These words resonated with me on my first day at Marshall School as the Interim Head of School.

As I walked in that morning, I was met with smiles and “hellos” from students, faculty, and staff. From there, I began the day with our ninth graders as they embarked on a journey to Camp Menogyn; in this place, students create and tighten bonds within their cohort as they start their first year in the Upper School. I then introduced myself at an assembly with the remaining tenth through twelfth grade classes.

That afternoon, I spoke with middle school students who beamed with energy and curiosity. They showed great interest in my involvement with showing dogs and horses, of which I’m sure they’ll have many more questions to come. I then visited with a group of Forest School students who, despite the unseasonable heat, assured me they were having “a super great day!” I witnessed the joy they had during pickup when they shared about their day’s activities with their families.

In various locations across our country, I’ve walked through school halls with students of all ages, but to me, nothing feels like walking down the halls of Marshall School. The community here is evident. The students are inquisitive and respectful, filled with a sense of ownership and pride in their school. Young learners have stopped by my new office to say “hi” on their way to class with a sense of confidence I can’t imagine having if I were in their shoes. When I went to a large public school in the Ozarks of Missouri, going anywhere near the principal’s office meant you were likely in trouble.

This past spring, my son Aidan graduated from Marshall. We took him to college for his first semester at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, New York, and it was both emotional for us to leave him, but also exciting to see him in his element. The confidence he gained at this school through class discussions, clubs, sports, and being engaged in the Hilltopper community made his college transition smoother than I could have imagined.

I’m not new to our school community after having served on the Marshall Board of Trustees and being a Marshall parent, but now in this role, I get the privilege of seeing our school from yet another side.

As we settle into fall semester, there is much to look forward to in the next year. I am committed to supporting a stable, yet inspiring, environment for our Hilltopper community as we search for our next Head of School. I am honored to bring my knowledge of Marshall and background with previous educational administrative roles into this special place as we continue to grow together, preserve and enhance the value of a Marshall education, further connect with our incredible alumni, and work together to inspire lifelong learners to embrace challenge and create positive change.

I look forward to meeting you all, Hilltoppers young and old, at one of our many activities and events this year!

Illustration by student Lydia Roth ’24

2023-2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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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.
The Class of 2023 graduated on Friday, June 2nd. This group of five were Marshall students from the beginning, all starting classes at Marshall as 4th graders! (Clockwise from top left: Grant Williams ’23, Brendan Friday ’23, Cormac Johnson ’23, Evelyn Ojard ’23, and Lance Koski ’23.)

Our Forest School wrapped up their very first year with a colorful maypole celebration at Chester Park. Students hiked to the park on the last day of school, then enjoyed ice cream from Love Creamery with family and friends. Our youngest learners range from kindergarten through 4th grade.

What’s the Scoop? is our newest alumni event, where our previous year’s grads come back to visit with teachers and classmates, talk about their first year away from Marshall, and indulge in delicious ice cream sundaes. Maddie Maas ’22 shares conversation with strings teacher Marc Harroo and history teacher Heather Holst.
Our 40-acre campus was the setting for a series of weekly nature-related summer camps this year. A number of our Upper School students served as camp counselors and formed great connections with the young campers.

Senior Audrey Dodge ’24 looks confident as she climbs a rope ladder at the North Shore Adventure Park in Silver Bay. The senior class of more than 70 students spent the first day of school bonding on the tight ropes high above the trees.

The Class of 2027 (below) gathered for a group photo before embarking on a beloved Marshall tradition: the annual ninth grade class bonding trip to Camp Menogyn.

Homecoming week was a rodeo of fun this year! Faculty and staff joined students for themed dress-up days; (right) teachers Kristy McGiffert, Jill Torres, and Terry Schoer aced country western day.

Thumbs up from 6th grader Tiegen Fryberger ’30, who is ready to start the school year on a foggy first day!
The Marshall School International Program brings students from around the world to our classrooms and friend groups to learn, grow, and share in experiences with our community. Almost all of these students live on campus in the Marshall House dorms, which provide a “home away from home” during the school year. We are pleased to introduce the diverse group of residential advisors who help to support, enrich, and protect the living experiences of our learners.

Taku Tavengwa is from Zimbabwe, and is currently a junior at The College of St. Scholastica, double-majoring in English Literature and Communications with a minor in Social Media Studies. She feels lucky to be working alongside such an incredible team at Marshall House, and to have the privilege of being a role model and mentor for all of our young international students.

Joje Martinez Dahan is a multifaceted educator and residential advisor from the Philippines; she is filled with boundless energy, a passion for teaching competitive sports and lifetime fitness, and has an aim to redefine our school’s approach to wellness as a physical education teacher. Off the field, Joje is a true theater arts and dance aficionado, infusing creativity and grace into every facet of her life.

Crystal Gail “CG” Welcome is an author, backpacker, public speaker, and teacher in our Forest School. CG has worked for over 18 years in youth-serving organizations. As a lover of Nature, explorer, and passionate educator, CG brings a unique worldview to the dorm and is thrilled to work with students throughout Marshall. CG is equally devoted to ensuring the safety and emotional well-being of our international student residents.

Sorrel Kaspszak has been with Marshall since 2014, and has worked in many capacities. She is currently an Upper School history teacher and loves working in this community that allows her to interact with, learn from, and support the young people around her. Sorrel is a Duluth native and is happy to be serving the community that she grew up in. She loves musicals, symphonies, and evenings with friends and family, and is looking forward to a wonderful year with our Hilltopper community.

Shokria Ebadi is from Afghanistan, and is currently a student at The College of St. Scholastica. She enjoys playing basketball, hiking, and spending time with our students. Before moving here, Shokria lived in Ohio for two years, but believes Duluth is the most beautiful city she has ever been to.

Bettina Keppers is the Director of Residential Life at Marshall House, and has been in that role since the start of the residential program in 2016. Prior to working at Marshall School, she worked in international child welfare for ten years, collaborating with governments and nonprofits working to serve the best interests of children in Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia, and the Netherlands. She is grateful to have the opportunity to work with young people from across the globe so close to her hometown of Esko, Minnesota. When not working, she serves as a Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Duluth, and enjoys competing in triathlons, spending time outdoors with family, and planning her next big adventure.
WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

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HERE, YOU BELONG

What does it mean to belong? Beyond being part of, a member of, included, affiliated, located, connected, rooted in... belonging is one of humanity’s most basic core needs. It goes as deep as being known, loved, secure, supported, welcomed, accepted, authentic... knowing one has a rightful place.

As Hilltoppers, each and every one of those words applies to any person who joins our community: students, faculty, staff, alumni, board members, parents, siblings, donors, grandparents... there is room for us all.

In this issue of the Hilltopper magazine, we explore Marshall experiences of belonging... such as stepping into a new administrative position, diverse backgrounds converging in our Marshall House dorm, and remarkable “legends” who contributed an entire career to our school community.

We invite you to read about ways additional activities help young learners connect and grow, unique opportunities and approaches existing in our Middle School, a community effort to enhance the athletic experiences of our students, and extraordinary achievements by our Hilltopper friends.

We celebrate all of this, because in our beloved school, the Hilltopper spirit and pride reminds us... we all belong.
COMMITMENT
to a COMMUNITY

On a cheery evening in September, a group of beloved “legends” gathered in the Chapel at Marshall School to be honored for their career commitment of 25 years or more to our Hilltopper community of Duluth Cathedral and Marshall.

The 25 Year Club celebration aimed to recognize and thank these individuals for their foundational support, impact on young minds, and long-term dedication to our school. The event included the unveiling of a handmade 25 Year Club commemorative plaque listing the names of all 31 individuals currently inducted into this respected and cherished group.

The club was originally established in 2012 in partnership with a scholarship fund allowing donations to be made in honor of the people who had impacted so many students. The fund still exists and multiplies that impact into a meaningful ripple effect on generations to come.

- Below from left to right: Dave Risdon, Susan Nygaard, Greg Mirau, Tom Diener, Tony Lockhart, Karen Snyder, Fred Sippel, Martha Firling, Dave Johnson, Lori Durant, Larry Weber, Scott Kylander-Johnson ’90, Dave Homstad ’72.
The roaring noise of the student section, the energy filling the air, the sea of black and gold in the stands... this is a Marshall School athletic contest with a sound and vision of support.

Whether in the gym, at the rink, on the field, or in the auditorium, the sense of community and belonging is felt throughout. From senior teammates who have been participating for years to seventh graders who are new to a club or sport, Marshall students all work together. They collaborate to reach a common goal, whether winning a competition or helping each other gain the confidence to compete.

When mistakes are made, ‘Toppers know it’s okay, and learn to persevere and overcome. The challenges of these experiences are often apparent, but students are unconsciously absorbing the benefits of participating in co-curricular and extracurricular activities as well.

At Marshall School, we understand that education goes beyond the walls of the classroom. While academic advancement is greatly valued, recognizing the benefits of participating in co-curricular and extracurricular activities is also necessary. These opportunities enhance a student’s learning experience and contribute to their personal growth and development.

Co-curricular activities, such as Marshall School’s speech team, TopperBots robotic team, National Honor Society, and other clubs provide students with an environment to explore their passions and interests in a different way. Sometimes this can generate ideas about a future career.

Engaging in co-curricular and extracurricular activities at Marshall develops our community by creating new friendships and connections a student may not gain elsewhere. Many sports teams and clubs on campus make it a point to add additional time to their schedules specifically for team bonding and community building. This fall season, the girls’ soccer team went out for ice cream, got creative with crafts, and went bowling together. Through these social activities and connections, students learn to interact with others while contributing to the overall growth and development of their teams and clubs.

Clubs and athletics also provide our young learners with lifelong skills needed for their future. These include, but are certainly not limited to, problem solving skills, teamwork abilities, and time management techniques.

These opportunities allow students to discover and share their talents while developing self-confidence, nurturing self-esteem, understanding compassion, and building leadership skills. Many of these activities are open to a range of ages; this creates situations where older students are able to mentor younger students, and gives younger students exceptional role models going forward.

Often students learn to take an encourager role as well, showing up to support sports teams or club events of which they aren’t players or members. School spirit becomes more than cheering and wearing school colors... it appears as a vital element nurturing a sense of unity and belonging that is seen and heard at Marshall.

These kids are proud of their school.

When our students develop strong connections to their school and peers, whether by being on a sports team, volunteering for a club, or cheering in the stands, they are apt to feel more motivated and engaged in both their personal academics and greater community.

As our students transition into higher education and careers, these experiences will set them apart. They walk forward into the world carrying with them, and anchored in, the inherent sense that started at Marshall...

“Here, you belong.”
Middle school years can be tough. In a time when students are balanced between being kids and reaching toward adulthood, significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes are happening. While learners are seeking more independence, these critical years require guidance, support, and encouragement. This is where the Middle School at Marshall comes in.

Duluth Cathedral first opened its doors to seventh and eighth grade students in 1982; fifth and sixth grades were added to Marshall in 1993. Since then, teachers have developed the middle school program into a nurturing environment where Marshall’s core values of respect, compassion, integrity, self-discipline, intellectual curiosity, and strong academic habits form the basis for how conflict is resolved and independence is gained.

How does Marshall turn this tumultuous time into a productive and positive experience? According to Middle School Principal Karen Snyder, “[In middle school] we work on more than just academic achievement. We are developing the whole person.” Focusing on the “whole person” emphasizes learning social and emotional skills that will help students in all aspects of life.

Teaching important study skills, including time management and organizational skills, help create a strong foundation for success in the Upper School and beyond. The Middle School is designed to be a safe and supportive environment where students are free to express curiosity, take risks, and try new things. Karen continues, “They are at a time in their lives when they are trying to figure out who they are and what they believe. We are here to help them find themselves.”

At Marshall, building a strong community is key to the middle school experience. There are several unique parts of the experience that reinforce belonging and growing.

**CREW**

Middle school students meet every morning and afternoon with their Crew leader and a peer group of about ten students. Fifth and sixth grade teacher Scott Kylander-Johnson ’90 says, “Having a dedicated time to building relationships is key. You get to know the students in a fun, non-academic setting so you get to know the whole person first, which helps in the academic setting later.”

Crew time helps teachers know when a student is having a tough day or when there is something to celebrate. It is also an opportunity for students to learn more about each other. Everyone participates and is heard, creating a teamwork approach that helps with building relationships and conflict resolution.

**LEARNING OUTSIDE**

Middle school is a time to build resilience and perseverance, and the outdoors often provide the perfect
space for those skills to develop. Younger students take daily nature hikes, a hike with a snack, to move their bodies and develop observation skills. Getting outside of the classroom provides unique opportunities to view the same problem in a different way.

Whether students are Nordic skiing while practicing Spanish vocabulary, or figuring out math problems with chalk on sidewalks, students develop new ways of learning. The outdoors also offer unique opportunities for choice and independence. During a recent Fun Friday, students had the option to choose from various outdoor activities including hiking, mountain biking, outdoor games, and outdoor art creation.

**STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES**

Near the end of each year, middle school students lead their own conferences, giving them the opportunity to take ownership of their work and progress. They choose what material to share with their guardians and have a chance to show what they are proud of, challenges they have faced, and offer examples of how they have grown.

Kylander-Johnson says, “It is really important for students to have their parents’ undivided attention for 20 minutes. It is often the first time a student has complete agency to run the show.” Presenting to family builds both communication skills and confidence.

**MENTORSHIP**

Being in the “middle” has some benefits. Middle school students have long been paired with upper school National Honor Society students for tutoring and group activities such as sledding and Halloween parties. Older mentors help set examples for what middle school students can do in the upcoming years and can provide encouragement and support to their middle school mentee. With the establishment of the Forest School last year, Marshall middle school students now also have the opportunity to be mentors for younger students. They can help the elementary-aged students with their lunch trays, be reading buddies, and help with outdoor activities. Students learn through both relationships—how to mature and how to serve.

**COLLABORATIVE TEACHERS**

Working with middle school students isn’t always easy, but the rewards can be significant. Marshall middle school teachers teach in teams where most have the same students for two years in a row. These teams talk daily about what they are doing, which students may need extra help, and how they can support one another. Students change rapidly between fifth and eighth grade, and because of this team approach, teachers are able to encourage growth across different classes and focus on long term progress.

This collaborative approach not only benefits students, but also benefits the teachers. According to middle school art teacher Turi Sederquist, “I don’t know what I would do without the support and ‘I got your back, no matter what’ mentality of my colleagues. They are unlike any other teaching staff I’ve worked with. We’ve cried, laughed, hugged, debriefed, consulted, painted sets, led field trips, played, observed, pitched in, made jokes, dressed up with wacky hair, and brought the most real versions of ourselves to the students walking through our doors each day.”

Middle school is a journey for our students, but Marshall ensures they are not alone on the journey. According to Snyder, “Marshall is a place where kids can discover themselves. Our teachers get to know students so well that they know how to draw the best out of them and can help students become the best versions of themselves.”
Athletic programs and events have always been a key staple in the grade-school experiences of students in our community and beyond. Sports bring populations together, develop lifelong skills in students, and push individuals to be their greatest selves, while also creating opportunities to learn how to work with others and build relationships. Over the past summer, Marshall School invested in the facilities where these activities take place, and prioritized creating beautiful, useful, and sustainable spaces for people young and old to come together.

Our soccer field was leveled, resurfaced, and lined with an eco-friendly irrigation system, while our school gym took on a head-to-toe Hilltopper transformation with stunning results. These projects involved countless people and businesses; so many people were involved, had a hand in one or more parts, donated money to make it happen… and now exponentially expanding numbers are going to be touched by that investment as our students and community utilize these spaces for years to come.

Marshall Facilities Director Brandon Hieb explained, “The biggest problem was that we couldn’t get grass to grow. I had Minnesota Sod come test the soil and found that we only had four inches of topsoil covering a very rocky surface. It didn’t matter how much we watered, seeded, or fertilized—and we were wasting valuable financial and environmental resources.”

In addition to poor surface composition, the field was originally installed with drain tile, which effectively drew needed moisture away from the area. Over time, the surface had settled to create a sloped playing field that varied almost twenty inches in elevation from one end to the other. If the tilted field didn’t mess up a player’s footing, the jutting rocks and divots created extra obstacles and challenges.

Minnesota Sodding Company, a turfgrass business headed by former Hilltopper Tom Groh, is responsible for installing some of the best fields in the region, including the Minnesota Twins Target Field. Their experienced team of installers extracted the former sod, removed truckloads of rocks, leveled the playing surface, installed an efficient irrigation system, and reinstalled the beautiful field in time for soccer practices this summer. They brought a robotic striping machine out to paint lines for the fall, and will return in the spring to draw out a unified lacrosse field for the boys and girls teams. “We now have one of the best grass surfaces in the state,
and because of the water pressure where we’re located, one of the best sprinkler systems as well,” shared Hieb. “Also, they pinstriped our field in less than 45 minutes, something that usually takes us several days.”

The benefits are astounding. It previously took a full eight hours of wheeled watering to cover the field during staffed hours, and now the automated system runs in less than an hour during optimal evening and non-usage times. Sensors throughout the field direct hydration only to areas that need it, and can be monitored via an app on Hieb’s cell phone. Not only does the system substantially conserve water, but it also lowered the operating cost for the field considerably.

**FLAT, PLAYS WELL, and GORGEOUS**

Coach Mike Sengbush has led soccer teams at Marshall for twenty years and has witnessed the evolution of the field; his varsity boys were some of the first to utilize the new surface this year. He also remembers back to the very beginning of his journey with the school, when his own three boys were Hilltopper soccer players who trained off-campus at the Fryberger facility in Woodland. Soccer has been Coach Sengbush’s true passion and love since he was five years old, and it’s heartwarming for him to see the students’ eyes light up when they get to play on the new field.

“The kids love it. They’re teenage boys, so the expression of that is marginal, but they really do. When the seventh through ninth grade JV boys get to come up and play with Varsity there, you can see that it’s like they’ve entered the Colosseum. It’s fun to watch young people experiencing this,” said Sengbush.

For the players who depend on this surface for a good game, the improvements are noticeable. The nuances have been corrected, students don’t have to run uphill to make a kick, and the visual impact is great. “The field is flat, it plays well, looks gorgeous, and when we have games going on, people drive up Rice Lake Road and can see that the beautiful campus is alive.”

Sengbush notes that our field represents our school, programming, and entire Hilltopper community. It is a source of great pride for students this year, and game attendance has been up from previous years. “We have good kids with great friends, it’s a really good culture this season. We’ve seen more students coming onto the field after games to kick balls around, and joining our team to congratulate their friends after a game. We have a good team with solid character, which makes for the best experiences.”

On this field, he also witnesses the development of future leaders in a safe setting of adversity. These young athletes learn perseverance and to stick to their beliefs while having support. They see that doors are
going to shut, but they can keep going… and they get real world experience in making mistakes, failing, succeeding, feeling exaltation and defeat… and they’re being set up for a thriving future.

**A SPACE TO BE PROUD OF**

In addition to a lush new field, the interior realm of Marshall sports received a stunning makeover as well. Last school year before the school’s annual fundraising auction, a gym upgrade was announced for the special Fund-A-Need portion of the event. The Hilltopper community rallied together to raise funds, with special support from local businesses North Shore Bank and Zenith Auto Glass.

The school gym is one of the most utilized areas in the entire building. All week, students come early to work out in the fitness center before school, have gym classes in the space during the day, and then sports teams take over until as late as 10pm in the evening. Occasionally, there are games on weekends and special community rental events. Most Northlanders who visit our school will only step as far as the school gym, so it ends up representing who we are as Hilltoppers in a limited amount of space.

The goal of the Fund-A-Need project was to resurface the gym floors and add new court paint, refresh the walls, add padding for safety, replace the old, original doors with new key-fob controlled locking doors for security, and update the scoreboards. Typically, that funding also looks at what project will positively impact the most people, while being something extraordinary that our community can get excited about.

Marshall’s marketing and communications manager Kelly Schamberger came up with several design options for the floor staining and paint, and then students joined the process by voting for their favorite design. The chosen two-tone stain design included the iconic chapel windows, which Schamberger added to represent the history of our school as both Marshall School and Duluth Cathedral. She then repeated the motif on the graphics for the padding at each end of the gym.

Our operations staff put in a giant effort over the summer to drastically transform the gym. Hieb gratefully acknowledged, “We have a talented staff and were able to do a lot of the work in-house to enhance the gym. Before school ended last year, we were in there peeling tape and markings off the walls, filling holes. We had one person paint the entire gym, floor to ceiling with gold stripes and everything, in less than a month.” That included special layers of primer to cover the old pink ceramic wall tiles.

When students returned to class after the long break, they were finally able
to witness the big reveal of the newly finished space. The most frequently heard reaction was that they were thrilled to have a space to practice and compete in that they could be proud of. Hieb repeated, “The kids were so proud. That first assembly this year... those kids were so proud to be in that gym. It definitely screams our brand and who we are.”

The girls’ volleyball team had the privilege of first use of the gym at the end of the summer. Varsity head coach Libby Nelson is in her fifth season with the Hilltoppers, and has joyfully witnessed the impact of the transformation. Nelson shares, “In volleyball, the texture of the floors is important, so the refinished surface is beneficial for our defensive players to move around quickly. The new painted lines are a huge difference and make it easier to play the game, while our line judges commented on how easy the lines are to call. The padding was exciting for safety reasons, but also looks awesome, and now we can show stats on the scoreboards. This changes the entire experience of our games.”

Her athletes are excited about the changes, and it has rippled into the community. Their first home game this year brought the largest turnout they had seen in a long time, and the school spirit was immense. Students came dressed in school colors to watch, cheered loudly, and stayed for all three sets. The visiting team commented on how good the gym looked, and the referees shared compliments as well.

Nelson saw the pride in her team and felt it herself. “I film all of our games, and as I was going through the videos, I kept thinking about how good it looked. Not only does it make playing our game better, but it makes a better experience for everyone visiting as well. For our team, it’s nice to receive so much positive feedback.”

**THIS is WHY**

Coach Sengbush and Hieb echoed the dire need for these updates, while addressing the responsibility we have. Hieb finished his thoughts, “This is who we are... and we're all in this business because we care about kids. We want to give them the same opportunities as big public schools, but we are working with limited private funding and reliant on support from our community. We find ways to make it work for us, and are blessed to have donors and businesses who believe in what we're doing. You walk into these spaces now and they feel like who we are, they feel like home. Every student in our school is going to benefit far into the future from the time they have enjoying the result of these projects.”

Coach Sengbush added, “I always want to make the most professional experience I can. I have enough years in to get our program to an advanced level with the resources we have, without adding a bunch of additional fees for families. This changes the game for us.”

With these updates, the visual appearance and utility of the spaces further support that Marshall is a school where everyone matters, where everyone belongs, and where we have an extended community that rallies around providing the greatest and most impactful experience possible for all of our young learners.

Thank you to everyone in our Hilltopper community, near and far, who made these upgrades possible.
Each year, the Hilltopper Honors Awards celebrate alumni who have excelled in their personal achievements, professional lives, or in service to society, and whose accomplishments have brought credit to the legacy of Marshall School and Duluth Cathedral.

The award committee was pleased to induct the following four alumni into our Hall of Fame at the 2023 Hilltopper Honors Awards Ceremony on September 21 in Marshall’s Fregeau Auditorium.

Awardees had an opportunity to give a speech to inspire current students, faculty, and additional members of our Hilltopper community.

NOMINATE EXCEPTIONAL ALUMNI FOR 2024!

Help us shine a spotlight on Hilltopper achievements while inspiring our next generation of learners toward excellence. Your nominations play a central role in helping us honor and celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments of our alumni.

To nominate an individual, please visit the alumni section of the Marshall website, email alumni@marshallschool.org, or call 218-727-7266, ext. 136.
David Krueger is an Assistant Professor of Machine Learning at the University of Cambridge. After Marshall, he graduated from Reed College with a BA in Mathematics, and then completed his graduate studies at the University of Montreal and Mila, with an MSc and PhD in Computer Science.

In this new age of artificial intelligence (AI), David is known globally for his work focusing on reducing the risk of human extinction from artificial intelligence (AI x-risk) through technical research, as well as education, outreach, policy, and advocacy. He is a research affiliate of Mila - Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute, UC Berkeley's Center for Human-Compatible AI (CHAI), and the Center for Study of Existential Risk (CSER) at the University of Cambridge. His research spans many areas of Deep Learning, AI Alignment, AI Safety, and AI Ethics, including alignment failure modes, algorithmic manipulation, interpretability, robustness, and understanding how AI systems learn and generalize.

David was awarded the NVIDIA Pioneering Research Award, and has been featured in media outlets including ITV's Good Morning Britain, Al Jazeera's Inside Story, France 24, New Scientist, and the Associated Press. Additionally, he has volunteered as a career counselor for students in the field, organized workshops on the topic, spoken about AI safety, and shared his expertise in a work that has been cited over 5,000 times.

Nordica MacCarty is a graduate of Iowa State University and received her BS ('00), MS ('13) and PhD ('15) in Mechanical Engineering. As a tenured Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Richard and Gretchen Evans Scholar of Humanitarian Engineering, and Executive Director of Aprovecho Research Center at Oregon State University, she is sharing her philosophies of sustainability and social justice with the next generation of students. Promoting humanitarian engineering infuses social, environmental, and economic context into the technical side of solving problems and, hopefully, inspires others to want to change the world.

Nordica's work at Aprovecho Research Center prior to graduate school included traveling the globe as an international consultant to build capacity in researchers in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs). She designed low-cost user-friendly emissions testing equipment that is now in use in 60 LMIC labs around the world, enabling them to optimize clean cookstove designs for their own communities. Her contributions impacted cleaner cookstove designs that have been distributed in the tens of millions globally. She has authored over 50 peer-reviewed journal publications, and has been invited to speak all over the world.

This winter, she will be on sabbatical teaching in New Zealand as a visiting Erskine Scholar, further extending her belief that one should make a good life, not just a good living, and offer their gifts to the world.
DAVID HOMSTAD ’72
ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

Dave Homstad is a 1976 graduate of St. John’s University where he earned a BA in English. Dave spent 36 years at our school as an English teacher, served as Athletic Director for 20 of those years, and was a head coach of five varsity sports during that time. From student to current member of our grounds crew staff, “Homer” has been a familiar face in the Hilltopper hallways for nearly 50 years.

As an athlete, he played in two state tournaments in basketball, one state tournament in baseball, earned All Conference Honorable Mention in football, and was named to Duluth’s All Academic Football Team. During his tenure with the school, he coached several teams to conference championships, coached in the girls’ state basketball tournament, created the Topper Tunnel, and founded this honor, the Hilltopper Athletic Hall of Fame. His participation with the Minnesota State High School League as Assembly Member President, Region 7A committee member, and Executive Secretary of the Lake Superior Conference has provided countless opportunities for thousands of students across the state.

Whether in the classroom, on the grounds, or out in the community, Homer is one of Marshall’s biggest supporters.

The Athletic Hall of Fame Award honors an alum, coach, or athletic director who has excelled in their athletic and community achievements.

JULIA HART ’99
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Julia Hart is a graduate of Yale University with a BA in Theatre Studies and German Literature, as well as Hamburg School of Music and Theatre with a BFA in Theatre Directing. She is a Theatre Director for Bard College in Berlin, Germany and credits teachers at Marshall School for encouraging her to follow her passions for theatre and German culture.

Over the last decade, Julia has developed and directed eight professional theatre productions for young audiences. Three of those productions drew attention to the climate change crisis and were produced for Greenpeace, the international network of independent organizations that use peaceful, creative confrontation to explore global environmental problems. Julia’s most recent show, BEING THERE, inspired productive and meaningful conversation with young people about finding the courage to confront racism.

Julia is an activist at heart, volunteering for two organizations in Hamberg, Germany that work to promote the arts. She is also a member of Dachverstand Freie Darstellende Künste, a cultural-political organization that works to support freelance artists in Hamberg. Julia holds her philosophy close and lives it out everyday: Small change can lead to big change.

The Global Citizenship Award honors an alum who has made a distinct and recognizable effort to contribute to global society while carrying out the core Hilltopper tenets of respect, compassion, and integrity. Nominees’ accomplishments and contributions are considered equally whether they are made domestically or abroad.
Brendan Flaherty ’82 was inducted posthumously into the Minnesota Hockey Coaches Association Hall of Fame on September 28, 2023. Flaherty served as Marshall’s Boys Hockey Coach from 1996 to 2018, leading the team to seven state tournament appearances, claiming second place at State in 2006, 2007, 2008 and third place in 2005.

We had a blast honoring our new Class of ’73 Golden Toppers and all of our alumni during Reunion weekend! It was fun seeing old friends, reminiscing about the past, and walking the halls of Marshall again. Cheers to memories old and new!

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We’re already looking forward to our next All-Class Mixer and Golden Topper Luncheon! Join us as we celebrate all of our alumni, especially our Milestone Classes...

Interested in helping organize additional reunion events for your class? Email us at alumni@marshallschool.org.

We now have an online store set up just for you... with Cathedral and Marshall alumni gear to share the Hilltopper pride.

Shop now at www.bonfire.com/store/hilltoppers
WE LOVE HEARING FROM YOU!

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 story ideas and updates from alumni to celebrate!

You can call or email the Alumni Office with ideas for Hilltopper articles and profiles, or visit our website to submit an update at:

marshallschool.org/alumni

NEWS & NOTES

50’S

Jon Walsh ’55 writes, “I am happily retired and living with my wife Kathleen at Boutwells Landing in Stillwater, Minnesota.”

10’S

David Kamper ’15 writes, “I graduated from University of Michigan in 2020 with a degree in neuroscience, philosophy, cognitive science, and linguistics. I was also in the school of music (music conservatory) where I completed a trombone performance degree, graduating summa cum laude and phi beta kappa. While at Michigan, I walked on the men’s water polo team, and won the Big Ten Championship three years in a row playing point (point guard equivalent). I am currently finishing a post-bacc research fellowship at Brown University, and I will be completing my PhD in cognitive neuroscience at UCLA. I am also deciding when (to defer) and where to attend law school, either at Harvard, UChicago or Stanford, to pursue a career as a legal academic in cognition in the law.

IN MEMORIAM

Thomas George Krzewinski ’37
Mary L. Samarzia ’43
Mary Ann Berg ’47
Albin Loushine ’49
Daniel Moore Jr. ’51
Ronald Koneczny ’52
Rosemary (Nesgoda) Anderson ’54
Mary Grubb ’56
James J. Merritt ’60
Robert Pavlatos ’65
John “Johnny Bill” O’Neill ’66
Charles Robert Swanson ’66
Kevin Hoene ’68
John Homstad ’68
Steve “Pokey” Trachsel ’69
Catherine (Hughes) Trachsel ’69

Rose Mary Perrault
Former Faculty

FIND IT ONLINE
ANNUAL REPORT

Thank you to the businesses, community partners, families, and individuals who generously support our school!

The Marshall School Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 is available online: www.marshallschool.org/annualreport

UPCOMING MARSHALL SCHOOL EVENTS

GRANDPARENTS and GRANDFRIENDS DAY for GRADES 5-12
November 22, 2023

ANNUAL DINNER AUCTION GALA
April 19, 2024
David Somppi '80 had no trouble thinking of Cathedral teachers who made an impact on his life; Mr. Sippel developed his critical thinking in History and Government classes; Sister Cecilia and Ms. Hyraks encouraged perseverance and problem solving in Algebra and Geometry; Mr. Giesen and Mr. Homstad’s English classes taught him effective writing and communication skills; Mr. Napoli taught him the value of competing well against all odds. These qualities built the foundation for who David is today.

While David appreciates the academic and life skills he gained from his time at Cathedral High School, he also fondly remembers the camaraderie of extracurriculars and social times on campus. He recalls the fantastical music of the 1970s filling the room in the Senior Lounge, playing soccer at Public School Stadium on a muddy field, and who could forget beating their biggest rival, East High School, in the High School Quiz Bowl just before graduation in 1980?

Although the school has changed in some ways in the last 40 years, David is grateful it is still here, imparting the same qualities to students today that benefited him. “I’m very pleased with how Marshall has evolved. I’m always impressed with the wonderful students-citizens who graduate each year and set forth on their life’s journeys.” It is because of the impact that Cathedral made on him that he continues to support Marshall School’s Annual Fund. “It’s been very important to me to play a (small) role in helping support Cathedral-Marshall over the years.”

David is a member of the Marshall School Sustainer’s Society, a group of donors who make a monthly recurring gift. He chose the option for a recurring gift because of its ease and affordability. Each gift adds up to make a significant difference in Marshall’s ability to offer financial aid, professional development for faculty, and experiential learning opportunities for students.

Marshall is grateful for alumni like David whose support serves as a testament to the enduring strength of our alumni network.

To make a gift to Marshall’s Annual Fund or to join the Sustainer’s Society, please use the enclosed envelope or visit: marshallschool.org/giving

To learn more about other ways to make an impact through giving, please contact:

Jen Berry
Director of Advancement
jennifer.berry@marshallschool.org
218-727-7266, ext. 113
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