetime journey of growth and development — something that Sweet Briar students and alumnae know, appreciate, pursue and love. Enjoy the ride!



## Nominations open for Outstanding and Distinguished Alumna Awards

Nominations for the 2021 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](https://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. These awards will be presented at this year's Reunion, July 22-25, 2021 (see page 6 for more details).

### 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.

# STUDENTS

## Senior Legacy Project concludes with tree dedication ceremony and words of wisdom from the Class of 2021

For the culmination of the Senior Legacy Project, the Class of 2021 planted their lasting legacy in the form of a Cherokee Brave dogwood tree on the morning of Thursday, March 25. The dedication started with class president Sammy Runyon '21 welcoming those in person and those joining us for the Facebook livestream. She remarked on the incredible class participation rate of 40% and the significance of the tree to the senior class. Following Sammy, President Meredith Woo spoke about the importance of relationships, and how Sweet Briar alumnae foster relationships extremely well. She remarked that she is sad to see the Class of 2021 leave, but not too sad since she knows they will return to campus and visit.

Caroline Potts gave a beautiful, inspiring call to her class that their legacy will live through this tree. [You can read her speech in full below.](#) Claire Dennison Griffith '80 had big shoes to fill after Caroline's rousing speech, but she rounded out the dedication by remarking on how this space will be a tribute to many generations of Sweet Briar classes. The tree is placed in the courtyard between Manson, Randolph, and Pannell (but will not encroach on the foundations of any buildings) and it will be joined by the 1991 memorial bench later this year. The Class of 1971 has also cultivated this area and helped it continue to be a beautiful space enjoyed by many in our community. Sammy returned to invite those in attendance to "turn the soil" and ceremoniously plant the tree. The dogwood tree symbolizes resilience, passion, and rebirth which are all traits that represent the Class of 2021. Here's to you, seniors! There is truly nothing that you cannot do!

For all our alumnae, especially our 1's and 6's celebrating their Reunion this year, we challenge YOU to strive to reach the 30% goal for participation this year. If you have already made a gift this fiscal year, then pick up the phone and call two of your closest classmates to encourage them! Think of it as **YOU + 2!** When we increase alumnae participation, it helps Sweet Briar's rankings as well as helps us be more competitive when applying for grants. You can make your best gift by going to [sbc.edu/give](https://sbc.edu/give).

### Caroline's Speech

Hello everyone! For those who do not know me my name is Caroline Potts. I am the treasurer of the class of 2021 and a member of the senior legacy committee. As the member of the committee that did the research and helped choose this species of tree, I have been asked to share my reasonings for selecting this tree. Admittedly, my reasonings were



Sammy Runyon '21 welcomes guests to the tree dedication.

boring and purely practical at first. The Cherokee Brave dogwood is not only native to Virginia, but the Dogwood is also the state flower. In the spring and summer, the tree blooms bright Sweet Briar pink that would attract both students and visitors alike. In the fall and winter, the tree blooms with bright red berries. Its roots will not harm the foundations of Pannell, Randolph, or Manson and it can survive in some shade with limited upkeep. However, when I was asked to give a speech at this dedication, I began to do more research and I discovered that if by fate, kismet, or happenstance I had chosen a tree that was the living embodiment of everything the Class of 2021 is and stands for. Trees like flowers have a language, meanings we have imbued on them to give them some significance. There are three associated with the dogwood that I would like to share with you now.



Caroline Potts '21 speaks to the significance of the Cherokee Brave dogwood tree to the Senior Legacy Project Committee.



# STUDENTS



The first is resilience. Although the dogwood appears small and fragile in comparison to the other native oaks and pines of the Virginia wild, this species of tree can withstand the toughest storms nature brings its way. Its branches may bend, its petals may fall, but when the rain clears it remains. The Class of 2021 has witnessed their fair share of storms these past few years (both literally and figuratively). Curriculum changes, the dismissal of beloved professors and the transfer of friends, and most recently a global pandemic. However, despite these obstacles, the women of the class of 2021, like the dogwood, refuse to break. We have carried on despite it all and have made it this far. With only 44 days left until graduation, I have no doubt that this will continue to be the case.



*Claire Dennison Griffith '80, senior director of alumnae relations and development, speaks to the bond among alumnae of all generations.*

The second is passion. Traditionally, pink has represented passion in flower language. Thus, the dogwood blooms passion. The passion that the Class of 2021 holds cannot only be seen in their dedication to this project, but in the way we live our lives every day. It is imbued in our athletic programs and our senior captains; it is imbued in our student leadership both in clubs and student government. It is in our honor societies and academics. It is in the

way we fight for what we want, speak up for what we believe to be right, and continue to fight even when it is not easy. The class of 2021 does not merely have a passion for the things that Sweet Briar has to offer, but a passion for life as well.



*Katie Balding '21 takes a turn at planting the dogwood tree.*

Lastly, there is rebirth. Every year the dogwood blooms pink petals, to be replaced by red berries, only to continue the cycle the next season. It goes through seasons of rebirth every spring. The young women who crossed the bridge to receive their daisies on move-in day almost four years ago are not the same strong women present in the Class of 2021 today. Nor is Sweet Briar the same college. As Sweet Briar has molded itself to a new generation of college students through curriculum changes, new programs, a green house, and several other building projects, the women of 2021 have grown in confidence, independence, strength, worldliness, and leadership. Like the dogwood, we have gone through a season of regrowth and are about to be reborn out into the world as women that will change it.

Now we are here on the cusp of a new chapter in all our lives, planting a tree that will stand as a legacy to the hard work, dedication, and passion the Class of 2021 has put into everything they have done for the past four years. To my class directly I say this. We may not know what the future holds or where our paths may lead so I implore you, whenever you are feeling doubtful, scared, lonely, or hopeless remember two things. Firstly, you are not alone. We, your sisters, are always standing with you ready to lend a helping hand. Two, remember our tree, the symbol of our strength, determination, passion, and resilience and let it guide you back to that very strength that always lies inside you. Three, remember that the tree will always be waiting to welcome you home. Thank you.



# STUDENTS

## 2021 Presidential Medal awarded to Sydney Campbell '21



There is always a lot happening at Sweet Briar in early spring, including one very special announcement. On March 25, the 2021 Presidential Medal was awarded to Sydney Campbell '21.

The medal is given to a senior who has demonstrated exemplary intellectual achievement, in addition to distinction in some of all of these areas: service to the community, contributions to the arts, enlargement of the College's global perspective, athletic fitness and achievement, leadership and contributions to the community discourse.

Sydney represents all of this. She has been intensely dedicated to her studies, graduating in three years. As a research collaborator, she was nominated for the Barry Goldwater Scholarship, a national award for students who have conducted research in a STEM field.

Her service to the community includes sitting on the Book Shop, dining, and lectures and events committees; serving as an ARC tutor and a Peer Academic Mentor; and being a member of the COVID advisory task force as well as a lead COVID Captain.

Despite having never played lacrosse prior to arriving at Sweet Briar, she enthusiastically joined the team and soon became a starting goalkeeper. Sydney was recognized by the Virginia Sports Information Directors All-Academic Team and in Sweet Briar's Chi Alpha Sigma Honor Society.

As a leader, she is president of the Chung Mungs

and the Inter-Club Council while also co-chairing the Student Events Committee.

Before the presentation of the medal (which is a closely guarded secret), Sydney was meeting with President Woo. "She never told me I was getting it. We walked over to the senior steps at Pannell, and I found out they were announcing the Presidential Medalist," said Sydney. "After she announced my name and read off the list of everything that I have done at Sweet Briar, it was so surprising. It's never really registered how much I've done here or been a part of. Even graduating in three years, I look back and feel like I didn't miss anything."

Also in attendance at the event were two people who had a big impact on her Sweet Briar experience: lacrosse coach Meredith Newman and math professor Stephen Loftus.

"Coach Newman really made a big impression on my life. I have never been an athlete, but I danced for nine years, and I ended up playing and loving lacrosse."

"Dr. Loftus is also on that same level of impact," she said. "I wouldn't be here without him. He is so dedicated to serving his students."

"All of the things that I got to do, you can really only do at a school like Sweet Briar. We're small so you get that one-on-one time with professors, coaches and your team," she said.

After Sydney graduates in May, she will be attending UVA in the prestigious statistics PhD program.

# ATHLETICS

## Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar program names Kalwitz Blanco, Larson-Jackson Individual Sports Winners



As part of the 2021 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars program, sophomore Ingrid Kalwitz Blanco and junior Britt Larson-Jackson have been named individual Sports Winners, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* magazine announced on Thursday.

Kalwitz Blanco (Antofagasta, Chile) was named the Sports Winner across all divisions of collegiate athletics for the sport of field hockey, while Larson-Jackson (Washington, D.C.) was named the Sports Winner for equestrian.

In addition to their athletic ability, student-athletes named 2021 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.5, be at least a sophomore academically and be active on their campuses or in their communities.

Kalwitz Blanco has one goal to her name in the spring of 2021 while finishing the fall 2019 season with one goal and one assist for the Vixens.

Recently honored as a Scholar of Distinction by the NFHCA, Kalwitz Blanco is an executive member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee at Sweet Briar and is the LatinX vice president.

Kalwitz Blanco helped organized a 'pulseras' drive



on the Sweet Briar campus, raising over 500-dollars for a non-profit organization benefitting Central American Countries and has also helped organize a program that put together and donated 350-plus care-packages to a local women's shelter. Kalwitz Blanco also serves as a remote tutor for a non-profit in her native Chile that works with children in extreme poverty.

During her junior campaign, Larson-Jackson finished the regular season 3-1 over fences and 5-1 on the flat, while earning Most Outstanding Performer honors once in fences and once on flat.

In addition to earning multiple academic honors during her collegiate career, Larson-Jackson spends time volunteering with the children's ministry at her local church and also volunteers to deliver meals to members of the local community.

At Sweet Briar, Larson-Jackson serves as a peer counselor and is a trail guide coordinator, while also serving as a Diversity Representative for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

The full list of Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars will be published in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education's* April 29 issue.





Alumnae Relations and  
Development  
P.O. Box 1057  
Sweet Briar, VA 24595

#### RECRUIT A STUDENT

Know a young woman who may be  
interested in Sweet Briar? Visit  
[sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student](http://sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student)  
so she can receive our  
admissions materials!



# Reunion has moved!

July 22-25, 2021



See the tentative schedule at [sbc.edu/reunion](http://sbc.edu/reunion).

**All alumnae are invited to attend events throughout the weekend!**

#### Thursday, July 22 - Sunday, July 25

Events honoring classes ending in 0 and 5  
Special events for the classes of 1970 and 1995

#### Registration

Early bird begins Tuesday, June 1  
Regular registration begins Tuesday, June 15  
Registration closes Tuesday, July 13

#### Friday, July 23 - Sunday, July 25

Events honoring classes ending in 1 and 6  
Special events for the classes of 1971 and 1996

*As we plan for Reunion, our highest priority is the health and safety of our alumnae, friends, faculty and staff. At this time, we are optimistic that we will be able to come together and host a safe and fun in-person event. We will continue to monitor state and local orders related to COVID-19 and will send you an update if our plans need to change.*