

# The Briar Wire

Volume 9, Issue 8 | December 2023



## My fellow alumnae and friends,

As the last few days have had a chance to sink in while I write to you from Sweet Briar House, I first want to tell you that I am elated to have been named Sweet Briar College's 14th President. I am particularly humbled by the Board of Directors' confidence in me to lead our venerable institution. As an alumna, I am a product of our alma mater, which I proudly carry with me daily as I interact and serve our students and the entire Sweet Briar community. This position is one of collaborative leadership with faculty, staff, students, friends and with you — my fellow alumnae who have fostered and lifted this college for decades and generations. I take this responsibility very seriously and I'm well-versed in the internal and external challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead. I believe our community, both inside and out, has the tenacity to lock arms and face the challenges, adapt to changes and seek new opportunities, just as we have done in recent years.

### ABOVE

Students at the tree lighting in the Quad in 2021.

Since I was named interim president, and now, continuing in the role permanently, I am focusing our campus community around the top priorities laid out in Sweet Briar's 5-year strategic plan.

They are:

1. Drive academic excellence;
2. Continue to build enrollment;
3. Lead and complete the *Where Women Lead* campaign;
4. Steward the campus, including our land and buildings;
5. Raise Sweet Briar's profile; and
6. Unify the Sweet Briar community.

Through these priorities, alumnae and friends have a tremendous opportunity to engage in the imperative to secure Sweet Briar's future.

I feel nothing but joy and excitement for this holiday season and our many seasons ahead together. As we approach the end of the semester and the beginning of the holidays, I am buoyed by the spirit that each of you magnifies in your communities and our college. Last year, I asked you to shine your light — and I know you continue to do so. I hope you will continue to project your light upon others and join me in sharing the spirit of kindness and care for others as we approach this joyous season. We all have so much to be thankful for, and this year, I am blessed to be your president. I remain so grateful for the gifts of talent, time, and treasure you give to Sweet Briar. Please know that I wish you and your family, peace, joy and the happiest holidays.

### WITH GRATITUDE,

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83  
President

**P.S.: We recently released the 2022-2023 Honor Roll of Donors on our website. Please take a moment to read it and honor those who continue to support Sweet Briar.**

## Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

Mason Bennett Rummel '83, Chair  
Mary Pope M. Hutson '83, President  
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Peter H. Bryan  
Verda Colvin '87, Vice Chair  
Laura Willits Evans '79  
Marianne "Mimi" C. Fahs '71  
Kelley Manderson Fitzpatrick '85  
Sally Mott Freeman '76, Secretary  
The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Lendon Gray '71  
Fred "Buzzy" Griffin, Executive  
Committee Member at Large  
Katie Hearn '85  
Martha Holland '72  
Keenan Colton Kelsey '66  
Michelle O'Neill '85  
J. Chapman Petersen  
Holly Prothro Philbin '95  
Norma Bulls Valentine '93  
Claude Becker Wasserstein '82

## Alumnae Relations and Development Staff

Claire Dennison Griffith '80, Interim  
Vice President of Alumnae  
Relations and Development  
Calli Arida, Advancement and  
Stewardship Manager  
Lea Sparks Bennett '83, Advancement  
Services Coordinator  
Rachel Blomquist, Administrative  
Assistant  
Pam Boydoh, Executive Assistant  
Lee Anne MacKenzie Chaskes '83,  
Director of the Sweet Briar Fund  
Margaret McClellan Driscoll '92,  
Director of Planned Giving  
Paula Eanes, Director of Advancement  
Services  
Heather Colson Ewing '90, Admissions  
Ambassadors Manager  
Katie Hawk '21, Advancement Services  
Associate  
Caroline Chappel Hazarian '09,  
Associate Director of Alumnae  
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Keeley Sullivan Jurgovan '92, Associate  
Director of Alumnae Relations  
Lisa Wray Longino '78, Senior Director  
of Major Gifts and Stewardship  
Rachel Pietsch, Assistant Director of  
Alumnae Relations  
Emily Dodson Sadler '18, Assistant  
Director of the Sweet Briar Fund  
Clélie D. D. Steckel, Director of  
Development Communications  
and Data Analytics  
Megan Sunwall, Alumnae Relations  
and Development Assistant

# Word of Mouth Marketing for Sweet Briar

Sweet Briar is embarking on a "word of mouth" marketing campaign to augment our efforts to recruit future classes for the College. Our counselors have been out on the road this fall, attending college fairs and making visits to high schools. That work will continue, and is enhanced by our alumnae Admissions Ambassadors engaging in these same efforts alongside our staff.

This campaign to share Sweet Briar through word of mouth relies on four advocate groups: current students, alumnae, parents, and college leadership, including the faculty and staff as well as our Board of Directors. These advocate groups will target high school women, parents, counselors, advisors, and coaches.

The Sweet Briar community already knows the core messages for these campaigns: Sweet Briar was founded to empower women and is where women lead. You can explore who you can be, and we cultivate leaders. You can find a powerful sisterhood at Sweet Briar, where all women are focused on undergraduate academic excellence. Our college is a fun environment where no matter what we do, we do it really well.

Over the next several months, we will reach out to these advocate groups to give you the tools to get started on helping with this campaign. For now, there are a few actions everyone in the Sweet Briar family can take to prepare for word-of-mouth marketing:

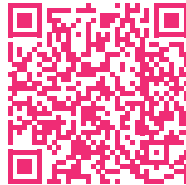
1. **Rock the pink and green!** Wear your Sweet Briar swag wherever you go — particularly when traveling during the holidays. Need more swag? See page 8 for new merch at the Book Shop and where to find it.
2. **Get involved in your local high school community.** Be on the lookout for opportunities where Sweet Briar can engage, like the athletics offered at the schools, any college fairs they host, and how they publicize their students' accomplishments (e.g., college signing days, senior theatre performances, scholarships earned).
3. **Share what you learn with Sweet Briar's Admissions Office.** Contact Heather Colson Ewing '90 at [hewing@sbc.edu](mailto:hewing@sbc.edu) with the information you've found on your local high schools.



# Mary Pope M. Hutson '83 named 14th president of Sweet Briar

On November 30, Mason Rummel, Chair of Sweet Briar's Board of Directors, announced that Mary Pope Maybank Hutson '83 is Sweet Briar's 14th president. Hutson, who served as interim president since July, has a background in the public and private sectors, including non-profit management and land conservation.

We have made the full announcement, press release, and an article from the Washington Post available on our website, which you can access by scanning the QR code to the right.



Scan to view  
the presidential  
announcements.



**“I am enormously humbled by this choice. I will devote all of my energy to the education of young women, building a unified community, and engaging our alumnae in the imperative to secure Sweet Briar's future.”** –Mary Pope Maybank Hutson '83, President

## Honor Roll of Donors Available Online

This year, Sweet Briar has published its Honor Roll of Donors online for gifts made to Sweet Briar College between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

The Honor Roll of Donors recognizes and thanks new and loyal donors who philanthropically support the College in a number of ways. From designated gifts that support faculty and programs, provide scholarships to our students, and steward our renowned and historic campus, to gifts made to the Sweet Briar Fund, every gift transforms Sweet Briar's ability to provide an innovative, liberal arts education.

Gifts of all sizes make a difference and for that, Sweet Briar recognizes donors at every level. Whether it be a gift of \$1 or \$1 million, collective giving cultivates Sweet Briar's mission of forging ethical leaders with the skill,

compassion, and vision to create a more just and sustainable world.

All of us at Sweet Briar continue to be inspired by the unwavering confidence and commitment of our amazing alumnae community. Thank you to all who made a gift or volunteered your time and talent to the College this year.



Scan to read the  
Honor Roll of  
Donors.



**HONOR ROLL OF DONORS**  
**2022-2023**

JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023



# Rev. Keenan Colton Kelsey '66 commits support for Gray

In October, Reverend Keenan Colton Kelsey '66 initiated a transformative gift to Sweet Briar College. This gift of \$5 million, part of the *Where Women Lead* campaign, will support the rehabilitation of Gray Hall.

Gray was one of the first residence halls designed for Sweet Briar by architect Ralph Adams Cram and was constructed in 1906, along with Carson Hall. Around 2000, Gray was transformed from a residence hall to an administrative and academic building, with the addition of classrooms and by modifying dorm rooms to become offices for faculty and staff.

As enrollment at Sweet Briar has increased since the 2015-2016 academic year, so have demands for student housing. The Covid-19 pandemic has also made a lasting impact on student housing, with students requesting more single rooms than in previous years.

Gray will be returned to its original purpose as a residence hall, which will include removing modern institutional finishes to

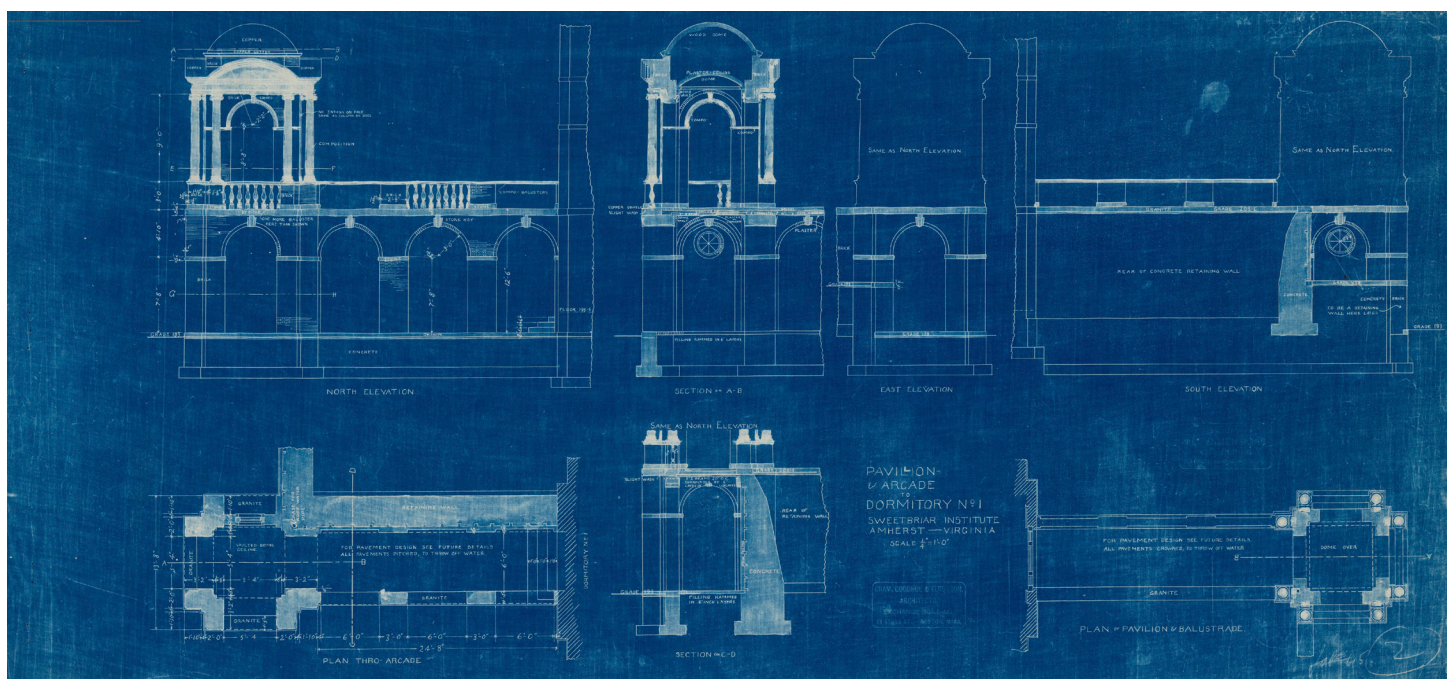
reveal hardwood floors and plaster ceilings. The College is considering restoring missing fireplace mantels following their original designs and other woodwork, such as baseboards and picture rails, removed as part of late-20th-century improvements. The project may also restore original residence hall room configurations, replace demolished partitions, re-open blocked doors, and will improve bathroom, kitchen, and laundry facilities. The College will also modernize Gray's HVAC system.

"I am a fierce believer in same sex education, particularly women's education," said Keenan. "We need the information, the confidence, the critical thinking, and the moral compass to make maximum contributions to the world. Sweet Briar gives women options to have choices in life."

President Mary Pope M. Hutson '83 said, "All of us at Sweet Briar are so grateful for Keenan's gift to support Gray, which accomplishes one of our *Where Women Lead* campaign goals. This demonstration of commitment will inspire many others to support this important effort and the consequential improvements to our college. My heart swells with gratitude for Keenan and her generosity."

## BELOW

One of the blueprints of Sweet Briar's bell tower, the pavilion extending from Gray Hall, which was designed by Ralph Adams Cram.





## Ways to make a gift and support students

**Make a gift online** at [sbc.edu/give](https://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, call the Alumnae Relations and Development Office at 434-381-6131.

**Send a check** 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 visit [sbc.edu/alumnae/give/types-of-gifts](https://sbc.edu/alumnae/give/types-of-gifts).

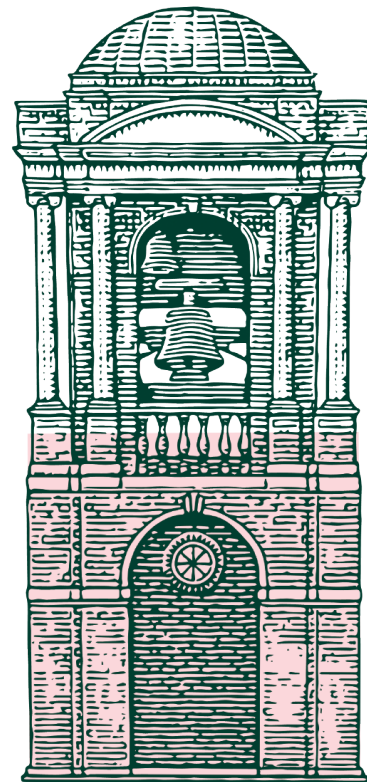
For gifts by **wire transfer**, please call the Alumnae Relations and Development Office to obtain the instructions for the transfer.

If you plan to make a **gift of stock** to Sweet Briar, please contact the Alumnae Relations and Development Office for stock transfer instructions for your broker. We will need to know the name of the stock and the estimated value.

If you are interested in setting up a **legacy gift** to Sweet Briar, please visit [sbclegacy.org](https://sbclegacy.org) or contact Margaret McClellan Driscoll '92 at [mdriscoll@sbc.edu](mailto:mdriscoll@sbc.edu).

### ABOVE

Students in class in one of Guion's labs.



## Sweet Briar Fund

Goal: \$4,250,000

Raised to Date: \$1,902,420  
(as of Nov. 30, 2023)

Left to Raise: \$3,097,580

Every gift to the Sweet Briar Fund makes a difference to our students. The Sweet Briar Fund supports:

- Additional scholarships for students based on merit and need
- Faculty and academic program support to ensure Sweet Briar remains innovative
- Stewardship of our natural and built environment, including our National Register Historic District buildings

**Make your gift at  
[sbc.edu/give](https://sbc.edu/give)!**



## Reunion 2024

May 31–June 2, 2024

The party starts  
when you arrive!

Let the  
celebration begin!

SWEET  
BRIAR  
COLLEGE

### Key Dates for Reunion

Registration launches with early bird pricing	February 1
Early bird registration ends	April 23, 11:59 p.m.
Registration closes	May 21, 11:59 p.m.
Reunion begins!	May 31

Visit [sbc.edu/reunion](https://sbc.edu/reunion) for  
more information:

- Tentative schedule
- Photos from Reunion 2023
- What to bring and what to wear
- Reunion Awards information
- Frequently-asked questions



## SPRING EVENTS

### Spring 2024 Schedule of Events

Swimming @ Bridgewater College	January 6	Gager Concert Series: Alma Ensemble	March 20
Swimming @ Roanoke College	January 13	Tennis vs. Roanoke College	March 23
Spring Classes Begin	January 15	Softball @ University of Lynchburg	March 23
NCEA Meet at Sweet Briar	January 16	Lacrosse vs. Pfeiffer College	March 24
Swimming vs. University of Lynchburg	January 19	Softball vs. Ferrum College	March 24
Accepted Students Day	January 21	Gager Concert Series: Kay Rooney	March 24
<b>Reunion Registration Opens</b>	<b>February 1</b>	Tennis @ University of Lynchburg	March 27
NCEA vs. Bridgewater College	February 2	Softball vs. Randolph College	March 27
IHSA @ University of Mary Washington	February 3-4	Tennis vs. Hollins University	March 27
Swimming @ ODAC Championships (Greensboro, N.C.)	February 7-10	Writers Series: Chloé Cooper Jones	March 27
Gager Concert Series: Anna Billias & Julia Goudimosa	February 11	Tennis vs. Shenandoah University	March 29
NCEA vs. Sacred Heart University	February 16	Lacrosse @ Eastern Mennonite University	March 30
Winter Open House	February 16	Writers Series: Lisa Russ Spaar	April 4
IHSA @ Liberty University	February 17	IHSA Zones Tournament (Liberty University)	April 6
Lacrosse @ Virginia Wesleyan University	February 17	Lacrosse vs. Warren Wilson College	April 6
Softball @ William Peace University	February 17	Lacrosse vs. Greensboro College	April 9
Tennis @ Ferrum College	February 18	Applied Music Students Recital	April 9
Lacrosse vs. Guilford	February 20	Tennis @ Mary Baldwin University	April 11
Writers Series: Edgar Kunz	February 22	Long Session Classes End	April 12
Softball @ Marymount University	February 23	Tennis @ Virginia Wesleyan University	April 13
IHSA Regionals at Sweet Briar	February 24	Tennis vs. Randolph College	April 13
Lacrosse vs. William Peace University	February 24	Long Session Exams	April 14-16
Softball @ Southern Virginia University	February 27	Lacrosse vs. Ferrum College	April 17
<b>March Days of Giving</b>	<b>March 1-10</b>	Tennis @ Southern Virginia University	April 17
NCEA vs. Berry College	March 2	NCEA Nationals (Ocala, Fla.)	April 18-20
Softball vs. Brevard College	March 2	Spring Open House	April 19-20
Lacrosse @ North Carolina Wesleyan University	March 2	Tennis @ Averett University	April 20
Tennis @ Washington College	March 2	Lacrosse vs. Trinity Washington University	April 22
Tennis @ Salisbury University	March 3	Earth Day Community Lunch	April 22
Softball @ Meredith College	March 5	Short Session Classes Begin	April 22
Lacrosse @ Trinity Washington University	March 5	Lacrosse @ Cedar Crest College	April 26
Spring Break (students)	March 8-17	Tennis vs. Washington & Lee University	April 30
Lacrosse @ Waynesburg University	March 9	Tennis ODAC Quarterfinals	May 1
Softball @ Salem College	March 9	IHSA Nationals	May 2-4
Softball @ North Carolina Wesleyan University	March 9	Softball ODAC Tournament	May 4-11
Tennis @ Transylvania University	March 11	Tennis ODAC Semifinals	May 4
Tennis @ Hope College	March 12	Tennis ODAC Championships	May 5
Tennis @ Franklin & Marshall College	March 13	Class of 2024 Awards Ceremony	May 17
Tennis vs. Centre College	March 20	Class of 2024 Baccalaureate	May 17
Softball @ Mary Baldwin University	March 20	Class of 2024 Commencement	May 18
Lacrosse @ Randolph College	March 20	Reunion	May 31 - June 2

**Schedule is subject to change.**

Please visit [sbc.edu/events](https://sbc.edu/events) to check for details and locations for campus events.

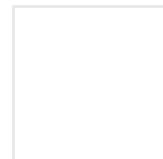
Check [vixenathletics.com/calendar](https://vixenathletics.com/calendar) to see details and times and locations for athletics events, including riding.



## Sweet Briar College

134 Chapel Road

Sweet Briar, VA 24595



## Sweet Briar's Book Shop: Gifts and Stocking Stuffers

Sweet Briar's Book Shop is ready for all of your holiday gift needs! In addition to the popular honey and honey bath products, the Book Shop offers many different types of apparel so you can wear your swag and promote Sweet Briar wherever you go. If you visit the Book Shop's website, you'll see that there's also drinkware, bags of all kinds, and books by Sweet Briar alumnae and faculty authors.

**[shopsweet.sbc.edu](https://shopsweet.sbc.edu)**  
**434-381-6106**

