

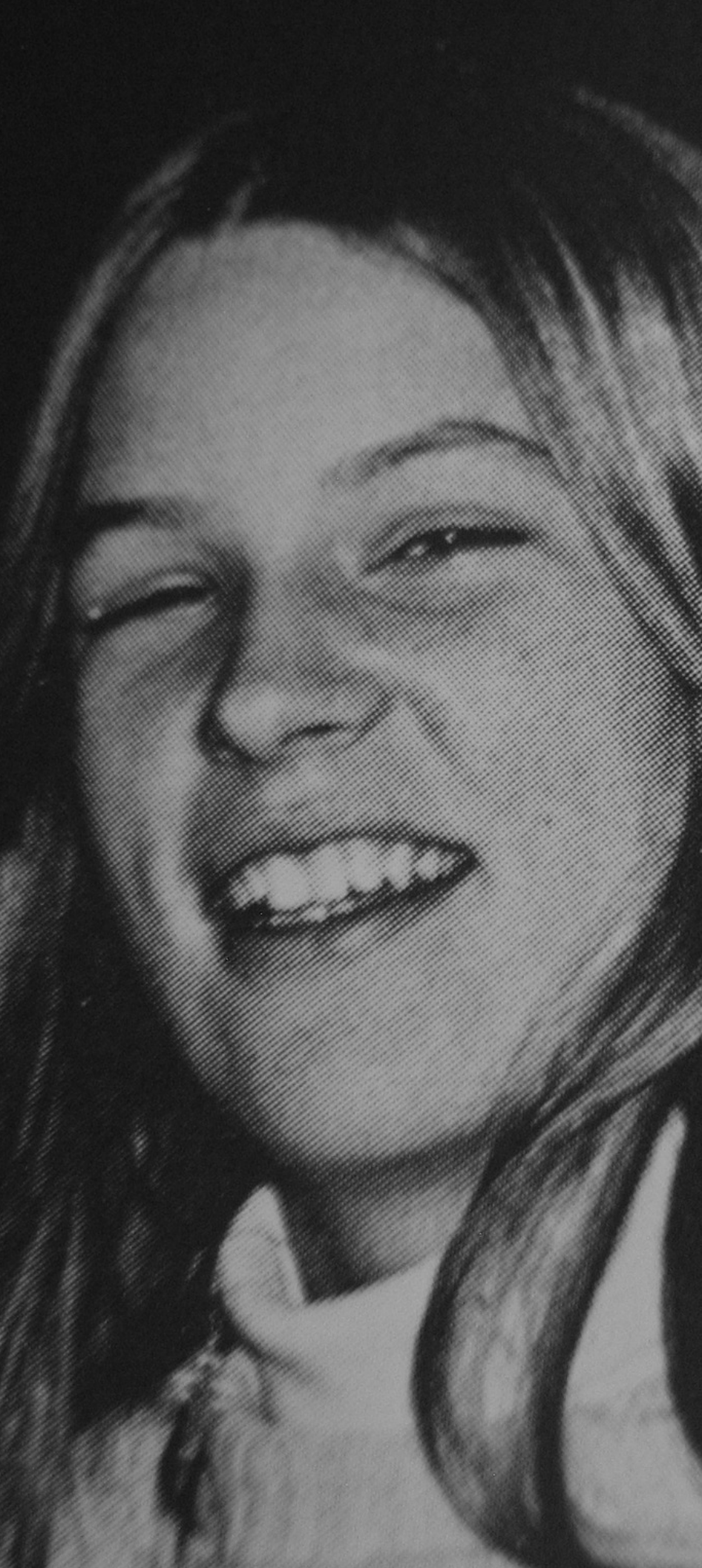
# Peg Board

THE MAGAZINE OF DARROW SCHOOL

FALL 2024



# ALUMNI EDITION



"Hands-to-work, hearts to God." This timeless Shaker saying reminds us of the profound connection between meaningful work and a sense of purpose; a principle that continues to resonate deeply within the Darrow community. It is with great pride and gratitude that I introduce this very special edition of the *Peg Board*, a publication that embodies the collective efforts, creativity, and commitment of our alumni family.

First, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Valle Dwight, Class of 1975, whose vision, leadership, and tireless work as editor-in-chief have brought this issue to life. Valle's contributions have elevated the *Peg Board* to a new level, and we are incredibly grateful for her dedication and talent. I also want to recognize Rebecca Provias for her meticulous work in laying out this publication—her time and effort have ensured its beauty and impact.

This edition shines brightly thanks to the members of the DAAG committee, whose talents have enriched these pages: Jane Feldman '74, Anne Paddock '72, Ned Bolle '76, Peter Wadsworth '72, and Peter Cholakis '72. Your gifts of writing, art, and creative energy capture the essence of Darrow's alumni spirit and remind us of the enduring connections that make this community so extraordinary.

In these pages, we celebrate not only our shared achievements but also the spirit of renewal. To those who may have felt distant from the school in recent years, know that your experiences, perspectives, and stories remain vital to Darrow's legacy. Reconnecting is not just an invitation; it is a heartfelt commitment to honor and include every voice in shaping Darrow's next chapter.

As we reflect on all we've accomplished together, let us also embrace the possibilities of what lies ahead. The Shakers have taught us that "every force evolves a form." Through your unwavering support, dedication, and love for Darrow, we are shaping a future that remains true to our values while inspiring the next generation.

With deepest appreciation,

Phillip L. Darrin  
Director of Advancement



# Peg Board

THE ALUMNI EDITION

Darrow is the only school in the United States located on the site of a historic Shaker village.

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Valle Dwight '75, P'11

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### On the cover:

Photo by Jane Feldman '74

PHOTO ON LEFT: Valle Dwight '75, photographed by David Richard Halperin '73. "This moment takes me back to my sophomore year at age 15. I had just woken up from a nap when David unexpectedly arrived to take our yearbook photos. Somehow, he managed to capture this smile!"

# THE ROAD TO *forever*DARROW

By Ned Bolle '76

From conversations with Head of School Andy Vadnais and Peter Cholakis '72 and [Pathway to Sustainability](#) document shared with alumni in June 2024

**T**he past year has been both challenging and inspiring for the Darrow community. Just one year ago, the school's future hung in the balance, with the announcement of a potential closure sending shockwaves through alumni, parents, and friends alike. Yet, what followed was nothing short of extraordinary. The SaveDarrow grassroots movement sprang to life, uniting the community in a shared mission. Within weeks, an astonishing \$3.2 million was pledged, with \$1.9 million already fulfilled as of September. Beyond the financial success, this movement reignited a profound sense of connection and purpose among Darrow's extended family—alumni, former parents, faculty, and countless others. Together, we were reminded of the enduring power of Darrow's community.

## A Turning Point at Reunion Weekend

This renewed commitment was on full display during June's Reunion Weekend, one of the best-attended events in Darrow's history. For many, it was a moment to reflect on the school's enduring impact while looking ahead to the work still needed. The energy was palpable as alumni shared their optimism for Darrow's future—but they also asked tough, thoughtful questions:

- What led to this crisis?
- How are the root causes being addressed?
- What's the vision for Darrow's future?

For those who couldn't attend, these questions deserve answers. But first, let's remember what makes Darrow worth saving.

## Why Darrow Matters

Ask anyone who's walked Darrow's campus, and they'll tell you it's not just a school—it's an experience. From the breathtaking views of the Berkshire Mountains to the intimate, supportive classrooms, Darrow offers a nurturing environment where students can thrive both academically and personally.

For example, Kerv 'PG, a standout in the new basketball program, credits Darrow's coaching and community support for his personal growth: "I've never been part of a team that feels this much like a family. Darrow doesn't just help you become a better athlete—it makes you a better person."

Similarly, parents like Lucille P'20, P'22, and P'23, whose children graduated from Darrow, cite the school's unique culture as the deciding factor: "Darrow empowered our children to be their authentic selves and see beyond the obvious. Imagine a community dedicated to your growth—how different our lives could have been with that support."

Stories like these remind us why Darrow has endured challenges for nearly a century.

## What Happened?

Darrow's financial struggles weren't caused by a single event but by a series of compounding challenges.

Declining enrollment—Interest in U.S. private boarding schools, especially among international markets that often pay full tuition, had fallen sharply.

Rising operational costs—Particularly in 2022, expenses soared, stretching resources thin.

Reduced donations—A strong economy didn't translate to giving because of limited outreach and engagement.

COVID-19 pandemic—The pandemic disrupted enrollment and increased costs, with lingering effects on students and families.

Faced with these challenges, Darrow's leadership shifted into survival mode, addressing immediate crises at the expense of long-term strategy. The SaveDarrow funds provided critical relief, giving the school time to analyze and address the root causes.

## Addressing the Challenges

Several initiatives are already underway to secure Darrow's future.

- 1. Rebuilding Enrollment**—Declining interest in private boarding schools reflects a broader issue: families want value. Darrow is actively communicating its unique strengths to prospective families and educational consultants, showcasing the intimate, nurturing environment that sets it apart.
- 2. Reducing Costs**—An aggressive cost-reduction program launched in 2023–24 has already improved efficiency. Additionally, infrastructure rehabilitation projects promise further savings in the years ahead.
- 3. Strengthening Community Connections**—The drop in donations stemmed largely from outdated records and limited communication. Inspired by SaveDarrow, the school is now updating its database and embracing a grassroots approach to outreach, fostering deeper connections across the extended Darrow family.

## Looking Ahead: "Darrow 4.0"

The phrase "Darrow 2.0" has been used to describe the school's renewal efforts, but Darrow's history suggests something even bigger—perhaps "Darrow 4.0." This is a school that has reinvented itself time and again, from recovering from arson in the 1960s to becoming coeducational in the 1970s. Through all its evolutions, Darrow has stayed true to its mission: to provide a transformative educational experience in a nurturing, supportive community.

Today, the challenge is clear: identify unmet needs in the private school market and meet them in ways only Darrow can. Here's how the school is doing just that.

### 1. Athletics Programs

Darrow's athletics are rising, offering students opportunities to grow as athletes and individuals.

- **Basketball:** The revitalized Basketball Program is already making waves, significantly boosting the school's visibility and appeal. As Coach Tone puts it, "Winning teams build winning cultures. And it's not just about the game—it's about fostering leadership, discipline, and pride."
- **eSports:** Though unconventional, eSports represents an exciting new frontier for Darrow. With its soaring popularity, the program provides students a competitive outlet while the school's close-knit community helps balance the isolating nature of screen time. This balance has already borne fruit: a Darrow student recently earned a college scholarship for his eSports expertise, showcasing the program's potential to open doors in this rapidly growing field.
- **Soccer:** A partnership with the United Soccer Group (USG) brought historic success to Darrow's 2024 soccer season, exemplifying the school's culture of excellence. Under Coach Powell's leadership, the team flourished. "This team has shown what belief and teamwork can achieve," Coach Powell reflected.

## 2. Support for Learning Differences

Students with learning disabilities, particularly dyslexia, are often underserved in traditional educational settings. At Darrow, an inclusive environment and a robust Learning Skills Program provide a nurturing space where these students can thrive. The school's approach incorporates evidence-based methodologies, including the Orton-Gillingham approach, which has been recognized for over a century as the gold standard for addressing language-based learning differences. By equipping students with the tools to succeed academically while fostering confidence and independence, and with ongoing faculty development, Darrow is poised to lead in this critical area of education, ensuring every student can unlock their full potential.

## 3. The Arts

For current students, Darrow's arts program serves as both a haven for personal expression and a launchpad for creative discovery. Anchored by the state-of-the-art Joline Art Center, the program features purpose-built studios for drawing, painting, sculpture, and printmaking, as well as specialized facilities including a wood-working shop, a photography darkroom, and a media lab for digital arts. Complementing this is the vibrant Performing Arts Center (PAC), a cutting-edge hub for students passionate about music, theater, and film. Outfitted with advanced technology, classrooms, practice rooms, and a professional-grade recording studio, the PAC provides a dynamic environment for creative exploration. Together, these facilities offer students unparalleled opportunities to experiment, hone their skills, and bring their artistic visions to life through hands-on learning and collaboration.

As highlighted by alumni profiles throughout this issue, the foundation built at Darrow consistently translates into successful and impactful careers. Whether performing on stage, exhibiting in gal-

eries, or innovating within the creative industries, Darrow graduates exemplify the enduring value of a strong arts education. Darrow has turned a corner. A carefully crafted plan is leading the way to a sustainable future, but the school's success depends on continued support from its community.

### HOW YOU CAN HELP!

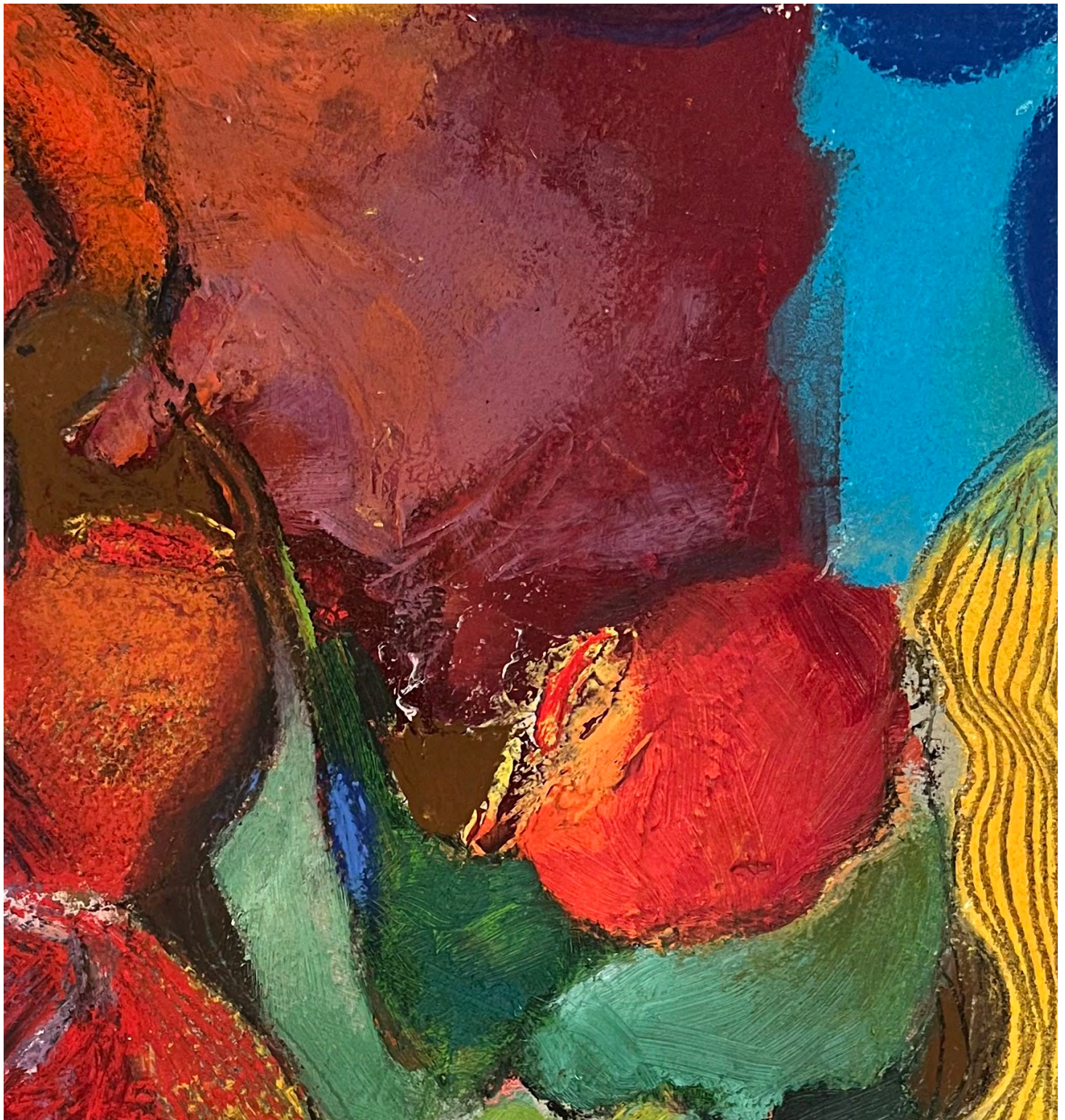
- **Spread the word: Do you know a family that would thrive at Darrow? Tell them about the school.**
- **Volunteer your expertise: Whether it's marketing, fundraising, or mentoring, your skills can make a difference.**
- **Stay connected: Reach out to your classmates and encourage their engagement.**

*As Head of School Andy Vadnais says, "Darrow has always been about our community. It's our community who built this school, and it's the community who will ensure its future."*

**This is our moment. Together, we can secure Darrow's place in the lives of future students and families. Let's make it happen.**

A close-up, rear view of a person with curly brown hair wearing a maroon sweater. The sweater has the name 'DARBROW' embroidered in white, block letters across the upper back. The person is looking away from the camera towards a blurred background of trees and a blue sky.

DARBROW



***Eileen Ordu: Artist and Educator***

Eileen Ordu taught ESL and World Language classes at Darrow from 2011 to 2018, a role she cherished. “But I’ve always been an artist,” she says. With a degree in Illustration from Syracuse University and advanced training at prestigious art schools, she turned to painting during her teaching years. Her work, blending oil paint, chalk pastel, and pencil, is now exhibited in galleries across Western Massachusetts and New York’s Hudson Valley. “Pieces morph and change as I explore color, line, and form,” she explains.



# A REMARKABLE BEGINNING

It's been an extraordinary start to the 2024—2025 school year, marking Darrow School's 93rd Opening. This fall, we welcomed 90 students from 12 countries and 13 states. These numbers speak volumes, especially given the challenges we faced last year. Our community now includes students from the UAE, Egypt, Ireland, Germany, Niger, Nigeria, Spain, Guatemala, Ghana, Canada, France, and Italy—a truly global family.

Darrow's traditions have grounded us. More than half of our students are new to Darrow, and many are new to boarding life. Our advisory system, Hands-to-Work program, morning meetings, Tuesday night dinners, Senior Close, home athletic contests, and Convocation have bound us together as one. Fall Family Weekend provided the extra connection and support our community needed. Each tradition—rooted in the values of honesty, humility, and joyful simplicity—has shaped our students and our school. Shaker values continue to guide us, building a sense of unity, respect, and purpose within our community.

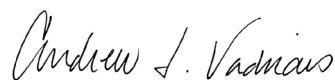
None of this would be possible without the unwavering commitment of our revamped Board of Trustees. Their support, vision, and sweat equity have been essential. We are deeply grateful to these individuals for their dedication to Darrow's future. We also owe thanks to the members of DAAG, the Parents

Association, class agents, and the many alumni who have contributed so much to get us here. A special thank you goes out to the Friends of Darrow Foundation for its continued faith and belief in our collective cause. Together, this extended family of ours has made Darrow's success possible, and I am honored to recognize their hard work.

Of course, this hard work has only just begun. We still have pledges to collect and funds to attract to put us on a path to sustainability. We are preparing for a year filled with initiatives that will support foreverDarrow—strengthening our people, programs, and place.

As we look ahead, we are inspired by our community's resilience, the values we hold, and the exciting future we're building together.

Thank you for being part of Darrow's journey.



**To hear directly from Andy about efforts to preserve and advance Darrow's rich traditions, watch his message [HERE](#)**

# FROM SOLOIST TO LEADER

## ONE DARROW STORY

By Colin Cartwright '25

As I reflect on how to articulate Darrow's unique impact on its students, my thoughts inevitably return to my own journey. While Darrow's influence has shaped me steadily over my time here, one moment during my junior year truly stands out. Strangely enough, it happened in a Spanish class—and it forever changed how I see myself.

But let me backtrack. At the end of eighth grade, my teachers and classmates invited me to be the graduation speaker. I turned it down. Instead, I sat down after performing a ukulele solo and listened to a peer give the speech. That moment defined how I saw myself for the next two years: a kid who avoided the spotlight. I went to school, played soccer, and went home. That was my world.

Fast forward to April 2024, a month after the incredible news that Darrow would remain open. During Spanish class, while working on an assignment, the conversation shifted to potential candidates for student body president. Names were tossed around, and then—unexpectedly—someone suggested me. To my surprise, my peers spoke as if I were an obvious choice. They trusted me in a way I'd never imagined. Before that moment, the idea of

being president hadn't even crossed my mind. My plan for graduation was simple: sit in the audience, half-listening to the president's speech while daydreaming about summer. But after that class, I started thinking about who I had become. Unlike the kid who once played *In My Life* by The Beatles on his ukulele, I was now deeply involved in extracurriculars, thanks to Darrow. This community had transformed me, and it felt like the right time to give back. I ran for president, got involved even more deeply, and embraced the challenge.

My experience at Darrow is not unique. I've watched my peers grow into leaders over time, witnessing countless moments of quiet transformation. Yes, Darrow's stunning campus and rich Shaker heritage are remarkable, but its heart lies in the community. It's a place where we encourage each other to dive in and become more than we thought we could be. That's what makes Darrow different from a typical high school. Here, the same people I debate with are also my teammates on the soccer field. Everyone supports each other, no one is boxed into a niche, and every student is free to explore their interests.

This year, we've focused on the value of compassion, a virtue Darrow excels at. Every time a nervous student gives their first announcement, everyone earnestly claps for them. When a student who has been steadily growing academically is finally called up to receive their High Honors certificate, the Tannery practically erupts. Students here want to see each other succeed, and they are truly kind and compassionate to one another.

It's hard to imagine who I would be without this school. Darrow has not only shaped me but also instilled in me the confidence to face whatever comes next. For that, I'm profoundly grateful—to the alumni, faculty, administrators, and everyone who has kept this magical place alive.





# Stacey Giordano—A Visionary Return to Darrow School

By Sara Van Deusen

Stacey Giordano's office contains the thoughtfully-placed paraphernalia of a career spent in education. Nestled by the windows is a stunning painting, and a carved wooden puzzle is perched on an otherwise relatively bare shelf. She describes having received these gifts, as well as others, from past students at Darrow. As we sit down to talk, it is manifest that Stacey holds immense respect for the academic and personal development of Darrow's students and faculty alike. Her calm, reflective demeanor coupled with her wit put me at immediate ease. A bit of background information regarding Stacey's own education: she studied veterinary medicine as an undergraduate at Cornell University. She recalls that it was a mentor who helped her to decide against continuing with veterinary school, as it would be a difficult path for her to take; this mentor could see that Stacey's strengths and passion lay in her role as a TA, in engaging with and in educating her students. Stacey enrolled in Teachers College, Colum-

bia University, focusing on curriculum and instruction, and worked in New York City's public school system.

Working in urban public schools proved to be a formative experience for her to look at education and life from a "different...different perspective." After that, she began working at a progressive school in Manhattan. In the early 2000s, she spotted a job listing for Darrow and applied. Her role at Darrow was as an influential environmental education teacher, using the Living Machine as an example of Darrow's commitment to sustainability. She was the leader of the Hands-to-Work Sheep Crew. Her background in veterinary science provided her with the understanding of the needs of the sheep and the skills to deliver the lambs. Former Head of School Nancy Wolf (Austin) said, "When she departed, we discontinued the sheep program, realizing we could not take care of the sheep or the farm area without her. She was a mentor of new faculty and a beloved teacher and

advisor.” Stacey remained at Darrow for four years, before moving on to the Albany Academies, where she worked as the academic dean. She was Dean of Faculty at a New Jersey school for almost a decade.

.....  
*“ The people who work in boarding schools want to educate the whole child; they don’t have their blinders on, but rather encourage multi-faceted learning at all times.”*  
.....

Most recently she was working with public schools in the upstate NY region helping to improve science instruction and supporting school leaders. Stacey emphasizes that she had followed the progress of the SaveDarrow campaign earlier in 2024 and affirms that she wanted to “come back to help.” Poignantly, Stacey states that she brought “pieces of Darrow” with her to other schools upon leaving the Mountainside, something that I feel truly speaks to its transformative capacities. I, too, find that there is something special about Darrow; I feel privileged to be able to work here alongside faculty members who are so incredibly compassionate, as well as passionate about educating the entire person.

When I ask about the importance of independent schools such as Darrow, Stacey barely needs to think: her response is thorough and fluent. Independent schools fill a niche role for both children and families. Sometimes there is a need to be away from home, even if the family situation is ideal. The intimate, holistic experience of an independent school contrasts greatly with the restricted, rather sterile public school environment (one in which teachers aren’t allowed to be as nurturing or as present with their students due to the nature of state rules and regulations). Stacey states, “ the people who work in boarding schools want to educate the whole child; they don’t have their blinders on, but rather encourage multifaceted learning at all times.” As Stacey describes her own educational

and career philosophies, I can envision my own high school self sitting in one of her classes. I imagine how it must be to feel so understood, cared for, and encouraged to continually strive to be the best that one can be at such a crucial time in life.

Stacey highlights the “joyful” moments of being at Darrow again: for her, these comprise Hands-to-Work (she details what sounds like an incredible experience bottling maple syrup while singing songs from the musical Hamilton with her crew), authentic connection with students, and the fact that faculty and staff can “plan for an experience but not choreograph it.” Stacey’s use of the word “choreograph” feels apt here; the importance and power of allowing students’ dance of growth to play out on its own, with holistic encouragement and guidance, is evident at Darrow. When I ask Stacey what excites her the most about Darrow’s future, she smiles and responds, “all of the possibilities of Darrow.” A self-described “change addict,” Stacey is looking forward to both alignment and evolution here, each geared towards doing the utmost for the students.

Stacey Giordano currently teaches two sections of biology at Darrow School, while also serving in the roles of Director of Sustainability and Dean of Faculty.



Luna the dog with Stevie and Dolly, two ewe sheep, in a photo taken in late April, just before shearing. After their time at Darrow, the sheep lived out their lives on Stacey’s farm.

# Investing in Darrow's Next Chapter

# THE TIME IS NOW



November 2024 Board of Trustees Community Town Hall: Eli '25 engages Board Chair Van Selden '60 with a thoughtful question.

For many of us, our time on the Mountainside was transformative—a love affair that continues to resonate. Some of us arrived at Darrow as challenged and confused kids, but we left with a profound appreciation for community—the face-to-face kind, so rare in today’s world.



At Darrow, we learned to inquire, to share, to embrace challenges, to seek diversity and inclusiveness—and to pursue our Tomorrows. (Yes, that’s me in 1958, standing proudly with the Snow Woman I created for class!)

I first came to the Mountainside 68 years ago, and the community I found here has been a guiding force throughout my life, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously.

Today, my perspective is unique. I’m not just a graduate; I am also the Chair of the Board of Trustees. This dual role gives me a deep sense of responsibility and purpose as I share these reflections with you.

### **Our Strengths—and Our Challenges**

Let me be direct. Darrow is as vibrant and impactful as ever:

- Our academic offerings are strong.
- Our faculty are talented and dedicated.
- Our students are inquisitive and engaged.
- Our community is as robust and supportive as the one I cherished decades ago.

But the truth is, we face significant financial challenges.

We do not yet have a steady revenue stream to meet our mandatory expenses, nor do we have a sufficiently healthy endowment to safeguard our future. Our Shaker heritage and historic buildings, while beautiful and integral to our identity, are costly to maintain.

### **Investing in Darrow’s Future**

The Board of Trustees, recently rebuilt, is small but mighty. Each member has rolled up their sleeves to fill in wherever needed. We’re making exciting gains—but we need partners who believe in Darrow’s mission and are ready to help us take the next steps.

Darrow has a long tradition of leaders who have shaped its growth: C. Lambert Heyniger, John Joline, Larry Van Meter, and Nancy Wolf Austin, to name a few. They built the foundation for the Darrow we know today—a school defined by its strength in academics, athletics, and community.

### **Now, it’s our turn.**

We need investors who share our vision and can help us improve and sustain Darrow for future generations. Major gifts are critical.

### **Our vision is ambitious but achievable.**

- A revenue stream that exceeds expenses
- A meaningful endowment to protect our future
- Rehabilitation of our Shaker buildings
- Construction of a new dormitory

### **Looking Toward Tomorrow**

As we prepare to celebrate Darrow’s Centennial in 2032, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to ensure the school’s continued growth and success.

Our community has always been our greatest strength. Together, we can ensure that Darrow not only survives but thrives, empowering students to embark on their unique paths for decades to come.

Now is the time to invest in Darrow Tomorrow. Let’s add new layers to the foundation, sustaining the school that has meant so much to all of us.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Edwin (Van) Selden '60  
Chair

# Darrow School Board of Trustees Rising from Adversity with Renewed Purpose

by Valle Dwight '75

Last year, Darrow School faced an uncertain future, teetering on the brink of closure. However, a small and dedicated Board of Trustees has rallied to transform adversity into opportunity, fostering a renewed sense of purpose for the school's future.

Trustee Tuck Barclay '72 reflects on the journey ahead: "In two years, my hope and vision are that Darrow will have an enrollment of 120 students and an Annual Fund that exceeds \$1 million dollars." He emphasizes the urgent need for infrastructure upgrades, particularly in the dormitories. "We need to update our current dormitories and build a new dorm by 2026," he stresses, signaling a commitment to creating a more supportive environment for students.

Challenges linger in the wake of last year's turmoil. Meagan Ledendecker P'21, '26 acknowledges that the specter of closure has left families hesitant to commit. "One of the biggest challenges we face is that families and academic consultants are waiting to see if Darrow will continue," she said. Yet, there's potential for collaboration, as she sees an opportunity to forge connections with Montessori feeder schools that align with Darrow's educational philosophy.

For Bobby Castro '05, a renewed sense of commitment drives his involvement. "In the past decade, I felt that Darrow was heading in a direction that didn't resonate with me," he said. "But today, I am doing everything I can to ensure that this campus and community thrive

for many decades to come." His call for alumni and supporters to remain engaged highlights the vital role they play in the school's long-term success. "I have never been part of a more authentic community than the four years I spent at Darrow," he added. "I believe this is what Darrow does best. It is an environment that allows people to be truly themselves and, for many of us, to discover who that person is."

Darrow's foundation of trust and community is a sentiment echoed by many. "Darrow is in my body and soul – I've lived it for a good part of my adult life," says Nancy Wolf Austin, who taught at Darrow in the 1970s, served as Head of School from 2001 to 2013, and returned as a trustee in February 2020.

She notes, "Alumni through the decades, and even current students, describe their Darrow experience using similar language. How do we articulate that Darrow uniqueness in a compelling message to attract new families?"

"We are looking at this year as a platform on which to build confidence and knowledge, because we intend to be here for the long haul."

Christian Masters '82 speaks passionately about the transformative power of Darrow, stating, "There is





such a need for a school like Darrow. It changes lives.” He calls for a unified community effort to uphold the school’s mission, emphasizing the importance of collective action.

The Board is keenly aware of the importance of visibility in attracting new students. Dan Holt ‘92 advocates for data-driven marketing efforts to share the unique story of Darrow. “It is critical to focus on increasing the visibility of Darrow’s unique programs,” he explains. Engaging alumni as ambassadors can help amplify the school’s message and draw prospective students.

Reflecting on the challenges faced last year, Firas Ibrahim ‘04 remains optimistic about the school’s resilience. “Honestly, I think Darrow will still be resurrecting but in a good way,” he remarks. His focus on financial stability is clear; it is essential for addressing other needs and moving forward.

As the Board of Trustees navigates the path forward, their collective insights reflect a commitment not just to preserve Darrow but to elevate it. “Darrow is needed,” Wolf says, encapsulating the shared determination to ensure that the school continues to provide a transformative educational experience for future generations. With renewed purpose and a unified community, Darrow School is poised to rise from the challenges of the past, ready to embrace a brighter future.

#### **Darrow Board of Trustees**

Left to Right: Matthew Bianco-Splann ‘05, Tuck Barclay ‘72, Nancy Wolf Austin FF, Bobby Castro ‘05, Meagan Ledendecker P’26, P’21, Christian Masters ‘82, Edwin “Van” Selden ‘60, and Peter Raff ‘71  
Absent from photo: Peter Cholakis ‘72, P’06, P’08, Dan Holt ‘92 and Firas Ibrahim ‘04

**Photo by Jane Feldman ‘74**





# Introducing Darrow's New Advancement Team

## *A Vision for forever***DARROW**

This year, Darrow embarks on an ambitious journey to secure its legacy for generations to come.

At the center of this effort is the newly invigorated Advancement Office, led by the dynamic team of Phillip Darrin, Director of Advancement, and Sara Van Deusen, Advancement Associate. With a fresh vision and a bold new campaign—*foreverDARROW*—they are inviting alumni, parents, and friends to be part of an exciting new chapter.

### **A New Team with a Shared Vision**

For Phil Darrin, stepping into his role as Director of Advancement is both a professional milestone and a personal passion. “Darrow’s commitment to education that is both innovative and deeply personal resonates with me,” he shares. With decades of experience in independent school administration, Phil is already laying the groundwork for a stronger alumni network,

enhanced donor engagement, and sustainable programs that reflect Darrow’s core values.

Joining Phil is Sara Van Deusen, whose expertise in alumni relations, donor communications, and languages brings fresh energy to the Advancement Office. Since her arrival, Sara has modernized the school’s database, crafted a comprehensive stewardship plan, and forged meaningful connections with alumni. “What excites me most,” Sara says, “is helping alumni see how their Darrow story contributes to the school’s future.”

Together, Phil and Sara are a formidable team—a blend of strategic expertise and a deep, genuine love for the Darrow community.

At the heart of Darrow’s transformation is *foreverDARROW*, a visionary, multi-year campaign designed to position the school as a thriving and

sustainable institution. The initiative is built on three foundational pillars.

**People:** Attracting and retaining exceptional faculty and staff to uphold Darrow’s legacy of personalized, world-class education, while also recruiting students who will both benefit from and contribute to the school’s distinctive learning community.

**Place:** Modernizing and expanding campus facilities to enrich the student experience and support future generations.

**Program:** Enhancing Darrow’s hallmark offerings—academics, arts, athletics, and Hands-to-Work—while fostering a holistic and inclusive community.

The campaign is already making an impact. Recent efforts include strengthening faculty resources, enhancing campus spaces, and program development.



### Alumni: The Heartbeat of Darrow

Darrow’s alumni remain integral to the success of *foreverDARROW*. Their stories are living proof of the transformative power of a Darrow education.

Adam Claxton ‘09 reflects:

“Darrow shaped me into the person I am today. Without my time at Darrow, I would be a completely different individual. The way I think, speak, and act is deeply influenced by the experiences I had there. I was fortunate to meet incredible people and gain a broader perspective on the world.”

To deepen alumni engagement, the Advancement Office has revitalized the Class Agents Program, ensuring each graduating class has a representative to foster connections. Darrow has also expanded its LinkedIn presence, offering opportunities for professional networking, mentorship for current students, and stronger alumni connections.

### How You Can Make a Difference

Every member of the Darrow family has a role to play in shaping the future. Here’s how you can contribute to *foreverDARROW*:

- **Be a Class Agent**—Take the lead in keeping your classmates connected and engaged.
- **Reconnect and Celebrate**—Attend alumni gatherings, networking sessions, or campus celebrations.
- **Donate to *foreverDARROW***—Contributions of all sizes make a significant impact. Consider supporting faculty recruitment, program enhancements, or campus improvements.
- **Stay Connected**—Update your contact information and submit a class note [HERE](#)

No matter how you choose to get involved, your contribution of time, talent, or treasure strengthens the community and ensures Darrow continues to thrive.

### A Shared Legacy

*foreverDARROW* is not just about facilities or programs—it’s about honoring a shared legacy and investing in a community that transforms lives.

“We’re not just sustaining a school,” Phil emphasizes. “We’re nurturing a legacy that empowers individuals, fosters innovation, and builds a lasting community.”

To learn more about *foreverDARROW* or ways you can get involved, contact Phil Darrin at [darrinp@darrowschool.org](mailto:darrinp@darrowschool.org).

Together, let’s honor our past, empower the present, and build an extraordinary future for Darrow—forever.

## LET’S STAY CONNECTED

As a cherished member of the Darrow community, you’re an essential part of its story—past, present, and future. We want to keep you in the loop with all things Darrow: news, event invites, alumni connections, and more!

Updating your info is quick and easy. Just click [HERE](#) to make sure we’ve got your latest contact details. Don’t miss a moment of what’s happening in our amazing community.

# More Than Chores

## The Lasting Impact of Darrow's Hands-to-Work

By Valle Dwight '75

Wednesday mornings at Darrow have never been like the rest of the week. Books are set aside, laptops are closed, homework forgotten for the moment. Instead, students are out in the fields, kitchens, workshops, and trails. This is Hands-to-Work, a vital part of the Darrow experience since 1932, which continues to be shaped by its Shaker roots—where work is seen as both a contribution to the community and a source of personal pride.

Today, Hands-to-Work, which is a natural extension of Darrow's classroom hands-on learning approach, is in the capable hands of Jennifer Leahey, or as the students call her, "Farmer Jen." With a background as an animal and nature program specialist and manager of the Leahey Farm and Dairy in Lee, Massachusetts, she's bringing a fresh perspective to this longstanding tradition. Her passion for working with animals and the land is helping to reignite curiosity and inspire a new generation of students at Darrow.

When I caught up with her on a Thursday in mid-October, she was

mid-task, loading a bale of hay into her car with an owl riding along in the back. Beyond leading the Hands-to-Work program, Leahey teaches environmental science and animal studies, bringing her deep connection to nature into every lesson.

"I brought an owl into my Environmental Science class today," she said with a laugh. "I like to include the animals in whatever we're talking about."

For her, it's about fostering a connection between students and the natural world. She's slowly bringing animals back to Darrow's campus—so far, there are two sheep, chickens, and an array of smaller creatures, including frogs and turtles who live in a demonstration tank at the end of

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***He didn't love the classroom, but give him an engine to work on, and he shined," she says. It's these kinds of experiences that set Hands-to-Work apart, offering students a way to grow and succeed outside of academics or sports.***

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the Living Machine, Darrow's natural wastewater treatment system.

Leahey believes in the power of connecting with animals. "I'm far more at home in natural settings, despite having grown up in the Boston area," she said, explaining how nature has always been in her blood. She believes in the biophilia hypothesis, the idea that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with nature. "It's in you, or it's not," she says.

And she sees the same in her students. She talks about a student from urban New Jersey, with no real experience with animals, who really bonded with the animals at Darrow and is now eager to become a farm prefect. She loves being able to make that connection for students.

This kind of hands-on connection is the essence of Hands-to-Work. The program is rooted in the Shaker belief of "Hands to work, hearts to God," which Leahey relates to, though not in a religious sense.

"For me, I translate that into, 'What-

ever you are doing, give it your best," she says. "It's about taking pride in your work and contributing to your community." Whether students are caring for chickens, clearing trails, or cooking meals for the campus, they're learning what it means to do something with a purpose greater than themselves.

As has been true for decades, there's a wide variety of tasks that make up the Hands-to-Work

crews. Students can join the farm crew, caring for animals and handling other farm chores, or the garden crew, planting and maintaining crops. There's also a trail crew, keeping the woods clear for cross-country runners and hikers, and a construction crew that tackles small repairs around campus. The maple sugaring crew taps trees and turns sap into syrup, supported by the wood chopping crew that gets the wood ready for the Sugar

Shack. The kitchen crew helps plan and prepare meals. New this year is the Shaker Singing crew, where students learn traditional songs—and maybe even put a modern spin on a few – to share with the Darrow or local communities in the future.

Not every student is naturally excited about getting their hands dirty, but Leahey has seen some unexpected transformations. One student last year struggled in the classroom but thrived on the facilities crew, especially when it came to tinkering with machines.

"He didn't love the classroom, but give him an engine to work on, and he shone," she says. It's these kinds of experiences that set Hands-to-Work apart, offering students a way to grow and succeed outside of academics or sports. "That's where Hands-to-Work wins," Leahey adds.

Looking ahead, Leahey has big dreams for the program. She wants to expand it to include more long-term projects, ones that students can look back on years later and say, "I did that." Whether it's building something that lasts or taking on a personal project with a mentor, she sees Hands-to-Work as a way for students to dive deep into their interests. Independent study projects, especially, are something she's eager to offer more of, allowing students to take real ownership of their learning.

Of course, this growth comes with its own challenges. Leahey is quick to point out that the success of Hands-to-Work depends on having





Photo by Jane Feldman '74

faculty who are passionate about teaching through doing. Having faculty members who are excited to lead a crew, whether it's working on campus infrastructure or guiding students through a creative project, is key to taking the program to the next level.

For now, though, Leahey's focus is on continuing to build the sense of community and pride that makes Hands-to-Work so special. As the program grows and evolves, its core values—giving your best, taking pride in your work, and contributing to something bigger—remain as strong as ever. For the students who participate, the lessons learned through Hands-to-Work might just be the ones that stick with them for life.

**HANDS-TO-WORK**



Photo by Jane Feldman '74



Photo by Jane Feldman '74



# ENDURING SHAKER VALUES

*A Legacy of Simplicity, Equality, and Innovation*

*by Andy Vadnais*



***“ Do all your work as though you had a thousand years to live and as you would if you knew you must die tomorrow. ”***

—Mother Ann Lee

In today's world, it seems there is a renewed interest in Shaker culture, and I find that personally gratifying. As someone who spent years as a curator and Associate Director at Hancock Shaker Village, I had the privilege of getting to know a few of the last Shaker Sisters at the Canterbury and Sabbathday Lake Villages. I still vividly recall a conversation with Sister Bertha Lindsey in the late 1980s, when she was eagerly anticipating the Harmonic Convergence, a global peace

meditation in August 1987 that coincided with a rare alignment of planets. Much of the thinking was based on Mayan calendar prophecy around this event, which would usher in a period of peace and environmental harmony, and she was convinced that it would bring about a New Age.

The values that the Shakers held close have remained unchanged over the years. Their lives and



communities were built on principles that we can still extract from the many documents they left behind. These values include:

- Honesty**—in both personal and business dealings
- Simplicity**
- Equality**—of both race and gender
- Pacifism**
- Compassion**
- Humility**—in both words and actions
- Communalism**—a focus on the universal good
- Self-sacrifice**—for the common good
- Dedication to spiritual life**—belief in the unseen world
- Hard work**—and excellence in craftsmanship
- Innovation**—embracing technology in its useful forms

These guiding values laid the foundation for the eighteen or so Shaker villages that once existed, and were key to what made Shakerism the most successful utopian experiment in American history. The Shakers often described their villages as “Heaven on Earth.”

One person who embodied these Shaker values was Isaac Newton Youngs (1793–1865), the youngest member of the Youngs-Wells family, many of whom were instrumental in founding the Watervliet and New Lebanon Shaker communities. Isaac spent his life working in the Church Family at Mount Lebanon, and he was a man of many skills: a tailor, clockmaker, mapmaker, inventor, musician, hymn-writer, blacksmith, tinsmith, and more. He was also the master builder of the Mount Lebanon Schoolhouse, constructed in 1839. The Schoolhouse still stands at its original location, between Hinckley House and Ann Lee Cottage, and now serves as a faculty residence. His friend and mentor, Brother Elisha Blakeman, gave a moving eulogy at his passing, honoring the life of service and virtue that Isaac led:

“Thus our Brother filled out a life of usefulness... In reflecting, let me draw from his industrious life a new chart for my own journey. Like him, may I toil in the vineyard, and as he has done, leave when called hence a name commendable, a character unrepachable, and an example of Christian virtue.”

Today, Darrow School stands as the inheritor of many of the buildings and grounds where Brother Isaac lived and worked. As the current Head of School since 2019, I often reflect on which of these Shaker values we still hold dear. In 2024, I would say Darrow values:

- Honesty**—in both personal and business dealings
- Equality**—across race, gender, and religion
- Compassion**—this is our theme for the year
- Self-sacrifice**—for the common good, living in a small, intentional community isn't easy for today's youth
- Quality work**—academically, yes, and physical labor is a work in progress
- Hands-to-Work**—every Wednesday morning
- Innovation**—more to come on this in time

To select the year's value focus, the faculty reviewed the Shaker values alongside the 12 Lakota Virtues: humility, perseverance, respect, honor, love, sacrifice, truth, compassion, bravery, fortitude, generosity, and wisdom. With the Fall election in mind, we chose compassion as the theme.

This theme of compassion is highlighted at all major ceremonies, including Convocation, Fall Family Weekend, Grandparents Day, Baccalaureate, and Commencement. Teachers also integrate it into their classes in ways that suit their teaching style.

For those looking to explore Shaker values today, a visit to Sabbathday Lake in Maine is a good place to start. If you're fortunate, you might even have a conversation with Brother Arnold, who has been steadfastly carrying on the Shaker tradition, hoping that Mother Ann's prophecy will one day be fulfilled. She predicted that the number of Shakers would dwindle to a few, but that a rebirth would follow, ushering in a new era of Shakerism.

At Darrow School, we see ourselves as part of that rebirth—embracing Shaker values in our community, in our commitment to equality, compassion, and the pursuit of both intellectual and hands-on work, carrying forward their spirit in a modern context.

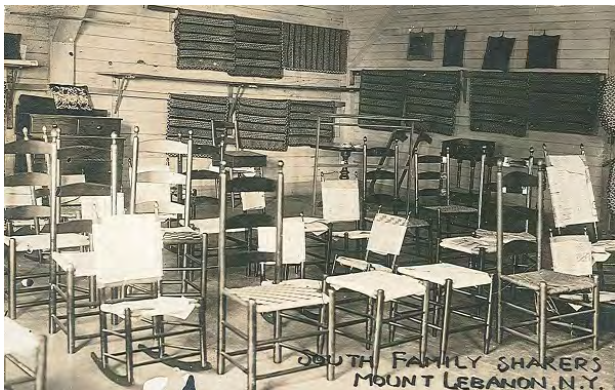
# Connections Beyond the Mountainside—The Shaker Legacy of Collaboration

Peter Cholakis '72, P'06, P'08

The Shakers may have seemed insular, yet their impact reached far beyond their village boundaries. Known for their commitment to communal living, innovation, and sustainability, they developed partnerships that enriched their communities and shaped industries still thriving today. At Darrow School, we honor and extend this heritage through partnerships that embody Shaker principles while adapting them to the modern world.

## The Shakers' Collaborative Spirit

The Shakers of New Lebanon, New York, were innovators, humanitarians, and stewards of the land. Their approach to partnerships reflected a deep commitment to simplicity, sustainability, and mutual benefit. These collaborations were instrumental in their success and remain a source of inspiration today.



## Economic and Craftsmanship Collaborations

The Shakers' superior craftsmanship in furniture, textiles, and agricultural products was widely celebrated. Their

strategic partnerships allowed them to share their creations with the world.

- **Furniture Production:** Shaker chairs, renowned for their elegance and durability, were marketed through illustrated catalogs and sold to retailers in major cities like New York and Philadelphia. The Shaker chairs are still used in the Wickersham Common Room and are as much a lesson in balance and function as in craftsmanship.
- **Botanical Medicine:** By collaborating with merchants such as Calvin J. Cowles, the Shakers distributed large quantities of herbal remedies, which became trusted household staples (*The Southern Highlander*).
- **Seed Distribution:** The Shakers pioneered commercial seed sales in the U.S., packaging seeds in small packets with gardening instructions—a standard still in use today (*Library of Congress Blog*).

## Technological Innovation and Sharing

The Shakers' inventive spirit reshaped industries, and their open-sharing philosophy ensured their innovations benefited society.

- **Flat Broom:** Invented in 1798 by Theodore Bates, this tool revolutionized cleaning and became a household essential (Wikipedia).
- **Circular Saw:** Sister Tabitha Babbitt's groundbreaking 1813 invention increased productivity in woodworking and influenced broader industrial practices (Wikipedia).



Through these and other innovations, the Shakers exemplified a selfless approach to technological advancement, refusing patents to ensure their creations were widely adopted.

### **Environmental Stewardship and Resource Management**

The New Lebanon Shakers demonstrated a profound commitment to environmental stewardship, pioneering sustainable farming and resource management practices that continue to influence contemporary conservation efforts.

#### **Crop Rotation and Composting**

Long before environmentalism became a formal movement, the New Lebanon Shakers implemented innovative agricultural practices such as crop rotation and composting.

- **Crop Rotation:** By systematically alternating crops with varying nutrient demands, the Shakers maintained soil fertility and minimized the risk of pest

infestations. This practice preserved the productivity of their farmland over generations.

- **Composting:** Organic waste was recycled into nutrient-rich compost, enhancing soil quality while reducing agricultural waste. This method allowed the Shakers to sustain crop yields without relying on chemical fertilizer

#### **Conservation of Natural Resources**

The New Lebanon Shakers extended their environmental ethos to managing their woodlands, water sources, and farmland. Their approach emphasized long-term resource conservation, reflecting their belief in caring for the earth as a sacred duty.

#### **Legacy of Environmental Responsibility**

The practices of the New Lebanon Shakers laid a foundation for sustainable farming techniques and inspired future conservationists. Their holistic approach to land management—balancing productivity with environmental care—remains a model for sustainable agriculture and resource stewardship.

Through their dedication to environmental preservation, the New Lebanon Shakers exemplified a forward-thinking philosophy that continues to resonate in today's environmental conversations.

### Modern Day Partnerships

At Darrow School, we carry forward the Shaker values of collaboration, innovation, and stewardship through meaningful partnerships. These initiatives honor the past while shaping a dynamic future.

### Syracuse University Partnership

Our collaboration with the Syracuse University Project Advance (SUPA) embodies the Shaker commitment to equipping individuals with the tools for success. Through SUPA, Darrow seniors take college-level courses, earning credits that prepare them for higher education while fostering intellectual growth and academic rigor.

### Partnership with United Soccer Group (USG)

Darrow's revitalized soccer program, bolstered by a partnership with USG, has achieved unprecedented milestones, including an HVAL Championship and a NEPSAC semifinal appearance. Reflecting Shaker principles of dedication and teamwork, this collaboration has strengthened school spirit and built a foundation for continued excellence. As Allie '25 shared: *"It's incredible to see our hard work pay off. We're building something lasting."*

### Shaker Swamp Conservancy

In partnership with the Shaker Swamp Conservancy, Darrow remains committed to sustainability and historic preservation. This initiative:

- Preserves the ecological and cultural significance of the historic New Lebanon Shaker Swamp.
- Provides eco-friendly access for education and recreation, fostering a deeper understanding of environmental conservation.

By aligning with the Conservancy's mission, Darrow extends the Shakers' legacy of stewardship, ensuring it inspires future generations.

Visit the [Shaker Swamp Conservancy: Experience](#) a vital part of Shaker history and contribute to its preservation.

### The Darrow Alumni Advisory Group (DAAG)

DAAG strengthens the bond between alumni and Darrow, uniting past and present in shared purpose. Recent contributions include:

- **Admissions and Marketing Support**—Alumni networks enhance Darrow's visibility and outreach.
- **Preservation of Shaker History**—Alumni-led projects, like this *Peg Board*, ensure that Shaker heritage remains integral to Darrow's identity.

By fostering these connections, DAAG embodies the Shaker ideal of community collaboration for mutual benefit.

### Looking Ahead: Building a Legacy Together

The Shakers' enduring spirit of innovation, generosity, and sustainability guides Darrow School's vision for the future. By nurturing partnerships that reflect these values, we empower our students to forge meaningful connections and lead with purpose in an ever-evolving world.

We invite alumni to join us in this journey—whether through mentoring, becoming a Darrow Admissions Ambassador, or supporting ongoing initiatives. Together, we can honor the Shaker legacy while building a vibrant, forward-thinking community that inspires generations to come.

Are you ready to support Darrow's mission? Contact the Advancement Office at [advancement@darrowschool.org](mailto:advancement@darrowschool.org)

PHOTO: Varsity Soccer Team celebrates a historic season, breaking records with their first HVAL Championship in 35 years and advancing to the NEPSAC semifinals for the first time. This remarkable achievement reflects a culture of excellence, strengthened by our partnership with United Soccer Group (USG).



# NEWS











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Photo by Jane Feldman '74





# How Darrow set the Stage for my Lifelong Love of Theater

By Kari Wishingrad, Class of '78

I grew up in an artistic family in NYC. At four years old, I saw my first Broadway show and was smitten. The show was *I Had a Ball*, with Buddy Hackett, which was produced by a close family friend, Joseph Kipness.

I attended a performing arts grammar school near Lincoln Center but did not grow up with the support needed to pursue my dream. Drawing and painting became my creative outlet.

Fast forward to my junior and senior years at Darrow.

I was encouraged in visual arts when Bonnie Miller recognized my talents. For theater, I learned it all: building and painting sets, even splicing electrical wires for lighting. I worked with costumes, makeup, and stage managed *The Crucible*. And, of course, whenever a program cover or decorations were needed, I happily contributed artwork.

But I was insecure and terrified to be on stage.

When Proctor Smith was directing *Bye, Bye, Birdie* in my senior year, I auditioned for a small role.

Imagine my surprise when Proctor pulled me aside and said, "I want you to play Kim—the lead!" I absolutely freaked out, quickly booking a meeting with my advisor, Bonnie Miller. Again, Bonnie offered encouragement, urging me to jump in.

I took the leap. Now, 45+ years later, I have never regretted that decision.

Safe in the artistic Darrow nest, my confidence slowly but steadily grew. Acting became a side career when I moved to the San Francisco Bay area after college.

I owe so much to Proctor and Bonnie for believing in me long before I believed in myself.

Currently, I am co-producing and acting in the short film, *Since She Left*, proof of concept (a short film that demonstrates the potential of a larger project) for the feature film. Along with my colleague and long-time collaborator, Jennifer Juelich, we are in final post-production while submitting to film festivals. We are also writing, and will produce, another film celebrating women of the beat generation. That project was inspired by a poem I wrote in 2010 when I performed at a Beat poet themed event.

The seeds sown during my two formative years at Darrow have sustained me throughout my life. They helped empower me to overcome my original fear and self-doubt, and set me up for success in the arts, and as a coach who helps people transform their homes, hearts, and lives.

Forever grateful to Darrow.

Watch the trailer *Since She Left*

Find more about Kari's projects:

[www.kariwishingrad.com](http://www.kariwishingrad.com) and [www.organizingbykari.com](http://www.organizingbykari.com)





PHOTOS: John Hultgren '70

# JOHN HULTGREN '70

## A Legacy of Service, Innovation, and Art

Reflecting on his time at Darrow, John emphasizes the importance of the foundational lessons he learned there—lessons that extended far beyond the classroom. Whether it was hiking down the mountainside to attend his first first-aid class or learning practical skills during Hands-to-Work, Darrow instilled in him a sense of curiosity, resilience, and problem-solving that became integral to his life's journey.

John's remarkable career in emergency services spanned over five decades, marked by innovation, dedication, and a passion for serving others. As one of the pioneers in paramedic certification and helicopter EMS, John consistently pushed the boundaries of what was possible in emergency medicine. Even in retirement, his commitment to community and education shines brightly, as he uses his artistic talents and teaching skills to inspire others and advocate for conservation.

Looking back, John's story is a testament to the enduring impact of a Darrow education—a blend of hands-on learning, intellectual growth, and personal development that prepared him to tackle challenges, embrace opportunities, and make meaningful contributions to the world around him.

# The Bus to Darrow

## My Mother's Greatest Sacrifice, My Greatest Gift

By Lawrence Jennings '72

I turned 70 on October 2nd, and the first thing I did was visit my mom. She'll be 94 in November, and lately, she's been telling me stories about my childhood—things I never knew. On this visit, she told me about the day we, my parents and I, took the bus from Port Authority to Darrow in September 1968. I'm sure you know what was happening in the country around that time, but that's another story for another day.

My dad worked as a skycap at Port Authority, shuttling people's bags from the taxi curb to their bus. Departures and arrivals. He got tipped in quarters. That day, his co-workers were cheering us on because his kid was going off to prep school. They shook his hand, patted me on the back. "Good luck, kid! Go get 'em!"

I don't remember much about the bus ride—just that it was long and the city eventually gave way to a sea of trees and fall leaves turning colors I'd never seen before. I was 13 and hadn't traveled much. When we got off at the Darrow sign, we stood there, not really knowing what to do. Ten minutes later, a jeep pulled up, top down, and the

driver asked if we needed a ride. So in we climbed, me, Mom, and Dad, squeezed into this tiny jeep. It took off downhill at breakneck speed, wind whipping past us. By the time we got to the bottom, my mother's hair was a complete mess. She was pissed! Ha! I'll never forget that. By the way, the driver? Mel Bourne, Woody Allen's set designer. His son, Tim, ended up being my roommate freshman year. But that's not really the point of the story.

.....  
**"Wake up, son. Time to get ready. On this visit, she told me she cried all night before that morning because she knew her firstborn, her only son, was about to leave home—maybe for good."**  
.....

The point is this: that morning at 6 AM, my mom woke me up with bacon and scrambled eggs with cheese. "Wake up, son. Time to get ready." On this visit, she told me she cried all night before that

morning because she knew her firstborn, her only son, was about to leave home—maybe for good. She was right. I graduated from Darrow, went on to Williams, then began my career...and all the rest that life throws at you. Today she tells me it was the greatest sacrifice she ever made: sending her son, a Black kid from Harlem, to a prep school in 1968, where he'd be the only Black kid in his class. Five months after the assassination of Dr. King. But I love her for that. She saw a future for me that I couldn't see for myself.

Little did she know, or maybe she did, that Darrow would stay in my blood, in my soul. The experience transformed me. I think of Joni Mitchell's "A Case of You"—"In my blood like holy wine. I could drink a case of you and I would still be on my feet." As Dr. King said, "Longevity has its place." I am many things because of Darrow, but the best parts are the ones I'm still discovering.

For Darrow Reunion 2024, I hitched a ride with Peter Raff, who was a sophomore in Brethren's my freshman year. Driving past the Darrow sign still made me smile, tear up,

and laugh out loud. I can't even imagine what my life would've been like without my Darrow experience.

### **LARRY JENNINGS BIO**

*Lawrence Jennings attended Darrow from 1968 to 1972, where he served as the Senior Year Prefect of Academics.*

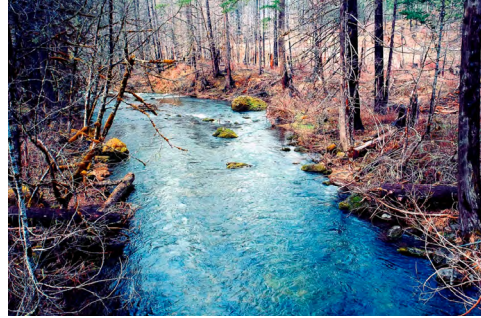
*Afterward, he attended Williams College, majoring in History and Sociology. His career in Human Resources spanned over 40 years, during which he worked at notable companies like Pfizer, Merrill Lynch, and True North Communications. His final position before retirement was Vice President of Human Resources at The Brooklyn Public Library. Now retired, he continues to work as an HR consultant.*

*In his free time, Larry enjoys writing, particularly poetry, and has had work published in outlets such as The Village Voice. He is currently working on his first book, which is rooted in the Bildungsroman genre—a literary form that focuses on the protagonist's psychological and moral growth from childhood to adulthood. Larry finds that his best poems often stem from his own personal experiences.*

*He is also passionate about music. Having built a computer-based home recording studio, he composes his own music, which can be found on Soundcloud under "Lawrence Jennings (Mudita)" and on ReverbNation under "Mudita."*

PHOTO: Larry Jennings and his mother, Thelma Jennings, taken Fall 2024





PHOTOS: Hunter Skowron '04



# FROM DARKROOM DREAMS TO PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

## Hunter Skowron '04

For Hunter Skowron '04, photography isn't just a career—it's a calling, ignited in the unassuming darkroom of Darrow School. Today, Hunter is a professional photographer based in Portland, Oregon, whose evocative images capture the beauty of the Pacific Northwest and the gritty charm of the city's forgotten corners. His journey, however, began long before his current lens found its focus.

Hunter credits much of his early growth to the unwavering support of two pivotal figures at Darrow: his advisor, Tim Clark, and photography teacher, Brooke Bull. Their mentorship and encouragement created a nurturing space where he was free to explore his budding talent. "Without that space to grow as an artist,

I doubt I'd be where I am today," Hunter reflects.

The spark for photography first ignited in 2001 when Hunter picked up a Pentax K1000 and began capturing moments with its hazy 50mm lens. From documenting life for Darrow's yearbook to managing the school's darkroom, his passion for analog photography flourished. It was this love for the tactile process of film that led him to pursue a B.A. in Photography and Film Production at Southern California's renowned Brooks Institute of Photography.

Now based in Portland Oregon, Hunter remains deeply connected to his film roots, drawn to the unvarnished beauty of real moments. His

work often spotlights neon signs in forgotten urban corners, evolving cityscapes, and the raw, natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest. For Hunter, film isn't just a medium—it's a link to his creative beginnings and a reminder of the journey that shaped him.

Ready to see the world through Hunter's lens? Explore his captivating photography at [fast-studios.com](http://fast-studios.com).

Alumni notes for this *Peg Board* were received by December 5, 2024. Click [HERE](#) to submit a class note for publication in the next issue of the *Peg Board*. We'd love to hear your updates—whether it's a new job, graduation, marriage, birth, alumni gatherings, or any other news you'd like to share!

## 1958

### Harry Bird

Harry's journey has been as adventurous as it has been varied. After three years at Darrow, where he developed a passion for physics, Harry went on to study at Williams, Bard, and the University of Oklahoma, earning a PhD in sociology. His career has spanned everything from software development—writing operating systems and business solutions for major companies like Apple and IBM—to working on prison program evaluations and education research. He eventually ran his own software company, creating Home Manager, a product he still uses today.

Now retired in Essex, CT, Harry enjoys life with his wife, Goody, the love of his life. Together, they share a peaceful existence filled with fond memories of his sailing adventures, which included cruises to Maine and races to Bermuda and Halifax. Harry reflects on a life well-lived, with few regrets, and credits Darrow for instilling values and sparking the curiosity that shaped his eclectic and fulfilling life.

## 1962

### Ned Groth

nedgroth@cs.com (914) 364-1026, Ned Groth shares a heartfelt update on the many changes and connections in his life. After losing his wife, Sharon Begley, to cancer in January 2021, Ned moved to San Francisco in July 2022 to be closer to his children, Sarah and Daniel, his daughter-in-law Colleen, and his first grandchild, Kate, born in July this year.

In 2023, Ned reconnected with Sarah Ward, whom he had known in the 1970s in Washington, DC. Their renewed connection led to marriage, and the couple now live in Watkinsville, GA, near Athens, where Sarah owns a small farm. Ned has happily adapted to life as a Georgia farmer, tending to horses, sheep, chickens, and dogs, and invites friends to visit, sharing, "People here are really nice—come visit!"

Last summer, a mini-reunion of the Class of '62 took place at Ned and Sarah's farm, with classmates Anson Perina, Peter Gorday, and Chuck Arundale, along with their

spouses, gathering to reminisce. It was the first class get-together for Chuck since 1962, and there was much catching up to do! Peter and Virginia recently moved to Athens, just 20 minutes from Ned, allowing the old roommates to reconnect often. Chuck, now retired in Kennesaw, GA, enjoys traveling in his luxury RV with his wife, Dianne, while staying active in their church. Anson, still in Fort Collins, CO, hosted a grand celebration for his 80th birthday, attended by 300 friends and classmates, including Ned, John Ho, Gib Manchester, Dave Benson, and Frank Rosenberg.

Ned and Sarah also celebrated their marriage with a party in Boston this October, attended by friends like Carl Sharpe and Patricia, who live in Mattapoisett, MA. Though Frank Phillips, now in Concord, MA, was unable to attend. He was busy celebrating his own milestone 80th birthday.

Reflecting on the vibrant lives of the Class of '62, Ned notes, "A whole lot of us are still around to celebrate our 80th's, and many of us are a bit surprised (but grateful!) that we—and Darrow—have made it this far."

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## 1965

### Culver Tefft

After graduating from Westminster College in Fulton, MO, in 1969, Culver Tefft served in the Army in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971. He then spent many years in advertising and writing at his family's newspaper in Greenwich, NY, before relocating to Wisconsin and later settling in Kentucky in 2002.

Now retired in Berea, KY, Culver enjoys the slower pace of retirement life. He keeps busy writing historical commentary, updating genealogical research, and perfecting photos for Facebook. Sharing humor, opinions, and knowledge with others is a daily joy for him. Culver continues to find fulfillment in these pursuits while staying connected to his community.

### Drew Barringer

After spending a year at Boston University, where he roomed with Andy Fuller and Ivan Narodny, Drew Barringer was drafted into the Army and served a tour in Vietnam. He fondly remembers his childhood friend and Darrow Class of '64 alumnus, Eddie McIlvain, who came to Darrow with him from their hometown. Eddie, a Green Beret medic, was tragically killed in action in 1967, and

the McIlvain Award at Darrow was later established through Eddie's bequest to the school.

Following his military service, Drew returned to BU to complete his studies and earned an MS from UNC-Chapel Hill. For more than 25 years, he helped run a large foundation in Atlanta. After remarrying, he moved to Flagstaff, AZ, to manage his family's company, which has owned Meteor Crater since 1903. His grandfather, a geologist, was the first to prove the crater's meteorite origin. Today, Meteor Crater is recognized as Earth's best-preserved meteorite impact site and serves as a hub for NASA training and global scientific research.

This past June, Drew retired after 43 years as the company's chairman and CEO. Now, at 78, he is embracing retirement with his wife, enjoying travel, camping, and hiking throughout the Southwest, Canada, and Alaska. He also cherishes time with his daughters and two grandsons, ages 16 and 12.

Reflecting on his life and career, Drew shares, "My best to all my classmates at Darrow—a place that left an indelible mark on each of us."

### David Blake

After serving in the military and building a distinguished career

as an attorney for over 40 years, David transitioned to a new chapter as an innkeeper for seven years. Now, at 78, David is in his fifth year of assisting individuals with developmental disabilities and supporting elementary school students diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

Living in the township where he was raised, David remains active and deeply fulfilled, dedicating his time to making a meaningful difference in the lives of others while staying connected to the community that shaped him.

### Mark Curry

Mark has called South Freeport, ME, home for nearly 50 years. After a successful career that included 13 years at GE and 30 years managing shipbuilding programs for the U.S. Navy at Bath Iron Works, Mark is now enjoying retirement.

In addition to his well-earned leisure, Mark dedicates his time as treasurer for a medical nonprofit in Guatemala. The organization focuses on helping children from families living near the Guatemala City dump transition into healthier school environments, providing full scholarships to over 15 graduates in the medical field so far.

Mark and his family embrace life in Maine, whether spending

time on Casco Bay or heading to the mountains for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. He has also made a few trips back to Darrow, where he fondly remembers the concerts in the Tannery and the lasting connections formed on the Mountainside.

## 1971

### Michael Flomen



Michael Flomen continues to make waves in the art world with his unique and innovative photography. This summer, his work was featured in an exhibition at Sohn Gallery in Lenox, MA, and he had another exciting show in the fall in New York City. Michael's passion for photography began at Darrow, where his artistic journey took root, and has since evolved into a career of international acclaim.

His latest book, *Michael Flomen: Photograms and Photographs*

2020–1970, provides a comprehensive view of his extraordinary body of work. This collection highlights his distinctive process of creating photograms—capturing the unseen beauty of nature—and traces his artistic evolution over the past five decades.

Michael cherishes the connections he has maintained with fellow Darrow alumni throughout his career, a testament to the lasting bonds formed during his time on the Mountainside. He invites the Darrow community to reach out to discuss his work, upcoming shows, or his creative collaboration with the natural world.

Stay connected and explore his captivating photography:  
Phone: 514-947-6777

Instagram: @michaelflomen  
[michael-flomen.squarespace.com](https://www.instagram.com/michaelflomen)

Michael's journey is a reminder of the enduring inspiration Darrow provides and the transformative power of artistic expression.

### Law Fotttrall

This past August, Law Foterall visited with Nancy Wolf Austin and her husband, Reed, Nancy Wolf Austin and her husband, Reed, while they were in Belfast, ME. Law and his wife, Kathy, who

lead vibrant lives filled with travel, cycling, gardening, and yoga. Law and Kathy split their time between Belfast, ME, and Vero Beach, FL, where they continue their active lifestyle during the winter months. In January 2025, they're embarking on an exciting-around-the-world adventure, with destinations primarily below the equator.

Law is always eager to connect and share stories about Darrow. He is in regular touch with Peter Raff '71 and other classmates.



*Photo: Nancy Austin and Law Foterall '71, Belfast, ME*

## 1972

### Tom "Tuck" Barclay

Tuck and his wife, Lucy Norvell, have been enjoying life in Scar-

borough, ME, where they've lived for the past 8 years after moving from Auburndale, MA. With a wealth of experience as a nonprofit fundraiser since 1983, Tuck found inspiration in last year's Darrow events and the remarkable support from the community, which motivated him to reconnect with the school. He joined the Darrow Board in March and took on the role of Treasurer in July.

### **Peter Cholakis P'06, P'08**

[peterc@darrowsschool.org](mailto:peterc@darrowsschool.org)

Peter joined Darrow's Board of Trustees in October and is enthusiastic about supporting the school's administration, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends in this new role.



Outside of his board responsibilities, Peter keeps active on Cape Cod. This year, he celebrated his baseball team's victory in the Cape Cod Senior Championship and secured first place in the Flying Scot Sailing Challenger Class.

On the family front, Peter's son Nick '08 and his wife Kathleen are thriving in Charlestown with their one-year-old son, Owen. His daughter Kate '06 is teaching at Smith College and The Conway School. Peter is eagerly looking forward to spending quality ski time with her this winter.

### **Bart Laws**

Bart is staying busy in his semi-retirement with a variety of meaningful endeavors. He works part-time as an evaluator for a pre-trial diversion program and mentors students on their theses. In his local community, Bart serves as a member of the Scotland, CT, Board of Selectmen and chairs the Democratic Town Committee. In addition, Bart is completing a book on U.S. healthcare and public health while taking on consulting projects, continuing to contribute his expertise to important societal issues.

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## 1974

### **Kate (Schnackel) Decker**

Kate is thrilled to announce the upcoming wedding of her daughter, Alex, set for September 7, 2025, in a picturesque waterfront ceremony in Wellfleet on Cape Cod. Fellow alum Jane Feldman '74 will serve as their photographer, having already scoped out

the stunning views for the occasion.



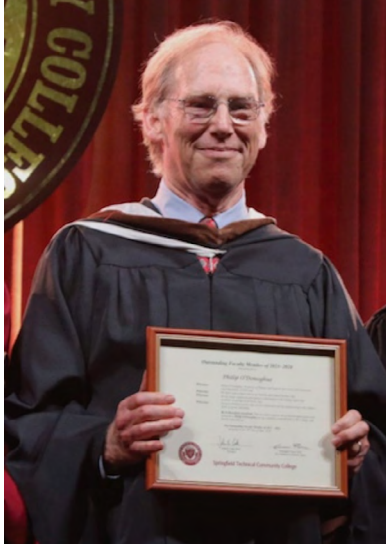
Alex, a nurse, and her fiancé, a marine engineer mechanic, share a love of the water with their family, spending summers fishing and boating. At home, Alex and Kate bond over their shared love for their Siberian huskies, who keep the household lively and active.

Kate and her family reside on the mid-Cape and warmly welcome visits from friends and fellow alumni. If you're in the area, be sure to reach out—they'd love to reconnect!

### **Phil O'Donoghue P'11**

Phil was recently recognized as the Outstanding Faculty Member of 2023–2024 at Springfield Technical Community College, where he teaches theater, English, and public speaking. His dedication to supporting students with diverse learning styles reflects his personal experiences and his

deep belief in the transformative power of education.



Phil discovered his love for theater at Darrow while working with Ron Emory, an experience that ignited his lifelong passion for the arts. He went on to earn a background in dramaturgy and playwriting from UMass Amherst and an MFA from Smith College. Phil's journey continues to inspire his students and peers as he contributes to the academic and artistic community.

## 1975

### Fred Allebach

Fred was recently honored by the City of Sonoma, California, as part of its "Celebrate Sonoma" program, recognizing his extensive

contributions to the community.

A familiar figure in Sonoma's civic sphere, Fred has been deeply involved in numerous local projects. His standout achievements include leading the rehabilitation of the Sonoma Overlook Trail and creating a self-guided tour for the Historic Section of Mountain Cemetery. Fred has also served as chair of the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency Advisory Committee and the Community Services and Environment Commission, reflecting his commitment to environmental and civic engagement.



His efforts have earned him accolades from the Sonoma City Council and the Sonoma League for Historic Preservation, highlighting the lasting impact of his work. In addition to these roles, Fred has built a nearly 50-year career as a handyman and house painter, further cementing his reputation as a service-oriented pillar of the community. For more details, visit the [\\_City of Sonoma's announcement\\_](#).

## 1976

### Katie Humes

Katie has called the Pacific Northwest home since 1980, though she still maintains close ties to family on the East Coast. She and her husband, Kurt Waldenberg, reside on Bellingham Bay, just north of Seattle. For the past ten years, Katie has served as the director of the Washington Deaf-Blind Program, which provides professional development and family support for children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss. Her career in education began in 1985 and continues to make a meaningful impact.

Katie credits her mentors and colleagues for nurturing her talents and supporting her in achieving major milestones throughout her career. And where did she first learn to collaborate? In Darrow's theater department with Ron Emory, of course. Katie also attributes Darrow with teaching her the enduring power of community and friendship—values that have shaped her life and work.

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## 1978

### Susie Drucker

Susie shares the joyful news of her growing family: 3 grandchildren! Her son, Ethan, is the proud father of three-year-old twins, while her daughter, Corey, recently welcomed a baby girl. Susie describes this new chapter as “so sweet to witness a new generation.”

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## 1979

### Nina (Ryan) Douglass



In 2019, Nina relocated to South San Diego after spending 30 years as a bilingual (Spanish) clinical social worker at a Boston medical center. She now dedicates her work to supporting asylum-seeking families and detained immigrants, continuing her commitment to helping those in need.

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## 1982

### Christian Masters

[mastersc@darrowschool.org](mailto:mastersc@darrowschool.org)

Christian is serving his 12th year on the Darrow Board, where he reflects on the challenges the school has faced and the important work needed to support its future. He credits his time at Darrow with deeply shaping his professional journey as a producer, director, and business owner, offering invaluable lessons he carries with him today. Christian hopes fellow alumni feel a similar connection to Darrow and are inspired to join him in supporting the school.



As he prepares to retire from both the board and his production career, Christian looks forward to dedicating more time to his family, traveling, and pursuing his passion for skiing—setting an ambitious goal of 40 to 50 days on the slopes each year. He is especially excited for his daughter’s wedding this summer in Ireland and continues to find inspiration in his two children, now 29 and 26.

Christian looks forward to reconnecting with classmates at this year’s reunion to celebrate the lasting impact of their shared Darrow experiences.

### Trish Connolly-Giusto

Trish lives in Watertown, CT, nestled in the foothills of the Berkshires, which makes for a scenic and short drive back to Darrow—a trip she makes often. Over the past year, she’s reconnected with the Darrow community at events like the Theater Workshop, Maple Fest, and Alumni Weekend, which she attends regularly. She also cherishes her bond with fellow alumni from the 1980s, enjoying meet-ups filled with laughter, reflections, and good food in NYC and during a summer beach house gathering.

Trish works as a residential counselor with adolescent girls and is involved in the culinary field. She is the proud mom of two sons, both attending UCONN. Reflecting on her Darrow experience, Trish recently revisited a senior-year art project—a batik of the Shaker Tree of Life—and was thrilled to win a blue ribbon at a state fair, more than 40 years later. She fondly credits Joy Vaughan as her best art teacher and dorm parent and shares that Darrow

continues to shape her life and friendships.

*“Darrow forever—Hands-to-Work, Hearts to God.”*

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## 1984

### **Kwame Henry Carlton Jones**

For the past 20 years, Kwame has been running his business, Infinite Roots, which brings the joys of cultural drumming and dance to people of all ages—from preschoolers to seniors. His work focuses on traditional drum and dance from West Africa, sharing its rich heritage and vibrant energy with communities.

In addition to teaching, Kwame performs as a solo singer and guitarist across the tri-state NYC area. His performances seamlessly blend his passion for music and culture, leaving a lasting impression on audiences and continuing to celebrate the traditions he holds dear.

### **Tezh Modarressi**

Tezh lives in Philadelphia with her husband of 22 years, Mark, whom she affectionately refers to as her “strapping Irish man.” She dedicates her days to her

art, working on several painting projects in her first-floor studio. Her work can be viewed at [www.tezhmodarressi.com](http://www.tezhmodarressi.com).

Tezh cherishes staying connected with a few lifelong friends from her time at Darrow, a testament to the enduring bonds formed on the mountainside.

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## 1989

### **Katherine Mullin**

Katherine has been living in Queen Creek, AZ, and working as a special education teacher since 1998. Married for 24 years, she is the proud mother of a son who is a college graduate and a daughter preparing to study to become a high school history teacher this fall.

Through life’s twists and turns, Katherine shares that Darrow’s motto, “Hands to Work, Hearts to God,” has remained her guiding principle, shaping her journey and grounding her along the way.

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## 2002

### **Kyla McKoll (McHale) '02**

Kyla continues to follow her passion for arts education, a jour-

ney that began on the mountainside at Darrow through her theater experiences with Cheryl Moore and her Hands-to-Work role as a teaching assistant at Mountain Road School. She is currently the Director for Professional Learning at ArtsConnection in NYC, where she collaborates with educators to use the arts as tools for deepening student learning and fostering equitable teaching practices.

Kyla recently presented her work at the National Guild for Community Arts Education conference in Washington, DC. She resides in Brooklyn, NY, with her husband and their 5-year-old daughter. In her spare time, Kyla enjoys singing with the NY Choir Project and performing at the Indeterminacy Festival.

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## 2005

### **Sam Kimball**

Sam has established a career as an independent journalist specializing in the Middle East and North Africa. His work has taken him to former homes in Tunisia, Cyprus, Iraq, France, and beyond. Recently returned to the United States, Sam remains dedi-



cated to journalism as a platform for education and knowledge exchange—values he credits to his time at Darrow.

Sam reflects on how Darrow encouraged him to express his true self and explore unique subjects, profoundly shaping his professional path and personal growth.

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## 2006

### **Kate Cholakis-Kolysko**

[cholakis@csld.edu](mailto:cholakis@csld.edu).

Kate is a faculty member in the Conway School's Graduate Program in Ecological Design and teaches in the Landscape Studies undergraduate program at Smith College, Northampton, MA. Previously, she led undergraduate landscape architecture studios at UMass Amherst during the past two spring semesters.

As a landscape architect, Kate has extensive professional experience in landscape master planning, green infrastructure design, and environmental permitting. Her research delves into the intersections of aesthetics and experience, ecological processes, social values, and environmental behavior. Based in Florence, MA, Kate

has also collaborated on several notable landscape design projects with Darrow on the Mountainside..




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## 2008

### **Peter Kent Carlisle**

Peter is the Senior International Officer for the University of Glasgow in Scotland, overseeing undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment in the Northeast USA and Canada. He also supports initiatives related to study abroad, institutional partnerships, and fundraising. Before joining Glasgow, Peter served as Associate Director of University Guidance at two IB international schools in Shanghai and New York.

A graduate of the University of Edinburgh and SOAS, Univer-

sity of London, Peter has spent a decade abroad since leaving Darrow. Now based in Brooklyn, NY, he enjoys reconnecting with fellow alumni Matthew Bianco-Splann '09, Emily Cooper, and Emma Schwartz.

Beyond his full-time role, Peter has launched an antiques business called [MOOAR](#), operating from his small apartment. He curates a unique collection of Americana and Continental decorative arts and furniture dating from the 18th to mid-19th century.

### **Emily Cooper**

Emily is a science teacher at an IB school in Manhattan. After earning her master's in general science education from Cambridge College in 2022, she began teaching and embracing life in NYC in 2023. Outside the classroom, Emily enjoys exploring the city's neighborhoods, planning her next adventure, and training for the 2024 NYC Marathon. Last summer, she embarked on a memorable hike through the breathtaking Julian Alps in Slovenia.

### **Emma Schwartz**

Emma works as a producer for CNN Original Series. After earning her master's degree

from the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism in 2019, she has contributed to documentary films for HBO, Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, PBS, and other major platforms. She resides in Brooklyn with her husband and their baby daughter, Maya.

### Ken Washburn

In 2016, Ken changed their name and now resides on the Connecticut River in Turners Falls, MA. This May, they proudly earned their Bachelor's degree in Food Studies/History from UMass Amherst—12 years later than planned but well worth the wait! A Certified Sommelier since 2011, Ken is now the general manager and wine buyer for a rural food co-op. They have also become a familiar voice on New England Public Media's daily radio show, *The Fabulous 413*.

When not managing the co-op, Ken enjoys quilting and birdwatching, with aspirations of becoming the greatest trans birder of all time

## 2009

### Elizabeth Adams

Elizabeth received a master's in cultural reporting and criticism from NYU and currently works in corporate compliance to support

her other passions. She lends her skills to her local parish, Church of the Ascension, and the Episcopal Diocese of NY. A dedicated swimmer, Elizabeth recently completed a 3-mile open-water race off Coney Island, placing first in the wetsuit division—and, as she notes, miraculously avoided contracting any diseases.

## 2011

### Tim O'Donoghue

Tim recently earned his MBA from the Eisenberg School at UMass and a data analysis certificate from Columbia University. This winter, Tim and his fiancé are making an exciting move to Los Angeles, where they'll start the next chapter of their lives. The couple is also planning their wedding, which is set for September.

## 2023

### Benjamin Jean Louis

A sophomore at the University of New Haven, Ben is pursuing a dual degree in Marketing and Business Administration with a minor in Physics. He credits his time at Darrow for providing a strong foundation and is now focused on gaining practical experience

through internships and expanding his professional network. Ben is excited to continue learning and growing as he works toward making a meaningful impact in his future endeavors.

#### SHARE YOUR TALENTS

Darrow's magic has always been its incredible sense of community, and when we join forces, we achieve greatness. As we look to the future, your skills and expertise can make a real difference! Whether it's sharing knowledge or tackling project, we'd love to hear from you.

Want to help shape Darrow's next chapter? Click [HERE](#) to let us know how you'd like to contribute. Together, we can do extraordinary things—thank you for being part of Darrow's future.

# BE THE LINK

## Keep Darrow connected, one class at a time.

I'm **Peter Wadsworth**, Class of '72, and I'm reaching out with an exciting opportunity to help strengthen the bonds that make Darrow such a special and enduring community.

At Darrow, connection has always been at the heart of who we are. It's the friendships forged in the dorms, the mentoring relationships with faculty, and the shared experiences that transcend class years. These connections aren't just memories—they are the foundation of a thriving, lifelong community. By staying connected, we keep Darrow's legacy vibrant, its spirit alive, and its community growing stronger.

That's where **Class Agents** come in. These volunteers are the vital links that bring our alumni together, keeping us informed, engaged, and inspired. Right now, only 58% of our classes have a Class Agent. Imagine how much stronger our community could be if every class had someone dedicated to nurturing those connections!

### Why Step Up?

Think about how Darrow shaped your life—your friendships, your perspective, your sense of belonging. Becoming a Class Agent is more than a way to give back; it's an opportunity to sustain the Darrow community we all hold so dear.

### What Does a Class Agent Do?

As a Class Agent, you'll:

**UPDATE**—Gather and maintain contact information so everyone stays in the loop.

**CONNECT**—Share news, updates, and stories that keep classmates engaged.

**INSPIRE**—Send occasional emails to rally support or celebrate milestones.

**STRENGTHEN**—Be the bridge between Darrow and your class, reinforcing the bonds that hold our alumni community together.

And don't worry—you're not in this alone. I'll be here to guide you every step of the way.

### What's in It for You?

Becoming a Class Agent is more than a role—it's a chance to reconnect with old friends, rediscover what makes Darrow so special, and play an active part in ensuring its legacy endures. Together, we can celebrate everything we love about Darrow and keep its spirit alive for generations to come.

If you're ready to step into this role—or even just curious to learn more—I'd love to hear from you. Let's keep Darrow thriving, one class at a time.

Warm regards,

Peter Wadsworth '72  
[peter.wadsworth47@gmail.com](mailto:peter.wadsworth47@gmail.com)  
(978) 815-4277

# In Memoriam

## Gerald A. Cann '49



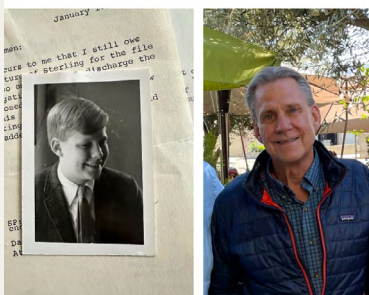
Gerry Cann's life was shaped by resilience and achievement. Orphaned at 11, he was raised by family and friends in New York, where he attended Darrow. A standout athlete, Gerry developed a lifelong passion for sports, especially soccer, which he later coached for his 3 sons.

After graduating from New York University with a degree in geology and geophysics, Gerry served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps and embarked on a distinguished career in public service. In 1990, he was nominated by President George H. W. Bush as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisitions, a role he held throughout the Bush Administration.

In 1993, Gerry and his second wife, Diane, moved to Virginia's Northern Neck, where they lovingly restored a Victorian farmhouse on Crane's Creek. Embracing the local culture, they enjoyed sailing, fishing, crabbing, and growing oysters, activities Gerry pursued with both passion and scholarly curiosity. Though they left Washington behind, Gerry's encyclopedic knowledge of government and global affairs remained sharp and sought after.

After Diane's passing in 2022, Gerry returned to the Washington area but maintained close ties to the Northern Neck. He passed away in Bethesda at 93, remembered for his remarkable intellect, dedication, and love for the communities he called home.

## Sterling Pile '70



Sterling Pile '70, co-founder of Outdoor Vision, passed away on August 6, 2024, in California. A trailblazer in the out-of-home advertising industry, Sterling revolutionized the field with groundbreaking campaigns such as Apple's "Think Different" series and imaginative use of urban spaces as marketing platforms. His pioneering adoption of computer imaging revitalized wall advertising, transforming cityscapes with bold, impactful displays. Known for his creative problem-solving, industry connections, and meticulous execution, Sterling was also celebrated for his charm, fun-loving spirit, and remarkable ability to connect with people.

His legacy leaves an indelible mark on the outdoor advertising world.

## Nick Vernon Crumm '71

Nick, a lifelong surfer and former professional ballet dancer, passed away on June 12, 2024, at the age of 72 after battling Alzheimer's disease. A resident of Montauk and a passionate athlete, Mr. Crumm also excelled in skiing, ice hockey, and pickleball.



In his 20s, he performed with the Colorado Ballet, Kansas City Ballet, and Chicago Ballet, before retiring from dance to earn a bachelor's degree at New York University. He later worked as a general contractor, primarily in New York City, and began frequenting Montauk over 30 years ago, drawn to its vibrant surf community.

Mr. Crumm and his wife of 34 years, Janelle Williams, bought a home in Montauk in 2001 and moved there full-time 4 years ago. He shared his love of surfing with his children, Sam and Olivia, and embraced life in Montauk with unwavering enthusiasm.

Born in Fairfield, CT, on August 14, 1951, and raised in Connecticut and Martha's Vineyard, Mr. Crumm was deeply devoted to his family. He is survived by his wife, children, grandson Charlie, two brothers, and a sister.

A paddle-out in his honor took place at Ditch Plain Beach on Friday, June 21, 2024.

## In Memoriam

### Daniel de Menocal '71



Dan passed on Thursday, December 5, 2024, at his home on Nantucket. Dan's life was marked by his professional achievements, dedication to community service, and deep love for his family.

Dan retired as Head of Equity Capital Markets at BNY Mellon Capital Markets, Inc., where he managed the equity capital markets business. His career included leadership roles at The Bank of New York and Irving Trust Company. Dan also contributed to his community as Senior Warden at St. Matthew's Church in Bedford, NY, and as a board member of the Community Center of Northern Westchester and The Bedford Association. As past president of the Bedford Village Chowder & Marching Club, he supported local youth programs in art, music, sports, and community service.

Dan's personal life was deeply rooted in his family, anchored by his wife, Linda Kathryn Simons, whom he met on a blind date and married in 1985. Linda, originally from Lawrence, KS, maintained close ties to her hometown, which influenced their oldest son Crosby's decision to pursue his education there. Dan and Linda's chil-

dren were a source of immense pride: their son Crosby, their daughter Emily, and their youngest daughter Jane."



Dan's legacy reflects his unwavering commitment to education, philanthropy, and fostering meaningful connections in both his professional and personal circles. His life was a testament to leadership, innovation, and service, leaving a lasting impact on all who knew him.

### Colin Ray '84



Colin Ray passed away peacefully in Hospice on November 11, after a brief battle with cancer. He was 59. Colin is survived by his loving parents,

Marilyn and Joel Ray, his sister, Laurie Ray, and her partner Heidi Tinnes.

Born in Chapel Hill, NC, Colin attended Darrow School, where he began fostering a deep connection to nature. His love for the outdoors was cemented during summers spent in the West, where he learned about horses and discovered the beauty of the Utah desert—a place he held especially close to his heart.

In Ithaca, Colin delighted in sharing stories about the wildlife, visiting his feeders and cherished the companionship of his beloved cats, especially Max, who often traveled with him.



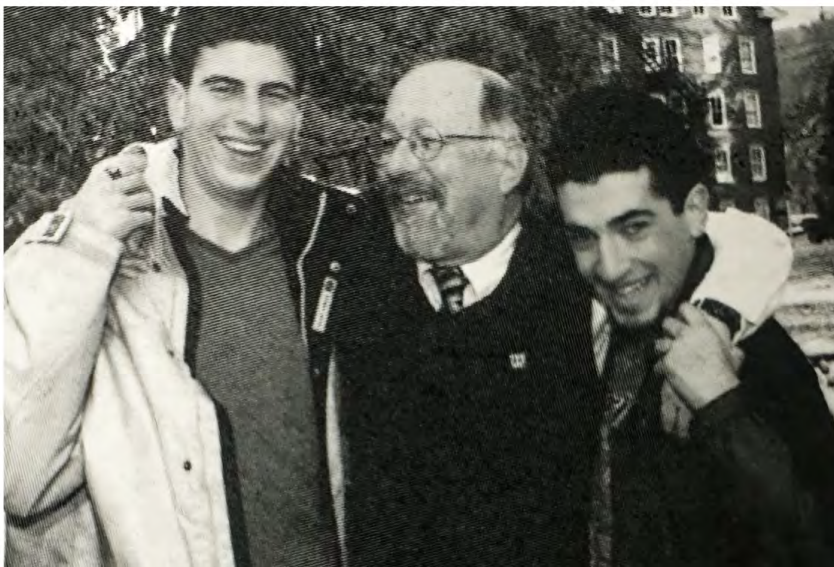
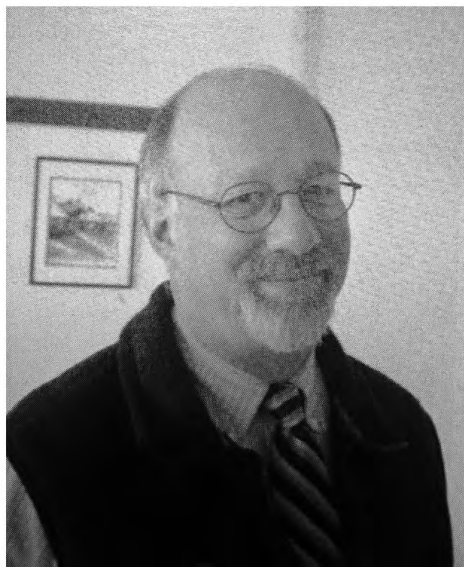
Colin had a passion for art and was an accomplished photographer, showcasing his work at a local gallery. His creative talents were matched by his dedication to helping others. As a volunteer, he rebuilt computers at the Re-Use Center, assembling them from donated parts. He also applied his skills as an attentive property manager, excelling in painting, carpentry, and landscaping.

Colin will be remembered for his gentle spirit, artistic eye, and the love he shared with family, friends, and the natural world.

## In Memoriam

# Richard "Rick" Brown

Former Trustee (2015-2019) and Faculty Member (1977 -1980, 2001-2010)



Rick's journey with Darrow spanned decades. He first served as a faculty member from 1977 to 1980 and returned to teach from 2001 to 2010, during which he played a pivotal role in strengthening Darrow's academic programs and fostering a supportive, inclusive environment. In the classroom, Rick's kindness, insight, and unwavering commitment inspired students to think deeply and act with purpose. From 2015 to 2019, he served as a trustee, providing thoughtful leadership and helping guide Darrow through pivotal moments, including strategic initiatives that continue to shape the school today.

Rick's life was marked by countless moments of connection and care. Joel Priest, former faculty spoke of his wise counsel during challenging times, noting how Rick's leadership steadied the school in moments of uncertainty. Joe Rozek credited him with life-changing guidance that shaped his academic path. Christian Masters '82 reflected on how Rick welcomed him into the Darrow fold, fostering a sense of belonging and later collaborating with him on the board.

His presence as a houseparent, alongside his wife Anita, was equally impactful. Nina Douglass '79 fondly remembered evenings of laughter and camaraderie watching SNL together, while Will McGreal, former faculty recounted Rick's generosity in introducing him to Darrow traditions and sharing his passion for music. Julia Emery '09 shared how Rick's patient guidance improved her writing, while Barbara Purington recalled his Chicago roots and their shared devotion to the Cubs.

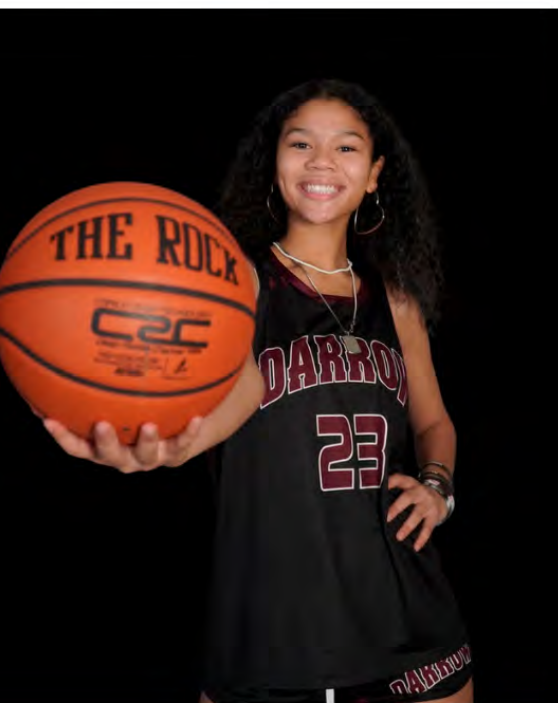
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**"Rick Brown returned to Darrow as College Counselor in 2001 when I came back as Head of School, with the same commitment and passion for Darrow. During our time together, he also served as Finance Director and Assistant Head of School. I could rely on him to take charge of complicated situations and to be good counsel for me, for faculty, students, and staff. He was level-headed, smart, and always had the best interest of the school in mind, along with a good sense of humor. Most of all, he was a friend." -Nancy Wolf Austin**

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Rick was deeply devoted to his family, which brought him immense joy and fulfillment. He is survived by his wife, Anita Loose-Brown, and their daughter, Althea, who carry forward his legacy of kindness and connection. Rick's wisdom, humility, and compassion were evident in every interaction. Whether he was teaching, mentoring, or offering thoughtful counsel as a trustee, Rick left an indelible mark on the Darrow community. He embodied the values of curiosity, care, and connection that define the school, shaping not only its present but also its vision for the future.

His spirit of kindness, dedication, and belief in the transformative power of education remains a guiding light. The Darrow community will forever celebrate the gift of his presence and the lasting inspiration he provided.



## *"The harder the conflict, the greater the triumph."*

At Darrow, our students learn to face challenges with resilience, creativity, and determination—in the classroom, on the field, and in life. This spirit of perseverance unites our community of alumni, friends, and families, who recently came together to overcome adversity with unwavering resolve. It's a testament to a simple truth: the lessons taught on the Mountainside extend far beyond its campus, inspiring a strength that endures through any challenge.

**Today, we move forward with renewed purpose and an ambitious vision for the future:**

- **Growing Enrollment:** Expanding to 150 students annually to build a vibrant, dynamic, and diverse community.
- **Investing in People and Place:** Supporting exceptional faculty and modernizing our facilities to provide an unparalleled learning environment.
- **Diversifying Revenue:** Creating innovative programs that ensure Darrow's mission thrives for generations to come.

Grounded in enduring Shaker values that have shaped countless lives, this plan is a commitment to ensuring Darrow remains a place where students turn challenges into opportunities and prepare to make meaningful contributions to the world.

**BE A PART OF THIS LEGACY. YOUR LEGACY.  
SUPPORT FOREVER DARROW TODAY.**

Your gift—whether through a donation, sharing your expertise, or simply spreading the word—will help bring this vision to life. Together, we can ensure Darrow continues to inspire generations of resilient, compassionate leaders.

**foreverDARROW**

**NOW ENROLLING**



**Know Someone Who'd Be a Great Fit for Darrow?**

Share your Darrow experience and encourage them to discover life on the Mountainside with an in-person campus visit! Contact: (518) 704-2760

**REUNION  
SAVE THE DATE**

**INTERESTED IN HELPING PLAN  
REUNION WEEKEND 2025?**

We'd love to have your input! Reach out to Sara Van Deusen at [vandeusens@darrowschool.org](mailto:vandeusens@darrowschool.org) or fill out the online contact form at [darrowschool.org](http://darrowschool.org).

We can't wait to see you and make this a Reunion Weekend to remember! Thank you for staving part of the Darrow story!



**June 6-8, 2025**

