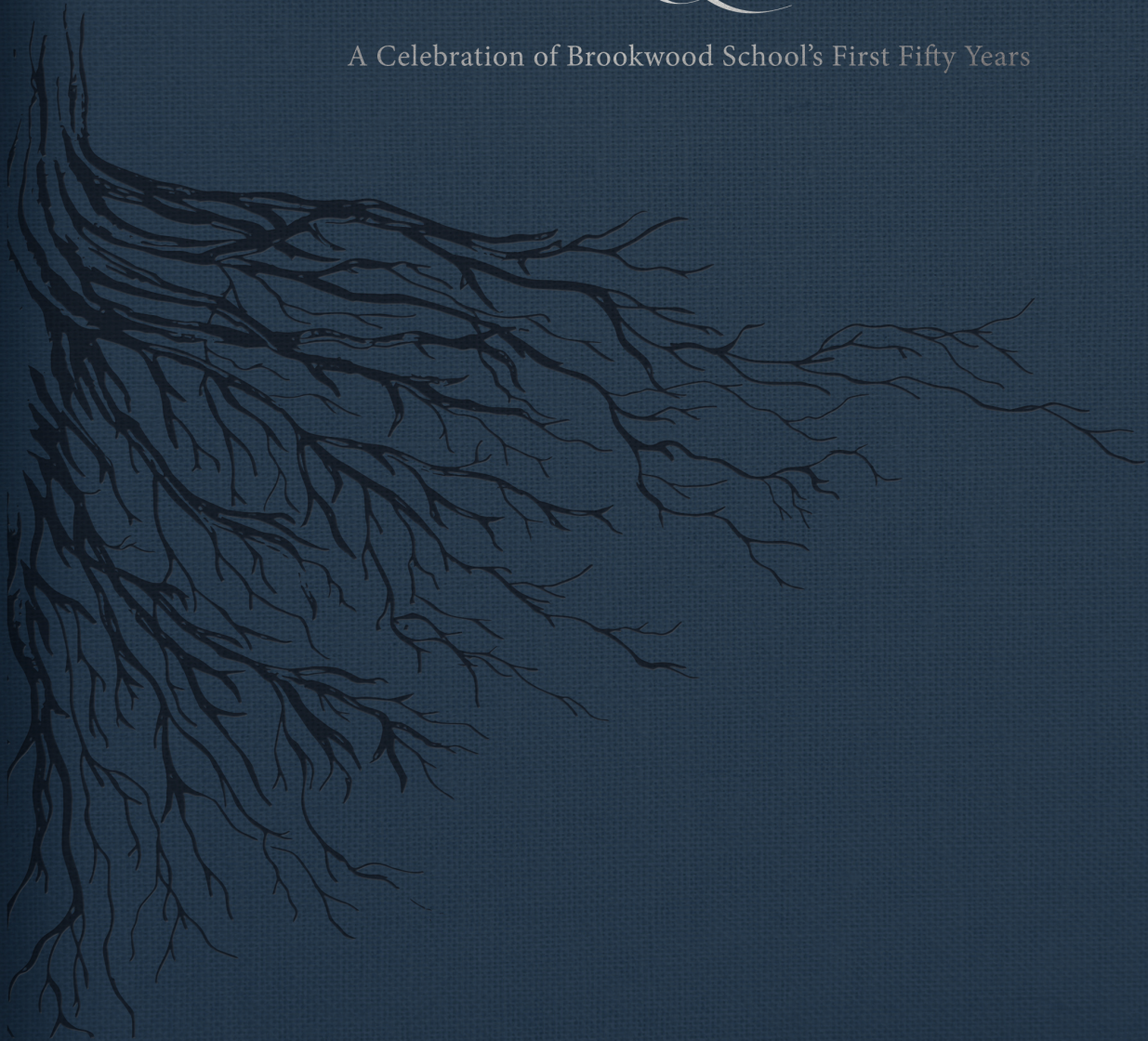




ROOTS & WINGS

A Celebration of Brookwood School's First Fifty Years



Introduction

If you are taking the time to read these words, you likely already know how special a school Brookwood truly is. Whether Brookwood is your alma mater; the school you supported for your children, grandchildren and other beloved youth; or the home away from home you chose for your workplace, you are an important part of its storied past. This compilation of its history is in part a reflection of your contribution, and so it has been carefully and thoughtfully compiled with the help of many members of the Brookwood community.

Even the title of this book — *Roots and Wings* — was mindfully chosen.

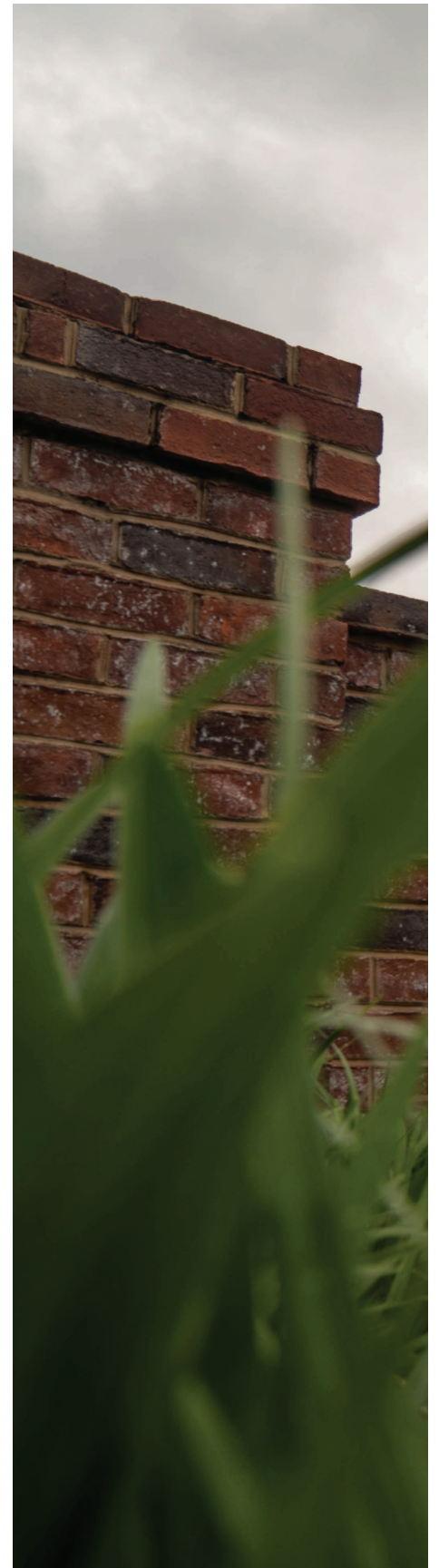
The word “roots” is evocative of the ideas of stability, tradition, home, family, shelter and connectedness to ancestry. Roots can be metaphoric of our own inner root systems of belief and spirituality. Deep rootedness ensures growth and health.

The word “wings” evokes freedom, light, adventure, self-direction, aspiration, imagination, thought and victory. At the same time, in the Christian tradition, wings are symbols of God’s power and loving care for people. In Psalm 91:4, God “will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings, you will find refuge. His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

‘Mid the pines, Brookwood School provides the roots for its children to feel protected, stable and connected as they grow. The school’s root system nurtures them as they develop the ability to make sound decisions for themselves. With a Brookwood education, students can sprout wings and take flight as adults, well prepared to make their own unique contributions to this world — with the knowledge that the Brookwood family will always be home.

A celebration of Brookwood’s first fifty years, *Roots and Wings* does not aim to follow closely a chronological outline of the school’s history. Instead, its contents celebrate how Brookwood has become a part of the hearts of its community — students, teachers, parents and alumni alike.

Warriors, welcome home.



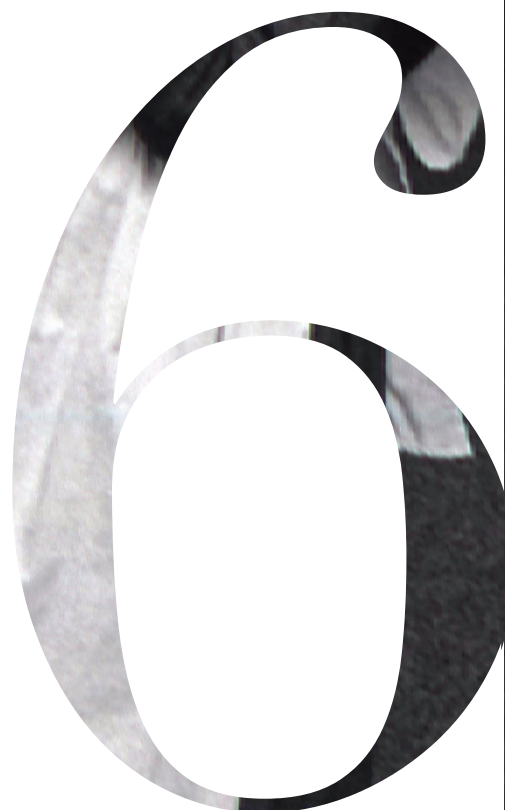


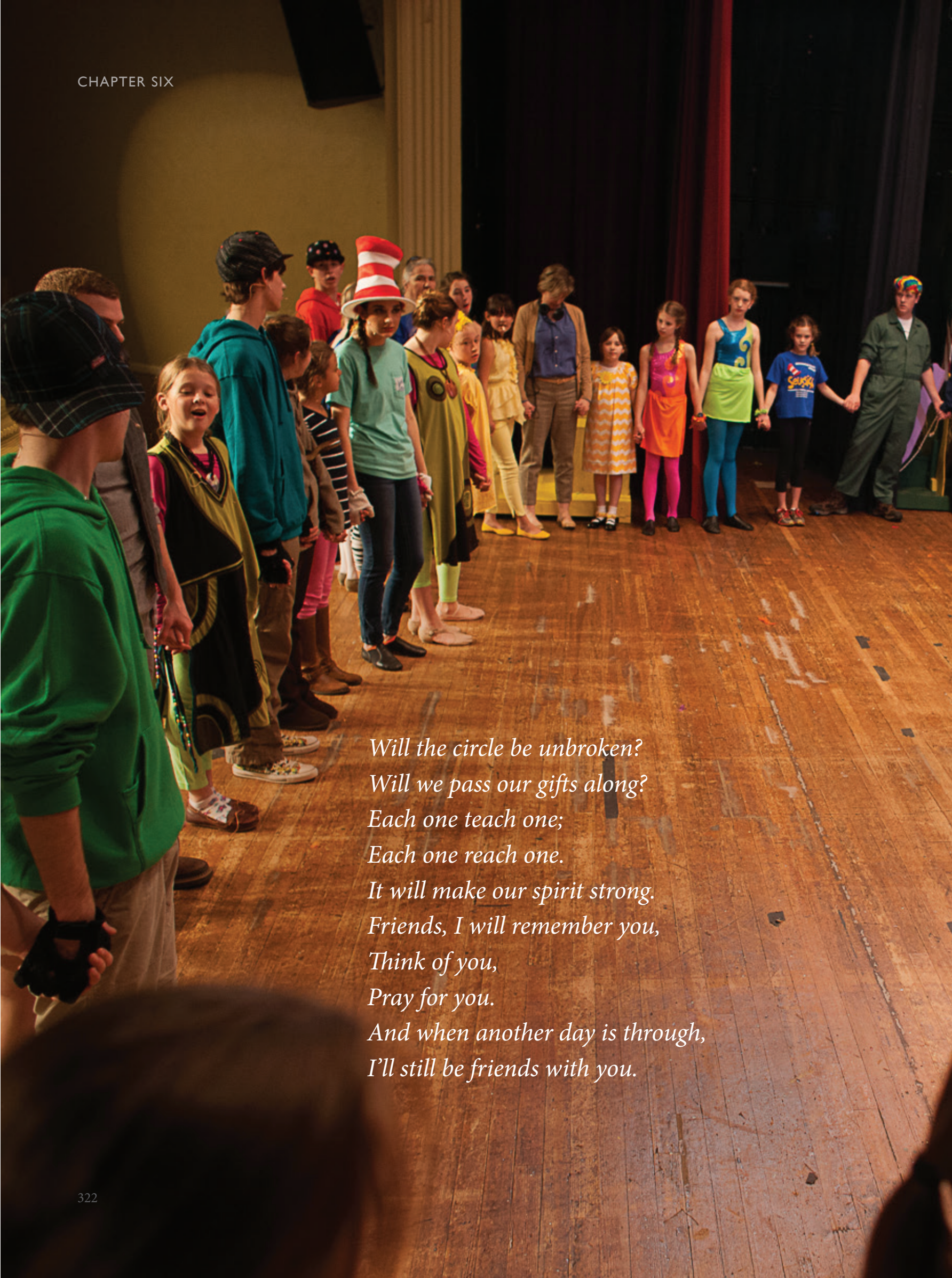
CHAPTER SIX



Brookwood is
Committed to
Developing the
Whole Child...

Socially



A group of children and adults are standing in a line on a wooden stage, holding hands. They are wearing various costumes, including a Cat in the Hat hat, a green jumpsuit, and a blue shirt with a cat logo. The background is a dark curtain.

*Will the circle be unbroken?
Will we pass our gifts along?
Each one teach one;
Each one reach one.
It will make our spirit strong.
Friends, I will remember you,
Think of you,
Pray for you.
And when another day is through,
I'll still be friends with you.*



After each all-school musical rehearsal, students in Junior Kindergarten through the twelfth grade, as well as faculty, parents and other volunteers, join hands to sing the Circle Song. This is just one of the many traditions at Brookwood that fosters friendship and respect amongst the ages and reinforces the value of community.

Teens and little ones, teachers and coaches, parents and grandparents — at the very heart of Brookwood is its community, strengthened by the many relationships formed within. The school's mission speaks to the importance of developing fundamental social skills, which prepare children for a lifetime of healthy interactions in every aspect of life. And what better an environment to learn these skills than in a community such as Brookwood's, where the people who surround you forever become family?

"Family is a true description of Brookwood," said Mrs. Karla George, longtime administrative assistant to the headmaster. Both of her children, Chris '02 and Rebekah '04, are graduates, and these days her young granddaughters, Callie '28 and Cate Alan '30, ride with her to school, always pointing out their friends in upper grades as they pull onto campus. They, too, participate in the all-school musical, where each afternoon, the entire cast and crew join together to sing the Circle Song.

"Lolli, I know them! They're in the play," Callie squeals, gesturing from her seat. She shares stories with her sister and grandmother about how the older kids have been friendly or helpful.

For Mrs. George, who also volunteered with the school play when her daughter participated, an



important life cycle has begun anew. “To sing that Circle Song with my daughter, and now to be a part of my granddaughters’ circle and to watch the circle of love continue — it’s a gift,” she said. “To watch my granddaughters benefit from that — the Brookwood community — it means everything to me.”

Many have described the Brookwood experience as a natural continuation of the life shared with family at home. Beverly Jackson, who served on the Board for 18 years in multiple capacities — including that of Board Chair — said that for her family, the school reinforced during the day what she and her husband expected of their four children at home. “Just as a parent expects respect, the school also insists on that respect; if a parent demands hard work academically, the school does as well,” she explained. “That continuity was so important to us.”

Similarly, Meridith (Richter) Redrupp, who entered Brookwood in the first grade and graduated in 1985, considered her teachers an important part of her family. “People cared about me here. They cared about how well I was learning and exposing me to the right things at the right time,” she explained. “They were role models for me, in a lot of the same ways that my parents were. What they said mattered.”

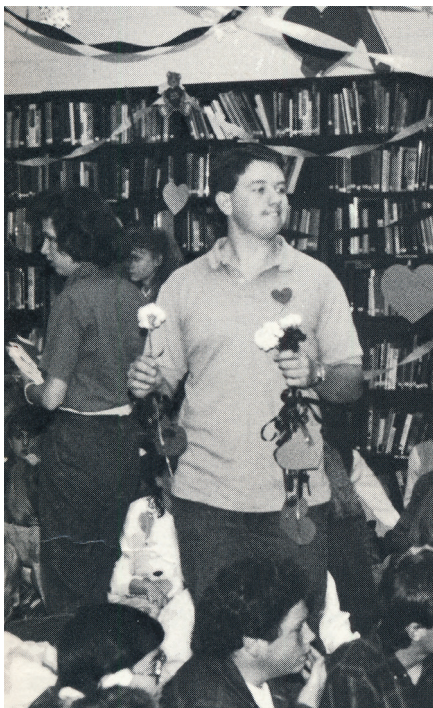
Today, Redrupp’s own children — Kate Ashton ’22, Emery ’25 and Julian ’25 — are students and active contributors to Brookwood School, just as she was before them. “It is a family. It really is. It is the community of Brookwood,” she said.

Student Connections

Relationships between older and younger students have always happened organically, said Charnie (Rich) Beverly '90. With only two buildings on campus when she was in the Lower School, older students naturally passed younger ones as they changed classes or visited Chubb library. The entire student population met in that space for all-school assemblies as well. "A lot of it just has to do with sharing airspace," Beverly smiled, remembering that there were always certain older students who were well admired amongst the Lower School children. "I remember my friends and I were starstruck when one of them talked to us," she said.

During the school's first several decades, events like the annual Halloween Carnival, established in 1970, brought the entire school body together. Younger children took part in a costume contest, a parade and a cake walk, and carnival games were run by students in the upper grades. But by far, the biggest attraction, Beverly said, was the haunted house, held in the basement of Stoddard Gym. "When we were little, we always asked amongst ourselves, 'Are you going into the haunted house?' But we all knew we had to do it," she said. "Those older kids would jump out at us and of course scare us, but getting through the experience was always a big deal." The Halloween Carnival has since been repeated in different forms year after year, in the 1980s and 1990s as a picnic-style buffet dinner, and most recently as Brookwood's Fall Family Festival, an event more analogous to the event in its original form.





Valentine's Day has had a tradition of celebration throughout the school's history.

Similarly, holidays like Valentine's Day gave Brookwood students of all ages a chance to connect in those early years. "It was like Christmas," Beverly said. "Basically, the school shut down for an all-day Valentine's Day celebration." Younger students each had a designated bag for cards and candy in their classrooms, while older students in the 7th through 12th grades decorated class mailboxes — or big barrels, in some years — and placed them in the school library. During the week before that special day, students of every age delivered valentines to their friends and siblings, and on the day of, representative cupids from the Student Government Association interrupted classes to bestow carnations, pre-purchased by friends and secret admirers.



Times-Enterprise, Friday, February 14, 1986 13A

HAPPY VALENTINES — Brookwood School first graders (L-R) Meredity Oxford, Jonathan Fallin, Emily Bixler and Traci Bond are busy cutting and pasting valentines for special friends

Photo Furnished By Brookwood School for today's special day. The students were to have a party to celebrate this day of friendship. Thursday, they students invited their fathers to school for a special program and refreshments.

Field Day was another highly anticipated school-wide event, held in the years after Brookwood's founding at Box Hall Plantation, the home of Louise and Buddy Hines, who graciously hosted many other Brookwood events. Children were invited to picnic and swim on the grounds after such activities as the wheelbarrow race, tug-of-war and the three-legged relay. Today, Field Day activities are held for Lower School students on Brookwood's campus in the spring.



As the school has grown in size, new traditions have been established to ensure that student relationships amongst the grades continue to thrive. Through the Senior Buddy program, established in the 2002-2003 school year, English teacher Mrs. Ann Larson, along with technology teacher Mrs. Sherrie Callaway and first grade teacher Mrs. Libby Howell, capitalized on that already natural connection felt between the grades and sought to make it even more meaningful. After a conversation with former Headmaster Tom Johnson's wife, Peachy, Mrs. Larson was inspired to institute the program, wherein twelfth graders are paired with first graders for a year to get to know one another and celebrate each other's many passages. More often than not, the friendship lasts well beyond graduation (See sidebar: "Buddies for Life"). It is a tradition — like many others Mrs. Larson established — that has endured to this day.

"When springtime arrives at Brookwood, everyone feels the welcome relief from the winter doldrums. With the spring come pretty girls in the Rose Parade, fun in field-day races and sharing of friendships. Even the game of marbles (pee-wees and bunkies) was revived as kids chanted, 'I've got marble fever!'"

— Excerpt from 1981-82 Yearbook, "The Warrior," p. 34



First graders and their older Buddies look forward to exchanging notes and gifts as well as participating in multiple events throughout the school year. Around Halloween, for instance, the seniors routinely dress up in traditional Halloween costumes to join in a dance contest with their buddies, Mrs. Larson said. "I was startled to realize that each senior would ask the child what he or she wanted them to wear," she remembered. "They would dress up and go into the library, where the lights would be out, and we would dance to the 'Monster Mash.'" For the best dancers there is a prize, but everyone leaves that day with a special memory.

BROOKWOOD'S SENIORS ENJOYED DRESSING UP for an annual Halloween surprise with their first grade "buddies." As per tradition, the students danced to the 1962 "One Hit Wonder" by Bobby "Boris" Pickett, "Monster Mash." Throughout the school year, members of the class of 2013 will have special events and treats for their young friends in the Lower School. Senior Bethany Harrell is pictured with her buddy, Abby McCaskill, both of Cairo.



At Christmastime, seniors have always bestowed upon their Buddies a small artificial tree, decorated with symbols of the first grader's favorite things or hobbies; in fact, it is not rare to find an older student or alumnus who has kept his or her tree as a memoir. In the spring, the children hunt for Easter eggs together, and in May, first graders perform the Buddy Farewell for their graduating friends. "They sing this precious song that brings everybody to tears," Mrs. Larson explained.

BUDDIES FOR LIFE

Candy-filled eggs, some in plain sight and others well hidden, lay waiting to be snatched up by eager fingers. The competition would be fierce, but six-year-old Will Bracken '29 was well equipped this year with a good-luck charm: clad in one of his Senior Buddy's hand-me-downs — a pair of sharp madras pants given to him by Preston Young '18 — perhaps today he would find that golden egg. Though the gesture had been small, the pants were a gift that meant a lot to Will.

Will first met his two senior buddies, Preston and Daniel Atkinson '18, at the beginning of his first-grade year through Brookwood's Senior Buddies program. The boys hit it off immediately. They played on the playground together, sometimes several times a week, said Will's mom, Libby Bracken.

"They cheered for Will at Field Day, dropped by to see his class play and would always go out of their way to talk to him, even if he was walking in line across campus," she said. "Once or twice a month, they would leave Will a treat in his locker or write him a little note, and he would do the same for them."

The friendship was not limited to Brookwood's campus: Preston took Will to the movies and attended his birthday party. Daniel went to cheer him on at a YMCA basketball game. Both boys dropped off Christmas and birthday gifts for Will at his home.



Preston Young '18



Will Bracken '29

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“Will knew he had two boys who believed in him, cared about him and were always there for him, cheering him on throughout the year,” Bracken said. “No one told them to do these things; they just knew how important each one was to the other.”

Because the older boys were so dedicated to their first-grade buddy, Will quickly learned the value of reciprocating their friendship. He attended their football and basketball games to support them. He was even there to congratulate Preston when he earned his Eagle Scout badge.

“These are three amazing friends who learned so much from each other, thanks to Brookwood’s Senior Buddy program,” Bracken said. “Will loves his Buddies!”



Preston Young '18, Will Bracken '29 and Daniel Atkinson '18



Callan Walker '21 and Chris Bragg '10

Leaders Reaching Out

The school community has never been limited to its students and their families, faculty, staff and administration; indeed, just as strong is Brookwood's role within Thomasville and Thomas County.

For those considering a move to the area — seeking excellent healthcare, a sound education, a healthy economy and a beautiful environment — the city can be seen as something like a four-legged stool, Beverly said, “where Brookwood is one of those legs, along with several large employers, an outstanding medical center and the scenic Red Hills region,” she said.

“The connections to Brookwood within the community are deep. If you look at just about any organization here, you will find Brookwood parents, grandparents and alumni who were involved,” Beverly said.

These fine resources — along with many others — have historically attracted new residents to the area. “There are some families at Brookwood who probably could live just about anywhere but have chosen this area because of the environment that Brookwood offers,” Beverly said, explaining further that families visiting for the first time are in awe when they see that students' school lockers do not have locks on them; the strong family atmosphere and a trusted honor code create a unique culture found at Brookwood.



Ava Parr '21

Visitors can feel the connectivity of the school community once they step onto the beautiful campus, she said. “Every child is known and nurtured to his or her potential in a thoughtful, caring environment with a strong curriculum. Brookwood, with its fine facilities, really is a hidden gem nestled in the peaceful setting of the Red Hills,” Beverly said.

Student engagement in the outer community has therefore always been an important part of the culture of the school. “Brookwood students have an innate sense of giving back through service to the community,” Beverly explained. “Our students are just not afraid to raise their

“Every child is known and nurtured to his or her potential in a thoughtful, caring environment with a strong curriculum. Brookwood, with its fine facilities, really is a hidden gem nestled in the peaceful setting of the Red Hills.”

— Charnie (Rich) Beverly ’90

hands and become involved — some quietly and some very publicly. Students do it from the get-go here; the Brookwood culture nurtures this kind of engagement.”

And that involvement is a fundamental part of educating the next generation of responsible adults, Mrs. Karla George added. “A third of our students are children of alumni, and that is something I value: parents want to sacrifice their time, talent and treasure to send their children back here to be prepared,” she said. “In a small town like Thomasville, that is such a quiet, strong statement.”

FOR BROOKWOOD STUDENTS, COMMUNITY IS NOT LIMITED TO CAMPUS

Service is embedded within the ethos of Brookwood School’s culture, teaching students that leadership can take many forms. Through their volunteerism with organized programs at school today, children of all ages learn to bring that spirit of giving out into the world as they grow.

Warrior Wednesday

Developed in 2016, Warrior Wednesday is an after-school program designed to instill the value of service in Middle and Upper School students; Lower School children are oftentimes included as well, when the activities are deemed appropriate for younger children’s participation.

Mrs. Jenny Ladson, Director of the Lower School Academic Resource Center, and Mrs. Allison Harrell, Brookwood’s School Counselor, are facilitators of the program, inspired originally by Brookwood’s partnership with the Oak Street Episcopal Mission, a service ministry project with a commitment to revitalize the Stevens Street historic district of Thomasville. For several years, Brookwood students volunteered with the mission’s after-school tutoring program and summer camp for area children.

Since the founding of the Warrior Wednesday program, teachers have stepped forward with their classes to volunteer, and many students have become regular attendees. “It’s been contagious,” Mrs. Ladson said. “If we as adults here at Brookwood can be facilitators and role models of service leaders, what more do we want for our students?”

Together, Brookwood students have volunteered with Lives Without Limits, a nonprofit organization that focuses on improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. They have worked with Hands and Hearts for Horses, a local therapeutic riding program. They have begun a tradition of doing random acts of kindness around town, giving away cold drinks, flowers and kind notes — and even washing windshields. Students have sung Christmas carols for residents at a senior living center; they have cooked casseroles for community members in need. And this spirit of volunteerism has spread, inspiring the institution of other service mechanisms — like Brookwood’s own Empty Bowls, Full Hearts event.

Empty Bowls, Full Hearts

Each fall for the past several years, Brookwood’s kiln has worked overtime. Students take a turn at the potter’s wheel, making a unique bowl out of clay — but they do not bring this particular art project home for their parents to admire. Instead, bowls are donated by the young artists to be filled with piping-hot soup and served at Empty Bowls, Full Hearts.

Empty Bowls, Full Hearts is a nationally known service project with one goal: to fight hunger. Students from Brookwood’s Student Government Association (SGA) brought Empty Bowls to Brookwood in 2017 to make others aware that hunger is also an issue at home in Thomasville.

Bowls are sold “with a simple meal of soup and bread that symbolize the hunger in our area, as well as the hunger that surrounds the world internationally,” said Christopher Watt ’17, who, along with classmates Melanie Quinton ’17 and Honey Balfour ’17, spearheaded the student-led project.

Watt said it is important for younger children to understand that there are people who don’t know they’re going to have food every day when they come home. Proceeds raised by the event are given to Backpack Buddies, a local ministry that provides meals for hungry children in Thomas County.

Bringing Service Home

No matter how they serve, volunteerism teaches children that they are natural leaders in their own, individual ways and gives them a chance to decide where their talents are most needed. “We want them to find that peace within themselves, and that’s not the same for everybody,” Mrs. Harrell said.

And serve, they do. On their own time, Brookwood students collect and donate canned goods and non-perishable items to the Thomasville Food Bank. They take part in manna food drops, distributing food to those in need. They step forward to pitch in at the Thomasville Humane Society and at Miss Kitty Feline Sanctuary, a local non-kill shelter for cats.

Children of all ages routinely volunteer with local outreach organizations like Hands On Thomas County, which connects citizens to non-profit and community agencies, needs and service opportunities in Thomas County. They travel domestically and internationally with their families and churches to serve others in need.

The most important thing that can happen through their service is that students discover in themselves how they can best give back to the world, Mrs. Harrell said. “That fulfills so many things within them that they need when they leave this place.”



The 'Q' -- Ian Quinton

QUINTON QUICKLY BECOMES FAMILY

Australian student Ian Quinton spent the 1975-1976 school year — his senior year — at Brookwood School as an American Field Service (AFS) exchange student, living with his host parents, Randy and Mary Malone, and their children, Rand '77, John '80 and Beth '79.

While at Brookwood, Quinton quickly made himself at home. He played for the 1975 state championship varsity football team as kicker and is still remembered for his ability

to drop kick a ball as far as 70 yards away. "It was probably the first — and perhaps the last time in Georgia Independent School football that there was a kicker who did not use a tee for kickoffs or a holder for field goals and extra points," said Philip Watt '79. As a former rugby player, Quinton's drop kicks "created a stir with referees on more than one occasion when they did not even realize that this was and still is legal," Watt said.

Quinton returned to Australia after graduating from Brookwood, attended Melbourne University and entered the workforce, returning to Thomasville often to visit loved ones — and to wed his wife, Debbie. Always envisioning a permanent return, they and their four girls made Thomasville their home in 2006 after living for 21 years in Miami, Florida.

Today the owner of International Design & Display Group, Quinton has managed and advised multiple building projects on campus at Brookwood. Debbie serves on Brookwood's staff, and each of their daughters is a Brookwood graduate. Additionally, Quinton's niece from Australia, Esme Harrington, continued the Quinton tradition of foreign exchange when she became a Brookwood student during the 2014-2015 school year.

"AFS, Brookwood School, the Malone family and Thomasville expanded my family to be a truly global one, and through endearing and enduring relationships, gave me the opportunity to seek a broader path in my life," Quinton said. "Ultimately, it has led back to Thomasville, where all of my daughters have benefited from the Brookwood experience."

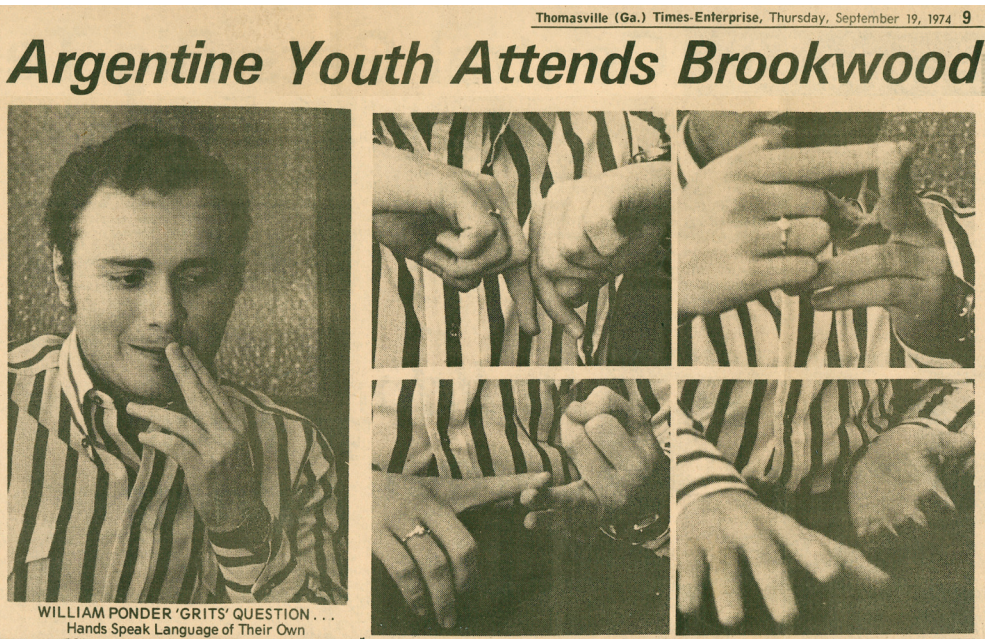
Welcoming the World as Family

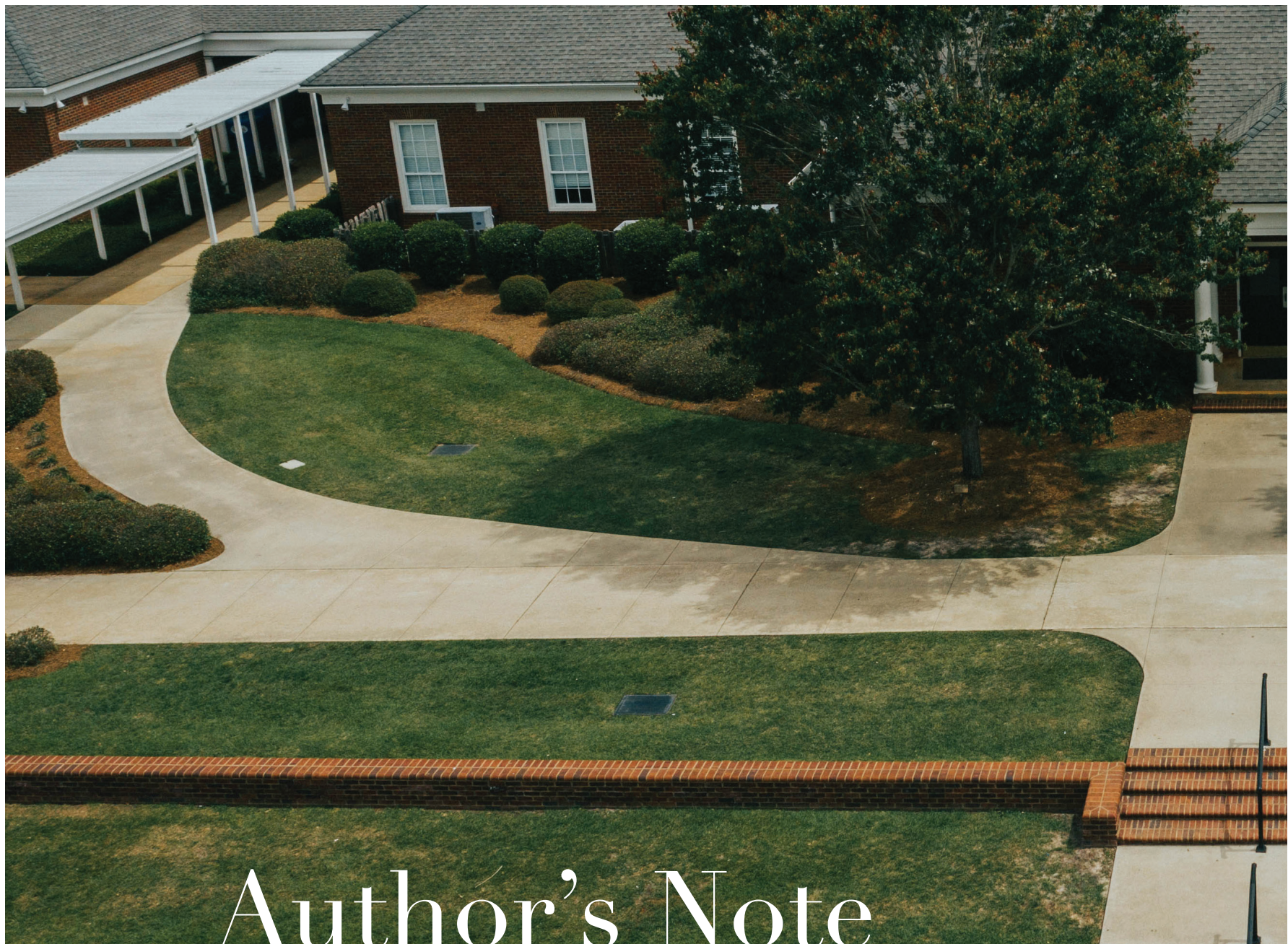
Certainly, Brookwood’s relationships are not limited to the immediate geographic area; the school has always been connected to the world community through its exchange students from other countries. These high schoolers give of themselves and their own cultures while they live with host families in Thomasville and study and socialize at Brookwood.

The school organized its American Field Service (AFS) chapter in the spring of 1974 and soon thereafter welcomed its first exchange student, Guillermo “William” Suttora, from Argentina. Since then, students have come to attend school at Brookwood through AFS, Global Insights and other exchange programs from as far away as Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Spain and South Africa.

For a list of Brookwood’s exchange students, see Appendix page 421.

Guillermo Suttora, from Bahia Blanca, Argentina, was Brookwood School’s first exchange student.





Author's Note

My family took our first trip to Thomasville over Victorian Christmas weekend in 2013, the winter before we would move our lives from Bradenton, Florida. We rolled in at dusk that Friday night and didn't skip a beat; between hot spoonfuls of Jonah's cheese grits and about a dozen laps in the Polar Express choo-choo along Broad Street, the four of us made ourselves right at home.

Ben and Sam were just little guys — six and nine years old — when their dad, my husband, accepted the position as the tenth Headmaster of Brookwood School. I would join him at the school as an AP English teacher in the fall. What an adventure! The four of us daydreamt aloud about new friends, a new-to-us home and a new routine. The glorious

artificial snow and the ubiquitous scent of whatever goodness was baking at Flowers didn't hurt things, either.

The following Monday, Randy would hold his first parent meet-and-greet in Chubb Hall while the boys shadowed in the first and fourth grades. As other parents began to filter into Chubb's gathering space, I settled Sam into his seat and then took Ben's hand, walking him to a classroom across the way.

"You're going to have a great day," I said to Ben, forcing the words out around the lump that had developed on my windpipe. "I promise." He sat down, waved, and dug right into the coloring worksheet on his desk. Easy-peasy, right? Randy had



already begun his talk when Mrs. Parrott's door shut between me and my baby.

Picture this next part in slow motion, because it all happened at once. My silent, surprised tears. Randy's enthusiastic, "Nadia, would you introduce yourself?" My involuntary pivot to face the group. My half-open mouth, which refused to let anything out. Then the silence, as what felt like a hundred sympathetic eyes were on me. Finally, I think I managed this: "Wait a sec. I'm not here yet."

Not a heartbeat later, a very compassionate Mark Parker '79 saved me by gently pulling my attention away from the crowd. "You and I are having a great conversation," he told me. "Just nod and smile." His

gesture was the first of countless daily kindnesses that have enfolded my family into the Brookwood community.

Over the past six years — and especially during the research and writing of this book — I've learned that my own personal Brookwood story is only one of infinite others that truly exemplify the spirit of the school. Whether you've been a Warrior for fifty years or for fifty minutes, you're family. Now and forever.

Nadia R. Watts is an author, an educator, a lucky wife and a proud mom. This is her second book about Thomasville. To learn more, visit www.nadiarwatts.com.