

**BROOKLYN
FRIENDS
SCHOOL**

NEWSLETTER

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A Celebration of Community

TRUSTEE CONVOCATION HONORS LARRY WEISS AS 19TH HEAD OF SCHOOL

The November 9th Board of Trustees Convocation to welcome **Dr. Larry Weiss** as the 19th head of school was a celebration of Brooklyn Friends School and its enduring history, resilience, and deep sense of community.

Students, trustees, faculty, Quakers, alumni and friends came together to wish Larry well in his new undertaking and to share with each other the special qualities of a Brooklyn Friends education. For convocation speaker **Sara Horowitz '80**, one of those qualities was the gift of "self acceptance." She also recalled that as a BFS teacher in the 1970s, Larry had the ability to discern the exceptional in his students, and to encourage them to act to address an injustice.

Representing the student body, **Max Scherzer '11** said, "Each student at BFS is uniquely his or her own, but what makes us stand out is that we make other people's cares part of ourselves,

too. We understand that to move forward, it requires the whole group to move, too." Middle school students created a short film for Larry, to welcome him, tell him about their favorite things at BFS, and offer advice, such as changing ice cream days in the cafeteria from Fridays to Mondays. Preschool and lower school children created a scroll for their new head of school; it read "Welcome Dr. Larry Weiss," with each letter colorfully decorated by every class. Alumna and Preschool teacher **Claudia Lewis '88** reminded Larry of the strong athletic tradition at BFS, and on behalf of the students and faculty presented him with a varsity athletic jacket and two baby panther stuffed animals, the panther being our current school mascot.

Karen Robinson-Cloete, Co-chair of the Board of Trustees, set an embracing and inclusive tone for the convocation when she



Above, a welcome scroll for Dr. Larry Weiss; top, from left, Claudia Lewis '88, Karen Robinson-Cloete, Larry Weiss, Max Scherzer '11, Sara Horowitz '80.

recognized the many people, who, working together, help the school run successfully. Teachers, staff, parents, alumni and our Quaker Meeting each add a special dimension to the school community, Karen said. Describing our students as "BFS's gift to the world" and our new head as "a true champion

of the heart of our school," Brooklyn Friends, she stated confidently, "is more than ready for the next step in its history."

—Joan Martin



SEE MORE PHOTOS AND HIGHLIGHTS at www.brooklynfriends.org/larryweiss

We are a school that nurtures intellectual curiosity and exploration, we are a school that sees the inner light and gifts of every member, we are a school led by caring, talented and committed professionals in the classroom, in the offices, in the board room, and working at the cafeteria tables. We are a school that sees a world beyond the immediate – we see the challenges and problems and seek solutions and answers. We are a school that embraces diversity and difference in all its beauty – we are a community of gifts flowing, over flowing. —Karen Robinson-Cloete

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL DR. LARRY WEISS

Reflecting on my first four months as Head of School, my overwhelming lasting impression is one of the warmth, spontaneity and commitment of the student, faculty, staff, parent and alumni constituencies that make up our vibrant BFS community.



“The life of the mind is also accompanied by a thriving life of the heart and life of the spirit that inspire action and activism in the pursuit of non-violent solutions to problems.”

I am currently half-way through my individual meetings with the Class of 2011 seniors, and to a person the seniors remark on their sense of a truly supportive learning community as one of the distinctly positive characteristics of BFS.

The “life of the mind” thrives in such a community. In formal classroom instruction, afterschool electives, spontaneous and formal advisory sessions, extra-curricular activities, and informal exchanges one sees a concern for ideas, concepts, theories, solutions to problems, and artistic expression.

Permeating our environment from preschool to 12th grade is the type of deep connection and communication that arises from patient listening and thoughtful speaking.

This animated life of the mind is also accompanied by

a thriving “life of the heart” and “life of the spirit” that inspire action and activism in the pursuit of non-violent solutions to problems. Such efforts to create a better, friendlier environment in our own diverse microcosm represent a key component of preparing our students for lives of leadership and service in the wider world that awaits and challenges them.

We are a growing, dynamic learning community. In the fourth year of our Strategic Plan’s growth initiative, we will surpass a total enrollment of 700—an increase of 100 students from the date of the plan’s inception. As we grow to our target of 920 students, with an average of 60 students in a grade, the additional tuition revenue provided by such expansion enables BFS to expand its program options in academic, athletic and



Max Scherzer '11 welcoming Larry Weiss at the trustee convocation on Nov. 9.

extra-curricular areas, develop new courses and curricula, enhance support services, and improve existing facilities while building the new pre-school/lower school building required by the expansion.

Reaching this “critical mass” of enrollment will also provide the resources we need to sustain and expand the financial aid support that underpins our commitment to a truly diverse student body. Ensuring appropriate compensation for a superb faculty, including funds for professional development, will also always be contingent on a strong and reliable revenue base.

In the Strategic Plan’s introduction, its authors state that, “For Brooklyn Friends, the historic opportunity exists to build on its strengths and develop in a way that transcends the dreams of the past, while maintaining the essence of its mission as a Quaker independent school.” Achieving such a goal requires us all to mobilize and invest our energy, intelligence, resources, and spirit in the growth and development of BFS. It is my greatest pleasure and privilege to lead our response to this challenge.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry".



MEETING LARRY

All alums and friends of BFS are invited to join us at receptions to meet Larry Weiss in California, Boston, Washington DC, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Florida. Please contact Susan in the Alumni Office, alum@brooklynfriends.org, if you are interested in hosting or helping to plan a regional reception.

A WINNING TEAM

Kieran Newcomb '11 and Peter Prince

BFS mathematics teacher Peter Prince got into coaching because he had been a cross country and track star in high school and at the University of Kansas. "Being a student athlete at a major university was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," he said. Coaching others in a sport he dearly loved was a natural choice. Now in his fifth year at BFS, the last four as the Cross Country and Track Coach, Peter's passion hasn't waned.

The same year he became track coach, a happy coincidence came along in the form of **Kieran Newcomb**, BFS Class of 2011. Under Peter's tutelage in the finer points of training and strategy, Kieran has put BFS on the map in the city's independent school cross country and track leagues by winning numerous awards. He won the Mayor's Cup on Oct. 2 and was first in the NYC Independent Schools Championship on Oct. 25.

That Kieran is a runner serves as a perfect metaphor for the fact that most of his life has been spent on the move. Hailing from Chicago by way of his birthplace in Sydney, Australia, he started at BFS when his family moved to Brooklyn when he was in 6th grade. By 8th grade he had decided to join the cross country team because "I had done a couple of fun runs with my grandpa and had run a decently fast 5K in the summer before 8th grade."

Peter recalled that early on he knew Kieran was a gifted athlete and had already dedicated himself to working hard to



Above: Kieran at the New York State Federation Meet in the lead. Left: Coach Peter Prince

succeed as a runner. "It's really been about getting him to understand how to be a mature athlete, understanding when he should be pushing himself to the brink and when he needs to be sensible and protect his body," he said. Peter also taught Kieran the importance of a year-round training regimen beyond just hitting the pavement whenever possible. "He's gained an understanding of how we do different types of workouts at different times of the year so that he can be at his peak when it matters the most."

Peter stresses that one can't rely solely on one's natural talents – not even someone like Kieran. "There are thousands of high school students who are naturally gifted athletes," he said, "but the truly successful ones also have a terrific work ethic and dedication."

That's all well and good but Kieran isn't a full-time athlete, he's a full-time high school senior about to embark on adulthood, college

and career. Might his fierce dedication and competitive single-mindedness on the course be having an adverse effect on his academic and emotional well-being? Not at all, according to his teachers. "Kieran is thriving in his math and science classes," said his advisor Jenna Goodman. "He's also doing well in Spanish. He pushes himself to succeed on his own terms, and I have a lot of respect for that." She described him as a welcome presence, with a positive attitude and good humor.

Indeed, Kieran doesn't take kindly to anyone who mistakes serious athletes for stereotypical 'dumb jocks.' "When someone assumes something like that it's just ignorant," he said. "Most athletes I know are extremely smart and push themselves hard academically." And besides, he contends, "Most runners are math nerds who can convert distances and times in their heads on the spot while they're running."

Added Peter, "He's laid back in every circumstance in his life except for running. He's exceptionally aggressive in races. He really takes it to his competition and calls attention to himself, but this is the

opposite of his regular everyday personality. He's friendly and isn't necessarily eager to be the center of attention."

Kieran is humble when reflecting on the past three years. "Most of the success that I see is purely from hard work and a drive to do the best that I can," he said. "I think there must be at least 20 people in the Upper School with much more talent than I have. The only difference is that I run six times a week and they don't." How do his teammates react to his successes? Kieran insists they're a close-knit group, "so there are a lot of jokes made."

As he moves closer to graduation, college plans are inextricably linked to his dreams of becoming a professional athlete. "Ideally I could make a living off of running, but I'd have to get considerably better to be able to do that." He does plan to continue running in college, calling it "a pretty big factor" in the schools to which he's applying. "I'm really looking forward to being part of a team where there's a bunch of guys looking to run fast every day and pushing me."

—Jeffrey Stanley

AROUND THE SCHOOL

PRESCHOOL

This past summer, three Preschool teachers – **Orinthia Swindell**, **Vanessa Reynolds**, and **Claudia Lewis** – received a BFS professional development grant to create a “Resource Guide for Teachers Living in a Diverse World.” Creating this resource was an outgrowth of the teachers’ attendance at diversity and anti-racist conferences and their engagement in substantive conversations in the Undoing Racism Committee at BFS. As the teachers explain, “Research shows that young children are very aware of race, are conscious of how the world views race, and that early childhood is the best time to send the message that talking about these issues is not taboo. The most effective way to implement a multicultural, anti-racist, inclusive curriculum for the early childhood years is to weave it into the fabric of what we do everyday.”

The concept of global education is inherent in every BFS Preschool classroom. Music, books, art, and cooking from many cultures are prevalent. Parents visit and share their religious and cultural backgrounds, helping the children learn about the world around them. Family studies and self portraits lead to discussions about customs that are unique to each family. The students observe differences and similarities in skin, eye and hair color which, in many cases, lead to discussions about race and cultural similarities and differences. Dolls and puzzles that represent a wide range of cultures, not only in terms of race but of family structure and ability, are represented in the curriculum.

We are fortunate to have teachers and staff in our Preschool who represent a diverse collection of cultures,

racess, families, religions, political beliefs, life experiences and values and who recognize the importance of sharing this with the children. Students benefit from this diversity and the more we share ideas across the boundaries of the classroom, the richer the educational experience is for all of us. Teachers speak passionately about race and cultural education and are excited to share the approaches that they are using with one another. Some teachers have created units that address the topic of race, while others have materials in their classrooms that provide children with an inclusive view of the world. The summer grant that Claudia, Orinthia, and Vanessa worked on was an opportunity to compile all that is being done around race, difference, and inclusion into a central resource. It is a living document that will grow and change to reflect and serve the Brooklyn Friends Preschool through the years.

–Karen Luks
Head of Preschool

LOWER SCHOOL

“Let me show you my game!!” “Do you want to know how it works?” “Would you like to play the History of Tea or take a music trivia quiz?” shout fourth grade students when I walk into their classroom carrying the fourth grade electronic quiz board games. If enthusiasm and pride in newfound knowledge could be bottled, I’d have enough to “light-up” all of Brooklyn after interviewing fourth grade students, **Grace Franco**, **Tenzin Chusar**, **Emma DiNapoli**, and **Cailean Murphy** about the fourth grade electricity study.

“On the first day of Science



Above and at right, fourth graders enjoying their electricity curriculum in the science lab.

class, Megan (**Megan Gottlieb**, Science Teacher) gave us a battery, a light bulb, and two wires,” explained Grace. “She challenged us to figure out how to make the light bulb turn on. It was really hard at first, but then finally someone got it!”

Circuits are next. The students give names to what they have learned – open circuits do not work because electricity can’t flow; closed circuits do work because electricity can flow around an unbroken loop. Students learn about the difference between simple, series, and parallel circuits, and build examples of each. For homework, the students find examples of different circuits. Holiday lights are connected in a series circuit, as are lights in a light fixture or chandelier.

Back in the science lab, the children test a variety of materials to determine which materials conduct electricity and which are insulators. They build their own light switches using found objects in the lab.

The final project is to build a quiz board game. Students build a game that’s wired so that if the player answers the question correctly, the light bulb will turn on. A correct answer closes the circuit. An incorrect answer leaves the circuit open.

“It was hard work getting every single wire properly connected, but in the end we had the satisfaction of making a real game that actually works and is also fun!” concluded Emma.

– Jacquelyn Comdie
Head of Lower School



Science students examine cells under microscopes, sketch and talk together about comparing and contrasting the different types. English students discuss race and identity and make discoveries about themselves, and a softly playing cello piece is the backdrop for focused drawing in a visual arts class.

Mathematicians scour the halls with measuring tape, juggling balls and stop watches to gather data for an experiment on graphing lines and linear functions as applied to real life situations.

One hundred and seventy two students and 35 teachers sit in complete silence and listen as peers share reflections about family, identity and recognizing what's important.

With jazz music playing in the background, eighth graders saw, hammer, drill and sand creations from treasure boxes to model airplanes. Fifth grade Physical Education students end class with reddened cheeks buzzing about the new soccer unit, and 6th grade math students triumphantly play their first jazz piece together from start to finish.

Each middle school classroom has its own feel and the lessons vary in texture and style, but there are moments throughout each day where I get to witness learning taking place...where I see that quiet spark of recognition when students realize they get it... where I walk into a room buzzing with excitement because something amazing is about to happen, or where the focus is so intense that students barely see me enter the room. How wonderful it is to support teachers and learning in this environment where behind each classroom door is an opportunity to witness real magic.

—Martha Haakmat,
Head of Middle School

UPPER SCHOOL

Over the last several years, many Upper School students have traveled abroad during spring vacation, and this year is no exception. Approximately 35 students will participate in the sixth Upper School trip abroad – destination Spain.

The students and their teachers will begin in Madrid and complete the journey 13 days later in Barcelona. In between, the group will make stops in Toledo, Cordoba, Seville, Granada, Valencia and Figueras. They will review the rich and deep history of the Iberian Peninsula, visiting monuments to Cervantes, the Alhambra Palace and the Dali Museum.

Initiated and coordinated by history teacher **Dr. Jon DeGraff**, these spring break trips help prepare our students to become global citizens. Jon started the program after having traveled to Cuba with a student group when he taught at another school. “I wanted to bring the same idea to Brooklyn Friends,” he said. BFS travelers have since visited Brazil, Peru, Italy and Greece, Vietnam, and Morocco. The first trip started out with 16 students, the most recent 45. The establishment of an international trip endowment fund will open the experience to more students so that every Upper Schooler has the opportunity to participate in at least one trip.

As Jon said, “Providing students with these experiences gives them a different aspect to learning that they can’t possibly get by sitting in a classroom in Brooklyn. I want traveling to be accepted as an essential part of our education at BFS.”

Faculty member **Mark Buenzle**, who along with Jon has chaperoned each of the trips since 2006, explained that when deciding on a destination, the faculty try to “visit places that may be off the beaten path.” Seniors **Molly Altrueter** and **Staver Klitgaard** have

participated in the trips since their freshman year and will end their travels in Spain. As Staver reflected on her first trip, she remembers “the art and the cultural experiences, especially in Rome. I also loved Greece, learning about the culture, the everyday lifestyle.” During the trip to Greece, the students traveled to a small village to see the destruction of the olive groves after summer fires ravaged the countryside. BFS students were in the first coach bus that visited this small village near Olympia.

Molly described each trip as special, with the most meaningful experience being “the opportunity to walk through the streets and villages, seeing the culture, and meeting the people.”

Jon said that one of his many unforgettable travel experiences occurred in Peru, when the group did community service in a small village with little running water and only one school. “While we helped paint a schoolhouse, several BFS students played soccer with the Peruvian children, and the parents in the community joined with us, supporting the school and understanding its importance.”

Art teacher Mark said he remembered “many amazing experiences together – drumming in Brazil; watching the mist burn off to reveal the ruins at Machu Pichu, the hidden churches and hidden art tour of Rome, the Vietnamese cooking lesson, and riding camels in the Sahara.”

Both teachers are excited by the prospect of sharing new experiences and memories with students and faculty in Spain. As Jon said, “Travel is learning, seeing, hearing and laughing at something new. With every trip, there is a shot of rejuvenation, a new way to grow.”

—Roxanne Zazzaro,
Head of Upper School

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school life is humming along. My “newbie” status is happily waning, but I continue to be surprised by the level of scholarship and warmth in the halls and classrooms of this division.

Picture this... Eighth grade History students challenge each other to understand the nuances of the Emancipation Proclamation within its historical context. Sixth grade Ceramics students hum with activity while building busts, cutting slabs with straight lines and finding the shape of facial features in their work.

World Language students in grades five through eight sing, share stories and crisply answer questions in the target language with impressive precision. Seventh grade



Alum Profile:

Camilla Church Greene '60

by Jeffrey Stanley

“I remember being the only person of color. My hair was different. I remember a boy telling me I was dirty. I remember that I hated *Dick and Jane*. I remember the rule that we couldn't be unkind to each other, and that's what saved me.”

Surely to the surprise of many in the BFS community today, alumna **Camilla Church Greene '60** is describing her memories of Brooklyn Friends School. This is how she recalls being a kindergartner in 1947 when she entered as one of the school's first African-American students.

Today Camilla is an anti-racist leadership trainer for teachers, both as an independent consultant and with the Coalition of Essential Schools through the Center for Equitable and Effective Leadership. “There's a team of us across the country from diverse backgrounds; white, black, gay, straight, working

on our journeys toward equity together.” The group holds four-and-a-half day residential seminars for teachers across the country, coaching educators on how to better provide educational equity in the classroom.

Back in the day, Camilla's parents and grandparents both owned brownstones in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. “They always said we were the first African-American family in the neighborhood but since that time others have made the same claim so I'm not positive.” Still, it remains an oft-repeated family legend.

Why BFS? “My dad always said you get what you pay for, and public education was free...” she said. Her mother was familiar with Quakers and their work as abolitionists in the 19th century so they enrolled Camilla at Brooklyn Friends. “They always said the only thing parents owe their kids is a good education, so we

didn't take vacations to Europe like some of the other families. They spent their money paying for education.”

Still, the only other person of color she remembers that first year was the custodian, “and I didn't want to speak to him,” she admitted with a tinge of regret. “And he was so proud that I was there.” Other students of color and with varying nationalities soon entered her class, and African-American students enrolled in younger classes, but no other African-American ever joined her class. “**Sushi Goshal** was of Indian descent,” she recalled with a smile. “**Robert Hagopian** was Armenian. So we did have some diversity.” **Eloise Crowley**, a Quaker, became her best friend. “She didn't come along until 5th grade. And we're still good friends.”

Influential BFS teachers included **Ms. Fasick** and **Ms. Person**, both of whom taught English. We were reading *Winnie the Pooh* and I got totally engrossed.” She and her family would often meet with Ms. Person in Manhattan on weekends and go to museums together. **Miss Bennett**, the PE teacher, held bible study meetings in her apartment before school, and Camilla attended regularly. **Mr. Roach**, the French teacher, even got Camilla to sing during her years in the Lower School. He made the classic reader, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, into a musical. He even turned Camilla on to Gilbert & Sullivan for a time, a fact which now makes her blush and grin.

Never one to mince words, Camilla also harbors less pleasant memories, like those of her history class, which “just exuded white privilege,” she said. “None of the history had a thing to do with African-American history. It was all white history.” She doesn't place blame on the teacher but considers it a symptom of the school's culture at that

time. “They didn't know how to make me feel proud that I was African-American.”

Thankfully, Camilla's parents did know how, as one can see in their efforts at BFS and at home. Camilla recalls her mother proudly telling her, “You're a pioneer. You're blazing the way” at BFS. When *Dick and Jane* caused unhappiness, Camilla's mother gave her Marguerite De Angelis' *Bright April*. Published in 1946, it was the first children's book to address racial prejudice against African-Americans.

Her parents both worked full-time with the Kings County Court System, but they made time to be prominent in the Parent Teacher Club at BFS. Outside of BFS, her parents continued their families' deep connection to Concord Baptist Church, where her mother was choir director. Camilla was also a charter member of the Brooklyn Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, the oldest and largest African-American family organization in the United States.

During her last years in the Upper School Camilla had made up her mind to be a public school teacher. Family friends used to tell her parents that with all that money they'd spent on her education she'd better become a doctor, “but my parents were thrilled that I decided to become a teacher.” Camilla found applying for college to be a challenge. “I wanted to go to a historically black college, and Brooklyn Friends had no brochures for historically black colleges.” At graduation she remained the only African-American student in her class, “but many came after that.”

She attended Upsala College in New Jersey, where she majored in English and Secondary School Education. “I wanted to bring a Quaker style education to public schools,” she said of her

ideals. Why not just teach at a Quaker or other private school? “I think I was tired of the privilege and whiteness,” she said frankly. “I was told by my grandmother that the reason people of color weren’t doing well is that they didn’t know any better.”

Camilla was determined to do something. She earned master’s degrees from St. John’s University and Fairfield University in Educational Counseling and Special Education, and began her teaching career at J.H.S. 275 in Oceanville-Brownsville, Brooklyn. She married, began a family, and left teaching for seven years.

In all, she taught at nine public high schools in three states. “I saw all the faults in the system because of my Friends education,” she said. “Teachers had a problem with me because I didn’t tow the line.” She wouldn’t write hall passes for her students. Instead, “I crafted communities in the classroom so that your word is your bond. If a student broke his word to me, then we had a problem.” Camilla recalled her own similar BFS experience with the written and unwritten “honor system” in which students were trusted when teachers left the room: “I used to feel so empowered by that.” She also refused to make boys take their hats off in the classroom, much to her fellow teachers’ and her superiors’ chagrin. “I never saw the correlation between wearing a hat and your intelligence,” she said. “And I’d go into upper middle class white schools and lots of the boys were wearing hats and no one cared.”

Over the years she also worked in the progressive education movement in New York City as part of a reform movement to make high schools smaller. She was struck by the fact that in large schools, “even in the most affluent white

“There’s a team of us across the country from diverse backgrounds; white, black, gay, straight, working on our journeys toward equity together.”

high schools, the students were bored out of their gourds.”

In the early 1990s, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, an outgrowth of the Coalition of Essential Schools, was formed at Brown University. Camilla was among the first group of 25 teachers who began the work that crafted what are now known as Critical Friends Groups. They are a professional development tool in which small groups of teachers gather regularly to learn and share in a collaborative environment. “It’s a process by which teachers have courageous conversations with each other,” says Camilla. In groups she has led, teachers would regularly bring in the work of their most engaged students to spark conversation, but she suggests using the work of teachers’ least engaged students. “The point is for teachers to ask themselves,

‘how do I as a white educator engage my Latino boys in learning math?’”

In time, she and other CFG facilitators and trainers began to feel that the real issue at the heart of their work was race, that student achievement was tied to questions like, “How do I bring my beliefs or repressed emotions about children who do not look like me into the classroom?” Feeling that the Annenberg Institute was “still pretty white” in its aims, they broke away and focused their CFG work on issues of race and “working and trying to build alliances across difference.”

Camilla is retired from the classroom, but not retired from her mission. Camilla and Tom’s son Robert works in marketing in Canada and their daughter Kelli is in finance in the pharmaceutical industry. Camilla and Tom now live with

their daughter and grandson in Allentown, PA. When Kelli became a single mother by choice at the age of 30, it was a family decision to become an inter-generational household. “My husband and I agreed to be her support system,” explained Camilla, adding, “It’s wonderful.”

Soon Camilla and Kelli were attending public meetings held by a group trying to start a charter school in the area. “My daughter and I both started becoming active, so I started making my voice known,” she said. “I was responsible for their decision to make the school K through 12 instead of just K through 8.” Today she is on the board of trustees. The school, Seven Generations Charter School, is in Emmaus, PA, “which is a white, upper middle class, conservative Republican community,” said Camilla in her usual outspoken way. “It has been met with tremendous animosity.” Still, the fledgling school is thriving and its future looks bright.

In all of her work over the years Camilla points out that she runs Quaker

“LET US BE COURAGEOUS...”

THE PATH TO ENROLLING OUR FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS was filled with nuance, both at BFS and in the world around us. Prior to 1940 and as early as 1916, BFS had enrolled other students of color, students who actively experienced discrimination in our country. It was not until 1945, however, that BFS enrolled its first African-American student.

In 1940, Douglas G. Grafflin, BFS Principal since 1937, addressed the Board of Trustees, and made the first known request that BFS enroll African-American students. Grafflin noted that only five independent schools in Manhattan and Brooklyn – out of 65 – had any African-American students. A Quaker, Grafflin was 29 years old when he wrote, “The time is ripe for taking another forward step by establishing the general principles of procedure under which the Friendly testimony concerning the brotherhood of men may be expressed through our Friends School.”

Grafflin left BFS in 1942, but he laid important groundwork for our next principal, Warren Cochran. Principal Cochran attended the 1944 Friends Council on Education Conference titled “How Can Friends Schools Develop A Wider Racial Policy?” It took another year, but our first African-American student enrolled in the kindergarten in September of 1945. In hindsight, one can sense that BFS stumbled and was imperfect. Treading this new ground could not have been easy for our school or for our African-American students and families.

Grafflin closed his 1940 address with these words “Finally, if we believe that we are right, let us be courageous – courage is as often rewarded as caution and more often brings with it the satisfactions of real accomplishment.” BFS was learning and, like all institutions, we are still learning today and we continue to strive to be courageous today. –Susan Price ‘86

Alum Profile

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inspired, consensus-based meetings. What's so wrong with voting? "Democracy is winner-take-all," she said. "With consensus we have to let everyone weigh in, and try to tailor our proposals so that everyone has ownership of what moves forward." She begins meetings with a few minutes of silence, a tool she used in the classroom as a high school teacher. "A lot of people have to grow into that," she conceded. "It's a space that you create so people can enter in. There is no silence in a public high school! The kids loved it." In her spare time as a retiree of sorts she's a voracious reader. "Right now I'm reading *The Warmth of Other Suns*, a new book about the African-American migration," she said. "It's bigger than the Gold Rush, bigger than the expansion west, and it's been mostly ignored."

Her advice to the current generation of decidedly more diverse BFS students? "Embrace the humanity, learn to think from multiple perspectives. Take advantage of the diversity around you."

As she's gotten older, Camilla says she thinks more and more about her days at Brooklyn Friends. She attended her 50th class reunion and an alum dinner in Philadelphia, and opened a Facebook account to keep in touch with classmates. "The humanitarian aspect of Quakerism is huge in terms of making learning possible," she said. "It is a safe environment." She remembered learning the Bible quotation once during Quaker meeting, *Be still and know that I am God*. "My mother was a church organist and there I learned the quote, *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord*, so I was always conflicted." Which won out? "For me, the stillness. But then there are times..."

ALUMNI/AE CLASS NOTES

by Susan Price '86

1940s

Congratulations to **Henry Altman '40** and his beautiful wife Mary! The happy couple celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this summer, returning to NYC to The Pierre where they honeymooned in 1950.

Niel Isbrandtsen Rising '43 reports that her eight grandchildren are all married, she has eight great-grandchildren (but two more on the way) and she was about to take a sea voyage to the Baltics, ending in Russia, with cabin-mate **Josie Secretan Taylor '45**.

From **Dick Frost '47**: "My wife, Barbara, and I are well. We celebrated my 80th birthday with friends at a lovely restaurant overlooking Cazenovia Lake. I am working on an article on the impact of railroads on the Pueblo Indians in the late 19th Century. I continue to write editors and congressmen, especially Senator Tom Udall, on our many national needs for reform – a tough road, but not hopeless. There has been progress!"

Marilyn Cornell Dupre '49 writes, "I am pleased to announce that I am now a great-grandmother! My granddaughter Jennifer and her husband Josh brought Miles Reed into the world on Feb. 11, 2010. They live in Los Angeles – so getting to know him will not be easy being on the east coast – but I got to meet him in June in Cape May, NJ when they flew out for a wedding. Of course he is perfect!"

1950s

Bob Bruce '52 sends warm regards to all. Bob retired from a very successful career in graphic design a few years ago, and even judged the **Type**

Directors Club Annual Awards, just one of many highlights in his career.

Marcia McVicar Polenz '55 writes, "I am always proud of having attended Brooklyn Friends School. I'm still working at Strasser Construction as a receptionist and loving it."

Judy Candib Larkin '57 sends her best, adding, "Still teaching after all these years." Judy is a Professor of Psychology at Canisius College in Buffalo.

1960s

Anna Dunwell '61, a registered Yoga instructor, has her own yoga studio, Soul Sanctuary, in the Boston area. Additionally, this fall she began teaching yoga to 9th graders at a local high school through Kripalu's Institute for Extraordinary Living. She is now helping implement the yoga portion of a multi-year research grant through the Department of Integrative Medicine at Boston Medical Center.

Ray Braverman '64 writes, "After 40 years of teaching history, being department chair and Advanced Placement Coordinator I retired this year."

Judith Falk Cohen '66 is a featured contributor on *Growers and Nomads*, an interior design and home improvement website. Some of Judy's recent articles have been on sustainable fabrics and salvaged objects, like an airplane wing transformed into a desk.

Former editor of *The Life* **Steve Wermiel '68** and Seth Stern received excellent reviews for their newly published book *Justice Brennan: Liberal Champion*. *The New York Times Book Review* wrote that it "provides the most comprehensive and well-



Stephen Wermiel '68 with his book about Supreme Court Justice William Brennan. BFS was thrilled that Stephen visited with the Upper School recently to discuss constitutional law, Justice Brennan, and the Supreme Court.

organized look at the legendary liberal jurist to date" and an independent reviewer states it is "an exemplary biography of an exceptionally influential jurist."

1970s

Joe Ritter '75 is back in Europe. He finished a 5-month artistic residency in Iceland, discovered a photographic technique of shooting through hand-dyed silk that has an effect of painting and photography combined, and photographed the Stotz Ballet in Berlin for a "backstage" museum exhibit. A remake of *The Toxic Avenger* may be on the horizon (Joe wrote the original screenplay).

Mark Perkiss '77 writes, "I've moved on from New Jersey state government and am now the communications manager for the New Jersey Association for Justice, an advocacy group for trial lawyers."

Kevin Jeffrey '77 was appointed Brooklyn Borough Commissioner for the NYC Department of Parks. Kevin has been with the Parks Department and related non-profits for 31 years. Brooklyn thanks you, Kevin!

Dabney Miller-Melia '79 writes, "I want to send a sincere

and warm hello to all my former classmates – some of whom I have touched base with on Facebook. Hoping everyone is well and would love to hear from anyone! Living in Dublin, Ireland, now since 1989 and find this a lovely city. It's much like the five boroughs now with good emigration during the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom. I am working in a local hospital emergency department as a Physician's Assistant. The influence of Brooklyn Friends and its 'ethos' have proved invaluable in my life and especially now working with patients and their families on a daily basis. I have two teen-age girls and on occasion, taking time out for 'morning meeting' on my own before work has kept me calm when facing them later. Sending felicitations to **Mr. Norregaard**, **Mr. Moore**, **Mrs. Duncalfe** and **Mr. Begelman** – all teachers who I know are retired but made deep impressions on me as a student."

1980s

News of the Mulder Family: **Brad Mulder '83**, his wife Marisa and six-year old son, Nicholas, recently spent the weekend in Washington DC with his brother **Steve Mulder '83** and his two children, Madeline (eleven years old) and Michael (eight years old). Steve is a lobbyist in DC and his children attend the Capitol

Hill Day School. **Todd Mulder '81**, and his wife, Jody, are doing well in Boston. Todd is a director with Restaurant Associates and Jody is a professor of dance with her own modern dance company. **Nicholas** is in first grade at BFS and is enjoying his class with Jill and Hannah. Brad served two years on the School Affairs Committee and joined the BFS Board of Trustees this fall. Marisa is a partner at the law firm of Holland & Knight LLP. Brad is the Managing Clerk with the law firm of Hunton & Williams LLP.

"We recently hosted an small party at our apartment in Brooklyn Heights with **Larry Weiss** to introduce him to some parents on a small scale," said Brad. "Despite the fact that a tornado roared through Brooklyn shortly before the start of the party – which was supposed to held outside on the roof deck – the party was quickly moved inside and was a success!"

Films by directors **Ari Taub '83** and **Tony Torn '83** were a great double-feature at Brooklyn's IndieScreen this summer and received good reviews: Ari's *Last Letters from Monte Rosa*, and Tony's *Lucky Days*.

1990s

Kudos to **Dr. Yndia Lorick-Wilmot '95**. Yndia's book *Creating Black Caribbean*

Identity was published this summer.

Congratulations to **Daphne Saget Woodley '96**. Daphne and her husband Stafford Woodley Jr. welcomed their son, Stafford A. Woodley III, to the world this summer. Daphne says "He is an absolute joy."

2000s

Edson Elcock '03 finished a successful soccer season with the Richmond Kickers, scoring five goals during the season, and a sixth in the USL Championships this summer!

Chad Levy '03 just completed his second marathon for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Keep running, Chad, you're doing wonderful work.

Former Faculty

Johnny Cusato and his wife Emma welcomed their son Jimmy into the world this summer. Congratulations!

Jack Ramey sends his best to all. A busy retiree, Jack volunteers at a local hospital. He also directs music at his church, a community chorus, and an instrumental ensemble. He'd love to hear from his BFS students (contact Susan in the Alumni Office for more info).

In Memoriam

Ann Waldenburg Steinacher '34
Lois Whittier Pickard '36
Arnold Oshin '42
Stephen "Peter" Valentine III '43
Joan Whitney Gillespie '48
John Howard '48
Patricia Doblin Bienfait '49
Candace Ramsey Crawford (teacher of music, 1951-52)

Please send your class notes to Susan Price '86, alum@brooklynfriends.org or 718-852-1029 x208.

UPCOMING ALUM EVENTS

JANUARY 4, 2011

Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Young Alums Day for the Classes of 2007–2010.

Alums from the Classes of 2007 to 2010 are invited to join the Upper School for Lunch at 11 a.m., meet with our junior and senior classes to discuss the college process and experience, and spend the day visiting with teachers and friends.

FEBRUARY 9, 2011

Wednesday, 8:00 a.m.

Estate Planning Seminar with Richard Cutler '62

Alum and BFS Trustee Richard Cutler will present estate planning concepts in easy-to-understand terms. Topics may include federal estate and gift taxes, wills and living trusts.

APRIL 29, 2011

Friday, 6:00 p.m.

BFS Spring Gala

Celebrate BFS with our annual auction, dinner and dancing in one of the most beautiful locations in NYC.

Location: Stage 6 at Steiner Studios in the Brooklyn Navy Yard

JUNE 4, 2011

Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Alumni/ae Day Honoring Martin Norregaard

Celebrating former teacher and present Trustee **Martin Norregaard** for his amazing 50 years with Brooklyn Friends School. Please join us at 11 a.m for a visit to the old school building, followed by Meeting for Worship at Brooklyn Meeting at Noon. The Awards Luncheon honoring Martin Norregaard is at 1 p.m., and tours of our present campus and alum basketball will begin at 3:00 p.m.

Connect with BFS ON THE INTERNET

facebook

LinkedIn

Brooklyn Friends School alums have a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, and our BFS website. Please visit us often. Let's connect and get together online. The BFS website has a secure online directory, which you can join or update; more than 60 Alum Profiles of BFS graduates; archival photographs; contemporary photos; and information about BFS Alum Events, which are held throughout the year.

brooklynfriends.org/alumni

Profile in Giving

Susan J. Bridges

by Jeffrey Stanley

Susan J. Bridges' reasons for being a consistent donor to BFS are typical on the surface. Her son, **Charles Leeds III**, is a lifer who graduated BFS in 2010.

"Charlie needed a school where he had the freedom to move around," she said. "All his teachers, all the way through Upper School, provided that for him. It's been amazing to me how much diversity the school can hold while still helping the individual child blossom."

By the time Charlie graduated he had played on the school's basketball team, softball team, had become involved in theater and had decided on his own to enter the IB diploma program.

Aside from her son receiving an excellent education, there are other reasons why Susan stands out as a unique donor in the BFS community. The explanation requires a bit of history. Susan started off in elementary school dreaming of becoming a paleontologist. By high school she had shifted her dream to archaeology. It was an almost entirely male-dominated field but she was never one to take no for an answer. Susan went on to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania, which is where she met her husband, Charles Leeds, Jr. She then went to Yale and earned her Ph.D. Her dissertation topic was the Social and Economic History of the Ancient Near East. Her research focused on an ancient archive of cuneiform documents housed at Yale. "They were the records of a big corporation," she explained. "I was trying to learn what had happened on a large agricultural estate that the government had formed to protect the area from brigands."



Alum parent Susan J. Bridges, photographed on the BFS rooftop playground, named in memory of her husband, Charles Leeds, Jr.

She was able to track three generations of a single family over a 50-year period at this ancient farming collective, which dated to around 2150 BC. "I knew this site had to be somewhere in what is now southeastern Iraq," she said, pointing out that a few years ago a scholar confirmed her beliefs when she located the estate near the ancient Sumerian city of Lagash.

Upon completion of her doctorate, Susan said there were literally three jobs in the world for which she was qualified, "and there were five of us." Rather than vie for an impossible position, she took an unexpected leap. By that time Charles, now her husband, was a successful analyst on Wall Street. She observed almost daily what he did for a living and concluded, *I could do that*. She worked at several different firms, earning an MBA at New York University's night school along the way. "I ended up analyzing bonds and equities for about 15 years."

In 1992, Susan and her husband had their first child, Charlie, and two years later a daughter, Susannah. Susan

then promptly retired; that is, she retired from Wall Street, but she didn't stop following her passions. "I brought up my children and studied *feng shui* and became a polarity practitioner."

"*Feng shui* is the art of understanding how energy moves through a space and using that understanding to help people have a more harmonious relationship with their environment," she said. "It dates to the Chinese emperors."

A polarity practitioner uses a body of knowledge from a variety of sources, including osteopathy and Chinese and Hindu medicine, to improve the flow of energy in the body.

Between *feng shui* and polarity Susan ran several successful businesses throughout the 1990s. Then, as with so many others, 9/11 occurred and scarred her family in unusual ways. They lived 100 yards away from the World Trade Center at Battery Park City. That tragic morning, she had dropped her kids off at school and started for home when the attacks began. She hurriedly made her way on

foot back to BFS. "As I was walking back into the school a parent offered us a place to stay," she recounted. "They were so wonderful at BFS. They also gave me access to an office phone and told me to sit as long as I needed to make calls. I didn't know what had happened to my husband, to our nanny." She finally learned that they had been evacuated to New Jersey and that they were both safe.

Like so many New Yorkers in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, especially those living in Lower Manhattan, Susan and her family began dealing with the emotional trauma of that day even though physically they were all fine. The experience was especially hard on the kids. Two months later while they were literally still waiting for the dust from Ground Zero to finish settling, she and her husband decided to get the children away from it all and take an impromptu November trip to Florida. "We weathered 9/11, but then my husband died of a massive heart attack while on a Disney cruise... It took us a number of years to find our way again."

Susan credits the school with giving much-needed additional support to her son, and to her, from that day forward. "Every fall was tough for Charlie, and the teachers were so supportive," she said. Ever since her husband's death, she's been busy helping her children and managing the family's investment business. "So I'm back involved in finance again after ten years out."

Today, even now that her son is a new graduate, Susan remains a generous supporter of the school. Our rooftop playground is named after her husband, and she has donated generously to the International Trip Fund, which enables less-affluent students to participate in foreign travel experiences at the school. "I give to the school because I want to give back," she said.

Announcements & ACHIEVEMENTS

■ The BFS Upper School has received the 2010 “Blackboard Award” as the outstanding independent high school in New York City. Blackboard Awards were established by Manhattan Media 10 years ago, with New York University, New School University, and Fordham Law School among the awards’ sponsors. Honoring excellence in education, the awards pay tribute to the city’s top early education, elementary, middle and high schools, both public and private. Upper School Head **Roxanne Zazzaro** represented the school at a Nov. 1 awards ceremony hosted by WNYC radio host Brian Lehrer. In accepting the award, she acknowledged “the BFS students, faculty and staff whose hard work, dedication, and commitment to the highest standards demonstrate the very best in education today.”



Roxanne Zazzaro

■ The 17-member BFS Model UN team spent the weekend of Nov. 12 at a conference at Brown University. Two students were awarded for their outstanding work: **Conor Heins '11** (right) earned Honorable Mention in a U.S. Senate simulation, and **Abraham Axler '13** was awarded Best Delegate in the 1993 Oslo Peace Process Simulation. Conor and his senior classmate, **Ben Waldman**, are the club’s leaders.

■ Brooklyn Friends School received the top prize, and four sixth grade students were awarded individual prizes in the international **Minimus Mythology Competition**, based in Salisbury, England. BFS received the highest number of prizes of any school in the contest, which asked students to creatively interpret the stories of Romulus and Remus and the Trojan Horse. **Sophie Edelman**, **Benjamin Francis**, **Caila French**, and **Hildagard Gabel**, all in **Marie-Christine Perry’s** Latin class, received individual awards for their submissions.

■ Brooklyn Friends middle and upper school students continue to distinguish themselves in the annual **National Latin Exams**, which are given to 150,000 students in all 50 states and 14 countries worldwide. **Conor Heins** received a Gold Medal and Summa Cum Laude award in Latin III Poetry. Also receiving a Gold Medal and Summa Cum Laude honors was **Raphael Tenazas Norman** for Latin I. **Lisa Frost** and **Spencer Morenko** won Magna Cum Laude honors for Latin II. In the Latin I exam, **Anton Sack** and **Anna Emy** received Silver medals and Maxima Cum Laude awards, **Sarah Murray** a Magna Cum Laude award, and **Elinor Hills** and **Tyler Clarke**



Conor Heins '11

Cum Laude honors.

Current 8th graders scored particularly well in the Introduction to Latin Exam. **Lia Eisenstadt** and **Maya Kaul** received a perfect score, and along with the following students merited a purple ribbon and Outstanding Achievement Certificate: **Aidan Palermo**, **Fiona Sharp**, **Thomas Chamberlain**, **Lily Carruthers**, **Patrick McConnell**, **Giovanna Molina**, **Hallie Wolff**, **Madeline Dulchin**, **Rachel Honigman**, **Airenakhue Omoragbon**, and **Aoife Henchy**. Receiving Achievement Certificates were **Eloise Seda**, **Audrey Mack-Westby**, **Patricia Stortz**, **Adam Wells**, **Charles Shulman**, **Louisa Grenham**, and **Kariesha Martinez**.

■ *Faculty Kudos*: Middle School Head **Martha Haakmat** has co-authored an article, “Independent School Leadership, A Gendered Experience” with Susan Feibelman of Packer, published in the Fall 2010 issue of *Independent School* magazine, the official publication of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Technology Integrator **Cordenia Paige** co-facilitated a professional development workshop on technology at the Friends Council of Education

in Philadelphia on Nov. 12. Athletic Director **David Gardella** received a citation for his volunteerism from the Liga Sabatina baseball and little league sports programs based in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

■ Health teacher **Valerie Alston** received a \$10,000 prize, a personal meeting with finance guru Suze Orman, and a VIP weekend in New York City in Avon’s Money makeover Contest. An Avon representative for the past two years, Valerie made a 90-second video explaining that she started selling Avon products to help her son pay for college and to buy herself a new set of hearing aids. She also talked about the ways in which Avon has changed her life – all in American Sign Language with her own voice-over. Read more on the BFS website: www.brooklynfriends.org/valarie.



Valerie Alston



DO YOU HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?

Send an e-mail to info@brooklynfriends.org



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GIRLS SOCCER Blue Pride Is Back

The BFS Girls Varsity Soccer team completed a recordbreaking season this year; most wins in a season, most goals scored in a season, least goals conceded in a season. The team finished 5-5-1, with the biggest win a 6-1 game against UNIS. Most are attributing the team's turnaround to BFS' new soccer coach, PE teacher **Gary Lawson**.

Gary is a newcomer to New York City, moving here with his wife this summer from England where, he points out, they call it football. Previously he worked as a coach at several programs in New Jersey. To call him passionate about soccer is an understatement.

"I have coached football for more than 12 years," he said. "When I knew I wasn't going to make it as a professional player I decided to take coaching more seriously." When he interviewed with **David Gardella** and learned about the school's record at soccer, "I was determined to do everything I could to develop the team and grow the program."

Success takes more than a good coach. I was very fortunate to have assistant coach **Tim**



LEFT TO RIGHT: Soccer players Molly Altreuter, Zoe Babian, Madeleyn Valenzuela and Victoria Lagano. TOP: Coach Gary Lawson

Gagnay '06 and the players I had this season," Gary said. He attributes their success to the team's talent, drive and spirit of collaboration. Time and again he saw them "working hard together on the pitch, motivating each other to attend the practices and games, and showing great determination to come back and win after some heavy defeats."

His coaching philosophy centers on what he calls power and pace, "attributes that can be devastating in combination, especially at high school soccer. At times we had to play to our strengths and if we couldn't be the most skillful team, we would certainly let our opponents know they would have to win the physical battle to beat us."

Is it all about brawn and athletic prowess? What about brains? Gary is rankled by the "dumb jock" stereotype that seems so prevalent in American schools. "I think it is a myth. There are a number of studies suggesting that physically fit students do better academically." Furthermore, he adds, "There is a cause-and-effect link between lower fitness and reduced academic performance."

Gary also refuses to point out any *star players*. "The premise is to play as a team," he points out. "Eleven players work together on the field, and although one or two players can influence a game, they couldn't win it on their own. You win and lose as a team."

Dare the BFS community hope that this recordbreaking season is the start of a new trend in girls soccer at the school? Gary isn't one for bravado, and plays his cards close to his chest. "For next season, our preparation is going to be key." He points out, however, that for the first time anybody can recall, the girls remain fired up and are already making plans for pre-season training next year.

"It's an exciting time to be around the girls soccer team," he said. "I hope the incoming ninth graders realize we have a developing program and that BFS is a great place to play school sports. This is just the beginning."

—Jeffrey Stanley



FOR MORE ABOUT BFS SPORTS, TEAMS, AND SCHEDULES go to www.brooklynfriends.org/athletics