

FALL 2023

HOO SAC



HOOSAC TODAY

FALL 2023



ABOUT THE COVER...

The walls of Gipson Hall are up!
Pictured left to right in the skeleton of the new academic building are Angerame Architects Leonard G. Angerame and James R. Glenn with AOW Contractor and Hoosac Trustee Craig Kennedy and Headmaster Dean Foster.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR HEADMASTER

Dean Foster

Greetings from the Valley of the Owl!

As always, the beginning of a new year is an exciting time. It is full of expectation, promise, and even some nervousness, especially for those new to Hoosac. On September 10th we started classes with another record enrollment of 227 students, many of them arriving on campus for the first time since their interview.

The transition to life at boarding school can be daunting. Fortunately, the continuum that exists between returning students and new students is one of amazing similarity. Each Hoosac student has a very similar experience when they arrive on campus. This similarity goes back decades, some might say generations.

Yes, times change and so do the ways in which human interactions happen. Now students may find their friend groups through WhatsApp and Snapmaps, but at the end of the day, it is the connectedness that every student feels with the school and one another that allows everyone to make bonds that will last a lifetime.

As I read through this issue and all about all the fantastic alums, many of whom were Prefects at Hoosac during my tenure as a teacher and administrator, I am struck by the similarities that I see with the student leaders of today. The dedication to the position and the reverence they take in ensuring that they live up to the expectations of the title is truly inspiring. As you read, take a moment to remember your time at Hoosac and what it meant to be part of such a special earnest community.

Lastly, I encourage you to register for our upcoming All School Reunion. We already have a good number of alumni signed up, but our goal is to make this the biggest reunion ever! Just scan the QR code and you will be brought to the registration page. The band is booked, the tent is reserved, now all we need is your confirmation. Yes, you absolutely can stay on campus, but if you want dibs on Towne Hall you need to register right away. I look forward to seeing June 14, 15 & 16th!

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Hoosac's Prefectural System

Every superhero has an origin story. The prefectural system is quite old, with early mention of it first occurring in Europe around the 1300s. A system designed to designate a certain level of authority to a few carefully selected upperclassmen in order to aid faculty in their running of the school. Apart from the more recent inclusion of young women, the system has changed very little in the past 600 years.

At Hoosac, prefects have been utilized for student leadership since near the founding of the school. In the 1950s Letter from the School Rector that appeared in that year's Owl publication, Rev. Meredith B. Wood suggested an increase in the responsibilities carried by the school's prefects, "Leadership on the part of Prefects... has shown increasing effectiveness."

During the Father Wood years, prefects were elected to Council each year, one from each form and each dorm had a dormitory prefect. Today, the prefect tapping occurs each spring and prefects have responsibilities much like their predecessors, including helping with lunch and dormitory duties and assisting individual students as needed.

Ms. Jill (Sarmanian) Larson graduated from Hoosac in 1991 and found the experience of being a prefect helped her develop skills she uses today running a business.

"Before I went to Hoosac, I was lost in a large public high school and my home life was a mess. Hoosac gave me the structure, the routine,

and the attention that I desperately needed. I thrived in the Hoosac community immediately and was chosen as a Prefect at the end of my Sophomore year. I was given so many responsibilities such as assigning everyone's dining room table seating arrangements and their work jobs for two years. I also conducted attendance and check my fellow students in at night. This was not easy because they often complained or made requests for exceptions. I was making so many decisions that impacted others. I wanted to be liked and to be respected and to do a good job at being a leader. My life is almost the same now. I own a small business with fifteen employees. It's my job to keep the team working together for the greater good of our community, our team, and our clients. I need to problem solve and make unique decisions every day, just as I did at Hoosac. It has been a great pleasure to teach and pass on what I've learned to the current Prefects and my Positive Solutions for Success life coaching clients. Thanks to Hoosac for giving me the opportunity to let my leadership skills strengthen and develop with experience that guides me everywhere I go personally and professionally."

Marbie (Parshall) Tarburton '88 is still showcasing the leadership skills she learned as a prefect at Hoosac, today serving on the school's Board of Trustees.

"Before attending Hoosac, I was shy and found myself with many acquaintances and fewer close friends. Anywhere else, I would never have run for student government. I wasn't confident enough to try. At Hoosac I didn't have to run. I'm not sure if it's still done this way, but students had to rate everyone on a 1-5 scale in a bunch of categories, eliminating the popularity contest that seems to happen in other schools. It was such an honor to be nominated by my peers. It still makes me smile. Being a Junior Prefect was the first step in boosting my overall confidence. To be picked as a Senior Prefect was an entirely different honor.

Looking back, I didn't particularly like sitting next to the Headmaster at dinner or making announcements from the podium, but I sat a little taller and grew more comfortable speaking in front of large groups."

This past spring, Dave Bliss Senior Prefect from the class of 1954 visited campus and met with 2023 Senior Prefects Leahokoe Tserane and Zihao Zeng. See their stories in the coming pages and look for other leadership stories throughout this issue of *Hoosac Today*.



At the start of September, Jill Larson '91 led a leadership workshop for incoming prefects. Said Jill: "They learned leadership and wellness skills that will last a lifetime!"

David Bliss '54 and former Hoosac Senior Prefect visited Hoosac during Prize Week and shared many delightful stories about his time during the transition from old to new campus. David was happy to see the Prefect Boards reconditioned and placed back along the Tibbits grand staircase. Advancement Director Sherri Klein invited the current senior prefects to write a letter to Hoosac's former prefects and Leahakoe Tserane '23 took the opportunity. David was particularly impressed with Leahakoe's letter. "That young lady is going somewhere. She is a very talented writer," he said.

During breakfast visit last spring hosted by the Delaney House in North Hoosick, David shared stories about his mentor Father Meredith B. Wood, who was rector at the school for many years. "We were a class following on the heels of the second great war, so for this or other reasons, many of the boys lacked a father figure at home. They looked up to Father Wood as that father figure and many of us sought guidance from him long after leaving Hoosac."

A Blissful Visit

The Father Meredith B. Wood Foundation scholarship was the idea of David's classmates, John Pulsifer '54 and Keith Adams '54. "Both Keith and John have passed away, but Gerry Guild '55 and I drove up to Portland to visit John in his hospital room before he died. We visited him for probably an hour and he was holding court because he had many of his former employees who were also visiting him. After the employees left, he got down to the Meredith B. Wood Foundation and passed the torch, so to speak. Pulsifer said, Guild, you're the numbers guy; you handle the money. Bliss, you're the guy who writes, so you do the promotion. So Gerry and I took over from Keith and John."

David recalled the long hikes around the Owl Spring south of Hoosick and many fond memories of adventures shared with his fellow classmates. He was one of only a handful of students to be selected to sleep in the then-new dormitory at Tibbits Hall and was the last jester to appear in the Boar's Head and Yule Log pageant at old campus.

Following Hoosac, David attended Brown University, majoring in American Literature, though he joked, "I have a confession; I actually prefer British Lit." He went on to sell books for Odyssey Press Inc. in New York city. He later found himself in Advertising for news publications, and then soon found himself learning the intricacies of clock and stringed instrument repairs.

Today he is enjoying his retirement and concluded his trip north with a visit to see his brother Malcolm, a Hoosac graduate of the class of 1957. We look forward to seeing David and his family at next year's reunion. It will mark 70 years for David and his class!



David poses with Henrique Leite Guimaraes '24, recipient of this year's Father Meredith B. Wood Foundation scholarship.



David Bliss, Senior Prefect in 1954, poses for a photo with this year's senior prefects, Leahakoe Tserane and Zihao Zeng



**Lehakoe
Tserane
'23
Senior Prefect**

The appointment as the female Senior Prefect has indeed been an honor. Leading the student body in various ways has taught me a lot about teamwork, creative thinking, and responsibility. I have learned that there is no blanket method to solving issues that are brought to my attention, and working with an incredible group of people (the prefects) has been rewarding. This position has helped me become a better individual because of my commitment to leading by example. The activities I have participated in have encouraged other students to pursue similar, if not the same.

Dedicating my time to building relationships with my peers has helped them feel comfortable to seek counsel with me when dealing with anything. This role has boosted my emotional intelligence and helped me connect with diverse characters in our school community. The various dress-down days for charity have been a key component of teamwork between the prefects and me. Now, no role comes with all positive lights. There have been times when I have had to use my judgment to condemn my peers, and such confrontations have been bittersweet.

The partnership with my Senior Prefect, Patrick Zeng, has helped me in times of decision-making. I have enjoyed creating the perfect steward duties for lunch and formal dinners, and knowing that my fair duty list has pleased my prefects has been rewarding. I have cherished being a shoulder to cry on, a motivational coach, and an advice giver to the students of Hoosac. My role has pushed me to become a person of candor, integrity, and kindness, and such qualities I hope will pass through to future Hoosac prefects.



As a dedicated member of the Hoosac School, I always have a strong sense of group honor and prioritize the interests of the team by sacrificing some of my personal convenience for the common benefits of the whole group. Moreover, I also have a strong sense of responsibility and organizing ability. Whenever the masses need me, I will come forward all the time and make some corresponding actions.

I often helped with the class management for my teachers and the activities organizations for my classmates, which, in the meantime, brought me a sense of honor and contribution and equipped me with sufficient skills and a positive attitude.

Every time I encounter an emergency situation, I will calm my mind down and then try to figure out appropriate solutions as soon as possible with the ability to distinguish right from wrong, rather than being anxious, which is meaningless as far as I am concerned. Whenever there is a conflict, I will buffer it fairly and equitably, never favor anyone. As an international student, I love to get along with various students from the world by sharing my culture, and try my best to encourage them when they have problems. For example, I used to introduce some Chinese traditional festivals to my friends, such as the Spring Festival, which is the Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival, in which we usually gather all family members together. So I can help new international students to interact better with each other and fit in our academic and social atmosphere faster.

**Zihao
(Patrick)
Zeng '23
Senior Prefect**



Sofia
Gurgel '21

Future Neuroscientist

Sofia Gurgel '21 has wanted to be a doctor since she was a young girl. “The idea of helping others as a profession has always been fascinating to me.” While at Hoosac, she demonstrated the necessary leadership, empathy, and compassion; the underpinnings of a good physician in her role as a prefect.

In the spirit of Be Hoosac, Sofia has always been vigilant about caring for others. “I always loved helping others. I was involved in volunteer work when I lived in Brazil and am still volunteering now in college,” she said. “The idea of being able to help and care for others as a profession was something that I’ve always seen myself doing.”

Sofia said her curiosity about the science behind physiology also drives her. And physician parents play their part, too. “Growing up in a home with both of my parents who are physicians express daily their passion for the field and often hear from people how they were not only great doctors, but also extremely caring people that made a difference in so many people’s lives - it motivated me to follow their path. I have never considered any other career.”

Hoosac provided the kind of opportunities to prepare Sofia for her role in the medical world. “I was a Senior Prefect during my last year of Hoosac and the experience as well as the responsibilities that came with the role really helped me prepare myself for the leadership tasks that come with being in the medical field.”

Following graduation from Hoosac, Sofia began her journey toward a degree in Neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh Honors College. There she has focused on the differences between healthcare systems in various parts of the world. “I’ve been immersing myself in learning about how medicine is practiced differently around the world. This interest of mine actually started when I was at Hoosac as I was immersed in such a diverse student body with people from all over

volunteering in a cancer center, editing for an undergraduate research journal, working as a medical assistant, working as a teaching assistant for multiple classes, and mentoring students that want to do research.” She has also volunteered with organizations from around the world including in Guatemala and Vietnam, lead a Brazilian Student Organization, has contributed to scientific papers, published a book with her sister, fellow Hoosac



THE IDEA OF BEING ABLE TO HELP AND CARE FOR OTHERS AS A PROFESSION WAS SOMETHING THAT I’VE ALWAYS SEEN MYSELF DOING.

the world. I was always very curious and would often ask my peers about how medicine was practiced in their countries and their answers motivated me to pursue activities related to global health in order to learn more about it now that I’m in college.”

“I’m now a rising Junior at Pitt and I’m majoring in Neuroscience with two minors, one in chemistry and one in sociology,” said Sofia. “Over the last two years, I have been doing research in neuropsychiatry,

graduate, Cecilia Gurgel, and she developed a medical app, and started a non-Governmental Organization (NGO).

Already studying for her Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), Sofia hopes to enroll in medical school in the fall of 2025. For now, she had this to say to her fellow alumni, “Although the Antonians never won a cup while I was at Hoosac, I still believe we are the best team!”



Home Away from Home

Hashani
Perkins
'97

Dr. Hashani Perkins, MD '97, grew up in Jamaica with parents who knew an American education would have its advantages. “They knew we would have a better opportunity to get into college.” At the end of Fourth Form, Hashani recognized the value of ending his high school career at boarding school. “I realized I could be better challenged by academics.” He said the rural environment eliminated distractions and proved helpful. “I found a similar trend in my life that I tend to do better academically when I’m in a more rural environment. Hoosac was good for me and offered all that. It was a quiet place where you could study. And for the first time in my

life, I could do well in school work and academics; I ended up on the honor roll which was a new experience for me.”

Hoosac represented an enormous change for Hashani. Though he was born in New York, he had lived his entire life in Jamaica. “It was my first time away from home; talk about culture shock. To this day, I think if I hear the word northeaster, I shudder.”

The experience, however, brought with it enormous independence and a sense of accomplishment. “I think the first time I was on the honor roll, I felt like I could achieve something.” And as a lifelong soccer fan, Hoosac gave him the opportunity to play on both the JV and Varsity teams.

“Some of the goals scored are some of my happiest memories. To this day, those achievements - to feel a part of something like that - was to feel at home away from home,” Hashani reflected.

As far as role models, Hashani took his cues from Coach Mike Ryan and Headmaster Dean Foster. “The two of them were integral in helping me understand what it meant to build relationships with people. You don’t know how the people that you interact with can affect your tomorrow... Or more aptly your dinner. When your table gets served last, it’s not cool. It behooves you to play nice in life; You treat people right and you tend to eat first.”

myself was hard for me.” It was Hashani’s mother who suggested he attend community college. “That seemed easy enough,” he said. “And the rest is history.”

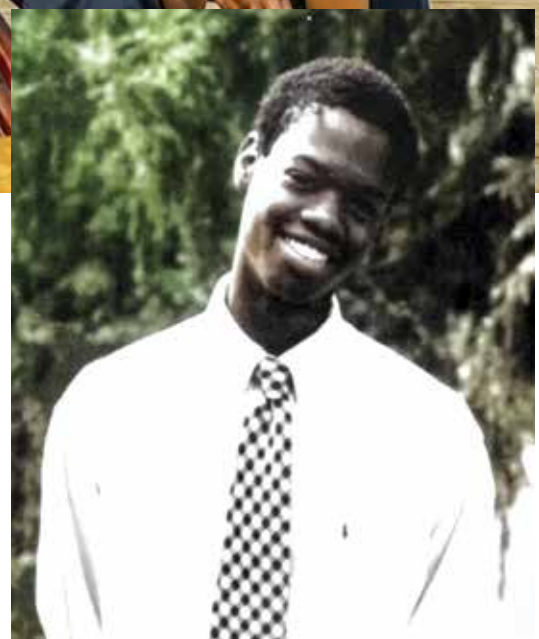
After attending a small community college in southern Virginia, Hashani finished with a BA from a small four-year college. “In the mountains, which was good for me,” Hashani laughed. “Again, I think I like mountains.”

Hashani’s life began to get busy. “I ended up at the University of Tennessee in Memphis where I got my medical degree. I finished there and did a year of



Even while at Hoosac, Hashani knew he wanted to go into medicine. He said positive role models in medicine, including an aunt who practiced obstetrics in New York, kept that dream alive in his mind.

After Hoosac, Hashani attended Drexel University, where he realized the school and class sizes were just too big. “There’s where I think I went wrong. I think I should have found a smaller school in a smaller area. I left Drexel and joined the US Air Force and then moved back to Virginia and spent some time there; took some time to figure myself out. I knew I wanted to be a doctor, but how to get there. I knew I could do it academically, but disciplining





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residency in general surgery in Tampa,” he said. “I got married my first week of medical school, my first son was born in the following year, and I had one year in medical school before my third son came along at Christmas break of residency. General surgery residency is no cakewalk and to have a pregnant wife at home was no mean feat.”

He eventually left general surgery training and started at a community health center in Panama City doing primary care. “There I realized I really like primary care. I did a lot of moonlighting, a lot of urgent care work.” But the location wasn’t ideal for the growing family. “Panama city isn’t near anything and most of my wife’s family is in south Florida and we were a bit isolated.”

A new move brought with it the opportunity to put down roots. “I took another job where I worked for the next six months in the Villages, a retirement community - I think America comes to retire in the Villages,” said Hashani. “There I became pretty good at primary care. They offered me an opportunity to open a clinic here in Tampa.”

Hashani said his time as a prefect while at Hoosac helped him develop integrity. “I learned about being personally responsible and not seeking to pawn off your actions on others.” He said that his happiest moments come when he can help others in his own practice. “It’s always great when you get it right and sometimes it’s as simple as I’m able to help this person. I’ve had a couple of times that I got a call and came up with a diagnosis that ended up saving someone’s life... or they need an antibiotic and it’s five o’clock on a Friday. That’s a sacred honor to be able to do that. Not everyone can do it. And that’s always a cool moment whenever I have that ability to alleviate that pain or that suffering or that discomfort.”

As far as advice for current students, Hashani said know your crowd. “There are points in time when you can either go with the crowd or make your own waves. I truly believe that to best practice medicine you should make your own waves. Medicine is full of opinions. If medicine were a perfect science we’d practice all the same way, giving the same drugs to all the

same people. But that’s not reality. Reality is way more messy and because of that, you have to know how to make a decision and to stick to it,” he explained. “And the biggest place where you start to make decisions that matter is in your friends and the people you hang out with. If you find that you’re selective in your crowd, you’ll be selective in your decision-making. You’ll be more courageous, less likely to make a decision because of how someone else feels. Especially in medicine. There are two people who matter; myself as the one making the decision and, most importantly, the patient. So my decision should be as pure as possible. Meaning that if my colleague over here says



this is how I do it, I should look to see what his results are, but I shouldn’t do it just because he does it. When I look back at my time at Hoosac, friend selection and standing up for things are what mattered.”

Reflecting back on his life so far, Hashani said his mother deserves a lion’s share of the credit in his success thus far. “It was a huge sacrifice for my mother to send me to Hoosac. While it wasn’t a linear path, I often believe that I overcame as much as I have to make it where I am today because of the sacrifices she made. Those sacrifices contributed to my achievements today.”



Hoosac Tennis

a new rising star on campus

Under the direction of Coach Virginia Gilroy, Hoosac’s tennis team is proving a new rising star sport on campus, with end-of-season results placing both the boys and girls team top in New England.

Playing for Division B at the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) Tournament this spring, the tough competition brought out an impressive display of talents among multiple players.

“It was better than expected,” said Virginia. “This year, the league president wrote to me and told me the B Division was actually stronger than the A Division, which we found was true. So the boys were the winners of the B Division even though it was the strongest one, and the girls were runner-up in the A Division. Again, playing the best teams in NEPSAC. That was the first time for Hoosac and it was an amazing result for us.”

Virginia was asked when was the moment she realized the team

was solid. “For the boys, it was when we beat Brunswick, a school that always had great results against us and is in the A Division. When they came to us, we beat them at home by the score of 5-2.” At Hoosac, we help kids improve their Universal Tennis Rating (UTR). Virginia said our teams started out with high UTRs. “The expectation was that we would end up at the playoffs. And we did. We beat Groton, Nobles, and Roxbury Farms in the finals, the one team that had not lost in the last three years. It was fantastic.” Among the students who stood out for Virginia was Carlos Calabuig Patino. He had missed much of the season due to injury but came back at the end to solidify his place on the team. “Even when we were in Florida, he attempted to play, but had to stop. Yet, he kept working; kept being present with the team, he was my captain this year. When we needed him for the playoffs, he stepped up and said he would play. I advised against it, concerned he would suffer a re-injury. However, he insisted, ‘No, no, I want to play,’ and he

did. And the two matches that he won were the deciding matches that gave Hoosac the win by 4-3. It was amazing.”

Another stand-out was Lucca Dos Santos Nesi. “Lucas had amazing matches,” said Virginia. “He was always a fighter; every single match throughout the season and during the playoffs.”

Lorenzo Biava showed similar determination, according to Virginia. “When he needed to do his job, he did. It was quite a team.”

The girls team was just as impactful. Virginia couldn’t contain her enthusiasm, “On the girls side, no question, my MVP was Marta Gonzalez Sevilla. She won every single match during the season plus the tournaments we played in Florida. She was amazing as our co-captain and whenever called upon.”

Claudia Calabuig Patino proved herself as Team Captain: “She stepped up and won doubles when we needed it the most. She was a natural leader.

Additionally, Gabrielle Brideau showed the most improvement from the start of the season. Same with Alissa Ushiro. I’m counting on these four girls, who are coming back to build a very, very strong team again for next year. I have very high expectations for both teams.”

Part of the team’s success is the dedication demonstrated by Virginia, who, along with her partner Patricia, offer the team an opportunity to travel to Florida during Spring Break each year for additional training. “We make them work a little more,” Virginia laughed. “Marta Gonzalez Sevilla did so well in Florida. The tournaments there were quite strong. When Marta won the whole thing in an open tournament, competing against adults, I knew we had a good team.”

“We go to Florida and look for UTR and USTA tournaments which will improve their numbers.” These numbers, said Virginia, are hugely impactful for colleges looking for players. “It’s very important for coaches; it’s how we talk to coaches. It’s one of the first questions; what is a kid’s UTR?”

Higher UTRs mean greater exposure for those students seeking scholarships in support of their post-grad academic career.

“Tennis is a great vehicle for students looking at college,” explained Virginia. “All the tennis team is going to college with good academic and tennis scholarships. So tennis was really good for them. I was really happy about that.”

Virginia speaks from experience. She began playing tennis in Brazil at just eight years old. In High School, she traveled to the United States as an exchange student. “I lived with a family in Cape Cod for 6 months. When I arrived, I beat the number one girl at the high school. My results attracted the attention of the college I ended up attending. I received a full tuition scholarship,” she said. “Now, when I talk to parents about how important high school tennis can be, I speak from experience. It completely changed my life. There’s no question it opened doors for me.”

Virginia went on to earn a psychology degree while playing and coaching tennis on the side. “I have enough life experience and I have my feet on the ground,” she said when asked whether the degree in psychology

has proven useful in coaching. “I think there is a side of me that is grounded, very real, and when I see a kid who has potential and I’m very real about how much potential he or she has, I can help them. So I think my psychology degree has been helpful. I’ve been dealing with kids and parents and dreamers all my life. I try to bring those dreams into reality.”

HOOSAC ALLOWS ME FREEDOM AS A COACH TO DEVELOP A STRONG TENNIS PROGRAM THAT WORKS TO BUILD NOT JUST STRONGER PLAYERS BUT BETTER VERSIONS OF THEMSELVES.



With the success of Hoosac’s tennis team highlights some potential areas of improvement to existing facilities.

“In the near future, I hope to see covered courts,” said Virginia. “Not only could it benefit our own kids, but it could also produce an outside income. Besides that, we would be able to hold the NEPSAC tournament on our home courts.”

Of her experience at Hoosac, Virginia says the freedom to develop the program has benefited students most. “Hoosac allows me freedom as a coach to develop a strong tennis program that works to build not just stronger players but better versions of themselves.”




Selin
Oncul
'19

The Long Road Ahead

Selin Oncul '19 didn't start out knowing she wanted to study medicine. She discovered her passion for the subject while still at Hoosac School. "Hoosac landed me the unique opportunity to study a variety of subjects in great depth and explore my passion," she said. "The AP Biology and Human Systems courses I took proved to me my interest in exploring the most complex machinery on earth: the human body. Hoosac was the perfect environment for my curious nature to thrive."

Currently at King's College of London where she has four more years of teaching ahead of graduation, where she said it was this curiosity that has allowed her to thrive in the field of medicine and research, Selin said the dynamic nature of medicine continues to interest her: "The ever-expanding amount of understanding regarding the ways by which human body operates and its sheer complexity meant that one needs to have immense thirst for knowledge to be able to excel in this field."

Additionally, Selin found the philosophical aspect of medicine



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appealing. “What is death?” she said she began asking herself even while still at Hoosac. “Was it the separation of soul and body or the death of brain that ended one’s life?”

These profound questions and more left her pursuing a path in medicine. “My educational journey has been a very long one. In 2022, I graduated from King’s College London studying Biomedical Sciences and received an honors degree. I then took the MCAT equivalent of the medical school entry exam in the UK, called UCAT. Following a very long and emotionally draining application and interview process, I was offered a place at the King’s College London Medical School.” It was no small feat; the school is one of the top 10 medical schools in the world. “I completed my first year of my medical school with a distinction award.”

Ultimately Selin hopes to end up back in the United States practicing medicine. “It’s the country which I feel that I owe because of the abundant opportunities it provided to my fifteen-

year-old self.” She said there are still a lot of unknowns ahead of her. “Where I will end up continues to scare me, however one thing I know is that I will give it my best effort to pass the necessary exams and practice in the United States.”

A senior prefect while at Hoosac, Selin said she learned leadership skills that benefit her to this day. “Being in a culturally diverse environment with different moral values and perceptions comes with various challenges. One of which is the fear of being judged while sharing your opinion,” she said. “At times like this, I encouraged my peers to speak their minds and contribute to our discussions. I developed a very basic yet the most vital skill of all: Listening more than I spoke and weighing up my ideas before I formed an answer. It is now clear to me that for a team to operate with harmony, all team members should feel heard. This is a fundamental lesson that I continue to remind myself of in any setting, including my professional and social life.”



Teruki
Watanabe
'09

Solving the Puzzle

Dr. Teruki Watanabe, PhD '09 was still in Tokyo, Japan when he learned about Hoosac School. He knew only that it was in New York. “In my mind New York was New York City; the Statue of Liberty, Empire State building, and all that. So when I first came here there was nothing and my first impression was that I was robbed.”

The change proved rewarding. “My parents had a vacation house in a rural part of Japan and I enjoyed spending time there. It felt like I was on vacation, except that I couldn’t speak the language,” Teruki laughed. He said between conversational English and help from his fellow classmates, he quickly adapted to the language and life at Hoosac.

“In Japan back then, you hung out with your class only, but at Hoosac all the students hang out as your peers, so that was a good culture shock. Another nice thing about Hoosac is that everyone was willing to help out.” Prior to Hoosac, Teruki’s parents sent him to live with a family in Martha’s Vineyard for three months for an English language immersion. He said it helped, but that Hoosac students provided the best foundation for everyday English. “They teach you English, some slang, some idioms; the day-to-day language. I loved that aspect; that I wasn’t the only ESL student. There were a lot of Korean and Chinese students back then. Many students with different backgrounds.”

Prior to Hoosac, Teruki was used to his classes being decided for him. At Hoosac, he had the freedom to choose his coursework path. “I really liked that you could take any classes you want. You’re designing your own schedule,” he said. “I struggled at first because I was so used to someone giving me the schedule, but now I was choosing, so that was challenging but interesting at the same time.”

“I did a lot of reflection while at Hoosac,” said Teruki. “My senior year I had an ah-ha moment where I was processing information and even dreaming in English and that concept wasn’t strange to me, but I realized I was now bilingual.”

He said there were many people who left a lasting impression on him. “Mr. Lomuscio and Mr. Buttenheim (my dorm parent at Cannon), who treated me like one of his sons. That was really nice. In terms of students, Steven Zylinski; I’m still friends with him. He and I roomed together in college. He felt like a brother to me.”

As for the Hoosac dress code, it was nothing new to the former student from Tokyo. “I was used to that aspect. It was nice; I didn’t have to think about what I was going to wear that day.”

The sports offerings at Hoosac were another new and exciting opportunity for Teruki. “You could choose any sports that you want to play without even trying out. I wanted to play every sport except for one. I wanted to play tennis in the spring, but Mr. Ryan told me that because I’m from Japan, I must be good at baseball, so I was recruited to play baseball for him. Unfortunately for him, I had never played baseball in Japan,” he laughed. Still, Teruki said Coach Ryan left an impression: “Baseball became one of my favorite sports.”

While at Hoosac, Teruki thought he might pursue a career



Dr. Watanabe at an ACS conference in 2019 less than a year before he received his PhD in chemistry.



Dr. Watanabe with his wife, Jacqueline Marie Watanabe.

in music until he took a chemistry class with Ms. Stultz during 9th Form. "I think that was a turning point. I really liked the subject." Another class in physical chemistry later that year confirmed his passion for the subject. At Prize Day, Teruki was the recipient of the Book Award for Physics. And following Hoosac: "I ended up becoming a chemistry major in college."

Following Hoosac, Teruki discovered college classes were far different in terms of pace. "I debated at first not focusing on chemistry and instead focusing on music, but I ended up double majoring in chemistry and music and got by the first year. The second year I took organic chemistry and that really was a moment when I realized I loved that subject, so I stuck with the chemistry major. And music became more difficult at that time with music theory, so I dumped the minor." The increase in chemistry labs meant less time for music, and so Teruki doubled down on his focus.

"I joined an undergrad research group in a lab and spent one school year learning what I could do in the lab with mentorship and started cultivating my skills as a scientist," he said. "My fourth year, I spent all my time researching. At that time I knew I wanted to pursue a PhD in chemistry. My senior year in college, every senior has to give this department seminar on literature that's been published within the year. I really cared about it and wanted to do well. I did very well. And after, one of the department chairs invited me into his office and he asked me what I was planning for the summer and following year. I planned to teach at the undergraduate lab, then figure it out. He told me I should pursue an advanced degree at the University of Vermont because they saw potential in me. That was really nice, so I accepted the offer and started my graduate program at UVM."

Teruki's PhD defense came right at the start of the COVID-19 lockdown. "I had invited 75 people to my defense, only 25 could actually attend, and by the morning of my defense they said no one could attend

except the PhD committee. Still 10 people showed up." Teruki got creative, "I streamed the defense on Twitch. That was before Zoom, so it was kind of fun."

For Teruki, organic chemistry comes naturally. "It feels like a problem-solving game; like a logic puzzle. You add A and B and it becomes C, but sometimes it becomes a variant of C and to find out why was exciting to me. It's going backwards to solve why this component does this or that. Very abstract concept, but something by which I'm very intrigued."

Following his PhD, Teruki took a job at a lab in Delaware for projects relating to pharmaceuticals. "I was conversing with a medicinal chemist. That really clicked with me. I realized it didn't have to end with chemistry, but could help people in need. I moved out to Boston, the hub for pharmaceuticals. I've started doing more oncology and drug development there."

Teruki said his time as a Senior Prefect was a boost to his confidence. "It definitely helped me with leadership; I started projecting my voice more. Speaking out in front of everybody helped give me confidence in my language skills and leadership."

Reflecting on his time at Hoosac and what it means to truly BE HOOSAC, Teruki said it's a phrase that to him means being unique. Don't be bound by where you are from or your background. Who you are is who you are regardless of where you're from. I am from Japan, but that's not all who I am. I am all this."

The impact of the Boar's Head and Yule Log pageant remains with Teruki to this day. "My wife always makes fun of me because I love Christmas music so much. All the students hated it and I pretended to hate it, but I loved it. I loved playing Good King Wenceslas my senior year. I loved the music and the costumes."

Dr. Teruki Watanabe today resides in Boston and is a scientist with Ikena Oncology, where he works to improve the efficacy and potency of drugs that target cancer cells.



Tina
White
'96

Tina (Vaccarella) White '96 said a career in medicine "fell into [her] lap."

"I was going to a local college at the time and went on an interview at a private office for extra money and I fell in love with all aspects of medicine," she said.

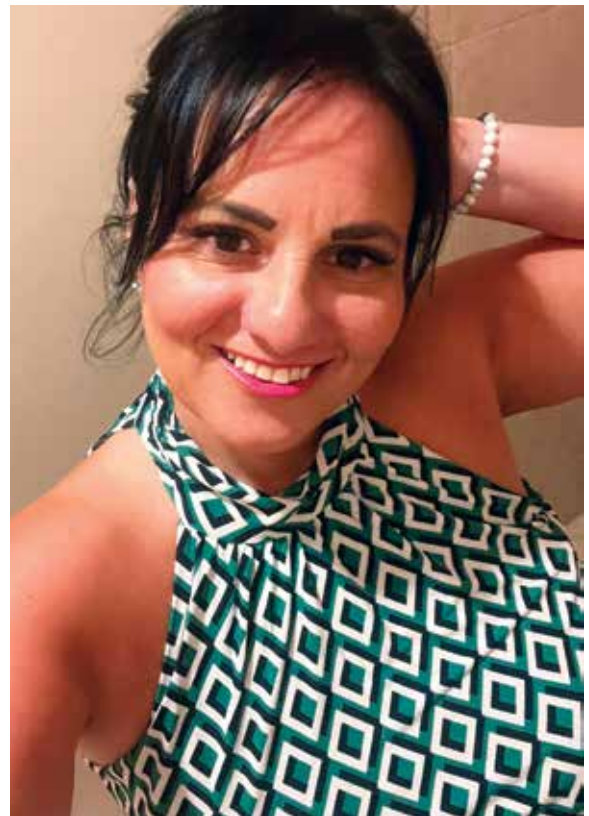
Tina credits Hoosac for preparing her for a leadership role outside of school. "I was given several leadership roles at Hoosac as well as several opportunities for public speaking and connecting with others at school fairs being given the opportunity to represent our school. I was given the honor of being the first student interviewed in an admissions video my senior year to talk about how much Hoosac had truly changed my life."

Tina said she didn't necessarily know she would go into healthcare while at Hoosac, but she did know one thing for sure: "I loved to help people. I was given that opportunity at school in several aspects. There were younger students who came to me for advice and guidance especially as a prefect which was really awesome considering I'm the baby of my family. Hoosac gave me the opportunity to mature and grow in so many ways. I loved having the freedom to grow but the smaller school setting which allowed us to become a family at school."

The 1996 graduate who now works in hospital administration, called her Hoosac experience a blessing and said, "I am forever grateful for all the opportunities I was given and will always have a tremendous love for this school and all the people I've had the pleasure of interacting with over the years."

While she enjoys her job, she finds that sometimes she must act as a buffer between an archaic healthcare system and the patients. "The hardest part for internal medicine is how much red tape there is. People still think that they should be able to get the tests or medications they need no matter what and are very angry or disappointed when I tell them they require prior authorization. They don't realize that can take several days or not at all. I wish it wasn't that way but no matter how much I wish, it's just not working. The insurance companies are allowed to make decisions themselves based on several factors and can hinder patient care." On the bright side, Tina said she also finds people appreciate her willingness to help. "I also get to call several patients a day with results and some of them are so grateful when they hear me on the other side."

When asked what she would tell her younger self through the lens of her experiences so far, she said, "Remember your worth and value in life and don't let others' opinions waiver what you think of yourself."



Dr. Kendell Munzer, PhD '92 was struggling with learning disabilities while in middle school. After being sent to Eagle Hill in Greenwich, CT, she began school at the highly recommended Hoosac School in New York.

“Hoosac for me was an easy transition from Eagle Hill,” said Kendell. “It felt like home almost immediately and the sense of family that you got from all the teachers and students was familiar. The faculty at Hoosac were approachable and receptive; many inviting us into their homes making us feel like we were truly a family. Being away from home so young, during a time in our lives when we were all so impressionable, these connections and attachments with both the adults and our friends was crucial.”

Following Hoosac, Kendell pursued a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice from Curry College and relocated to San Diego, CA. “I really didn’t have a tremendous amount of direction, and was mostly just having fun. After a few years out there I decided it was time to figure out what direction I wanted my career to go in. I had always been really interested in psychology and counseling, so I moved back to New York and went back to school to get my Masters,” she said. Kendall earned her M.A in Counseling from Mercy College in 2002.

“It was during the time that I also met my husband. It took me two years to get my degree,” said Kendell. Following school she landed a job as a behavioral specialist working with the mentally ill and disabled. “I had over 90 clients under me, both children and adults, in seven different group homes. It was my responsibility to write all their behavior plans, run trainings for the staff, work with the parents. Although the work was very challenging it was incredibly rewarding.”

While working as a behavioral specialist, Kendell also became a mother to two boys, Hayden and Owen. “When they were around five and nine, and after years of working at this job, and living in NY, we decided we wanted a change,” explained Kendell. “We made the decision to move south, to an area just outside of Charleston, SC. I also decided during this time that I wanted more time with my boys, so I started working in their schools.”

The change also renewed Kendell’s desire to return to school. She set her sights on a Doctorate in psychology which she completed in 2020 at the Professional School of Psychology. . “I am fascinated by human behavior and love learning and uncovering the processes of the mind. Since psychology is a broad and ever changing field, I wanted to be on the cutting edge of that. My doctorate took me two and a half years to complete, and when I finished I went on to write and publish a book on psychology with two of my classmates. After this I



*Kendell
Munzer '92*

decided to relax for a bit, so I am doing just that by spending time with my kids, helping out with the family business and deciding what my next move will be in my career.”

As far as advice for students who might be struggling, Kendell had this to say: “Struggle isn’t always a bad thing, especially if you use it as an impetus for change. Often times it’s a signal, and serves as a benchmark for where you are and where we need to grow and learn. High School is such a short time in your life, but the foundation it lays is invaluable. It’s a great time to develop and evolve as a person, and a good time to begin to figure out how you want to leave your mark on the world.”

In addition to her work in psychology and as a mother, Kendell also serves as the Hoosac 1992 Class Agent. She said of the volunteer task, “It’s nice to re-connect and see where people’s lives have taken them and share with them where your life has taken you. Reminiscing and revisiting the past with people you grew up with in such an intimate environment, evokes a sense of nostalgia you really can’t get from anywhere else. It’s a great reminder of a simpler time, and even if just for a moment it’s nice to remember what it felt like to be so young and carefree.”

Kendell’s book, Pathways to Health, is available through the Professional Psychology Press website.



The Experience of Living

Nicholas
Samstag
'72

Dr. Nicholas Samstag PhD, PC '72 was barely out of junior high when he experienced a devastating loss. Both his father and his step-mother committed suicide in the same 12-hour span. "My mother, who was usually quite helicopterish, to her credit, got me out of town. I think Hoosac was suggested as a decent place to go when one wasn't particularly academically competitive, which I certainly was not in those days."

"She was extremely protective," Nick went on to explain... "but I don't really know what allowed her to do that. I think it was probably because at Hoosac there were a number of faculty 10 or fewer years older than me. We called them Masters in those days. They were young and really smart and they paid attention and I will always value that. Hoosac was good for me."

I really benefited from the structure; the dress code, the schedule... That's no surprise really; kids benefit from structure," said Nick. "I didn't like it at times, but I think I appreciated it. I found it beautiful being there." Having come from a home

in Putnam County where he split time between life on a farm and life in New York City, the stillness of the forest offered a refuge during a difficult period in Nick's life. "I was a disassociated kid. I wasn't really processing life as it was happening. I was very much in my head. It was a beautiful campus, people were by and large nice. I had completely split off any feelings I had about my father who died less than a year before - the spring vacation of my eighth grade year. Hoosac was new; I got new clothes, it was good."

In particular, Nick said Ashton Crosby, Richard Lomuscio, Father Cannon, and Richard Reese were instrumental. "There are a number of people who made a big impact. I made friends. I really enjoyed the plays. Lomuscio and Crosby were the theatrical people and I really enjoyed working with them. I wish I had been a less depressed kid because I never did well at sports and I never really tried or cared, but I think that was a missed opportunity."

Nick, who today is a practicing psychoanalyst in New York City, said acting was a form of therapy during those days. "Acting to me was like bad therapy, but it was better than no therapy. And I think it allowed me to get a lot of feelings out - pretending to be someone else can be quite therapeutic. And then you discover who you might actually be," he said. "Somewhere at the end of my second year beginning of my junior year I started acting in plays because of Ashton."

During this time, Nick started to see successes resulting from his efforts: "I was on the Honor Roll Junior and Senior year. I was a proctor and ran the dining hall and was on various committees. I wanted to be a prefect so badly, but didn't get it."

Nick said there were several people who stood out at Hoosac. In particular he was motivated by Ashton Crosby, who encouraged him to act in the school plays, as well as Richard Lomuscio, who helped Nick improve his French language skills, and English teacher, Richard Reece. "I had been academically engaged my last year with Richard Reece and Lomuscio and Father Cannon, who was remarkably smart."

"I think developmentally it was a great thing to do to send me to Hoosac. There was a lot of intellectual freedom," explained Nick. "Father Cannon was mostly gracious in

being the recipient of our raised eyebrows. Similarly, Lomuscio taught an advanced seminar that I had no business being in, but it was me and three fluent-speaking people and two of whom had lived in France. But the class was a very heady class. We were talking about Plato and Thomas Aquinas in French. It was all conversational so you couldn't look at books. I remember the feeling of it was a welcoming feeling. I think that the country setting and the beauty of the place affected me - I liked being there."



Nick was the jester in the Boar's Head and Yule Log pageant. He said it was one of his favorite performances.

Following graduation from Hoosac, Nick wanted to pursue acting. "I didn't take tests very well, so the options for college were limited. I ended up going to Bard thinking I would pursue drama, which I did for four years."

During that time, Nick realized it wasn't the performances he enjoyed, but something else



entirely. “I realized I was mostly interested in literature, in the plays, but not interested in entertaining people, which is a problem if you think you want to be an actor,” he explained. “So I left not knowing what I wanted to do. I ended up getting a second BA at Columbia in general studies and studied 18th-century English literature and in the process Greek and Latin and got a fellowship to get a Masters in Ancient Greek.”

Following Bard, Nick attended Columbia. “The department was very Germanic, meaning they were more into philological than intellectual or other types of discussions; it was dry. I didn’t feel comfortable after the masters and then went into advertising. I wrote for Newsweek and then I got into therapy and thought I could probably do this. I had to go back and get some psychology credits because I didn’t have any, so I got a Masters in psychology. I ended up with three masters,” he laughed.

As a licensed clinical psychoanalyst and psychologist with his own practice today, Nick says he finds he mostly helps people find what’s important about their experience. “Not so much what you’re striving for or competing against, but people are just less and less able to focus on any kind of interior life. It’s all well and good for striving to be doctors and lawyers, but if you don’t have a sense of your experience, you’re really at a loss. You can be successful, but vacuous. No thoughts of their own. They don’t really have any creativity,” he said. “My main goal is to help clarify things. Help demystify and untangle things so that they can make whatever decisions they need to make.”

Dr. Samstag holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, and a certificate in psychoanalysis from the William Allison White Institute. He practices in New York City.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

WHITNEY KRAFT



Whitney Kraft is excited to join the Hoosac community as Director of Racquet Sports. Last year he served as Interim Head Coach for the Men and Women tennis teams at SUNY Oneonta, and this past summer oversaw the tennis program at Camp Walt Whitman in New Hampshire. For the past two years, he has also been Managing Director of All Racquet

tennis and racquet sports business for 40+ years. He spent 10 years as Director of Tennis for the City of Fort Lauderdale Park & Recreation Department (1998-2007), and 14 years as the Director of Tennis at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing, NY and Director of Player Operations for the U.S. Open. He was a 1983 Singles All-American for Florida Atlantic University and inducted into their inaugural Athletic Hall of Fame class in 2006. Besides being an elite tennis instructor, Whitney is a U.S.P.T.A Platform Tennis instructor, member of Beach Tennis USA Board of Advisors, a certified Pickleball instructor and Padel instructor. Whitney has been the Tournament Director for many prestigious events including the National Public Parks Tennis Championships (2007), ITF World Championships (2002), the inaugural U.S. Open National Sectional playoffs (2010), USTA Boys 14 National Clay Court Championships (2000-2007) and the USTA National Open Clay Court and Indoor Championships (1998-2020). Whitney lives in Manchester, VT with his wife, and has five daughters, a cat, and a dog.

Sports USA, a company passionate and instrumental in bringing the game of Padel to the United States. Whitney has been in the

FUTURE ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

FINLEIGH LEWIS '23

Finleigh Lewis '23 attended a Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) program this summer. "For five weeks I lived on campus and got to experience what it was like as an undergrad student there. I had class everyday from 9-4:30 and it was probably the hardest I've ever worked in my life."

Finn said RISD has been her dream school since childhood. "It was such an incredible experience to be accepted into the program on a full-ride scholarship," she said. "I had access to so many resources that helped me gain a major advantage in completing my portfolio for applying to art colleges this fall."

During the summer of 2022, Finn attended the NYU Summer Art Intensive program which ultimately led to her decision to enroll at Hoosac. "Here, working with Mr. Sussman has really allowed my creativity to flow with absolutely no restrictions."

Hoosac gave her a strong foundation for which to carry the grueling summer schedule at RISD. "I would spend 15 hours in the open studio all weekend working on a single painting and go into class the next morning to sit through a five hour critique. In my drawing class, we could spend an entire day rendering a garbage bag, then have a live model come in after class and draw them until the sun went down for homework. I would have three essays to do by the end of the week and a four-foot collage self portrait, due that same day. Besides the fact that I was constantly working to make each piece better than the last, and that I literally did not stop



working while I was there, I loved every second of it. I learned how to fully apply my technical skills into more conceptual pieces and how to elaborate on the meanings behind my artwork. I left RISD with over twenty-five pieces that could be included in my portfolio which is really incredible.

This fall, I am working on my applications to national art competitions and to colleges. Next year after graduating from Hoosac I am hoping to return to RISD as a freshman in college and continue my studies there."



Robert Chambers '61 was just four years old when he suffered severe burns on nearly half of his body. "I died that day," he said, when reflecting on the injuries. After one year in a hospital, a near-daily rehabilitation schedule kept him from attending school the following year.

"I couldn't go to school until I was seven years old," said Bob. He struggled and by mid-way through his educational journey, his parents realized Bob needed a school that would meet him halfway. Bob's father contacted Hoosac and they made the trip from Boston to tour the campus. "I fell in love with this place," Bob said of the experience.

The difference between Hoosac and his former school was palpable. "Everyone was friendly; there was no aggravation which eliminated the distraction I felt at my former school. I could focus on my studies. I had not had any interest in school, but that changed with Hoosac."

Bob said he was allowed to be himself and explore his interests, which helped him develop a passion for observing and understanding how things worked. He followed up on this passion with a degree in engineering and worked as a consultant and salesman on smaller and major projects around the country, including some government contracts.



Bob met his wife, Melanie, and the two celebrated 53 years together last June. Together, they had two children, Jennifer and Robert. Sadly, Melanie passed away this past January. “It was Mel who told me to let my job go and retire early. We traveled all over the world together. I’ve had a wonderful life.”

Bob’s experience recovering from his childhood injuries coupled with his experience at Hoosac taught him that kindness and patience toward others is essential. “I’m a man of principle. If someone needs help, reach out and ask if there’s anything you can do. I will never bark at someone; I will never make someone feel stupid.” He said kindness and loving others is the greatest of feelings, a sentiment reflective of what it means to Be Hoosac.

When asked about what he thought about the new buildings on campus, Bob laughed, “You gotta a whole lot of dirt out there!” He smiled his warm, broad smile, “I always think about this place. And every so often I come in.”

We’re glad you did, Bob.

At left, Headmaster Dean Foster poses with Class of 1961 graduate, Bob Chambers. Below, Bob shows off his Hoosac class ring which he has worn since leaving Hoosac. At right, Bob poses with his son, Robert, and Hoosac’s former Director of Advancement, Sherri Klein.





Akeesha
Simmons
'08

I arrived at Hoosac in the winter of 2005, and although this memory is now nearly 20 years old, I quite vividly remember the first time I saw the campus. As I was driven up to Tibbits Hall to meet my tour guides, having been just 15 years old and not quite old enough to have a driver's license, my mind was wrapped up in thoughts about whether I would make friends or thrive until graduation. I had just moved to Vermont with my mother, as my father had died a few months prior, and I was in the middle of grieving his sudden and unexpected passing. At the time I hadn't known that some of the experiences I would have on and off campus would plant the tiniest seeds of inspiration and

end up playing a profound role in my life path and academic career. I now hold a bachelors and two master's degrees in adjacent fields of psychology, two formal certifications as a trauma-informed yoga teacher, and by next year will be finishing up my PhD in clinical psychology, as well as considering whether to pursue a research post-doc or clinical private practice. As a clinician formally trained under the scientist-practitioner model, and who strives to maintain cultural competence and humility, my clinical work is informed by both scientific practice and the various ways of knowing and being in which diverse communities live.

There are a few Hoosac experiences that likely played a role in my life path and the pursuance of graduate coursework and research. Interestingly, but perhaps unsurprisingly, the seeds were not planted in my science coursework, but the three courses in which I was introduced to philosophy and spirituality. At the age of 16, I took Jonathan Horne's Ethics class. The classroom was small but had many windows that allowed light to flood over the desks and allowed for glimpses of nature. It was in this scene that I was first introduced to Buddhism and read Siddhartha. The teachings in this book, as well as our class's journey through Taoist perspectives, set in to motion the conjuring of my worldview and understanding of self that would continue to develop throughout my twenties and thirties. Around the time I took this class, a select few of us expressed interest in taking a field trip to a local Buddhist monastery that allowed visitors to attend their meditation sessions. Although I don't recall whether we completed a silent or guided practice, or whether there was a Dharma talk or not, I do remember sitting cross-legged on a Zafu, eyes closed and silent, attempting to shift my attention inward as I watched my chatty, reactive mind unfold in front of me, oscillating between interest, boredom, memories, aversion, and mind wandering. As a clinician and researcher today, I've dedicated much of my time to studying and understanding experiences similar to this.

It was shortly after that I took Tom Kurland's





Great Books Seminar. I was one of four students in that class. The others were three of my closest friends at the time. We met in various locations across campus, sometimes lounging on the stage of the auditorium or sitting under the warm sun at one of the picnic tables, discussing, arguing, and reflecting on our readings. Together, we made our way through Plato's *The Allegory of the Cave*, Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Hobbes, Rousseau, Descartes, and others. I distinctly remember the feeling of my mind expanding, infused with moments of epiphany that I could hold more than one truth and that the mind was capable of more than I realized. I still have the original copies of many of these books and passages, although it's been many years since I've re-read them.

To my utter dismay at the time, I was also required to sign up for a sport each semester. Thankfully, Hoosac provided alternative activities for those of us who were less inclined to participate in group sports. I signed up for Yeoman, which helped me foster a

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loving relationship with nature and place, as well as yoga. The yoga classes were taught by Leonora Rabinowitz, and although I don't recall us diving into Patanjali's Yoga Sutras or the eight limbs of yoga, she provided a context in which I was encouraged to develop a relationship with my body. If Jonathan and Tom used a top-down model to facilitate learning (by focusing on explicit knowledge), asana practice reflected the bottom-up approach (no pun intended) to self-understanding, which allowed for the development of implicit knowledge through sensory experience. After the trimester ended I sought out yoga classes in Bennington and continued the practice for many years after. Yoga has played a critical role in my life and as a therapist, helping me to yuj mind, body, and spirit. In session, I utilize both top-down and bottom-up methods with clients to address their mental health concerns and their development of self-understanding, putting aside the dualist model and resting in non-dualism.

Due to my early experiences, I pursued psychology and sociology in college and graduated with honors after completing my undergraduate thesis. I took delight in my coursework, studying social psychology, neuroscience, and states of consciousness, but also Eastern religions, anthropology, feminism, and art. It was here that I was introduced to psychological research. At the ripe age of 21, I became a volunteer research assistant at a laboratory called the Emotion Regulation Lab. I helped conduct EEG studies to better understand how attentional and emotional systems in the brain operate across the lifespan and had the opportunity to help with my first developmental mindfulness study. After graduation I obtained a position working at the lab and stayed until I left New York City for sunny Australia in 2016. While I was working, I was also practicing yoga, and continued to do so while abroad. Here, I worked as a researcher in collaboration with a Sydney-based academic and Tasmania-based psychologist on a few different research projects, my favorite being a study that looked at the benefits of mindfulness-integrated cognitive behavioral therapy. During this period of my life, I traveled across Australia and through Thailand and Indonesia, began spending more time in nature than academic institutions, and took an interest in U.S. politics.

Upon my return stateside, I completed my first yoga teacher training and began to take the idea of pursuing graduate education seriously. My yoga practice blossomed during these years. I studied Sanskrit, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, and began to focus on the other seven limbs. Although my practice looked very different than the yoga I learned when it was first introduced to me, I'd be remiss if I didn't express gratitude for Hoosac and Leonora for

introducing me to such a life-changing philosophy and spiritual system. At that time, I wanted to bridge my interest in yoga with my academic work, and was invited to complete my first master's degree in psychology with a focus in mind-body interventions, ecopsychology, and social justice. I moved to the pacific northwest to complete my degree and fell in love with the natural splendor of Oregon. In my three years of study, I primarily focused on developing my identity as a psychotherapist and fostering my therapeutic orientation. I completed an in-house externship at a community counseling center and an internship working with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. I also helped conduct chronic pain research at our local VA hospital and completed a secondary yoga teacher training in trauma-informed yoga, teaching yoga to incarcerated men a couple times per month and co-developing a community alliance of teachers of color who taught yoga, meditation, and other contemplative traditions to ethno-racially minoritized communities throughout the city. Upon my completion of my first master's degree, I was invited to pursue my doctoral education at Pacific University. Enroute to the PhD, I completed a second masters in clinical psychology after a successful externship at our community counseling center and master's thesis that investigated the synergistic relationship between ethnoracial-discrimination and COVID-related stress on anxiety and depression in racially minoritized communities.

Currently, my primary research interests include investigating the performance and utility of third-wave behavioral constructs and processes (mindfulness, compassion, psychological flexibility, and resilience), specifically within the context of reducing the harmful effects of racism on mental health and wellbeing and studying how we can use third-wave constructs in psychological interventions to reduce racial bias. I also have an interest in learning about non-ordinary states of consciousness via psychedelics, other forms of meditation and contemplative practice, and nature-based interventions for health and well-being. I am currently helping conduct research with my lab and mentor on the use of a culturally adapted mindfulness-based intervention to enhance wellbeing and reduce aggression and excessive use of force among law enforcement and first responders. I am also assisting with two randomized controlled trials investigating the use of MDMA as a pharmacological intervention for social anxiety disorder and an investigation of cognitive affective brain processes in pregnant people who are in recovery or treatment for opioid use.

Gipson Hall *Ready for student returns!*



Construction on Gipson Hall is nearing completion with the doors set to open when students return after break.



The Herb Elkinton Shooting Gallery

With the help of parents and alumni, Hoosac has installed a 22x42 synthetic ice shooting gallery. Players this season can practice their shot year round. The gallery is named in Memory of **Herbert Elkinton '74**, who passed away earlier last year.





Sofia '21 and Cecilia Gurgel '25 have released their new book, *Seeds of Tomorrow: About Maturing and Ecology*. The book was reviewed by Dani Mafra, who had this to say about the Gurgel sisters' latest project: "Sofia and Cecília are ahead of their time... While young people at their age are living a life of immediacy, uncommitted to people and no vision of the future, urban forestry and the challenges of waste management pushed Sofia and Cecilia to find, together, a way to make the world a better place... To combat such complex challenges, it is necessary to be creative, to look for innovative solutions and strength collaboration networks."



Congratulations to **Jinhyung Im '12**, who was married earlier this year.

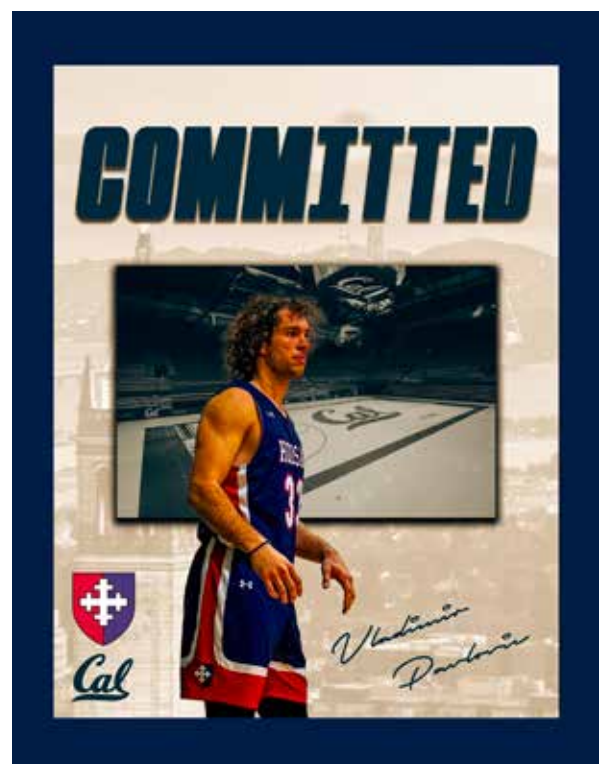
"I'm doing well. Living on 170 acres in the middle of Missouri. I was a senior counselor for Vocational Rehabilitation in MO in my first career. In my second career, I enjoyed raising, breeding, and showing heavy woolled Argentine and Chilean Llamas. Now enjoying retirement and staying active doing many projects on my farm."

-Bruce DeMurio '63

"I'm doing great. Still skiing, surfing, and fishing. I'll never forget Hoosac; especially my classmates."

-Max McAllister '74

From the parents of **Damien Saunders '99**: "Damien is doing well and cherishes his memory of Hoosac. Thank you for the care you provided for him."

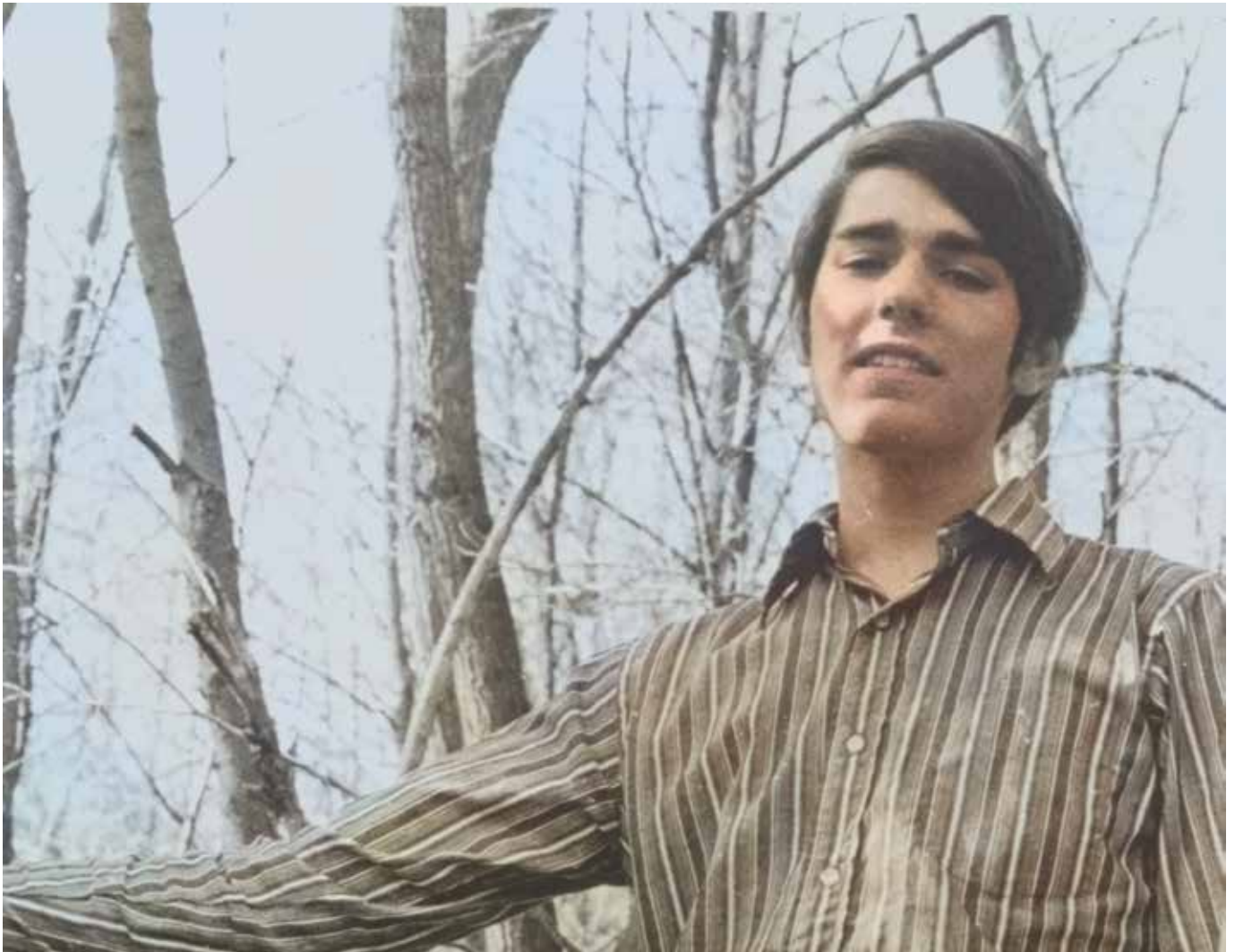


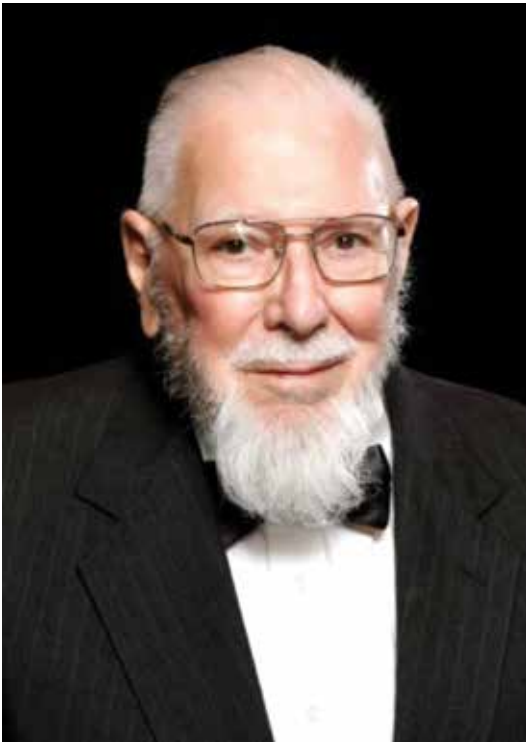
In Memory



John Hudson Deming '71

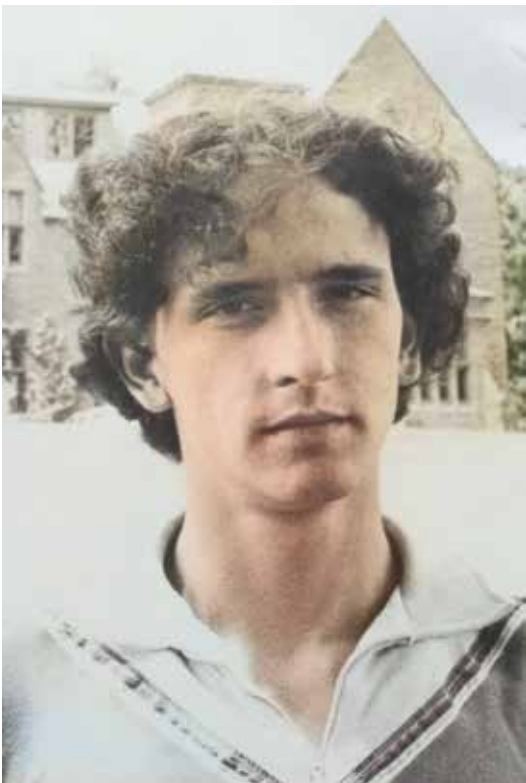
According to John's family, "John did not want an obituary. His obituary rests with the memories of everyone in the Grand Ledge (Michigan) community whose lives he touched." While at Hoosac, John was a member of the Hospital Volunteers, the Library Committee, the Owl Committee, and participated in Forestry Club. As a hospital volunteer, John worked two days each week with aged patients as well as children in need of a partner for a game of checkers.





Francis Shepard Jones '53

Hoosac Class of 1953's (attended Hoosac 1946-48) LTC (ret) Francis Shepard "Shep" Jones, 87, a lifelong resident of Bennington, passed away July 21, 2023 in Bennington Vermont. Shep was born in Bennington on June 1, 1936 the son of the late Franklin Peene and Margaret Shepard Jones. He attended the Bennington Graded School (K), the Pleasant Valley School, a one room school (1-5), Hoosac School (6-7), Bennington High School (8-12), and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Physics at Middlebury College. He married Margaret (Peggy) Dodd on Nov. 30, 1957 in Middlebury. He served on active duty from 1957-1977 in the US Army Ordinance Corps in various worldwide assignments. He was awarded a Purple Heart for minor injuries sustained in Vietnam. He was awarded the Legion of Merit medal in recognition of his management of the Army's tank-automotive inventory in Europe. He retired from the Army in 1977 as a Lieutenant Colonel. Returning to Bennington, he and Peggy purchased Taylor Rental, which they rebranded as EZ Way Rental and operated for 20 years before passing on the business. After retiring again, he worked part time supporting his son Frank's business designing and manufacturing specialty motors and electronics for robotics and energy conversion. Shep was a member of the Bennington Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Vermont Retail Association, the American Rental Association, and the Bennington School Board. He sang with the Bennington County Choral Society, the Serenity Singers and the Second Congregational Church Choir. Shep enjoyed genealogy, traveling the world, especially cruises with Peggy and his daughters, was an opera buff and organized the monthly opera program at Brookdale at Fillmore Pond. Shep is survived by his children Frank Jones (Lori) of Shrewsbury, MA, Carol Sawyer (Tom) of Mesa, AZ and Sarah Lein (Don) of Orlando, FL, brother William "Bill" Jones (Chris) of Mineral, VA, sister Elizabeth (Betsy) Macomber (Don) of Richmondville, NY, 14 grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife Margaret (Peggy) Dodd Jones, son George Shepard Jones, and his granddaughter Emily Anne Lein.



Hoosac School learned only recently of the death of Alex Vonnegut, Hoosac Class of 1981 on June 16th, 2021.

Letter from the Editor

At Home at Hoosac

I was married this past April 1st. We sold our house, closing on April 3rd. And my husband died on April 4th. There are no Hallmark cards for this kind of experience. No words that really capture the tumultuous torrent of raw emotion. My husband had been suffering with Farh's Disease, an extremely rare neurodegenerative illness that produces calcifications in the brain. Normally, a diagnosis of Farh's is not an immediate death sentence, but Richard had a subcategory of the disease and from the time of onset of symptoms to his death on April 4th, only eight weeks had passed.

Those who have grieved understand the need to feel grounded, to have a safe place to land and the support to help you through it. We had just finished packing our entire lives into storage units and found ourselves facing the immediacy of dealing with Rick's death and finding a place to live. I set about making that my highest priority, so that my son could have some normalcy soon restored to his life. And despite my best efforts, we were met with more devastating news when the house we were attempting to buy flooded and left us without anywhere to go at the end of June.

Through the generosity of Mr. Foster and Hoosac alumnus and faculty, Conor Jordan '12, my son and I were able to move into Conor's faculty residence while he was away for the summer. There was comfort in being at Hoosac; the one constant in our lives at that point. And as I told my son, how lucky were we to have joined the ranks of so many students who have lived beneath the Tibbits roof?

Hoosac was our safe haven this summer; a place to reflect on the past year and a that had happened; a place where we could feel safe and supported through the kindness of co-workers and friends; a place where we could wander and explore and find solace in the stories of so many who have gone before us. We've heard Hoosac compared to Harry Potter, a setting in a Dickens novel, and even Narnia, but for us, and for so many students and faculty, it was home.

Kind regards, Samantha Graves-Brownell



Welcome New Owl Pups!



New members of the Hoosac Pack this summer include *(from top left clockwise)*, Kilometers "Kilo" Hooper Graves-Brownell, Buckley Anderson, Thor Robichaud, and Matilda "Tilly" Wednesday Harniman.

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HOOSAC'S
ALL-SCHOOL
REUNION

JUNE
14-15-16
2024

Join us in the Valley of the Owl to
rekindle old friendships while you
celebrate the milestone years
with food and festivities on
Hoosac's beautiful hillside
campus.



SAVE
THE
DATE