

# The Briar Wire

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## Honors Summer Research

Eight rising juniors and seniors dove deeper into an area of interest for eight weeks of the summer as a part of the Honors Summer Research Program (HSRP). A component of Sweet Briar's Honors Program, HSRP offers its participants a chance to work closely with a faculty sponsor during intense study of a topic specific to their academic pursuits, often preparing them for future research or publishing opportunities. Throughout their concentrated courses, students also foster critical thinking skills, cross-disciplinary curiosity, and analytical and creative rigor while accessing advanced research resources.

This summer's cohort took on topics ranging from examining different types of grain boundaries with computational software to collecting local water samples to determine the level of microplastic pollution. ●

### 2024 Honors Summer Research Projects

#### Liza Dareing '25

The Health of Freshwater: Land, Nutrients, & Algae Growth (pictured left)

#### Ainsley John Darling '26

Spotted Lanternfly Trapping & Plant Host Species Tracking

#### Emma Evans '26

From Rivers to Fountains: Microplastic Content Found in Tap Water from Amherst, Va.

#### Abigail Huling '25

Seeking the Narrative: Archaeological Excavation on Matohasanaj

#### Ariel Hullender '25

Milkweeks, Monarchs, and Amassed Azoxystrobin

#### Lara Jost '25

Predicting Grain Boundaries of Fe-Cr-C Alloys Using Density Functional Theory

#### Julianna McIntyre '25

Feeling Salty: Impacts of Sodium Content on Gene Expression in Monarch Butterflies (pictured below)

#### Elizabeth Wells '26

Sweet Briar Pipes vs. Smart Meters



Learn  
More!

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Megan Sunwall, Sweet Briar Fund Associate

# Dear alumnae and friends,

Here at Sweet Briar, we have wrapped up a terrific summer starting with a wonderful Alumnae Reunion celebrating classes ending in 4 and 9 and their friends and families. The College then held its 2nd annual Sweet Briar Summer: Arts and Writing Retreat with 50 participants (double the number from last year) enjoying instruction from our excellent faculty and guest instructors, Orange Grove Dance.

I hope you are as impressed as we are with the Honors Summer Research Program projects that took place this summer, highlighted on the front cover. These talented students have had a transformational experience, and many will continue their research during the academic year. Students also participated in internships all over the U.S. and abroad, from the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas to the Cetacean Research & Rescue Unit (CRRU) in Scotland.

We are so excited to have our students back on campus and to welcome 139 new Vixens. As the new academic year begins with our first 3-week session, our dedicated faculty and staff are ready to embark on another year of inspiring education and transformational experiences for our students. We invite you to join us again this year to support our mission to empower young women through a rigorous liberal arts education.

Sweet Briar College has a rich tradition of fostering academic excellence and personal growth. Our commitment to providing a supportive and nurturing environment enables our students to thrive academically and personally. This year, we are focusing on enhancing our student success programs, expanding access to

resources, and creating opportunities for experiential learning, including AI, which will prepare our students for the challenges of tomorrow.

This fall brings more opportunities to celebrate at Sweet Briar. The Richmond Symphony Orchestra performed in Babcock's Murchison Lane Auditorium on Sept. 5, and on Sept. 28, we'll celebrate the Inauguration of Sweet Briar's 14th president, Mary Pope M. Hutson '83 — the first alumna to hold the position.

Your continued support significantly impacts our students' lives today. Whether through scholarships, program funding, or faculty support, your contributions have the power to shape the future of our students and our institution. Your donation is not just a financial contribution, but a statement of your belief in the potential of our students, the importance of our mission, and the value of a Sweet Briar education.

We invite you to invest in Sweet Briar College this academic year. Every gift, no matter the size, plays a crucial role in helping us fulfill our purpose. Together, we can ensure that our students have the resources and opportunities they need to be successful.

Thank you for considering this important gift at this pivotal time to support our future women leaders. If you have any questions or would like to discuss how you can contribute, please feel free to reach out to me directly. Thank you in advance for your support.

Claire Dennison Griffith '80  
*Vice President of Alumnae Relations and Development*

*P.S. If you have not yet made your gift for the year, please do so at [sbc.edu/give](https://sbc.edu/give). Every gift matters!*



## A Message from President Hutson

Dear Fellow Alumnae and Friends,

Many of you know that our Board recently voted to help secure Sweet Briar's future as an all-women's college by limiting admission to women whose sex assigned at birth is female and who have consistently lived and identified as women. As I noted in the wire story that covered the adoption of the policy, Sweet Briar's leadership believes that single-sex education is not only our tradition, but also a unique cultural and social resource. Recognizing its importance, single-sex admissions are also protected under federal law.

Importantly, to have an open admissions policy does not align with the intentions of the founder's will, which we are bound to follow.

Critics of the policy have harshly denounced it. Supporters on the other hand see the real issues that could arise from backing away from the standard that we are an institution for women. Future critics may seize the point of view that transgender students are male students and therefore we have ceased to be an all-women's institution. That, of course, would be the end to this distinctive all-women's institution we have all been successfully nurturing and stewarding.

Clearly, these are angles to a complex issue which the Board, my leadership team, and I have taken very seriously. I am interested in your thoughts and appreciate civil discourse as we continue to strengthen our institution and also stay true to our mission.

With gratitude,  
Mary Pope M. Hutson '83  
President

*P.S. Please continue your strong support for Sweet Briar College and the educational opportunities it provides our students by giving to the Sweet Briar Fund at [sbc.edu/give](https://sbc.edu/give).*



## Sweet Briar Partners with IWP for International Affairs and National Security Education

On July 17, Sweet Briar College and the Institute for World Politics (IWP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a new partnership for international affairs, national security, and intelligence education. Under the new agreement, Sweet Briar students will be able to have early assurance on or after April 30 of their junior year when applying to IWP, as well as priority consideration in its internship program. Graduates will have access to a special partnership scholarship for IWP's in-person master's programs, which will be \$2,200 per semester in 2024. They will also have the opportunity to receive reduced tuition of \$500 per credit hour for IWP's online programs.

*Visit [sbc.edu/news](https://sbc.edu/news) to read the full articles and more recent news!*

## Kaitlyn Justice '24 Goes Nuclear

Following graduating from Sweet Briar last winter with a degree in engineering, Kaitlyn Justice '24 holds the title of nuclear engineer I at Hill's Newport News Shipbuilding division, her third position at the organization after being promoted twice since she started working there in January 2024. Kaitlyn is a project engineer, overseeing the welding division, welding submarines, helping with the mechanization process as well as the main seals on nuclear reactors.

Kaitlyn is one of more than 15 alumnae working at the shipyard in various departments, including three of her Class of 2024 classmates.





## CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS



### Pool Renovation

Located in the Fitness & Athletics Center, the Prothro Natatorium has undergone renovations this summer. Projects have included replacing the metal halide lights with LED fixtures, replacing the ceiling and metal grid supporting the new lights, and updating existing electrical panels.

Thanks to the generous support of the **Perkins-Prothro Foundation** (the original benefactor in 1976) for their lead gift and other donors, the pool renovations were completed in early September in time for the swimming team to start their pre-season training.



#### TOP

A large group of Sweet Work Weeks volunteers gather for a photo in Prothro Hall.

#### BOTTOM LEFT

Madison Mills '17 refreshes the entrance of the Alumnae House.

#### BOTTOM RIGHT

Briana Garcia '20 organizes Daisy's Closet.



Special thanks to this year's group of alumnae and friends who supported Sweet Briar during **Sweet Work Weeks!**



# Richard C. Colton, Jr. Funds Additional Equestrian Arena

Thanks in large part to generous gifts from Richard C. Colton, Jr. and the Richard C. Colton, Jr. Foundation, Sweet Briar College will be expanding its equestrian center to include an additional covered riding arena to be used for competitions, clinics, and instruction space.

The new \$1.5 million arena will include a 115' x 220' interior space, as well as additional parking. There will also be a separate operational space for our new staff veterinarian. The College broke ground on the project on June 27, 2024.

One of the riding program's immediate needs is more all-weather teaching spaces to accommodate the growing number of students who ride or want to learn to ride. The current indoor arena, Robin S. Cramer Hall, can only accommodate two riding lessons at a time, which requires the riding center to provide extended hours and often causes scheduling challenges for instructional sessions. The new auxiliary covered riding arena, a pre-engineered metal building sited adjacent to the hunter barns, will meet this need for Sweet Briar's growing program.

This expansion is Phase II of renovations and updates to the 130-acre Harriet Howell Rogers Riding Center at Sweet Briar. Phase I included complete renovations and infrastructure

updates to our main stable wings, the Howell Lykes Colton '38 Stables, and the Bailey Room, including a team room with lockers. There are also refurbished restrooms and a new kitchen to better meet the needs of both riders and visitors, along with significant landscape improvements.

Richard C. Colton, Jr. is a long-time friend of Sweet Briar. His mother, Howell Lykes Colton '38, attended Sweet Briar, as did one of his sisters, Keenan Colton Kelsey '66, and two cousins, Charlotte M. Jorgenson '72 and Susan Mueller '70. Mr. Colton has also loaned Sweet Briar an art collection entitled "Women of the World," which hangs in the Josey Dining Room of Prothro Hall.

This new arena comes as the Sweet Briar equestrian team concludes a successful year, including the following:

National Collegiate Equestrian Association (NCEA)

- Runner Up 2024 National Championships
- MOP Fences National Championship: Emmy Longest '24
- All-Championship Team Fences: Emmy Longest '24
- Second Team All-America Fence: Katherine Atherton '25, Isabelle Mesiarik '25
- Honorable Mention All-America Fences: Naomi Dachis '26
- Second Team All-America Flat: Ella Peterson '25
- First Team All-Academic: 5 riders
- Honorable Mention All-Academic: 2 riders

Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC)

- Runner Up 2024 ODAC Head-to-Head Tournament
- Rider of the Week: 7 times
- Elite Equestrian ODAC Head-to-Head Tournament: Wytte Felton '26

Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA)

- Zone 4, Region 4 Reserve Championship Team
- Reserve National Champion Individual Intermediate Flat: Rachel Chard '26
- 5th place National Individual Novice Flat: Emily Roberts '25
- National All-Academic Awards: 9 riders First Team
- National All-Academic Awards: 9 riders Second Team



## FY 2024 FINAL CLASS STATISTICS

Class Year	Giving June 30, 2024	Participation June 30, 2024
1950	\$24,680	36.0%
1951	\$6,175	20.7%
1952	\$127,107	38.8%
1953	\$186,343	22.6%
1954	\$134,811	29.2%
1955	\$40,691	38.0%
1956	\$18,085	18.8%
1957	\$342,803	38.0%
1958	\$553,416	26.5%
1959	\$57,322	30.3%
1960	\$1,290,357	41.6%
1961	\$311,745	35.8%
1962	\$454,838	38.1%
1963	\$2,104,380	35.1%
1964	\$842,521	65.5%
1965	\$100,283	44.4%
1966	\$1,246,870	32.5%
1967	\$95,729	32.5%

Class Year	Giving June 30, 2024	Participation June 30, 2024
1968	\$152,343	65.2%
1969	\$152,600	23.2%
1970	\$342,340	37.2%
1971	\$93,712	39.6%
1972	\$910,934	30.7%
1973	\$70,228	24.1%
1974	\$750,902	42.1%
1975	\$118,792	30.8%
1976	\$175,962	23.4%
1977	\$74,626	31.5%
1978	\$407,597	35.6%
1979	\$498,759	25.3%
1980	\$49,045	28.5%
1981	\$601,653	20.3%
1982	\$455,569	21.8%
1983	\$68,700	30.5%
1984	\$52,316	27.1%
1985	\$166,962	20.3%

## Reunion Giving & Participation Awards

### The Nancy Dowd Burton '46 Award

2024 Recipient: 1964

Given to the class celebrating an anniversary Reunion year with the highest total giving to Sweet Briar in the current fiscal year.

### The Centennial Award

2024 Recipient: 1964

Given to the class celebrating an anniversary Reunion year with the highest total giving to Sweet Briar over the last five years since their last anniversary Reunion year.

### Visionary Class Award

2024 Recipients: 1960, 1963, 1966

Given to any class that contributes \$1 million or more to any funds at Sweet Briar within one fiscal year.

### The Nancy Godwin Baldwin '57 Award

2024 Recipient: 1974

Given to the class celebrating an anniversary Reunion year with the highest percentage of its members attending Reunion.

### Participation Award, Post-50th Classes

2024 Recipient: 1964

Given to the class celebrating an anniversary Reunion year after their 50th Reunion with the highest participation in giving to Sweet Briar.



## FY 2024 FINAL CLASS STATISTICS

Class Year	Giving June 30, 2024	Participation June 30, 2024
1986	\$50,211	34.3%
1987	\$10,532	9.5%
1988	\$22,027	20.0%
1989	\$18,852	20.1%
1990	\$17,825	16.4%
1991	\$17,220	31.3%
1992	\$21,831	18.8%
1993	\$20,478	25.8%
1994	\$3,115	13.8%
1995	\$21,507	29.3%
1996	\$17,239	29.5%
1997	\$12,964	18.4%
1998	\$6,836	11.6%
1999	\$20,109	20.0%
2000	\$2,800	8.5%
2001	\$7,150	9.6%
2002	\$5,529	12.5%
2003	\$9,863	9.6%
2004	\$9,371	11.4%

Class Year	Giving June 30, 2024	Participation June 30, 2024
2005	\$5,560	8.1%
2006	\$5,237	17.4%
2007	\$2,518	8.6%
2008	\$4,419	8.3%
2009	\$2,015	5.9%
2010	\$3,024	9.6%
2011	\$3,861	6.8%
2012	\$2,525	7.7%
2013	\$2,185	15.1%
2014	\$1,740	5.0%
2015	\$1,636	10.5%
2016	\$1,070	6.0%
2017	\$336	2.0%
2018	\$790	2.6%
2019	\$127	13.6%
2020	\$980	6.8%
2021	\$140	3.2%
2022	\$115	3.3%
2023	\$242	3.5%

### Participation Award, 25th through 50th Reunion Classes

2024 Recipient: 1974

Given to the class celebrating an anniversary Reunion year between their 25th and 50th years with the highest participation in giving to Sweet Briar.

### Participation Award, 5th through 20th Reunion Classes

2024 Recipient: 2019

Given to the class celebrating an anniversary Reunion year between their 5th and 20th years with the highest participation in giving to Sweet Briar.

### FY 2024 Success

Total Raised: \$16.1 million

Sweet Briar Fund Total: \$6.47 million

Restricted Total: \$1.21 million

Funds from Other Sources: \$1.32 million

Where Women Lead Campaign Total:  
\$7.1 million

Final Overall Alumnae Participation Rate: 28.7%

Sweet Briar College  
134 Chapel Road  
Sweet Briar, VA 24595



2024-2025 Schedule of Events

Weeks of Welcome including First-Year Social with HSC	August 26 - September 22	New Student Spring Orientation	January 8-12
Richmond Symphony Orchestra Concert	September 5	Long Session Classes Begin	January 13
Short Session Classes End	September 12	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service (No Classes)	January 20
Long Session Classes Begin	September 16	Gager Concert Series: College Faculty Recital	January 23
Founder’s Day Weekend	September 20 & 21	An Evening with Big Read author Yaa Gyasi	February 5
Presidential Inauguration	September 28	Winter Admissions Open House	February 17
Families Weekend	October 4-6	Spring Break	March 8-16
Fall Admissions Open House	October 26	Lydia Kiesling, Common Read author at Sweet Briar	April 3
Fall Theatre: <i>Natasha, Pierre, and The Great Comet of 1812</i>	October 31 - November 3	Spring Admissions Open House	April 12
Gager Concert Series: Bellezza Chamber Ensemble	November 14	Long Session Classes End	April 14
Thanksgiving Break	November 23 - December 1	Short Session Classes Begin	April 23
Reading Day	December 14	Commencement	May 17
Winter Break	December 18 - January 12	Alumnae Reunion 2025	May 30 - June 1

