



April 20, 2009

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Dear Friends in the BFS community:

I am writing to let you know about Michael Nill's plan to retire as Head of School at the end of the 2009-2010 academic year. This is sad news for us; our community holds much respect and affection for Michael and we will miss him. At the same time, there is much to celebrate, as Michael's capable leadership has brought the school to a place of great strength and purpose.

Michael has devoted enormous energy, creativity, determination, and intelligence to BFS during his nine years as Head. Under his leadership, the school has solidified its financial standing, increased enrollment, strengthened the Upper School program (including the addition of the International Baccalaureate), conducted a successful capital campaign, located a wonderful temporary space for the Upper School while continuing the search for a permanent addition to the school's physical facilities, enhanced our relationship with Downtown Brooklyn by adopting the Horizons program, and achieved separate incorporation while maintaining a meaningful spiritual connection with the Quaker community. Michael has done all of this by virtue of a profound love for our school, along with a commitment to its Quaker mission.

Thanks to Michael's leadership, BFS is poised to move forward on a number of important goals articulated in our strategic plan. By next year, for example, we plan to have secured new space to accommodate our growing student body. Above all, we will continue to nurture our students so they become lifelong learners, drawing on rigorous intellectual skills as well as their deepest values in guiding them towards lives of meaning and service. The incoming Head will join our school at a time of great positive momentum.

The most important responsibility of the Board of Trustees is the recruitment and selection of the Head of School, and we will make this our first priority to ensure a smooth transition. Of course, we have the great advantage of a talented and committed group of faculty and administrators who will provide essential continuity. As the process unfolds, we will keep you informed and involved.

In this, as in all things, we are united by our love for our school, and for the Quaker principles and practices that provide its foundation. I am filled with excitement as I look forward and imagine what we will create together for this next phase in the life of Brooklyn Friends School.

In warmest Friendship,

Alice Pope  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

Brooklyn Friends School  
375 Pearl Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
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## HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear Trustees, Parents, Students, Faculty, Alumni/ae and Friends:

After much deliberation, I have decided to retire from my life as a head of school at the end of the 2009-2010 academic year, which will mark my 15th year at Brooklyn Friends. This was not an easy decision to make: separating from an institution that has spoken so strongly to who I am will be painful.

When I first arrived as head of the middle school, it probably didn't even take a week for me to realize I loved this school. Being somewhat of a Platonist, I came with a strong belief that education had to have a moral dimension to it, and what was immediately clear to me is that this dimension was woven into the fabric of the institution in a way that I had never experienced before. It had a dual, interrelated mission: to develop knowledgeable and academically skillful students, at the same time ensuring that they had grappled with questions of how best to use the knowledge and skills they were learning.

Brooklyn Friends is also a place that has nurtured my leadership skills. I often find myself recalling one of the first alumni/ae reunions I attended as the head of school. Harold Vaughan, a history teacher at the school during the 1950s, was the honoree. He acknowledged that he had taught at a number of schools, but emphasized that his best teaching occurred at Brooklyn Friends because of the kind of place it is and the kind of mission it has. I feel very much the same. I do not believe I would have been as good a teacher or leader anywhere else. Certainly I could not have asked for a better community or better colleagues, and I am particularly grateful to the members of the board and administrative team for their unstinting support, loyalty, and dedication to the school's mission.

However difficult the decision, it is nonetheless the right one. For me, it's time to return to writing and research, and perhaps to some teaching and consulting. I would also hope to be in a position to develop my modest woodworking skills. As for the institution, I have aimed to build on its strengths of the past in shaping it to meet the future. It's now time for fresh leadership to build on that in bringing the school to a new level of excellence.

You can be assured that I will continue to work with the same level of dedication to my very last day to ensure that our children and our institution continue to thrive through the transition period. Work will also be continuing full speed ahead on our strategic goals, including the procurement of additional facilities. As always I remain very appreciative of all the support members of the community have extended to me over the years.

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With every best wish,

Michael Nill  
*Head of School*