“What the live creature retains from the past and what it expects from the future operate as directions in the present.”

John Dewey

Diversity / Innovation / Citizenship
Summer 2018
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An Introduction from Dan Frank

Francis W. Parker School educates students to think and act with empathy, courage and clarity as responsible citizens and leaders in a diverse democratic society and global community. —Parker’s Mission

Parker stands for a clear set of values that affect the way we educate students along their path toward maturity and growing citizenship. As Colonel Parker noted long ago, we live in a society where we learn together and from one another. What we learn or fail to learn depends on each person’s experience of how and with whom they have learned to explore, reflect and make sense of the world and our dynamic relationship to it.

Each year at commencement, I ask our graduates the Parker Question: “What will we do with our Parker educations? How will we use our knowledge, skill, resourcefulness and confidence to make the world a better, more just and interesting place for all people, not only for ourselves?”

Central to Parker’s approach to education is our consistent commitment to the value of being responsible, contributing members of a diverse democratic society and global community. This ethos begins with our relationships to one another inside the school and expands outward throughout our lives as teachers and students to find engaging ways to learn through active participation in the classroom, the broader life of the school and the wider world.

Students of all ages grow more aware of their relationship to the world as they learn through reflecting on their emotional experience of playing and working with others in groups, exploring the social and natural worlds, providing help to classmates and others and receiving it as well, participating in community building and problem-solving projects and more.

Engaging in community life inside and outside of school contributes to the formation of lifelong values and a sense of identity. The affirmation students feel as they participate in creative acts of citizenship contribute to their intellectual understanding of the world and their desire to make a meaningful difference.

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This issue of The Live Creature features stories about Parker students, educators, parents and alumni who participate as active citizens and leaders in their communities. These are just a few of the abundant narratives that tell Parker’s story of engaged, lifelong citizenship. From classroom curriculum to Morning Ex, from County Fair to running for elected political office, from community organizing to professional commitments, these accounts underscore the point made by educator Eric Liu, founder of Citizenship University, who spoke at Parker this past school year and reminded us all that, as citizens, we are more powerful than we think.
How My Parker Experience Yesterday Influenced My Life Today
By Bill Lowry ’80

Active Engagement

I am Bill Lowry, a lifelong Chicago South Sider, a husband of 27 years, a father of three children, a proud alum of Francis W. Parker School’s class of 1980 and the Democratic nominee for Cook County Commissioner of the 3rd District.

After graduating from Parker, I attended Lake Forest College, then Loyola University School of Law in Chicago. I have practiced law for more than 30 years, and I currently serve as president and co-managing shareholder of a 50-person litigation firm, Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie & Lowry, P.C. While I love the law, I recognized long ago that I must do more than just practice law. That is why I serve on numerous boards, including the boards of Lake Forest College and Loyola University.

After many years of whispering in the ears of my friends serving in public office, I realized, on January 29, 2013, that I could no longer whisper. On that day, Hadiya Pendleton was shot and killed 10 feet from my backyard. This horrific event led me to start The It’s Time Organization, or TITO, a non-violence organization that provided afterschool programming and summer internships for high school students on Chicago’s South Side. During this important work, I realized that we need effective leadership rooted in communication, collaboration and action. I believe I can provide such leadership through public service.

As a first-time candidate, I started my campaign for Cook County Commissioner of the 3rd District last August intending to make clear that this campaign was not just about issues, it was also about inclusion. This was a campaign about shining a light on those not seen and giving voice to those not heard. Such inclusion had been instilled in me when, following an act of violence perpetrated against me at my first high school, I transferred to Parker in 1979. Immediately, I found Parker to be a bastion of inclusion where true knowledge was gained. Parker was a place with knowledge born in education from exciting course work with talented and devoted scholars, as well as learning steeped in experiences with

For me, Parker was the start of a lifelong commitment to diversity in all of its wonderful hues.
many diverse teachers and students outside the classroom. For me, Parker was the start of a lifelong commitment to diversity in all of its wonderful hues. At Parker I was surrounded by racial diversity, religious diversity, gender diversity and economic diversity. I learned at Parker that wealth does not ensure success nor does poverty ensure failure. I learned at Parker that all opinions are to be valued and that all experiences are to be cherished.

With lessons learned at Parker, I set out on a campaign vowing to bring economic development and jobs to the entire 3rd District of Cook County; vowing to provide job skills training where needed and job placement when warranted; vowing to lean on our financial institutions to ensure they provide the same support and capacity to the businesses on Cottage Grove and Stony Island that they provide to businesses on Division and Michigan Avenue; vowing to ensure that affordable health care, including mental health care, is available for our children, our seniors, our veterans and our Medicaid recipients; vowing to develop strategies to keep our children out of the criminal justice system; and vowing to provide our returning citizens job opportunities, transportation and shelter. There is much to be done, but I believe together, we can do it!

My belief in community is rooted in my Parker experience. Parker is a community of confident risk takers, analytical thinkers, creative problem solvers and generally well-rounded people who walk the Earth with a can-do attitude. For more than 39 years, the Parker community has given me more than I have given back. Yet, to whom much is given, much is expected. Thus, as I move toward November as the Democratic nominee for Cook County Commissioner of the 3rd District, I do so with a service heart and a can-do attitude, while standing on the shoulders of many, such as Markwell, Geer, Seebold and Triplett, who were willing to shine a light on me and give me voice when I needed it most.
The phone rang at 7:46 a.m. “How soon can you be down here?” asked the former chief justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. “Uh, about 20 minutes?” “Great!” Click.

Justice Charles Freeman appointed me as a Circuit Court of Cook County Judge 45 minutes later, granting me the privilege of following in the footsteps of my aunt, Willie Whiting, the second African-American female Cook County Judge. I barely heard or seriously considered the former chief justice’s next statement, “You are now a candidate.” The appointment-induced euphoria numbed any feelings or thoughts about the approaching judicial campaign.

My enraptured state endured while winding down my law practice and purchasing robes (one regular and one ceremonial/spare), until I repeated the phrase, “uphold the Constitution” during my swearing-in. That is when the reality of the awesome responsibility truly kicked in, quickly followed by the intense desire to tackle the position with the confidence gained from 30 years of practicing at large law firms and serving as Illinois Court of Claims commissioner (appointed by the governor) and a hearing officer (appointed by the Secretary of State).

The day after being sworn in, I joined one other newly appointed judge for training on the intricacies of traffic court. For two weeks, we sandwiched the patient and experienced supervising judge on the bench during three morning calls and two afternoon calls, learning and familiarizing ourselves with law, codes, language and procedure.

Marriage Court assignments were interspersed with the traffic court curriculum. Sometimes referred to as “judges’ jail,” Marriage Court was for me a pleasant mix of excitement and curiosity. I’m a softy. I love marrying people in all types of ceremonies. Sometimes, however, the realities of life, culture and circumstances made me wonder what the future held for a couple.
As a judge, I am no longer a practitioner. My job now is to apply the law to the facts and make decisions, not to advocate. Suppressing the practitioner mentality is sometimes a frustrating adjustment.

Misdemeanor and driving under the influence trials followed. Traffic court is sometimes unfairly represented or viewed as a training ground for new judges where mistakes are less impactful. Presiding over my first DUI trial, involving an admitted drunk driver who killed a five-year-old child holding his father’s hand while crossing the street on the way to school at 7:30 in the morning, made me bristle at this assessment.

As courtroom management skills are honed and confidence (both yours as well as those of the supervising and presiding judges) grows, assignments expand. Civil contract and personal injury jury trials are both exhilarating and excruciating. As a trial lawyer, jury trials produce pure adrenaline. You fight with all of your being to represent your client. As a judge, I am no longer a practitioner. My job now is to apply the law to the facts and make decisions, not to advocate. Suppressing the practitioner mentality is sometimes a frustrating adjustment.

Harshly interrupting any feeling of professional normalcy in the position is the reality of having to campaign to keep your appointed job. For sitting judges doubling as political candidates, preparing for the primary election includes appearing at countless events and hiring staff and vendors to raise and help you spend money on publicity and for political support.

Weeks include six politically related events per night, every night—most scheduled at the same time on opposite sides of Cook County, which is two-thirds the size of Rhode Island. This, after a full day’s work on the bench, where decisions directly impact people’s lives. The toll on spouses, family and friends can be harsh. Fighting tunnel vision is essential and requires training, time and commitment if you lack a seasoned candidate’s combat experience.

As Election Day approaches, potential voters begin to pay somewhat closer attention to candidate ads, news stories and mailers, though you, as a candidate, have been “on the trail” for the last six to eight months. As a sitting judge and candidate, I wanted all voters to research the candidates’ backgrounds, qualifications and experience.

A potential voter told me he selected judges via the “Eeny, meeny, miny, moe” method. I asked him if that is how judges should make their decisions from the bench. He thought for a moment and, to my relief, replied, “Hey, judge, what was your name again?”
Openly discussing the reality that not every adventure will be successful is not oxymoronic for a supportive institution such as Parker. No one wants to embrace failure. Coping with it, though easier said than done, will ensure you will not be one.

Other potential voters disappointingly dismissed anything I said with the statement, “I simply vote for all [fill in the blank] candidates, no matter their positions or qualifications.”

Frustratingly, the realities of politics mean the candidate with the highest qualifications, most experience, highest bar ratings and most endorsements does not always win. Timing and trends can produce annoying results. Such was my case in the March 2018 Democratic Primary. Despite my qualifications, my experience and the Democratic Party’s endorsement, I did not win the nomination to retain my appointed position.

Cue Parker here. Parker (and my parents) prepared me for these challenges. It does not protect you from the realities of winning and losing or from good and bad. Marie Stone, a Parker bedrock, pushed us beyond our perceived limits and encouraged us to always be our best. She also warned of the importance of learning how to fail. It happens at some point to most people—rich, poor, genius, inept, talented, lacking, motivated, complacent—and it must not dissuade you from persevering.

I noticed a recent post on Parker’s website addressing the topic of failure. It is nice to see the school continue adhering to its supporting philosophy. Openly discussing the reality that not every adventure will be successful is not oxymoronic for a supportive institution such as Parker. No one wants to embrace failure. Coping with it, though easier said than done, will ensure you will not be one.
Parker Alumni Actively Engage in Their Communities

Active Engagement

We sent a survey asking Parker alumni who are actively engaged in community life as citizens and leaders, whether through their occupations or as volunteers, to share their experiences and their thoughts about Parker’s impact on those choices. Here are a few of the responses.

Bennet Greenwald ’60

I have been engaged with agencies addressing homelessness for the last 20 years: The Monarch School (for Homeless Students) and Second Chance, an organization serving those returning from prison, addiction and homelessness who seek to achieve self-reliance.

We read The Other America at Jack Ellison’s direction, and, not for the first time at Parker, I became aware of how fortunate we were and how desperate were the lives of so many of our fellow citizens.

Jamee Tucker Gregory ’66

I am currently president of The Society of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. I am responsible for a board of 100 women who raise funds and work on patient care committees. I also serve on the boards of the Central Park Conservancy, the Boys’ Club of NY and the Weill-Cornell Council.

FWP taught us to give back and be involved, to be active citizens of our community. Taking leadership roles comes naturally after attending a school that teaches you to stand up and be counted, to express your opinions and to participate.
Werner Christie ’68 (exchange student)

After a brief stint as a family doctor I became the hospital manager in our county. I was then asked to be first Minister of Health in Norway (1992–96) by Prime Minister Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland and joined her cabinet. I therefore had the pleasure of hosting U.S. Secretary of Health Donna Shalala on her official visit to Norway in 1995. A great lady! I was later invited to be the first chairman of the steering group for stoptb.org, the World Health Organization’s global public-private partnership against tuberculosis. In that role, I collaborated closely with the World Bank, including current President Jim Yong Kim, as well as George Soros and Hillary Clinton. We also collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Lung Association and lobbied the U.S. Congress about public health and tuberculosis programs. From 1999 to 2001, I was special advisor in biotechnology at the Norwegian Consulate in San Francisco, including broad collaborations with both academic and private organizations in Silicon Valley and San Francisco. I spent 2004–10 in China as science and technology counselor for the Norwegian Government and later chairman for China operations of Public Advice International, a consultancy based in Brussels. Since returning to Norway, I have designed and am now in charge of The National Leadership Program for Primary Health Care sponsored by our ministry of health and operated by BI Business School, where I currently work.

Parker gave me close familiarity with U.S. culture and conditions and experience and confidence in “cross-cultural” communication and practices. I also greatly enjoyed several of the academic subjects I studied at Parker, even with a completed high school diploma from home, including anthropology, social studies and math, as well as music and working with the student newspaper.
Governor Brown appointed me to the Los Angeles County Superior Court (LASC) in December 2013. I served as a trial court judge in criminal infraction and misdemeanor courts for about a year and then in a family law court for about three years. This year, Governor Brown appointed me to the Court of Appeal, and I began serving as an Associate Justice in April.

There are many reasons I was attracted to becoming a judge, including the breadth and importance of the issues presented in courts, the intellectual challenges inherent in deciding cases and the luxury of being in a role in which you aim to do the right thing. I also feel that my personality is well suited to being neutral in a case, as opposed to having to advocate for one side. In addition to these reasons, I have a strong belief in public service, government and community service—a belief I trace back to the education I received at Parker. Parker encouraged its students to see themselves as part of larger communities, starting with the school and expanding to encompass the surrounding neighborhood and city, the country and the world. Many teachers there instilled in me the lesson that we need to take on responsibility for those larger communities and find ways to improve them and the lives of others. Bernie Markwell, most significantly, encouraged me to think about the importance of public service. Serving as a judge and justice is a natural extension of this belief.

I started a nonprofit 10 years ago—the Andrew Levitt Center for Social Emergency Medicine—to incorporate social context—such as housing, food, violence, economic opportunity—into the structure and practice of emergency care.

At Parker there was always a sense that we were part of a larger ecosystem. We could have lived in a bubble, but that wasn’t the ethos.
Wiley Nickel ’84

I am the Democratic nominee for the 16th District—Cary, Morrisville and NW Raleigh—of the North Carolina State Senate.

The results of the presidential election in November have fostered a lot of emotions for many of us—disappointment, outrage, sadness and concern for our country’s future. Those same sentiments have encouraged me to stand up and join the fight for a better future. I’m running for the legislature because it is time to focus on strengthening our schools, creating high-paying jobs, expanding access to affordable health care and protecting our state’s natural resources. Governor Roy Cooper has laid out a positive agenda for our state’s future but is faced with a Republican supermajority in the General Assembly who are fighting him at every turn. He needs our help and I’m ready to join the fight to clean up Raleigh.

At Parker I was encouraged on a daily basis to be a responsible citizen and to get involved in the political process to help my community.

Sophia Shaw ’87

Serving as president and CEO of the Chicago Botanic Garden for nearly a decade gave me the great honor to enhance the lives of well over a million people (as well as plants and pollinators) each year. I am also active on a number of boards of directors that benefit many people from very different communities. Most relevant to the next generation of community leaders is my work at the Kellogg School of Management (Northwestern University) leading the Kellogg Board Fellows program, which trains 100 full-time M.B.A. students to be active civic leaders of social impact and nonprofit organizations in the years ahead.

The Francis Parker auditorium proscenium words, “a school should be a model home, a complete community, an embryonic democracy” have motivated me and helped guide my career. Replace “school” with any place of work or avenue for volunteer service and the mission and purpose of our efforts feel so much more important.

Matt Brown ’89

Since 1994, I’ve worked in and with K–12 schools and classrooms (including Parker) as a teacher, as a researcher studying how people learn and as a designer creating technologies to support teaching and learning. In 2001, I helped found Inquirium, a design firm specializing in creating learning technologies, which are used across the country.

I’ve spent much of my career as an educator reflecting on what made my Parker education so rich and productive. My experiences with Parker teachers are what made me a teacher, and my experiences as a Parker student have informed my research into how people learn.
Stephen Feldman '91

I ran for judge in 2014 and 2018. I lost both times. The primary reason that I decided to run for judge was that I wanted to serve my community and the legal profession in a manner that would promote public confidence in the judiciary.

Life is about taking risks! When I was a student at FWP, the school created an environment where every student was provided an opportunity as well as the encouragement to follow their passions. We were also encouraged (or maybe required) to also try things that we were not passionate about. The environment at FWP helps students build self-confidence, which is an essential trait in successful people. Being in an environment where I was encouraged to follow my passions is the most significant influence that my FWP education had on my decision to run for judge. I am grateful that I was and continue to be a member of the FWP community.

Sara May Berliner '94

I've been active as a volunteer and fundraiser for progressive causes and political campaigns for many years, but in March 2018 I founded my first social enterprise: Vote Like a Mother (votelikeamother.org). When my sign for the NYC March for Our Lives resonated strongly with people, I realized I had an opportunity—and a responsibility—to organize. I decided to create a platform to make parenthood key to politics; to rally moms, allies and advocates for change; to become a time/money funnel for groups doing crucial organizing work, like MomsRising and Moms Demand Action; and to support leaders and candidates who are mothers (a term I use inclusively).

I volunteered at the Children's Museum and Casa Central in Middle School, but joining the FWP Ecology Club in 9th grade turned me into an activist. My eyes were opened to profiteering at the expense of the environment and global health. Luckily, I come from a long line of rabble-rousers and my family encouraged community involvement. Parker's faculty, and some fellow students who led by example, helped me find my voice and develop the confidence to use it. Parker also gave me opportunities to organize—the foundation for skills I've relied on now for almost 25 years.

Stephanie Lieber '94

Professionally, I work at Chicago Children's Museum helping improve children's lives by creating a community where play and learning connect. When I am not at work, I am volunteering for the Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation, where I have served as chair of the board, chair of the Nominating Committee, co-chair of our 30th Anniversary Luncheon and more. And, of course my involvement with Parker continues.

At Parker I learned respect and responsibility. I learned that learning, questioning and, ultimately, doing were the first steps to change. From my earliest days at Parker, I felt confident speaking up, expressing myself and righting the injustices I saw in the world. Those lessons developed as I became steeped in the community service program and learned the importance of civic engagement.
Amy Carson ’98

I work for Tinkergarten, a national company that is at the forefront of bringing playful learning back into the lives of children. We offer play-based educational classes outdoors (mainly in local parks) for kids ages 18 months to eight years old and their beloved adults.

Our curriculum is designed to help kids become well-balanced people who can problem-solve, lead and create and help adults learn more about child development and how to facilitate playful learning. After teaching in schools for years, I was briefly a full-time mom before I found Tinkergarten. It was a true “Aha!” moment for me. Tinkergarten provides exactly the kind of education I most believe in for young children, it allows me to do the kind of teaching I am most passionate about, and getting to work with kids alongside their beloved adults means that those adults are going home with all kinds of new ideas and information about how best to support their kids’ learning and development—not to mention a community of like-minded families to hang out with!

I knew from a young age that I wanted to work with kids—pretty much as soon as I was aware that there were people in the world younger than I was! And I think being at a school like Parker, where kids of all ages are encouraged to spend time together, helped form that idea for me. Parker was also a huge influence in my educational philosophy. What I knew from my own experience was confirmed in my education classes in college and graduate school. It was easy for me to embrace child-led, playful learning as an early childhood educator because I knew how powerful that type of learning was for me growing up at Parker. Fun and joy are essential elements of true learning—the young brain takes in so much more, forms more lasting synaptic connections, when it is having fun and feeling joyful. All of my wonderful memories from my Parker years are evidence of the deep learning that was taking place! I am grateful every day for the path that Parker put me on, as well as for the wise and encouraging mentors I’ve had who reinforced what I knew instinctively to be true—that joyful learning and the freedom of (and responsibility for) pursuing one’s own interests are the keys to high-quality education.

Ashely Bagot ’99

I work in Supportive Housing for people with disabling conditions, with a focus on chronic homelessness.

I’ve always had an interest in social justice. I liked the way Parker reinforced that with an 80-hour community service requirement.
Ben Felton ’00

I run CPS’s initiatives to improve teacher quality in low-income communities: CPS.edu/opportunityschools. Parker instilled in me a deep sense of social justice and an understanding of how incredible teachers can impact lives. I carry that with me every day in my work.

Madison Mullen ’11

I currently work full-time as a facilitator for StoryCorps, a national nonprofit with a mission to preserve and share humanity’s stories to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world. My work takes me to 10 cities and towns each year to record the stories of everyday people, especially people who have been misrepresented or underrepresented in media. We add these stories to our archive at the Library of Congress for future generations and play small segments of these conversations on National Public Radio every week. In each city or town that we visit, we partner with local public radio stations, cultural institutions and community-based organizations to make sure the people who record with us are as diverse as the places we travel to. I do this work to amplify those voices that are not often heard and to remind every person that their story matters.

My work and interests are largely products of my high school social studies education. At Parker, I learned from an early age how certain voices make it into the history books at the expense of others. I learned how our country locks certain people into cycles of poverty and incarceration that leave them without a stage to speak from. I practiced thinking critically about how we, as citizens, can combat mainstream narratives that dehumanize and degrade people. The commitment I have to amplifying unheard voices started as a Parker high school student and has since been highlighted and underscored. My experience as a Parker student showed me both the necessity of public service and the joy of being deeply connected to a community of people.

Morgan Faye Harler ’17

This summer I am working on two campaigns with the Fund for the Public Interest in Los Angeles to save our bees and ban the use of Styrofoam due to its negative environmental impacts on our oceans here in California. The Fund for the Public Interest teams up with Environment America and U.S. PIRG to challenge large companies like ExxonMobil to reduce their environmental damage.

I took Mr Bigelow’s Elections class the first semester of my senior year and got very involved and interested in political campaigns. I realized that if I wanted to make a change in the world, I would have to take action. Change in many ways can be largely due to the effort you put into communicating issues with others and motivating them to desire change as well. Thanks to Mr Bigelow, Model UN and my Elections class, I’m now a political science major at USC and spending my summer convincing others to elect politicians with a goal of saving the planet.
Evolution of an Exercise
By Kingsley Tang, Music Department Chair and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Co-Chair

Progressive education at Parker obliterates the education model of a teacher standing in front of a class of students having them repeat math problems in chorus. A walk through our school on any day reveals teachers working with individual students, small groups of five or six students or larger groups, sometimes as a whole grade of more than 60 students. These educational environments address the diverse learning styles of our students and helps them, at times, focus more on their work, and in other situations, understand their learning in the context of a community. One important and unique way our students learn is in a group much larger than most classrooms: Morning Exercise (MX).

In the same way some concepts and ideas are best taught in small groups, many educational experiences are best experienced during MX with peers, students in other grades, faculty, administration and staff. It may seem strange that a broader experience might have benefits, since sitting with hundreds of students when learning the difference between a noun and a verb is not the most productive way to learn that concept. At Parker, learning in MX is never about a singularity of concept or learning a skill to check off in a box. In MX the multiplicity, the depth of learning, takes place every week.

There are three ways students in MX grow and develop as Parker learners beyond the subject of the presentation. First, there is appreciation as a viewer of the presentation on stage. Sometimes it’s artistic: the joy of music, the grace of dance and the passions of slam poetry. There is an appreciation on an academic level of a scientist describing the nature of shapes and symmetry or an author discussing the process of researching a book. If this was all our students took from MX, it would be a valuable use of our time. However, at Parker, there is more to our students’ experiences than simply being an audience member.

When students sit in the Heller Auditorium during MX, and give energy, time and attention to the people on stage, they express to everyone around them and those on stage that they matter. When a senior leans forward to listen to a 3rd grader describe the ways she is thankful during the Thanksgiving MX, that senior is affirming the importance of that 3rd grader’s words. When a JK student looks up in awe at the seniors...
marching around them during the Big Brothers/Big Sisters MX, that Lower School student is telling those seniors, “You are my inspiration.” And when an entire student body waits patiently as one of their own pauses in silence to find the bravery to perform during a talent show, they are saying, “It's okay, we see you, we're here for you, and we are proud of you.”

A person’s voice—for expressing thoughts and feelings through many media, including spoken language and the arts—is the most important tool of being a citizen, but if we don’t pair this tool with the skill of understanding others through means of expression, it creates a cacophony instead of progress.

As an audience, when we express to those on stage that we care, that we see and value them, we reinforce the foundation on which we build our sense of community. It is one thing for a single person to tell another that he/she matters. That's adding a brick to our house. Doing this together in an MX, showing openly with pride that we support and care about who is on stage, is creating another floor in our house, it's creating another space and another way people see themselves as valued members of this model home we call Parker.

The third way MX serves the growth of Parker students is by providing the opportunity for students to exercise one of the most important skills for being a positive, productive citizen in our society: the ability to actively listen. A person's voice—for expressing thoughts and feelings through many media, including spoken language and the arts—is the most important tool of being a citizen, but if we don't pair this tool with the emotion, the stories and the meaning of the day's presentation. This work does not always provide clarity, but it deepens understanding of the humanity of the people on stage. Beyond enjoyment, MX challenges the student to know what it means to be a citizen in a community, a society and a country.

There are many types of MX presentations that reflect the diversity and values of the Parker community. MXes that carry tradition, like Class Day, connect students with each other in the moment and create a bond with alumni. A student who sings “Simple Gifts” at the Thanksgiving MX has an immediate connection with alumni who sang the same song decades earlier. Even though they are separated by time, the tradition creates a bridge, an expression of a value through an experience that binds them together.

The MXes that feature guests broaden our sense of community and help students understand the roles
people play in our democracy. These MXes provide important windows into other people’s experiences and offer mirrors for students to see facets of their own identities valued in our community. MX guests range from members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, as part of this year’s inaugural Visiting Music Scholar program, to Representative John Lewis speaking about his experiences in the Civil Rights Movement and his ongoing work. There is a powerful and important thread that connects our speakers. The values of our school, our progressive approach to education and our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion resonate in those who visit our school. The deliberate work to welcome MX guests who believe in the mission of our school makes real our meaningful and purposeful work and helps our students understand that their values, goals and beliefs do not exist on an island.

At some MXes, students share their curricular work or extracurricular activities. These “show and tell” presentations provide peeks into activities happening throughout the school. During a JK–5th grade sharing MX, students may present reflections, songs and journal writing. This work is an important reminder to students of where they used to be, where they are and/or where they are going. A 3rd grader may not fully understand the work of an Upper School science student, but the student’s MX presentation might expand that 3rd grader’s view of the school and inspire her own pursuits. Robotics are an innovative way to combine technology, engineering and teamwork to complete tasks. While the task may be as simple as moving a ball, the process to create the robot, which students present during an MX, is complex and challenging. It is the challenge of the process that informs the work students undertake throughout the school.
Like the magic of a window, MX is both reflective and transparent, and at just the right angle, students see themselves and the world at the same time: a vision of progressive education, a vision at the core of the Parker experiences, a vision of hope, self-worth, diversity, curiosity, justice, kindness, inclusion and community.

The traditions, the guests and the curricular and extracurricular topics in MXes enrich our community and are powerful in different ways. As our school continues to reflect on our students’ needs in the context of our country’s circumstances, MXes have evolved to reflect the need to address present-day issues. And like the innovation within the classroom experience, new MXes have brought people together from across our community to create moments that redefine our understanding of what it means to learn together.

Morning Ex is a lived experience that is one powerful expression of what it means to be a member of the Parker community and the importance of progressive education in our students’ lives and in our country. MX carries on traditions and binds us together through shared experiences across generations, and it provides space for traditions to evolve and become more inclusive and more relevant. The work of our school to amplify and honor diverse voices materializes in the space of MX as it does in the classroom, creating mutual feelings of value to all.

Like looking through a window during sunrise, MX provides a reflection, a mirror and a view of the outside at the same time. Students see a reflection of themselves but also what’s in the background—the philosophy, values, choices and people who are integral to the development of the Parker learner. At the same time, that window of MX is a view of the outside world, beyond the walls of our school, that enriches the way students see themselves as active citizens in our democracy. Like the magic of a window, MX is both reflective and transparent, and at just the right angle, students see themselves and the world at the same time: a vision of progressive education, a vision at the core of the Parker experiences, a vision of hope, self-worth, diversity, curiosity, justice, kindness, inclusion and community.
Morning Ex: An Opportunity for Inclusion and Engagement

Taking a Fresh Look at the Corinthians Morning Ex

Since the school’s founding in 1901, Parker has begun the academic year with a traditional reading from Corinthians 12:14–26, reminding all in attendance of Parker’s commitment to each individual in our community. This is a fine tradition on many levels, but, as Tang commented, “by using solely a passage from the Judeo-Christian tradition, we inadvertently also send another message: Parker is a place that holds Christian traditions in higher regard than others.”

Because Parker values diversity and inclusion, Tang was instrumental in leading the charge to make the powerful and significant change to decentralize the Judeo-Christian dominance of the Corinthians MX this past academic year by expressing interconnectivity through two additional cultural perspectives. In addition to Corinthians, this year’s traditional opening Morning Ex included readings of the 11th Chapter of Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu and a piece by Bishop Desmond Tutu expressing his thoughts on “Ubuntu.”

This change to a much revered and respected Parker tradition indicated that Parker expresses its values through many cultures, reflecting the different identities in the school population. It also set forth an important example of how the school can embrace change while respecting and building upon its traditions.

She Persists: A Community Experience

Tang happened upon Chelsea Clinton’s illustrated children’s book She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World last spring while looking for an appropriate book to follow up on an interdisciplinary MX presentation of President Obama’s book Of Thee I Sing.

Clinton’s book tells the stories of 13 women whose persistence affected our world in positive and important ways and serve as a tangible expression of the school’s values. The book features women of different belief systems and racial identities and represents all academic disciplines in a way that mirrors Parker students’ education.

To bring this book to life for students, Tang and other teachers collaborated on a momentous Morning Ex experience integrating work from throughout the school. The 3rd–5th grade Colonel Choir honored Civil Rights Movement pioneer Claudette Colvin with a rendition of “If You Miss Me From the Back of the Bus” popularized by Pete Seeger. The Upper School Advanced Wind Ensemble performed “Also sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30,” a tone poem by Richard Strauss, to reflect on Sally Ride’s space exploration. A group of 7th grade students created a video about the life and work of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.
In a wonderful video, JK students described how they would support and stand with Ruby Bridges as she integrated her school, William Frantz Elementary School. In reflecting on Helen Keller’s accomplishments, one of the Upper School choirs performed Andrea Ramsey’s “Through the Dark,” which sets Keller’s writings to music. Elise Paschen, Parker class of ’77 alumna and parent, spoke about her mother, the prima ballerina Maria Tallchief.

If students read She Persisted in a classroom, it would have been meaningful. The students in the class would see each other caring and thinking about the message of the book. In the context of MX, students saw the whole school coming together to create a shared experience, defining its values and feeling as one body, one community. What’s more, when a video of this Morning Ex came to Chelsea Clinton’s attention, she shared it widely on her social media accounts.

Understanding Music in Cultural Context

When the idea came up to have the 3rd grade perform selections from the musical Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat with the Upper School Special Chorus, it seemed logical and necessary to discuss the story so the lyrics would make more sense, and students would enjoy working on the music. But which story?

The story of Joseph appears in the Jewish tradition, the Christian tradition and the Muslim tradition (as Yusuf) and is interpreted with secular music in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Why not present all of them?

To start the MX, Upper School math teacher Wendy Olt introduced the story of Joseph from a Jewish perspective. She talked about the important lesson of learning from your mistakes and the idea that you can change as the people in the story grew to become better people. Education Technology and Integration Specialist Sarah Beebe talked about how she teaches this story in a Christian context, linking the theme of forgiveness to the story of Jesus Christ. Upper School Spanish teacher Yadiner Sabir spoke about Yusuf being an important prophet in her Muslim faith. Her family reads the story as part of their Ramadan traditions, and its theme of patience brings meaning to the Ramadan holiday.

Tang shared how he discovered and came to appreciate the story in the secular context of a musical. He said, “After hearing these introductions, the music I had been working on for months sounded different. There was a new energy knowing this music was connected to different religions and cultures. The music felt more inclusive, more immediate and more powerful. Perhaps the
way we think about music is as important as the music itself. If we think about music in the context of diversity and inclusion, maybe music can change more than just how we think about music. In the context of an MX, maybe music can change the way we think about religion and each other.”

**Morning Ex Presents: Islam 101**

Morning Ex often provides a forum for broad-based education, as 3rd grade teacher Nadia Pardesi and 7th grade history teacher Anthony Shaker recently demonstrated in a learning experience, entitled Islam 101, aimed at better educating Parker students about the Muslim faith and dispelling misconceptions about the religion that has become prevalent in our society.

Shaker typically covers Islam in his 7th grade history curriculum when leading his students on an examination of world religions. Pardesi, who was raised in the Islamic tradition, joined Parker's community of teachers last year. Seeing an in-house opportunity for sharing, Shaker invited her to speak to his class to better acquaint students with the religion and allow them to ask questions. The experience proved to be so beneficial that the teachers decided to share this year's joint presentation in a Morning Ex.

Taking turns at the podium, Pardesi and Shaker led students through a presentation on Islam that included general facts, visually demonstrated the countries with the largest number of Muslims and outlined basic tenets associated with the faith.

Students learned that Islam is the second largest religion in the world with followers that comprise almost 25 percent of the world's population. In the U.S., they make up only 1.1 percent of the population, but they are reflected in 15 percent of the city of Chicago's population and 1.5 percent of Parker's student population.

In describing the six major beliefs in Islam—One God, Prophets, Books, Angels, Day of Judgment and God's Predestination—and five common practices—Shahada (declaration of faith), Salat (prayer), Zakat (charity), Sawm (fasting) and Hajj (pilgrimage)—teachers helped connect Islam with Judaism and Christianity on a timeline of the three major Abrahamic faiths, emphasizing similarities rather than differences at every step.

With the fundamentals established, Pardesi spoke to what it currently means to be Muslim in America and the recent rise of Islamophobia in our society. Shaker posited some reasons for this increase, including overrepresentation in the media, and provided a number of helpful tips on how all people can be allies to Muslims—or any marginalized or oppressed people in our country—as we work together to make the world more just, beautiful and welcoming to all.
GUN CONTROL

NOT

THOUGHTS + PRAYERS
A Community Effort to Make Change Happen

Active Engagement

The National School Walkout protests this past spring brought students across the country together to call for legislation that responds to gun violence and presented the Parker community with an ideal opportunity to cultivate creative citizenship in our student body.

Recognizing the need for developmentally appropriate ways to approach this topic among the school’s 14 grade levels, teachers, students and administrators worked both independently and collaboratively to develop and plan meaningful ways for interested students to observe this important moment. They also realized that some students might prefer not to participate, so they planned several alternative activities.

In a similar manner, a number of 8th grade students expressed a desire to organize and lead a student action against gun violence on the day of the walkout. These students needed to show their solidarity with youth across America on a national day of action that emerged from the activism of students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida.

Middle School administrators and teachers worked with student leaders to create a meaningful series of experiences to join their peers nationwide, teach others and facilitate reflection and conversation on next steps as part of their engaged citizenship. These activities included student-orchestrated teach-ins on “The Facts on Gun Violence in America”

Middle School administrators and teachers worked with student leaders to create a meaningful series of experiences to join their peers nationwide, teach others and facilitate reflection and conversation on next steps as part of their engaged citizenship.

After returning from February Recess, Upper School student leaders worked hard to develop a full day of learning about gun violence to pair with their walkout event as a way of adding their voices to the ever-growing national conversation on youth activism. These students wanted to spark a dialogue and improve school-wide discourse on the reality of guns in America.

And What Citizens Can Do” for interested 5th–8th graders and dedicated sign-making time in the shop the day before the walkout.

Parker’s Junior and Senior Kindergarten teachers seized upon this teachable moment as well. After a discussion about rules in the classroom (e.g., no hitting, no gun play, non-violent communication, etc.), they related those rules to the
world at large with bigger questions like: Do you think adults should follow the rule of “no hitting”? Do you think adults should go around playing with guns? Do you think adults should communicate in non-violent ways? The answers were easy and obvious to our youngest students. The teachers then shared that older Parker students believed in a safe world so strongly, they wanted to raise their voices and make themselves heard. They explained that those students would participate in some activities that week to exercise their right to come together and spread a message of love, kindness and safety.

With this in mind, JK and SK teachers decided that their classes would do the same and set to work making signs to share their messages. Most of the children focused on the ideas of “Equal Rights for Everyone,” “We Deserve a Safe World” and “Women Can Do Anything.” On the morning before the walkout, these five- and six-year-olds marched throughout the school, using their signs and empowering chants to express themselves as active citizens—inspiring their older peers for the events the next day.

On the morning of the walkout, a special Morning Ex for students in 5th–8th grades featured history teachers Andy Bigelow and Anthony Shaker educating all in attendance on the history of the 2nd Amendment. They spoke to its origins, the nuanced ways different people interpret the amendment and how those interpretations influence differing approaches to addressing the problem of gun violence.

Upper School students and faculty then joined their younger peers in the Heller Auditorium. Middle and Upper School student leaders thanked those who helped and gave space for their plans for the day and shared a student-produced film. Principal Dan Frank
addressed the assembly, stressing his pride in the students’ efforts and encouraging them to make change happen as active citizens.

Walkout activities commenced shortly thereafter. As 5th–8th graders reported to the field with protest signs in their hands and hunter orange caps on their heads, their Upper School counterparts assembled in Circle Drive before marching to the Lincoln Park Conservatory to observe a moment of silence, joined by 43rd Ward Alderman Michele Smith.

At 10 a.m., the Upper School student crowd fell silent as student leaders read two names per minute—the name of a victim of the Parkland tragedy and the name of someone younger than 18 who had been a victim of gun violence in Chicago since January 1. Alderman Smith applauded the students’ efforts and provided additional suggestions for pushing for changes in gun laws.

As Upper School students began marching south down Lincoln Park West to the park just behind the Chicago History Museum for speeches, poetry, songs and protest, younger students were doing the same just a few blocks away—circling Parker’s campus, using their voices and exercising their rights as democratic citizens. The neighborhood heard their boisterous voices as they chanted phrases like, “We want change” and “Hey hey, ho ho, guns in schools have got to go.”

Upper School students returned to campus for lunch before participating in a series of breakout activity sessions developed and led by their peers. Topics included writing letters to families of shooting victims and elected representatives, setting up phone banks for calling elected

These educational experiences, provided for and developed by interested students, align with Parker’s progressive educational philosophy and remain an integral part of the school’s effort to “educate students to think and act with empathy, courage and clarity as responsible citizens and leaders in a democratic society and global community.”
representatives and attending a
more in-depth teach-in on the 2nd
Amendment and current state of gun
legislation or a teach-in on the history
of school shootings.

Following these breakout sessions,
Upper School students gathered once
again in the Heller Auditorium for a
closing assembly with Colleen Daily,
executive director of the Illinois
Council for Handgun Violence.
Daily spoke about her connection to
Lincoln Park and her personal history
with gun violence, as well as the work
her organization handles every day
and the dynamic power of the student
voice. She also shared a number of
action items for those interested in
supporting this cause beyond that
day’s activities.

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Middle School Model United Nations: Public Engagement on a World Stage

By Anthony Shaker, History and Social Studies Department Co-Chair and 7th grade teacher, and Stephanie Lorenzo, 8th grade History and Social Studies teacher

Program themes and topics
The Model United Nations Club works towards engaging students in themes of diplomacy and current events. In their research on global, regional or state issues, student delegates explore geography, history and economics and learn how various countries, regions or the international community itself acts on issues like peace and security, human rights, economic development and globalization. Students can begin participating in Model UN in 6th grade, and many continue through their Upper School years. Regardless of when they begin their involvement with the program, students learn about the United Nations system of approach toward problem solving, debate, compromise, conflict resolution and negotiation.

Structure
Each Model UN topic follows a three-week cycle. The focus of the first week is introducing the new topic and each student to a newly assigned country. To expose them to as much of the world as possible, students are never assigned the same country twice. During week two, students research their respective countries and each country’s connection to the issue. Guiding questions help to focus their research, which they separate into three sections: Past Actions, Present Positions and Future Goals. These two weeks help to prepare students for the symposium that takes place in week three.

During this simulation, students assume the role of ambassadors to their countries and advocate on each country’s behalf. This role-play is powerful because students often must defend a position that might conflict with their own, a challenge that can help them build perspective and empathy for the ways other individuals and governments might perceive a global issue. Upper School Captains moderate the simulation, but Middle School students are empowered to shape and guide the course of the symposium. By following parliamentary procedure, students can motion for different types of discussion deliberations. Some, like “speaker’s lists” and “moderated caucuses,” involve delegates delivering 30- to 60-second improvised speeches in front of the whole “assembly,” helping students build their public speaking abilities, poise and powers of persuasion. Others, such as “unmoderated caucuses,” allow students to freely talk and engage with the other delegates, building alliances,
forming partnerships and strategizing on specific ways their countries might tackle the problem in that symposium. The ultimate goal for the delegates is to collaborate in drafting and submitting original resolutions that outline their solutions. Delegates submit these resolutions to the full assembly; then, both sides debate them and the assembly votes. If a resolution passes, the Captains utter the phrase to the assembly, “Clapping is now in order,” affirming the main goal for the symposium: finding common ground to help the world.

Seeing growth
Students can join Model UN Club any time during their Middle School years, but most of our members join in 6th grade, their first year in the division. Since this is the first year when clubs are available at Parker, many of those students are “trying out” a number of options, looking for a good fit. For those who stay in the club, we have the privilege of seeing them develop and grow during these three transformative years and become leaders on the Upper School team. Oftentimes a student arriving in 6th grade can take a while to acclimate to the club and fully understand the complex procedures, maybe building the confidence to speak a handful of times in the symposia throughout the year. By 7th grade, they’ve grown accustomed to the format and have built the skill set to more deeply understand the issues and ways to problem-solve. Hopefully by 8th grade, they’ve emerged as leaders, both in terms of guiding the symposia and also helping to coach and encourage the newest members of the club. Sponsoring this club allows us to witness growth and maturation that often take years, rather than months, to develop, and nothing is more exciting than watching these kids mature into Upper School Model UN team members who travel the globe to engage in more competitive and immersive events with their peers from around the world.

Citizenship should be an active rather than a passive experience, and it demands engagement, empathy and critical thinking.

Skills
As with any Middle School club, our main hope is to make the vibe fun, inviting and lively. And while the candy flows freely and there can be silliness in the air, we’re hoping to develop real skills in the students: understanding of complex issues, critical thinking, reading comprehension, research, public speaking, negotiation, alliance building, creative problem solving, empathy development and more. We know these skills will serve the students not only in Model UN, or even solely as a student, but also in helping them become engaged and committed global citizens for life.
Working with Upper School Captains
Within the structure of Francis W. Parker School, we have the opportunity to allow Upper School students to become Captains of the Middle School Model UN Program, which provides leadership and mentoring from students who have previously been through the program—quite a rich experience. The Captains develop relationships with the Middle School students and help cultivate knowledge about and passion for Model UN. Not only do our Middle School students grow in their knowledge and skills, but Captains also grow in terms of their leadership skills and ability to share their perspectives with younger students.

Citizenship should be an active rather than a passive experience, and it demands engagement, empathy and critical thinking. The skills of citizenship, like any endeavor, require practice and training. Our hope is that the experiential learning and immersive process of Model UN helps our club members become better global citizens and equipped to meet 21st century challenges head on.

To read about the Upper School Model UN’s experience at the International Model UN Conference in Mexico City, visit fwparker.org/usmuninmexico
When Ruchi Gupta was starting out as a pediatrician and researcher, she and her family moved from Boston to Chicago, where she joined Lurie Children's Hospital and Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine to practice and conduct asthma research. Soon after, she met a family with two children who had food allergies and wanted more information. “At the time, it was a relatively new condition without much research or data around it,” she recalled. “Even the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention didn’t have definitive numbers on the prevalence of the problem.”

As a junior faculty member, she had the capacity to investigate further, using her training in epidemiology, clinical care and community research. “I was excited that I had the potential to make a difference,” she said. She and her team published the first numerical findings on food allergies, describing the number of children affected, the types of allergies and diagnoses. “Fortunately, we were able to make a large impact in increasing awareness.”

After about four years of this work, her professional specialty became a personal priority. Her one-year-old daughter, Riya, was playing with her older son, Rohan, who was eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. “All of a sudden, Riya broke out in hives, and I was now the mother of a child with a food allergy,” Gupta shared. “It quickly became my 24/7 job. I started to understand personally the impact food allergy has on everything every day.” She now leads a team at Lurie and Northwestern under the banner SOAAR—Science & Outcomes of Allergy & Asthma Research—which aims to find answers and shape policies surrounding childhood food allergy and asthma.

Gupta and her husband, Tarun Jain, an infertility specialist at Northwestern, found Parker after colleagues recommended the school. Rohan spent his first couple of years at Parker, then both children attended Alcott, their neighborhood school. When Rohan was in middle school, they were ready for a change. “Parker invited me to give a talk on food allergies, and everyone was so warm and welcoming,” Gupta described. “It reminded us what an amazing school Parker was. Rohan applied and returned for 7th grade, and he was on top of the world. It’s definitely where he belongs. We have a different kind of appreciation for the school, with Rohan having left and come back. We are very in tune with the school’s philosophy, how they teach and what they teach to achieve.”

“We are very in tune with the school’s philosophy, how they teach and what they teach to achieve.”
Rohan, who starts his junior year in the fall, enjoys writing, economics, science and sports. “He’s even starting to get interested in medicine, but we will see what passion he decides to pursue,” Gupta said. During Rohan’s freshman year, Gupta offered Parker her expertise, and Assistant Principal Ruth Jurgensen took her up on it. Gupta conducted a program that introduced Upper School students to varying health issues in different communities. “I wanted to offer experiential learning in health, science and community,” she said.

First, the students identified health issues in their own communities, such as ADHD and asthma. “I asked them, ‘How many people do you think are impacted by ADHD or asthma?’ for example,” she explained. “They went home and researched the national impact of those conditions compared to their impressions about the impact in their own community, then we discussed it. The kids’ responses were so impressive! They wondered if ADHD was diagnosed more in their own community than nationally because of greater access to information or something in the environment causing the problem.”

For the next phase of the program, students visited areas of the city less familiar to them to learn more about the prevalent health conditions in those communities. In Englewood, they staged a health fair and met with community members in small groups.

“The kids did a great job and came away somewhat transformed to understand that different communities have different health issues,” Gupta said. “Obesity came up a lot; the students took the time to learn about the different factors involved, such as inaccessible green space for kids to play, lack of high-quality healthy foods in school cafeterias, smaller numbers of grocery stores in the neighborhood, etc., and with this information they started to find connections between the environment and the medical issue.”
Matt, Max, Charlie, Lucy and Eli Moog.
Rohan led the charge to turn this “pilot” program into an official after-school club, which became the Community Research and Medicine (CRM) Club, supervised by Upper School science teachers Bridget Lesinski and Leslie Webster. CRM just completed its first full year working on three projects: asthma; anxiety, mental health issues and stress; and healthy eating and obesity. Club members conducted initial research on their respective topics and developed interventions, with members of Gupta's SOAAR team visiting about once a week to support and assist them.

The asthma group produced an informational video (vimeo.com/254911514) to educate students about inhaler use and how to respond to someone having an asthma attack. The anxiety/stress group used a standardized instrument to assess how much students understood about the difference between healthy and unhealthy stress and offered various tips for stress reduction. The obesity and healthy eating group developed messaging on napkin holders in the cafeteria encouraging healthy eating habits and physical activity. “Each group did an assessment and an intervention, then had to determine if their intervention was successful,” Gupta related. “This work helps them develop into researchers who understand how community issues impact health in different areas.”

For the past two years, CRM members have had the opportunity to tour Northwestern's medical school and Lurie Children's Hospital to gain a better understanding of how community research and medicine work firsthand. During their visit, the students heard from physicians with different specialties as well as various community groups, such as Strengthening Chicago’s Youth (SCY), which works to implement a public health-based approach to decrease violence in the city and invest in the mental and physical well-being of Chicago's children. In addition to these field trips, CRM students have been fundraising for Reach Out and Read, an initiative that supplies books to young children at clinics in low-income minority neighborhoods.
“CRM has been a great opportunity for me to get more involved in the school,” Gupta said. “I hope it continues to grow every year.” She also has talked with teachers about food allergies at Parker and gave a Morning Ex that was so well-received, she hopes to return to Morning Ex this coming year with more time for questions from students.

SOAAR has produced several food allergy videos that were filmed at Parker using Parker students. “Bullying related to food allergies is a national problem,” Gupta noted. “Kids don’t always understand that it’s life threatening to pressure someone into eating something they’re allergic to, and unless we educate them, they won’t know.” SOAAR produced three videos, one each for elementary, middle and high school-age students (ruchigupta.com/kidstalk/).

In their free time, Gupta and her family enjoy playing basketball and tennis together, and she coaches her daughter’s basketball team at Alcott. “Getting to know the kids, their interests and personalities at school is so rewarding, whether it’s through CRM or basketball,” she commented.
Victoria Lee:
Upper School Mathematics Teacher

A Community of Learners: Faculty/Staff
Community is an important part of Victoria Lee's life. A Chicago native, she grew up on the North Side in St. Gregory's parish and attended Good Counsel High School, an all-girls Catholic high school, “because that's where my mother went,” she described. “When I was growing up, my world went north to Howard Street, south to Foster Avenue, west to Pulaski and east to the lake. I did my Christmas shopping at Devon and Western.”

She earned her B.A. in mathematics in 1986 from North Park College (now North Park University), also in her neck of the woods. After student teaching at the all-boys St. Patrick High School while finishing her degree, she joined the Math Department's full-time faculty.

The opportunity to form a community with her students, whether in her math classes, her sophomore graderoom or her advisory, contributes to her satisfaction at Parker...

After teaching all levels of math at St. Patrick for 22 years, her friend, Tom Kalleses, who was Parker's assistant athletics director at the time, let her know a position had suddenly opened up when faculty member Peter Barrett decided to retire.

“Tom and I had a basketball connection,” Lee explained. “I was student activities director at St. Pat’s and would run activities during halftime at basketball games, and he's a basketball coach, so we have all these mutual friends. I didn't know anything about Parker but Tom loved it—he thought it was the best place ever—and he had known me for a long time and knew what kind of teacher I was at St. Pat's. He knew me as a person and thought it would be a good fit for me.”

The opportunity to form a community with her students, whether in her math classes, her sophomore graderoom or her advisory, contributes to her satisfaction at Parker, where she just completed her 10th year teaching Upper School math.

She had to adjust to some differences between St. Pat’s and Parker. “There were so many rules at St. Pat’s that were so ingrained, but I liked the sense of family there, and Parker has that as well. At St. Pat’s, I was running all day, teaching classes, proctoring study hall, subbing for an absent teacher, monitoring lunch—there wasn't much free time. But here I have time to help kids when they need it.”
Lee has taught Algebra II/Trigonometry for 20 years (spanning both schools). Since coming to Parker, she also has taught Statistics, Geometry and, starting next year, Conceptual Calculus. The past school year was her last teaching Algebra II/Trig. “Having taught it for so long, I’ve changed it up a bit every year depending on the makeup of my class. It’s a little bittersweet to give it up, but it’s time.”

In her 10 years at Parker, Lee has appreciated the ways technology has enhanced her instruction. “I’ve been using an iPad for three years, and it’s helped me do what I’ve always wanted, which is to review their homework before I teach them again, so I know if they got it or not, and if they didn’t get it, I have to teach it again. When I was at St. Pat’s, I’d have students hand in their homework at 8 a.m. and hope I had time to at least take a look at two or three problems just to see if they understood it. Digital homework is so much better because I can see it the night they do it, so I have an idea if they understood the topic and know if we are ready to delve deeper or need to cover the material again.”

Lee enjoys her leadership role as a sophomore grade head, partnering with History Department Co-Chair Andy Bigelow. As Team “Big-Lee,” they have reinvigorated the planning of County Fair, which is the responsibility of the sophomore class. “When I first came to Parker and was told I would be working in the Tea Room, it was so unexpected,” she remembered. “I asked, ‘There’s really no school that day?’ So it took me a few years. When Andy and I took over as the heads, we interviewed teachers from all the grades and then got to work organizing everything—allocating tables and chairs, creating a map. The planning evolved slowly as we found ways to improve the flow and make it more logical, like having all the food in one place, establishing roving ticket sellers and dressing the sophomores in the same T-shirts so people needing help knew who to ask.

“It’s nice to be part of something that isn’t my academic focus. I have a good rapport with a lot of kids because I know them in a different way and can see them shine.”

“The sophomores run County Fair. We say it’s their way to give back because it’s really for the younger grades. It’s part of being a community.”

Lee acknowledges the challenges of being a student advisor but also appreciates having the time to know her advisees well. “I’m the one who helps them get through things teens get embroiled in. I’m here to say, ‘This didn’t go well; how can we make it go better?’ If there’s an issue with a teacher, the student has me to come to because I know him/her as a person.”
She also has the opportunity to use her math skills in a non-classroom environment: recording stats for Parker’s basketball teams. She started with the girls’ team, learning the task on a Blackberry from P.E. faculty member Willie Banks. After switching to the boys’ teams in her fourth year, she now handles the Junior Varsity, Varsity and girls’ basketball teams. “I love it,” she exclaimed. “It’s nice to be part of something that isn’t my academic focus. I have a good rapport with a lot of kids because I know them in a different way and can see them shine.”

Family occupies her non-academic hours. Her son graduated from St. Pat’s this spring, and her daughter is a student at Harold Washington College. And she looks forward to shifting gears during the summer. “I love to golf,” she said. “I look forward to it because it means relaxing. I don’t care if I don’t hit a good shot; I’m so happy to be outside.” Sometimes family and golf combine. “On Mother’s Day two years ago, my girlfriend and I golfed with two other women, then last year we golfed with our daughters. This year my daughter had to work so I took my mom. She has bad arthritis and doesn’t golf but she drove the golf cart. Although I love grading math papers inside for nine months, I love doing this for three months. But when I put away my clubs in the fall, I’m OK and ready to start a new year.”
Jo Oppenheimer ’53

Jo Oppenheimer was a member of one of the first racially integrated classes at Parker. Her early experiences learning alongside students of different perspectives and backgrounds influenced lifelong work championing diversity and equity. She “apprenticed” as a stained glass artisan in New York City from 1965 to 1970 and operated her own studio in Peekskill, New York from 1971 to 1979, where she taught children and adults. While in Peekskill, Oppenheimer was an emergency medical technician and a paramedic in the Peekskill Ambulance Corps, and she also was responsible for the Corps’s fundraising, as the city did not provide any funding. She also was an auxiliary police officer and an elected Democratic District leader in Peekskill. She graduated from Marymount Manhattan College with a degree in psychology in 1982 and earned her master’s degree in clinical psychology from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas in 1985. That same year, she was licensed as a clinical psychologist in Israel.

Oppenheimer has been an ardent supporter of LGBTQ rights for decades, long before it was a mainstream conversation. She has presented on LGBTQ issues in New York, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, Dublin and other places. While living in Peekskill, she ran groups for lesbians under the auspices of the National Organization for Women.

A proud feminist, Oppenheimer was a founding mother of The Counseling Center for Women in Israel in 1988, emphasizing her work with survivors of sexual abuse and trauma. She became an Israeli citizen in 1989 and worked with HIV/AIDS clients at the Gay Center in Jerusalem. She organized, with the cooperation of the Municipality of Tel Aviv, a two-day conference on incest, rape and sexual abuse that featured art work by survivors in the municipality, as well as panels, poetry readings by survivors and a play written by a survivor. She returned to the U.S. in 1993 and in 1998 completed a three-year program at the Women’s Therapy Centre Institute.

Having shifted her focus to photography in more recent years, she has lived in Brooklyn, New York since 1997. She has a son, David Rosoff.

What did you enjoy about teaching stained glass in those early years?

I taught children from the ages of 10 to 18, garnering apprentices and a high school student who worked with me for high school credit. I taught adults through the Lakeland Adult Education program. The kids were more fun. The wonder when they finished their projects—that made it all worthwhile. It also forced me to break down the how of it because I no longer gave it a thought, having done the work for years. For me, it was learning by doing, a philosophical approach learned at Parker.
I worked for Adlai Stevenson in Chicago back in 1952, the first time he ran for President. In Peekskill I worked for McGovern when he ran for President in 1972. In 1975 I was appointed by the Democratic City Committee to fill a vacancy in District 1. In 1976 I was elected to the Democratic City Committee, and I was reelected in 1978. I was elected to the Westchester Democratic Committee as well. I worked for Bella Abzug when she ran for the Senate Democratic nomination in 1976, which involved working with the party in Duchess County, Westchester, White Plains and Hyde Park. Independently, I organized a fundraiser for Bella, with her permission, with actress Ruby Dee and Mary Anne Krupsak, then Lt. Governor, as drawing cards. Bella contributed a hat, Carol Channing donated a scarf, and David Levine contributed two signed lithographs of Bella. We auctioned all these and other items to raise funds. Radio and newspaper publicity helped, and I successfully convinced the Peekskill Police Department and state troopers to lend a hand for the crowds expected, and come they did.

Two other members of the ambulance corps and I sent a series of letters to the director of the Bureau of Emergency Health Services requesting our admittance to the advanced EMT program that was forming. We also wrote letters to the Peekskill Hospital so we could have a connection to the ER and approval from the cardiac unit, which was required. We were finally accepted. I actually have copies of every single letter as part of my Life Portfolio; I submitted them to Marymount Manhattan for a year’s credit, which was granted. Unprecedented, I was told. No one ever received a full year’s credit, but I did. I was in my 40s at the time.

My first trip was the Ms. Magazine 10-day tour of Israel, sponsored partially by the Israeli government. We had two buses and, therefore, two women tour guides. Long story short, I brought one of them home. I was living, working and being a paramedic/police officer in Peekskill at the time. I decided to go back to college and grad school so I left Peekskill and moved to New York City to go to Marymount Manhattan College. Ilana and I made a pact: I would have six years to complete undergrad and grad school, and we would then move to Israel. I majored in psychology but chose my courses with the goal of becoming licensed as a psychologist in Israel, which happened when I moved there. During my graduate work, I spent three semesters working at the Bexar County Women’s Center, a feminist organization in Texas.

I met three like-minded women at a conference about cancer in Israel. We started talking about a feminist therapy center. I claim The Counseling Center for Women began in 1986 with the original 10 members using my office space to meet, talk, organize and work as therapists. The Center celebrates another beginning in 1988, so this year is our 30th year of existence and we’re still going strong, now with 28 therapists and the need for more as there is a waiting list of more than 70 women wanting therapy.
I lived in Israel for eight years but went back and forth before moving “permanently” from 1979 until 1985 when I made aliyah. I am an Israeli citizen, as well as an American one. The most challenging aspect of being an out lesbian and a feminist was providing information and education not only to the members of the mercaz (our organization) but to therapists outside of TCCW and the public. The attitude about incest, sexual abuse and rape was, “Jews don't do that.” The second challenge concerned AIDS as Israel had a Minister of Health who denied AIDS or HIV existed in Israel.

As a child, I was given a Kodak Brownie. I shot only black and white as color film was frightfully expensive. There hasn't been a time that I didn't shoot photos although I did add color to my portfolio. Photography feeds the creative part of me. In 2000, I attended a workshop in Bigfork, Montana where I had spent time during my teens. I met an elder, we clicked, and I continued to go to the reservation, staying with Oshanee and meeting many Salish-Kootenai people. Actually, I plan to drive to Chicago for the reunion and afterwards drive west, photographing as I go to Montana, Utah, Idaho and possibly Washington. Oshanee died but I am still in touch with a number of the Salish-Kootenai Nation.
I definitely had challenges! I was dealing with recognizing myself as a lesbian in a society that condemned it, including books. If there were any gay and/or lesbian students in my class, I didn’t know. I spent a lot of time going to movies (17 cents for a double feature, travelogue, cartoon, news). I would go to one set of movies, treat myself to a Wimpy hamburger and go to a second set. The Field Museum of Natural History was a playground for me, as was the rookery in the Lincoln Park Zoo.

I don’t think any of us knew we were an experiment. BJ (Betty Jean) Rogers, June Pearson and George Williams joined us in 1944 or 1945. We also had the first Asian, Harold Arai, and the first refugee from Europe. I liked June immediately and we became friends. BJ was tougher to know, and she and I often clashed, but I’ll be damned if I know what about now. We did have a big fight, fists and all, once. It was strange on the one hand but easy on the other. I frequently went home with June during high school and was completely accepted by her parents. I can’t say the same for my parents. June and I doubled dated, running into a problem when we were not allowed to come into a restaurant because June and her date were black (Negro was the term used when I was growing up).

I think the impact of having black classmates impacted me at home more than at Parker. My parents, anti-Semitic with Southern attitudes, were also against black people. So was my Kansas-born grandmother. The irony was that we went to see Satchmo, Ella, Duke Ellington, etc. As long as they were performers and not part of our household (“knowing their place”), black people could be tolerated.

Being a rebel at home, in school and in life, I had to fight against the bigotry that was pervasive in my family.

Carousel—at our graduation in 1953, we sang “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” carrying on a tradition that the senior class chose and sang some song—and The King & I, both of which I have seen more recently again. I’ve enjoyed Wicked and Come from Away. I love plays as well, from experimental to traditional. The love of musicals comes from one of my family traditions: for my birthday, we would go to musicals as they came to Chicago, mostly with the original casts, unlike today. At Parker, I loved doing the backstage work; lighting became a specialty that I carried into college years. I hated performing but Parker insisted everyone have a role, no matter how small.

I have written a number of articles/chapters for journals and books. At this time I am trying to put together an article that reflects my work as a therapist. That’s the professional side. On the other hand, I love reading well-written mysteries, and my bookcases overflow with possibilities. Photography is an important component of my life, and I always carry a camera (as well as a book), which is why my “bag” is a huge backpack weighing 10 pounds. I love portraits, especially the elders. Despite the fact that I usually walk using two canes, I try to not let the physical disability stop me in any way. I’m still a rebel.
Alumni Reconnect

(L–R) Class of 2010 alumni Mason Friedman, Jen O’Connor and Michael Quigley at the Google Happy Hour event on April 24 at Google’s Chicago office.

Upper School History teacher Andy Bigelow and Upper School English teacher Theresa Collins with Sarah Berman ’09 at the Boston Regional Alumni Gathering on April 18 at La Morra.

Marcia Occomy ’78 and Chris Riff ’84 at the annual Chicago Alumni and Friends Gathering on June 5 at the home of Jennifer Ames Lazarre ’79 and Paul Lazarre.
Melody Oates ’72 (L) and Candi Benford ’67 at the alumni outing to a Cubs game May 9 at Wrigley Field.

(L–R) Larry Kirshbaum ’62, Parker SK teacher Lisa Nielsen, Nancy Aries ’68 and Elliott Sclar at the New York City Regional Alumni Gathering on April 19 at Rockefeller Center.

(L–R) Phil Conrad, Ashely Bagot, Carrie Wenzel, Sarah Pond, Jordan Balagot, Katie Nordine, Andy Rosenstein and other members of the class of 1999 sang one last time with Grape Jam to honor Sunnie Hikawa ’67 (far L), who retired at the end of the 2017–18 academic year (see p. 59).
Class Notes

Parker alumni: please send your class notes to Associate Director of Alumni Engagement Joe Bruno, jbruno@fwparker.org.

1949

Jim Ascher writes, “My wife Susette and I moved from Seattle to Gig Harbor, Washington almost four years ago, about the time I retired from the practice of law in Olympia, Washington (although the firm there still bears my name). Our most recent travel of any consequence was the month of October spent last year in Bordeaux, France. I can’t recommend it highly enough for anyone who might crave most of the advantages available in Paris without the hassle of the larger city. The fact that Susette is still working part-time as a self-employed computer programmer doing work for the State of Washington still keeps us anchored somewhat in the ‘real’ world.”

1954

Natalie Crohn Schmitt, Annick Deutch Smith and Phoebe Steele Telser recently got together in San Diego.

(L–R) Annick Deutch Smith, Natalie Crohn Schmitt and Phoebe Steele Telser.

1955

George Bach remains heavily engaged in the Himalayan Stove Project, a not-for-profit philanthropic project started in 2010 that provides free, clean-burning, highly fuel-efficient vented cook stoves to individuals and families in remote villages, replacing open cooking fires and inefficient stoves that affect the environment. The project has delivered almost 5,000 stoves, which furthers the goal to improve health and the quality of life and reduce environmental damage in this fragile and sensitive eco-system. This effort, combined with the relief work after the earthquake in 2015, has provided aid to more than 40,000 people. He writes, “Good FWP teaching here...We believe that each of us has a moral responsibility to give back to this world.”
1961
Larry Garner performed the role of Walter Burns (the editor-in-chief of the Chicago Examiner) in Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur’s The Front Page at the Saint Sebastian Players in Chicago April 27–May 20.
Larry Garner (L) in The Front Page with Michael D. Graham.

Michael Horn, in addition to his new book, Future Self, which shows how to use one's phone, tablet, etc., as a truly interactive, goal-setting tool, has a new children’s book on Amazon, The Bulb Heads and the Pin Heads, a teaching story for adults and children alike.

1965
Jim Schultz has packed up and moved to the fun side of the wall. He and his family are living in Bucerias, Mexico, just a bit north of Puerto Vallarta.

1968
Constance Schmitz writes, “I want to wish all my 1968 class members hello! In 2015 I retired from being a full-time educational psychologist with the University of Minnesota Medical School, but I continue to do a little consulting for their Academic Health Center on learner assessment and evaluation of interprofessional health education programs. My husband (Bob) and I spend the summer in Minneapolis, where we have lived since 1972, and the late fall to early spring months in Tubac, Arizona, where we have remodeled an older adobe home. I am studying Spanish (Mr. Negronida would be happy!) and learning about desert landscapes. We are lucky to have two fully launched sons and four grandchildren (three boys and one little girl, who was just born on March 15, 2018). My parents both passed away in the past couple of years. My sister Becky ’67, brother Lawrin ’70 and I are planning a family reunion around our 50th class reunion in September. They may crash some of our parties—who knows? It is a mystery how we managed to get this old, but we’ve decided to be generally in favor of it. Looking forward to seeing everyone.”

1975
Andrea Gabor writes, “I’m very excited to announce the upcoming publication of my new book, After the Education Wars (The New Press, June 2018), which has been almost 10 years in the making. In the book, I argue that Bill Gates, Eli Broad and other leaders of the prevailing education-reform movement have borrowed all the wrong lessons from the business world and that the market-based measures and carrot-and-stick incentives informing today’s school reforms are out of sync with the nurturing culture that good schools foster and at odds with the best practices of thriving 21st century companies as well. For more on the book (including pre-orders), please see andreagabor.com.”
1977
Rebecca Lieb and her husband, Robert Dennis, moved this spring from New York City into a 200+-year-old villa in Greece overlooking the Aegean in Tsagarada, the village where centaurs originated. Mrs. Martin’s 4th grade influence clearly has a long, long reach. Rebecca continues to work as an analyst and consultant covering digital marketing and media and recently published her third book. Any Parkerites headed to Greece? Come see them!

1979
Lise Haines (nee Couchot) had a fourth novel, When We Disappear, that came out in June from Unbridled Books. A short story, “The Missing Part,” appeared in the Boston University journal Agni in April. She also had an essay in an anthology called Teen Idol in June from McFarland.

1981
Kim Kerbis writes, “What a year it has been! I was recently promoted to VP/Managing Broker of @properties’ largest city office where I will manage more than 400 agents. I was selected for the inaugural edition of Chicago’s Most Influential Residential Real Estate Brokers by Crain’s Custom Media as well as Chicago Agent Magazine’s ‘Who’s Who’ edition (for the third year in a row!).”

1983
Bruno Oliver writes, “I recently hit the bittersweet benchmark of having lived in Los Angeles for longer than I actually did growing up in Chicago. Still acting in various media and, after several near misses over the years, finally sharing some (too brief) on-screen time with Parker classmate Peter Jacobson. I’ve been serving as board president of Sacred Fools Theater Company for three years and have overseen its move from its cramped home of 19 years in East Hollywood to a four-theater facility (The Broadwater) on Hollywood’s ‘Theater Row’ while producing three groundbreaking productions for the company in that time. I coach actors for auditions and also for general savvy in ‘the Biz.’ After 20+ years, I find myself sticking a toe into the waters of a long-ago abandoned career as a consultant and cocktail advisor for the soon-to-be-opened bar in the theater’s new home. If you are in L.A. come and visit The Broadwater Plunge.”
1987

Natalie Bullock Brown and Joshua Newman enjoyed an evening of barbecue and great conversation on March 20 in her current city of residence, Raleigh, North Carolina. She writes, “Josh reached out a few days before he came to town to see if we could hang. I had seen and had the chance to briefly spend time with Josh and other classmates at our 25th reunion in September 2012. Josh’s Raleigh visit was the first time that I believe Josh and I really had a chance to catch up since, possibly, the early 1990s.”


1989

Ron Lieber writes, “I’m at work on a new book called What to Pay for College, which is all about when, if ever, it’s worth paying more to attend a college that is more expensive than the state university where you happen to live. Now that those flagship state universities cost more than $100,000 all-in if you don’t get a discount and private colleges cost as much as $300,000 for four years, more families are asking this question. I’m going to try to answer it, probing whatever data exists but also all of the intense feelings we parents have about our offspring and our desire to invest in them. I’m still living in Brooklyn with my wife, Jodi Kantor, who helped break the Weinstein story for The New York Times this year (along with Evanston native Megan Twohey). We added a second daughter, Violet, now age two, in 2015. Her older sister, Talia, will become a bat mitzvah this fall. I recently ate at the new Italian Beef joint in Manhattan with Jane Lerner and Josh Fine ’91 and at Bern’s in Tampa with Matt Brown and Josh Anderson.

1990

Regine Rousseau writes, “I am so excited to announce that my new book, Searching for Cloves and Lilies: The Wine Edition, is now available on Amazon. I have been working on this second edition of Searching for Cloves and Lilies for the past year and am happy and relieved to share my work with you. I look forward to hearing your feedback. Please purchase a copy (or 20) and review on Amazon. The more reviews, the better. If I get 25 reviews in one week, Amazon will help advertise the book to more readers.”

About the book: “Regine T. Rousseau combines her two passions for poetry and wine in the new edition of her alternately witty and warm collection Searching for Cloves and Lilies. Rousseau’s work mixes short, sharp portraits of her friends and family with musings about her own experiences with love and loss. Providing an intimate glimpse into her life, Rousseau examines failed relationships and wonders at bad luck with romance. She writes odes to the men who have abandoned her and those who stayed. She tells of deep loss and trauma but also the beauties of family, friendship, and faith. While the poems in this collection are striking on their own, The Wine Edition pairs each poem with a suggested wine to heighten your reading. Rousseau uses her expertise as a sommelier to create experiences that flood the senses with the combination of words and wine that are truly unforgettable.”
1992

Danny Hirschhorn married his other beloved “Parker,” Parker Merrow of Concord, New Hampshire on June 25, 2016 in Los Angeles, where they both reside. He writes, “Why? Because now it’s legal!!! Emily Shelton ’91 officiated the ceremony and her sister, Lucy Radtke ’02, was my wedding coordinator.” Danny has taken a much-needed break from social services, as a geriatric social worker, and is now pursuing a career in hospitality/events in the Los Angeles area.

Danny Hirschhorn (L) married Parker Merrow, with Emily Shelton ’91 officiating.

1995

Kelwin Harris has been selected as a 2017–18 Marshall Memorial Fellow with the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). The Marshall Memorial Fellowship (MMF) is the German Marshall Fund’s flagship leadership development program. Created in 1982 to introduce a new generation of European leaders to the United States, MMF grew in 1999 with a companion program that began sending emerging leaders from the United States to Europe. The German Marshall Fund gives MMF awards to the best and brightest from all sectors, including business, government and civil society. Selected fellows engage in six months of preparation designed to enhance their understanding of transatlantic relations before embarking on 24 days of policy immersion across the Atlantic. Kelwin’s travel cities include Washington DC, Brussels, London, Barcelona, Bucharest and Berlin. He will be exploring city planning processes and civic engagement practices as a means to stabilizing governments.

Kelwin Harris (L) and a group photo of the Marshall Memorial Fellows.
1997
Travis Johnson founded foodjunky.com in 2011 and it was acquired on May 31, 2018 by delivery.com. His next venture is termschecker.com, which he founded with Sasha Wiesen '95. TermsChecker, LLC aims to solve the problem of getting and updating online Terms of Service and Privacy Policies. TermsChecker offers both on a subscription.

2006
Grady Chambers has written North American Stadiums, which is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and various independent bookstores. Watch for his appearances in New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities. Grady Chambers.

2008
Kathryn E. Avila, a rising young photographer, showcased her work in a photography exhibition, Crossed Countries, that debuted in April. This exhibition was the product of a six-week photo journey that explores European architecture, landscape and culture. Her crisp, new-edged portraiture and wedding/engagement photography is available to view at kathrynavila.com.

2010
Any Parfenoff begins her tenure as assistant public defender for the 11th Judicial Circuit of Florida, Miami-Dade County, in September.
In Memoriam

Gerry D’Amico Loehr ’49 lived in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She attended Colby Junior College, New London, New Hampshire and graduated with honors from Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida. According to an obituary, “For more than 60 years she was a member of the Junior League of Greater Ft. Lauderdale, of which she was president 1971–72. In that role, she was instrumental in the relocation of the King-Cromartie House to the Historic District. Mrs. Loehr was a member of the Children’s Opportunity Group, of which she also served as president. After raising her family, Mrs. Loehr returned to college, receiving her BA in art history. She went to work at the First Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale as the institution’s first director of the Adult Activity Center and secretary to the senior associate minister. For 15 years, she and her husband, Alan, volunteered as chaperones of the church’s Kirk Singers Choir. For more than 30 years, Mrs. Loehr was a bridal coordinator, the last 12 at the Church by the Sea. After leaving First Presbyterian Church, she was employed by Stranahan House as volunteer coordinator and education director. ...Mrs. Loehr will be remembered fondly by family and friends for her generosity and creativity, whether cooking, entertaining or supporting Fort Lauderdale’s civic and cultural institutions.” Her granddaughter, Brooke, noted that she was class secretary for a period of her time at Parker and “Parker was very important to her.”

Jean A. Goldman ’60, according to classmate Merle Gross, “was engaged with the world, sharp-witted and scholarly up to her last days. Jean was passionately involved with art history and the art world as a student (B.A., M.A., Ph.D.), as a curator and, for many years, as a lecturer with an enthusiastic following at the Art Institute. Her great passion for collecting Old Master Drawings culminated in two important exhibitions at the Art Institute where she and her husband, Steven, were generous supporters of the Department of Prints and Drawings. She will be sorely missed by many Chicago friends as well as the Parker community, which she embraced as a student, parent and devoted grandparent. Many scholars and friends in the art world also feel her loss—that discerning eye, enthusiasm for scholarly discourse and, as important, her hearty wit. We remained good friends over the years. Through our mutual love of drawings, my husband and I enjoyed wonderful encounters with Jean and Steven in Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Rome. I will particularly miss our frequent emails and phone calls, which were always scintillating and fun.”
Victoria Chesley “Tory” Ruder ’77 was, according to a Chicago Tribune obituary, “a welcoming and caring friend to so many loved ones that they cannot be counted. Tory was an alumna of the Francis Parker School (1977), Williams College (1981) and the University of Arizona (1989). Tory was the longtime Chief Financial Officer of Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4), a North side non-profit agency that provides outreach and care to our neighbors who cannot obtain access to any other services. She was tireless in seeking funds for all our neighbors who would otherwise live without help or hope. Her compassion for people acknowledged no limits.” Her sister is Julia Ruder San Fratello ’80, who is married to Charles San Fratello ’78.

James Saft ’83, according to classmate Bruno Oliver, “was a 14-year Parker student and one of the Goudy Square gang of somewhat feral kids growing up in the Gold Coast neighborhood (with classmates Bruno Oliver, Brian Hodes, Jim Witz, Andrew Block and Bobby Hoge). He is remembered by classmates and Parker friends for his razor sharp and sardonic wit, shambling gait, expansive worldliness, terrible handwriting and an unceasing, never waveriing distaste for authority.

“After Parker, Jim attended Vassar College, where he was a Student Fellow, a member of the College Bowl team and a regular at a poker game that would continue until 1995. At Vassar, he also met his future wife, Rebecca Moore (in the 1992 wedding party were best man Bruno Oliver ’83, Dan Epstein ’84 and Jason Walker ’84).

“Post-graduation Jim and Rebecca moved to New York City, where Jim taught 6th grade and worked briefly at the short-lived National Sports Daily before joining Loan Pricing Corporation (LPC), writing for their weekly newsletter Gold Sheets. In 1995, Jim was asked to head up LPC’s London office in the Reuters Fleet Street headquarters. There, he was chief correspondent for London capital markets. In 2002, Reuters named him global treasury editor directing worldwide coverage of economics and financial markets. An early predictor of the global financial crisis, he became a columnist in 2007 and the following year won a Best in Business award from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers. His columns ran twice weekly in the International Herald Tribune and widely elsewhere. He also appeared as a public speaker and on-camera for Reuters TV.

Jim Saft (L) and Bruno Oliver at Wrigley Field for Game 4 of the 2016 World Series.
“In 2009, the family moved from London to Huntsville, Alabama where Jim continued as a columnist with Reuters. He made a deep impression on his new community as a deeply devoted father to his daughters, Eleanor (with whom he earned a black belt in taekwondo) and Virginia (sharing a love of music, dogs, social justice and human folly).

“In fall 2016, the Chicago Cubs finally rewarded Jim’s lifelong devotion and drew him back to Chicago to experience the World Series among his oldest friends.

“Among those Jim leaves behind are his sister, alumna Liz Saft ’78. Bruno, Dan and Tim Sheridan ’83 hosted a gathering of classmates, friends and Parker parents at The Red Lion in Chicago.”

Patrick Desmond ’84 had an active, successful career in public relations and marketing, graphic design and photography, according to his mother, Patricia Desmond, who described him as “a loving and wonderful son.” He attended Reed College after graduating from Parker and lived in Florida and New York.

CORRECTIONS:
In the Winter 2018 issue, the profile of Alicia Gonzalez ’96 contained several lines of erroneous text. The question and correct response are:

Working directly within a community seems to have been a primary factor in your professional life. Can you talk about why that’s been important to you?

As a young child growing up in Chicago, both of my parents were activists. My father was an arts activist and promoter in his Pilsen community, and my mother was an academic activist at University of Illinois at Chicago. They taught me the importance of fighting for equality and justice and instilled the value of service. Even though my father was a starving artist, he always gave what little he had to others. It seemed very natural for me to follow in his footsteps and have a career in the nonprofit sector.

In the Winter 2018 issue, in the article “The Bridge” by Kingsley Tang, the first name of alumna Jeanne Harris Hansell ’45 was spelled incorrectly.
A Fond Farewell

At the end of the 2017–18 school year, Parker celebrated three retiring faculty members, who spent a combined 96 years at the school, at a special Morning Ex and a reception for former faculty, parents emeriti and alumni to reconnect with these longtime educators. The Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, parents and students are grateful for their immeasurable contributions to the Parker educational experience and our community.

Christine Beh
Lower School
Drama teacher
Parent emerita
Taught at Parker for nearly 40 years

Sunnie Hikawa
Music Department
Co-Chair
Class of ’67, parent emerita, grandparent
Taught at Parker for 33 years

Michelle Hirsch
Upper School
Mathematics teacher
Parent emerita
Taught at Parker for 23 years