
THE HILLTOPPER

The
POWER
of
WORDS

SPRING 2020



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FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

If Hugh Blair were alive today he would not approve of hastily composed tweets. In fact, I am confident he would despise Twitter altogether. To Blair, an 18th century Scottish preacher, scholars were to be judged by the quality and craftsmanship of their letters. In *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters*, he asserts this argument:

“The study of composition, important in itself at all times, has acquired additional importance [in] the present age... To all the liberal arts much attention has been paid; and to none more than to the beauty of language, and the grace and elegance of every kind of writing. Every author must aspire to some merit in expression, as well as in sentiment, if he would not incur the danger of being neglected and despised.”

We live again in an age that requires “merit in expression.” Surrounded by the uncertainty of a pandemic and corresponding financial crisis, we turn to the newspapers we hold in the highest regard, and to the poets, priests, and philosophers we feel are best able to provide us with some understanding. Since the crisis began several weeks ago, we are reading more selectively and, when we come across a poignant and well-written piece, we are apt to share it with friends and loved ones.

Words matter. Words help us shape meaning. When we take the time to craft our thoughts with care, we give a gift to each other. For many of you, this lesson was learned on the Hilltop. Your teachers implored you to expand your vocabulary, experiment with syntax, master punctuation, support your arguments, learn logic, and tinker with figurative language.

In the moment, those lessons may have been met with consternation. Years later, and in times like these, are we not grateful for those lessons? It was Ms. Lindquist who taught me to edit and proofread in eighth grade. “You have such nice ideas,” she wrote on one of my essays. “It would be a shame if no one read them because of all of the careless mistakes.”

So here’s to the legendary Marshall/Cathedral instructors who taught us to “aspire to some merit in expression.” In this issue, we meet some former classmates who “learned their lessons well.”

Kevin Breen, *Head of School*

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THE HILLTOPPER

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The Hilltopper is published for alumni, current and past parents, grandparents, and friends of Marshall School and Duluth Cathedral High School.

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SNAPSHOTS



1.

Students and teachers celebrated the middle school's annual "Apple Week" with apple-themed topics in each of their classes. Students pressed apples into cider with a hand-operated press, created apple art, tested apples for sugar content with a guest presenter, graphed apples on a coordinate plane, quizzed on apple history, and taste-tested seven apple varieties.

3.

From hosting the Mixed Choir from Hayward High School to campus caroling to the winter concerts—Marshall's musicians displayed an abundance of holiday spirit and musical growth this winter.



2.

This year's fall play featured a true classic—Mary Poppins! The Marshall drama students successfully captivated audiences at all four performances. Did you know that our theatre program is the only activity on campus that all students in grades 4-12 can participate in? As Mary Poppins herself says, "In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun!"



4.

It's no secret that we LOVE iTerm! Pyrography, What is Raku?: Japanese Ceramics, Personal Finance, Minnesota Outdoor Adventures, Beekeeping, Patchwork Pandemonium, Quantitative Careers, Wood Craft Engineering, Tiny Houses, U.S. History Through Broadway Musicals!, Mythical Civilizations, Interior Design Basics!, Rube Goldberg Machine Making—just to name a few. The energy during iTerm radiated throughout our community.



5.

Marshall winter sports teams made repeat appearances at state this year. The dance team made its 18th straight appearance at the Target Center in Minneapolis, and Nordic Skiing individuals **Declan Hutchinson '21** finished 28th overall while **Lucy Campbell '21** finished in 36th place overall.



6.

The Hilltoppers' artistic talents were on display during the Fine Arts Showcase at Zeitgeist, featuring student art exhibits and performances by the Hilltop Harmonics, Chamber Singers, and Jazz Band. A fun evening with members from the Marshall and greater Twin Ports community was had by all!



7.

Girls basketball won the section 7AA championship and punched their first ticket to the state tournament in twenty years. After defeating New London-Spicer in the quarterfinal game, the season was abruptly cut short prior to the semifinal game due to social distancing restrictions with COVID-19. Even though they were unable to play for the title, they did get to finish their state run undefeated!



8.

Upper School students shared the gift of poetry during the annual school-wide Poetry Out Loud competition. The school-wide finalists were **Angelina Dodge '20**, **Madyson Friese '21**, and **Dasia Stark '22**. Dodge went on to qualify for the state competition, bringing the honorable mention award to the Hilltop.



9.

Marshall's 33rd annual auction was transformed into the first-ever virtual auction. The virtual Secret Garden Gala, hosted on Facebook Live by the one and only **Ms. K-Sorrel Kaspzszak**—was a blooming success! While we couldn't be together in person, the support felt from the community transcended technology.



10.

On March 16th, Marshall closed its doors to prepare for the governor's school closure order to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Just two days later, with the combination of tactful leadership from the administration and alacrity displayed by faculty, Marshall made a smooth transition to eLearning. Of course, we can't forget to mention our students—we are so proud of the resilience, flexibility, and creativity they have shown throughout these uncertain times.

The **POWER** *of* **WORDS**

It's impossible to imagine life without words; they're simply everywhere. Whether written, spoken, or thought, words construct and reinforce our cultures and our understanding of the world. Words help us connect with each other, even in disagreement, and can help us build bridges where there were chasms. Throughout a Hilltopper's journey at Marshall, words are indispensable.

Going far beyond grammar rules and sentence diagrams, gaining mastery over language is an educational undercurrent that carries students beyond the harbor of school and into the wider, uncharted territories they are bound to discover. This issue of the Hilltopper is a look at the power of words and a peek into the richness of the Marshall experience of learning to wield them well.

HOW TO THINK LIKE SHAKESPEARE

Lessons From a Renaissance Education



BY CHRISTA KNUDSEN '92



Scott Newstok, '91

Scott Newstok's most recent book, *How to Think like Shakespeare: Lessons From a Renaissance Education*, is an exhilarating work. On one hand, it reads as a whimsical and uber-creative love letter to the copious intellect and imagination of the great bard. Newstok's own insights—which inform and are informed by his work as a professor at Rhodes College—converse throughout with a large cast of thinkers. From ancient Greek philosophers to Maya Angelou, each perspective weaves further illumination throughout the tapestry-book.

How to Think like Shakespeare, taken in its entirety, also makes a spirited case for the liberal arts as education's cornerstone. This is a weighty focus... so perhaps the biggest surprise is the delicious fun of it all! Each page is a joy to digest, as the words carefully reveal more flavor upon rereading, until the cumulative fullness is not unlike the experience of consuming one of its namesake's masterpieces.

Scott and I were a year apart at Marshall in the mid-80s and early 90s. We attended the school when it was memorably low on resources. What we did have, despite the leaky roofs and uncomfortably chilly winter days inside the building, was a sense of purpose, and a pride in learning fostered by teachers like **Julie Ball, Larry Weber, and Tim Blackburn '66**, who were visibly and unfailingly passionate about their disciplines – and breathed that passion into their students daily.

Scott and I recently caught up about his book, his beliefs as an educator, and the ways in which Marshall shaped us.

WHY DID YOU WRITE THE BOOK?

How to Think like Shakespeare grew out of a convergence between my teaching and my parenting. Over the past decade, I'd been reading a lot of great new work about Shakespeare's career, from classroom practices to the collaborative nature of theater. (Your own Marshall career as an actor surely made this clear to you decades ago! But it's taken me some time to figure out just how radical this collaboration can be.) My reading reoriented my teaching, as I sought to help students approach him as a maker: a play-wright.

During this same decade, my own kids have been progressing through elementary and secondary school. Some of the frustrating educational reforms they've confronted strike me as jarringly at odds with the still-beneficial aspects of a humanist education. These strands of thought came together when I was invited to speak to the incoming class of 2020 at Rhodes College, where I now teach. Four years later, I've expanded these thoughts into this (short) book.



**A Midsummer Night's Dream,
Marshall School 1988:**

Katie McGee '91 (center) as Puck;
author '92 (front left) as woodland
fairy; lighting by **Harry Gehring
'88** and **Scott Newstok '91**;
directed by **Tim Blackburn '66**.

**IN YOUR BOOK, YOU TAKE ISSUE
WITH SIR KEN ROBINSON'S JOKE
THAT SHAKESPEARE WOULD HAVE
BEEN ANNOYING AS A 7-YEAR OLD.
CAN YOU ELABORATE?**

Robinson's "Do Schools Kill Creativity?" is the most popular TED talk of all time. The title primes your answer: yes—yes, of course schools kill creativity. And Robinson's pitch follows his self-confirming template:

schools are [hierarchical/
industrialist/outdated];
this is a [crisis/crime/catastrophe];
and the answer is [creativity/
innovation/technology].

Yet his diagnoses and his prescriptions don't line up, right from his disarming opening jest:

... you don't think of Shakespeare being a child, do you? Shakespeare being seven? I never thought of it. I mean, he was seven at some point. He was in somebody's English class, wasn't he? How annoying would that be? 'Must try harder.'

Sir Ken gets the laughs. But Shakespeare never studied in an "English class"; no such class would exist until centuries after his time. Instead, his Stratford grammar school was conducted in Latin. And his regimented Latin curriculum proved to be the crucible for his creative achievement—in English.

This book celebrates enduringly vital aspects of education. It's always easy to tease teachers for being outdated, or to scoff at schools for not having the latest technological gadgets. But what's the real creativity-killer today? At age seven, I don't recall suffering anxiety about test preparation strategies, or even having any homework. But now my own seven-year old does. According to the National Council of Teachers of English, teachers lose between 60 to 110 hours of instructional time in a year because of testing and the institutional tasks that surround it. That's staggering! An endless battery of high-stakes testing rewards mere extraction, strip-mining context for content.

**HOW DO THESE OBSERVATIONS
CONNECT WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE
AT MARSHALL?**

There was an electric charge in the hallways at Marshall, a sense that this was a place where real things happened, and that Duluth was a meaningful place to grow up and experience the world. Marshall taught us not just how to think, but how to think big. How was this so?

What was most memorable about the Marshall I recall was not the number of computers we had, or the quality of the laboratory equipment, or the grooming of the turf on the sports fields. To the contrary, Marshall's infrastructure in the 1980s suffered from severe underfunding and deferred maintenance. We played on banged-up instruments, stumbled over cinders on the track, and sat on broken seats in Fregeau. I hasten to add that I'm of course elated that the school's finances have since improved, that our teachers are paid better, and that students learn in an environment with long overdue improvements. All to the good!

“WHAT EVERY GREAT TEACHER HAS IN COMMON IS THAT ELUSIVE ABILITY TO CONVEY, WITH CONTAGIOUS ENTHUSIASM, COMPLEX CONCEPTS IN ACCESSIBLE (YET NOT REMEDIAL) TERMS.”

But the core of an educational institution, no matter its physical infrastructure, has to be the proximity between a committed, informed instructor and an engaged, disciplined student. The current push for distracting devices, distance learning, and the like runs almost entirely against what I’ve characterized as “close learning”: that time-consuming, uncertain, and difficult-to-nurture space between teacher and pupil. That’s the space I most cherish as I look back on our extraordinary Marshall mentors. Course topic, pedagogical approach, the teacher’s personality – all varied wildly, as rightly they should. But what every great teacher has in common is that elusive ability to convey, with contagious enthusiasm, complex concepts in accessible (yet not remedial) terms.

THIS ISSUE OF THE HILLTOPPER IS ABOUT THE POWER OF WORDS. WHAT IS THE ‘SUPERPOWER’ OF WORDS IN THE DIFFERENT SETTINGS YOU’VE TAUGHT IN?

I’ve tutored kindergartners, conducted high school workshops, taught at colleges, and led seminars in prison. No matter the venue, words matter. Being better able to articulate what we think often forces us to consider: what do we really think? Even limited enhancement of our species’ primary mode of communication is essential for flourishing, a complex modern world. How significant are such enhanced verbal skills and experiences? After all, most people read, write, and speak

well enough to function. But we know that any culture is doomed that relies on “well enough to function” in, say, mathematics; and the same is true of facility in language, which is our fundamental interface between mind and world. In the face of multifaceted experience, “well enough to function” renders the individual (and society) powerless, reactive, scarcely comprehending.

Thinking and speaking clearly: the power every despot despises.

WHAT IS THE POWER OF THINKING LIKE SHAKESPEARE IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL WARMING, POVERTY, AND HUMAN SUFFERING?

This is the impossible question, isn’t it? One could list endless ways in which a call for “thinking like Shakespeare” risks being laughable, even irresponsible, when far more daunting challenges press upon our classrooms—from outbursts of terrorizing violence to continued savage inequalities in access to schools. More globally, we’re facing (or rather, failing to face) existential crises in the environment, human migration, creeping authoritarianism, and the spectre of artificial intelligence. It makes me think, for better or for worse, of the talk C. S. Lewis gave in the fall of 1939, about “Learning in War Time.” If Hitler’s army is toppling European capitals like so many dominoes,

“What is the use of beginning a task which we have so little chance of finishing? . . . why should we – indeed how can we – continue to take an interest in these placid occupations when the lives of our friends and the liberties of Europe are in the balance? Is it not like fiddling while Rome burns?”

This is a version of that endlessly nagging question: what’s the “use” of education? But, as Lewis insists, “human life has always been lived on the precipice.” If we wait for things to “get back to normal” before we start learning, we fail to recognize that “life has never been normal.” A famous rabbinical injunction: “It is not your responsibility to finish the work of perfecting the world, but you are not free to desist from it either.”

To close with a sonnet, Shakespeare knew that we are all mortal, that we all have limited time. Yet we still love each other, and love the world, and seek the best way to say that:

This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long. M

Scott (Newstrom) Newstok ’91 is professor of English and founding director of the Pearce Shakespeare Endowment at Rhodes College. He lives with his family in Memphis, Tennessee – way down on Highway 61.

PEGGY HAYES '79

CAREER COMMUNICATOR

BY TONY LOCKHART




“My clearest memory is of Joe Giesen,” Peggy Hayes '79 remembered. “When I earned an A from him, it felt like five As from someone else. His high standards and expectations taught us that we could deepen our skills. He nurtured my love of writing.”


Hayes has spent her professional life following that passion in a career that has taken her from Duluth to New York City to Washington, D.C., and now to her home in Boston. A journey that has been all about mastering the written word.

“I always wanted to be in New York City,” Hayes recalled. “I was really in love with the idea of it that I absorbed from books and film.” That meant attending college at Vassar, where she wrote and edited the college newspaper, “and never considered changing my major from English!” she emphasized. Her desire to be near the city was challenged when she accepted her first job, not in New York, but in Washington, D.C., working for Minnesota’s Senator David Durenberger.

The job with Senator Durenberger had many components, but writing was the key element. “It was such a big part, all day and every day. I wrote thousands of letters,” Hayes said. Washington was exciting, and it was fun to be a part of a community of young and passionate people. But after three years it was time to move back to New York to take her craft to the next level. It was also good to be back close to water, as anyone who has grown up in Duluth can understand!



**“WRITING IS LIKE A MUSCLE,
AND AT CATHEDRAL/MARSHALL
WE LEARNED TO EXERCISE IT.”**



Back in New York, living in the West Village, Hayes accepted a position with Burson-Marsteller. Her time in public relations and communications helped her refine key elements in the writing process, elements that would be common to all the different places she would work. “From my time at Marshall, I learned that there are two important avenues to good writing. One is the ability to synthesize and understand ideas. The other is to express those ideas, particularly in a way that is persuasive.” Hayes leaned heavily on those skills as she focused on health policy, first in New York and then in Boston as the Director of Health Science Public Relations at Tufts University. Now, as the Director of Communications at Northeastern University College of Professional Studies, she uses those same tools to provide strategic direction to the College’s communications.


“Writing is like a muscle, and at Cathedral/Marshall we learned to exercise it,” she said. Hayes wrote and edited the school newspaper and was a part of the Beacon Yearbook staff. “We had the ability to try things out. In class, we wrote frequently, and while I might not agree now with all

the content, it gave us a chance to think through and defend ideas. It taught me the power of a well-argued idea.” For her final project as a senior, Hayes remembers writing a long paper, “three to four times” longer than any other. She chose Virginia Woolfe as her subject and had to learn about both scope and focus. She described it as “a real growth experience.”

Hayes was also part of the student group that helped plan assemblies, a new idea at the time but one that is still in practice at Marshall. They were charged with coming up with programs that could hold the interest of—and surprise and intrigue—the student body, which is no easy task now or back then. “I know we learned as much from the things that didn’t work as those that did,” she said. Cathedral was also a big part of making the transition from childhood to adulthood. After finishing at Holy Rosary, it was natural for Peggy to follow her sisters and become a Hilltopper. But in addition to the academics, it was other, little things, that helped Toppers begin to feel like “mini-adults.” “At first it was as simple as moving from classroom to classroom which we didn’t do in

younger grades. Later as seniors, it included the privilege of having our own private space, the glassed-in senior lounge with decorations inspired by Pink Floyd’s Dark Side of the Moon, which seemed very adult to us,” she remembered.

There was academic rigor and a choice of classes. And there were teachers who both pushed and encouraged. Important, too, were the “hands-on opportunities,” that gave students a chance to put into practice the ideas learned in classes. “Drama was important, but my favorite activity was Model UN, earning a trip in the old Cathedral van to New York to observe the real UN in action. After the UN trip, I spoke to the Duluth Rotary luncheon, making my adventure interesting to a group of local business leaders.”

Today, Hayes is still a writer, and still in love with the written word, and “when I don’t have a book going at the moment, I don’t know exactly how to feel.” Her time at Cathedral/Marshall was an important part of her journey. “Cathedral gave us a hint of what was to come.” 


COMMUNITY CENTERED PRICING MAKING THE MARSHALL EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE FOR ALL

This past December, Marshall School announced Community Centered Pricing, a new approach to tuition designed to make the Marshall experience possible for more families in the Twin Ports. The Board of Trustees designed Community Centered Pricing to recognize that if education is a priority for a Twin Ports family, then making the Marshall experience affordable for a family is indeed a priority for the school.

Marshall's founders envisioned an independent school community reflective of the diversity in the region, which would bring families together around the importance of education. Today, Marshall students come from 56 different schools, two different states, and nine different countries, and over half of Marshall families receive assistance to attend. However, we believe we can do even better. With Community Centered Pricing, Marshall returns to the original promise of our founders and reasserts their intention. In simple terms, Marshall seeks to reflect the community we belong to, celebrate the community we are, and build the community we wish to be.

For new enrolling families, Marshall is introducing a guided tuition process. This approach customizes a family's tuition to its specific financial circumstances. Marshall is committed to providing the highest quality educational program in the region. At the same time, we recognize that families have budgets, and it is our goal to work within those budgets so that we may have an inclusive, welcoming school that reflects our community. An online tuition calculator will allow new applicants to estimate the cost of attendance from the privacy of their own homes. In most cases, the lower a family's household

income, the lower a family's tuition. Alongside Community Centered Pricing, the new Marshall School Community Fund (MSCF) is a philanthropic fund dedicated to supporting Marshall's commitment to creating an inclusive, diverse, and accessible educational community. The Fund, established by Don and Kathleen Annala, provides Marshall with broad discretion in the support of two objectives: Enhanced Access and Enhanced Opportunity. The Marshall School Community Fund was this year's Fund-a-Need Project. To date, the school is pleased to announce over \$120,000 in gifts have been received.

Technically, the MSCF is a quasi-endowment designed to work in conjunction with Community Centered Pricing to augment Marshall School's commitment to equity and inclusion, most especially in the first few years of our new affordability initiative. 

To support the MSCF, contact Jennifer Berry in our Office of External Relations at jennifer.berry@marshallschool.org or give online at marshallschool.org/community-fund





PORCH PORT

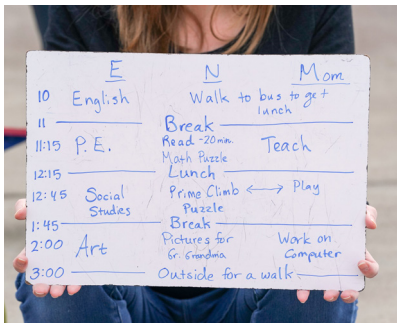
On March 18th, Marshall moved all classes online in response to the growing COVID-19 pandemic. With their hard work, there were zero lost days of instruction during this transition. Kim Kosmatka, Marshall's photographer, visited the homes of faculty and staff for long-distance photos as a way to capture and record this unprecedented season.

STEPHANIE KIERO MARSHALL MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH

"Figuring out how to use Zoom, and being able to see the faces of the kids, getting eyes on them, smiling, laughing, being able to answer their questions...that's been the silver lining in this. That matters a lot. It's been tricky trying to figure out the schedule of being able to teach and have my own kids learn at the same time."

MATTHEW WHITTAKER MARSHALL SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

"It's amazing how busy things can be just keeping everything online. Students, especially, have been putting their best foot forward. We just did five hours of interviews for new Honor Council applicants. We had nine current juniors and seniors interviewing candidates. They're just really making the most of these difficult times."



PORTRAITS

To see more of these portraits, visit:
[facebook.com/marshallhilltoppers](https://www.facebook.com/marshallhilltoppers)

Search Facebook:
#HilltopperPorchPortraits

CASSIE ERDMANN MARSHALL SCHOOL MATH

“The kids are realizing this whole thing is completely new and they’re giving us patience and grace. They’re understanding that we’re sometimes trying to figure things out on the fly. There are so many things I’m trying now that I will definitely continue to use when we go back to the classroom.”



ANNA MOORE MARSHALL SCHOOL WORLD LANGUAGES

“One of the keys to language learning, of course, is person-to-person interaction, which is really easy to do in a classroom. But it’s been an exciting challenge to find ways to do that online. There are so many resources I’ve now discovered that I’ll probably continue to use for classroom learning when we get back to that.”



CHRIS IBARRA MARSHALL MIDDLE SCHOOL WORLD LANGUAGES

“I think I’m going to be a better teacher at the end of this. Everything we do is more deliberate now. My students all say they miss school, so I always give them a few minutes at the beginning of class where I mute myself and just hang back and let them catch up.”



BUILDING ON TRADITION

Beyond classroom curriculum, Marshall students have myriad opportunities to take their communication and language skills to the next level. Here, we talked with faculty and staff about some of the deeper work that happens as a result of engaging with the words surrounding, shaping, and being harnessed by students each day.



GARRETT QUINN

With his seventh grade classes, English faculty Garrett Quinn builds on middle school goals of learning to love reading. In the fall, students work on defining their “Reading Rights,” where students talk about what makes reading less fun for them—including a required page count, written responses after reading, annotating the text—and their “outside reading” is able to reflect these anti-guidelines.

“Outside reading in middle school is hardly ever assigned; the point is to instill a love of reading,” Quinn said. “Students get to discover characters and stories that can both validate their experiences and increase their empathy for others, and they are highly encouraged to explore topics and narratives that are familiar and foreign.”

While reading is an opportunity to understand and empathize with others’ stories, writing is an opportunity for students to find their own voice and perspective. “If you give students the space to explore their identity, they will absolutely surprise and impress you,” Quinn shared. “One of our assignments is to write a speech for students to ‘speak your truth,’ and it gives them a space to demonstrate bravery as they go deeper about a topic of their choice. Some big, tough topics—mental health, homophobia, gun control, et cetera—have been tackled there.”

Quinn can’t help but bring his passion into the classroom with him. “The number of times I’ve read something and been impacted is mind-boggling. I can’t imagine not reading and engaging with the world that way,” he said.

INSPIRING WORDS FOR QUINN

“A PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE, NO MATTER WHO IS CONTROLLING IT, IS TO LOVE WHOEVER IS AROUND TO BE LOVED.”

**KURT VONNEGUT
THE SIRENS OF TITAN**



DR. LON WEAVER

Dr. Lon Weaver curates a wall in his classroom that’s full of quotes—111 quotes, to be exact—and the point is to reveal important voices and to encourage students to embrace their own voices. As Marshall’s Ethics and World Religions teacher and chaplain, Weaver’s professional interaction with words is dynamic. “I want to empower students to use language as a way to connect rather than to persuade,” Weaver shared. “This works better with courage, confidence, and safety within a group setting, and that’s what we try to create together in discussion-based class.”

Facilitating discussions rather than debates is a particular goal of Weaver’s, and his classes rise to the occasion. Students choose the issues, spend time researching and preparing for the discussion, and take notes on the arguments they see being made. For grading purposes, the preparation work ahead of the discussion is more heavily weighted than a student’s time spent discussing. Oftentimes, smaller group discussions will come out of

the classroom moments, bringing students back together to gain more understanding of each others' perspectives and opinions.

"What's especially relevant to these discussions is the opportunity for students to see arguments being made and understand the line of reasoning they are following," Weaver explained. "Looking at logical argumentation, when students can see how someone's thinking is structured, they can piece together the arguments being used, even if they are not explicitly stated."

"I can't control the experiences, perspectives, or biases students bring into the room, but I can make a soft landing for them," Weaver said. "At the end of the day, my responsibility is to teach students how to assemble and discern arguments so they don't have to be pulled along by others' thinking or told what to think. Framing these moments as 'discussions' instead of 'debates' has positively affected the culture of these conversations and gives students practice in truly civil discourse about controversial issues before they leave Marshall."

INSPIRING WORDS FOR WEAVER

"LOVE HAD RESURRECTED THEM, AND THE HEART OF EACH CONTAINED INEXHAUSTIBLE SPRINGS OF LIFE FOR THE HEART OF THE OTHER."

**FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

KAREN STILES

To Karen Stiles, words are everything. She doesn't just take them seriously herself; learning to notice the world and notice words and language is a common thread through her ninth grade classes and advisory groups.

"Writers write about the human experience; some of these experiences resonate personally and some of them don't, but they all have something to teach us. Words help us find connection," Stiles said. "Good authors are masters of language and showcase experiences through their use of words. For example, in Richard Wright's autobiography *Black Boy*, he deliberately alters his writing style to mirror and reflect on the significance of various life experiences. As a teacher, it's fantastic to see students begin to notice and develop awareness for the ways people around them use language."

One thing Stiles makes sure to tackle that doesn't often get this much thought and attention? Teaching ninth graders how to write emails



and interact on social media.

"Words aren't just words; they are also tone and intention, both of which are significantly more difficult to discern in an email or a social media post," she explained. "It's important and helpful for them to understand how much weight their communication carries, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and to understand that things like sarcasm can be hurtful."

"I just want people to notice language; I think my biggest hope," Stiles expressed, "is that whether it's what they read or what they hear or ultimately what they say, they notice the power of words."

INSPIRING WORDS FOR STILES

**"YOU MAY WRITE ME DOWN IN HISTORY
WITH YOUR BITTER, TWISTED LIES,
YOU MAY TROD ME IN THE VERY DIRT
BUT STILL, LIKE DUST, I'LL RISE.**

**DOES MY SASSINESS UPSET YOU?
WHY ARE YOU BESET WITH GLOOM?
'CAUSE I WALK LIKE I'VE GOT OIL WELLS
PUMPING IN MY LIVING ROOM."**

**MAYA ANGELOU
"STILL I RISE"**



RISK OUT LOUD

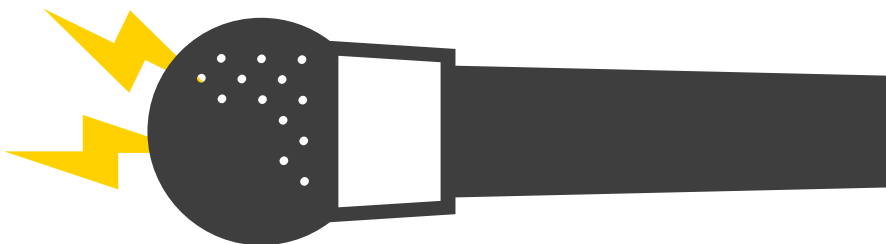
English and Poetry
Out Loud

Reading and writing is one thing; performing is another thing altogether, and public speaking is something many adults avoid as much as possible in their lifetime. At Marshall, students in seventh through twelfth grades are charged with the opportunity and obligation to face that risk each year through English Out Loud and Poetry Out Loud.

Back when middle school was added at Marshall, Drama Day—a day full of class plays and musicals—was part of the year-end festivities. After 20+ years, **Lori Durant** and **Matt Whittaker '02** refreshed and relaunched it as English Out Loud, an event where seventh and eighth graders performed memorized passages for the occasion.

“Eighth graders have the option to write their own piece, and when they do, it’s such a rewarding experience,” Durant shared. “After seventh graders perform, many start planning for their next EOL right away. Seventh and eighth graders also dive right in by choosing to write and perform their own words instead of a piece they find in their research. Seeing the extra work they put into crafting their message and the heart that goes into performing it is incredibly rewarding.”

After wrapping up middle school with this time on the stage, upper schoolers are ready for their next challenge: Poetry Out Loud in classrooms in November. Former Marshall faculty member **David Johnson** brought Marshall into the Poetry Out Loud fold in 2010, and



as it grew, the entire English department got in on the project. Students select a poem from the vast Poetry Out Loud catalog and spend two weeks not only memorizing their poem but diving into the mind of the poet and seeking to understand the meaning behind the words and turns of phrase as they can.

Focusing a student's attention on one piece of poetry for this period of time unlocks different benefits than simply reading it once or twice in class. "If they spend two weeks with their chosen poems, working to understand them and memorize them, every day students have new realizations about the meaning of the poem, they discover new meanings of words or new interpretations of metaphors," English faculty **Nate Mattson** explained.

Angelina Dodge '20 can attest to the personal benefits of this time: "I found time spent focusing on my poems, because I liked them, to be stress-relieving. By spending so much time with my poems, I was able to really understand and explore what the author was trying to communicate. I'd say my appreciation for poetry is much higher now than it was before Poetry Out Loud."

Dasia Starks '22 explained that she spends the majority of her preparation time committing the poem to memory. "When I memorize a poem, I work on two or three lines at a time. Once I have an entire stanza memorized, I move onto the next one until the entire poem is concrete in my mind," she said. "However, I never 'perform' a poem while memorizing it. My first time performing the poem is always in front of my audience. This allows me to use true emotions in the moment and not sound like a robot!"

Spending the time to prepare sets the stage for success, but actually performing is a huge step outside of most students' comfort zones. "It's not easy, getting up in front of your peers to recite a poem; after all, you might have to show some emotion!" **Dr. Susan Nygaard** said. "And it's scary because you might suddenly forget a poem you've been obsessively memorizing for weeks. You might even experience the supreme awkwardness of being stared at while you pause, panic, and wish desperately to plunge into an abyss! You can't just give up and quit—somehow, you have to get to the end of the poem."

And when a performer does get to the end of their poem, their classmates are waiting to celebrate with them. Mattson shared, "Outside of sports, I never see students truly support and appreciate each other as much as during Poetry Out Loud practices and performances. They are high fiving and clapping. They say things like 'That was awesome,' or 'How did you DO that?' or 'You're gonna win for sure.' When someone messes up or forgets lines, the audience is even more supportive. They

genuinely smile at each other and try to make their classmates feel better. It is truly one of my favorite times of the year."

"I'm so glad I competed in Poetry Out Loud," Dodge said. "It led me to realize a few things, the first being that competitions can be enjoyable if you go into them with the right mindset. The second is that I learned how to present myself and speak in front of crowds, something I've had only a little previous experience with."

Nygaard summed the experience up well: "No matter how you performed, no matter how painful the experience might have been, you're stronger for having gotten there. These days, lots of folks think that grit is the key to success. I think they're probably right."

Pictured Below: 2019 winners of Marshall's school-wide Poetry Out Loud competition: **Dasia Starks '22** (1st), **Angelina Dodge '20** (2nd), and **Mady Friese '21** (3rd)



ALUMNI



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ALUMNI WEBSITE

marshallschool.org/alumni



Jasen Wise

GREETINGS FROM OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS!

Hello Hilltoppers,

My name is Jasen Wise, and I'm the new Director of Alumni Relations and Director of Hockey Operations. I am very excited to be a member of the Marshall School community, and I look forward to meeting all of you in the near future. In the meantime, here's a bit about me:

I grew up in Anchorage, AK, playing hockey and spending time in the mountains hunting and on the water fishing. At the age of 16, I moved to International Falls, MN for the spring semester of 10th grade to pursue my passion for hockey. We were fortunate to have a great team my first season and we made it to the state tournament in 1989, playing in the old St. Paul Civic Center with the clear boards and WCCO music videos. After high school, I played two seasons in the USHL followed by four years of NCAA Division III hockey. I graduated from the University of St. Thomas in 1996.

Following graduation, I worked for Anheuser Busch, US Bank, and Bombardier Capital, before starting my coaching career. All three companies are leaders in their industries, and I learned a lot about what it takes to be the best in a very competitive market. Those lessons later helped me take two different hockey programs from humble beginnings to top 15 national rankings. I spent eight years at Marian University and eight years at Concordia University Wisconsin, and left both with the most wins in program history. Now, I'm excited to join the Marshall community and be part of both celebrating the past and continuing on with the rich legacy of Marshall Hilltoppers, on and off the field, in and out of the classroom, and beyond.

Feel free to reach out by emailing me at jasen.wise@marshallschool.org.

REUNION

Coming up on a reunion year? Wondering what the Alumni Office offers to help your class celebrate? Read on!

To make the most of our resources, the Alumni Office celebrates Milestone Reunions (this year, it's '10, '00, '90, '80, '70, and '60) together at Marshall School on the third weekend of July.

- Milestone Classes have designated spaces for gathering and reminiscing
- Drinks and appetizers are served

Looking for your milestone class-specific schedule? Watch your mailbox, your inbox, and the alumni website (marshallschool.org/alumni). RSVP today! marshallschool.org/alumni

2020 REUNION EVENTS

ALL-CLASS MIXER
FRIDAY, JULY 17 | 4:30 -7:30

GOLDEN TOPPER LUNCHEON
GRADUATES OF 1970 AND EARLIER
SATURDAY, JULY 18 | 11:30AM

As of the printing of this issue of the Hilltopper, we are planning to move forward with July's Reunion event, but we recognize that national, state, and local travel and gathering recommendations may continue to shift and extend into summer months. For the most up-to-date Reunion information, please RSVP and keep an eye on your email.

HELP US CELEBRATE THE CLASS OF 2020 IN THESE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

This time of year, we're always looking forward to welcoming the next class of Hilltoppers as the newest alumni. While they will still cross that finish and earn their diplomas, the extraordinary measures taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 this spring has transformed, rescheduled, or canceled many of the traditional rites of passage for graduates. To help give them a special send-off regardless of what shape commence-

ment takes this year, we'd love to share a message with them from alumni everywhere!

To participate, simply email alumni@marshallschool.org with a written or recorded (video or audio) message by Monday, June 1st. It could be as simple as "Congratulations, Class of 2020!" or include some of the best advice you received as a new graduate.



HILLTOPPER HONORS

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

DISTINGUISHED YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AWARD

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

• MARSHALLSCHOOL.ORG/ALUMNI •

HONOR AWARDS

The Hilltopper Honors Awards are a way to honor alumni who have excelled in their personal achievements, professional lives, or in service to society, and whose accomplishments have brought credit to the school.

The 2020 Hilltopper Honors Awards will be presented on campus in the fall. Nominate alumni by visiting the alumni website or contacting Jasen Wise, Director of Alumni Relations, at alumni@marshallschool.org or 218.727.7266 x112.

NEWS & NOTES

70s

Mary Webster '70 writes: “Just retired June 31, 2019. Moving to Grand Junction, CO after we remodel our kitchen. My husband’s mom and dad are in their 90s and living in Grand Junction along with son Brien and his wife Holly and my husband’s youngest sister. My other son Lucas is in Durango so we will be closer to him too. Maybe we’ll be moved by reunion time!”

90s

Susan Clark '91 and **James Walker** writes: “Greetings from Atlanta, GA, where we are raising our two children—Sofia (7) and William (2)—and I work for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).”

00s

Christopher Bowman '02 writes: “In November 2019, I joined the law firm of Madigan, Dahl & Harlan, P.A. (www.mdh-law.com), where I practice civil and appellate litigation, focusing on labor and employment and construction litigation, as well as representing beer and alcohol distributors across the country.”

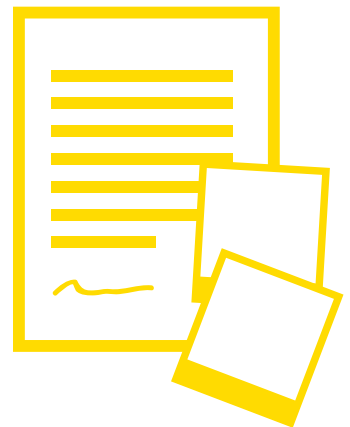
IN MEMORIAM

Clare (Meyer) Chamberland '45
 Mary (Brown) Sundland '46
 Beverly Parkinson '48
 Joan (Mahoney) Segel '50
 Robert Gressman '53
 David Olsen '53
 Michael Dungan '54
 Barbara (Kreager) McTavish '54
 Thomas Collins '55
 Michael Lynch '55
 Claudia Trefethren '55
 Joseph Pucci '57
 Jeffrey Sundell '57
 David Cismoski '58
 Laurella (Royer) Watts '59
 Patricia (Collier) Wollack '59
 Sandra (Lampinen) Perreault '61
 Stephen Greenwood '64
 Kathy (Makoski) Hon '65
 William Gitar '68
 Edward Jeanetta '68
 Marie Carlson Killian '68
 Thomas O'Neill '68
 William Smith '68
 Deborah (Dickson) McLeod '70
 Ronald Tomshack '70
 David Ridgewell '75
 Scott Moore '78
 Kathy Stender Thompson '91
 Heather (Anderson) McLaughlin '93
 John Grombacher '94
 Kristin (Medjo) Baldwin '94
 Ryan Hartranft '97
 Marina Mednik-Vaksman '01
 Jesse Schoff '04

WHAT ARE WE MISSING?

With more than 5,000 alumni scattered around the world, it's hard to keep track of the incredible things everyone is up to. We're always looking for stories and updates of alumni to celebrate, and we need your help! You can call or email the Alumni Office with updates and ideas for Hilltopper profiles, or visit our website and submit an update form.

Thanks for keeping us in the loop!



GIVING MATTERS

JIM ENGBERG '85

When the school district closed Morgan Park High School in 1982, school officials assumed all the students would transfer to Denfeld, but alumnus Jim Engberg's '85 parents had a different idea. Although the Engbergs were Lutheran and of limited means, they elected to enroll Jim at Cathedral, a school that did not even offer swimming, his favorite sport.

"I was intimidated to join a predominantly Catholic community I didn't know, and I was a bit scared of the nuns, but that all changed immediately. It was such a happy place and everyone was treated equally by the teachers," recalled Engberg. "Larry Weber, Michael Fedea, Frank Napoli, Sister Cecilia, Chico Anderson, and Dave Homstad—those teachers weren't there for the money; they were there for us. When you entered a classroom, it was like walking into a room in your own house."

Engberg knew his parents sacrificed to meet the cost of tuition. His father was an accountant and his mother owned a beauty shop and was on her feet seven hours a day, six days a week. Engberg lost his father in 1995, so when his mother and step-father passed away in 2015, he was inspired to leave a legacy, creating scholarships at Marshall School and at UMD. He hopes his scholarship



will enable more families to access a Marshall education, knowing that his years at Cathedral brought him happiness and fulfillment.

Jim feels fortunate to have been successful in his adult life but finds he "only needs as much as he needs" and, therefore, also intends to remember Marshall in his estate plan as well. His rationale is quite simple: He wants to provide students with an experience similar to his for years to come.

"There was never a day I didn't want to go to school," added Engberg. "The building was always cold and the roof leaked everywhere back then, but it was also a place of great warmth and happiness."

"IT WAS SUCH A HAPPY PLACE AND EVERYONE WAS TREATED EQUALLY BY THE TEACHERS"

To make a gift to Marshall School's Annual Fund, please use the enclosed envelope or visit marshallschool.org/giving. To learn more about establishing an endowed scholarship or making an estate gift contact Jennifer Berry at jennifer.berry@marshallschool.org or 218-727-7266 x113.

Marshall School

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Would you prefer not to receive a printed copy of the Hilltopper?

You can request to unsubscribe at alumni@marshallschool.org.

