



# TALLULAH FALLS SCHOOL

## Magazine

SPRING 2017

### Bake sale

How one TFS fifth grader used her baking skills to help other students

Also inside:

- Fine Arts students excel
- Records fall in basketball
- Community service standouts

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A season of surprises

Victory Bell naming

zSpace arrives at TFS

Tribe Tellers



# Cataloochee ski day - TFS middle school • February 3, 2016

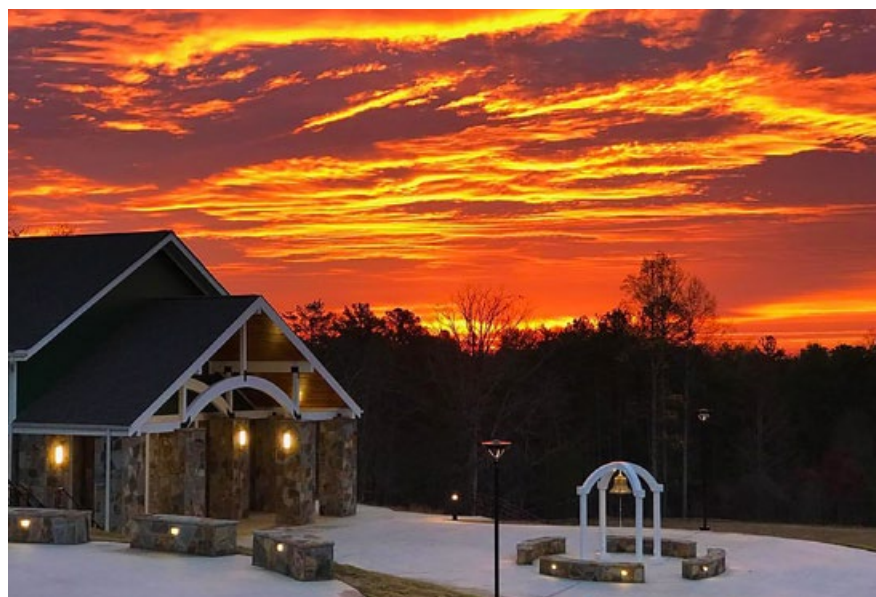
photos by E. Lane Gresham





ON THE COVER: Fifth grader Piper Allen raised funds to help future TFS students purchase school uniforms. For the story turn to page 22. Photo credit: Kelly Allen.

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A spectacular Winter sunrise captured by middle school Academic Dean David Chester.

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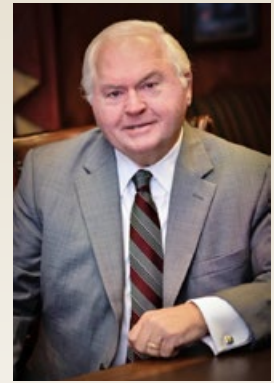
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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

LARRY A. PEEVY



### The road to excellence

Aristotle spoke of the road to excellence. “Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives. Choice, not chance, determines your destiny.”

At Tallulah Falls School, we strive for excellence in all of our choices. Excellence doesn’t happen in a vacuum. Many catalysts come into play to help students identify their natural gifts and talents. Our job as educators is to guide young people to develop those gifts and talents by using those around them to their greatest advantage. That’s why, at TFS, we require every teacher to be fully certified in his or her discipline.

Introducing students to highly-qualified education professionals in a small classroom environment helps each child to open up to different ways of thinking, different ways of looking at life.

The choices we make present an excellent learning environment that advances our mission to elevate character and intellect. Along with an excellent faculty and staff, we offer the latest technology students can use to solve any problem or explore any area they are curious about. In com-

bining the best teachers with the best equipment and facilities, we create a positive atmosphere to prepare students for what’s ahead. And with 21 college classes offered on campus, students choose to leverage academic rigor to enhance college admission choices.

As you enjoy this edition of the *Tallulah Falls School Magazine*, you’ll read stories about the excellent choices made by our students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends.

Choices to excel in sports with our athletic teams continuing to break region, school and personal records. Choices to excel in fine arts, with one sophomore selected to perform at Carnegie Hall. Choices to excel in the classroom, with a group of seniors accepted under early admission to Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia. Choices to excel in community service, with one student raising money to help her fellow classmates. Choices to excel in mentoring, with high-profile community members sharing lessons in leadership with our seniors.

These stories – and more – offer a glimpse into the TFS community. Join me as we celebrate a most excellent student experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Larry A. Peevy in black ink. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Larry A. Peevy  
President and Head of School





## Middle school 'Victory Bell' named after longtime TFS trustee Gewene Womack

**B**ig things come in small packages." This adage has never been truer than when it comes to longtime trustee Gewene Womack.

Womack was honored on Dec. 12 during one of her regular campus visits. Through a generous donation by Womack's family, the new 'Victory Bell' at the TFS Student Activity Center has been named in her honor.

Womack has a special place in her heart for the students, faculty and staff of Tallulah Falls School. Womack has served on the TFS board or trustees for three decades, starting in 1986. She has served as chair of the building and grounds committee, vice chair, chair-elect and then as chair from 2006-10. Today Womack continues to serve as a lifetime honorary TFS trustee.

Womack discovered she had been honored only as she was being escorted by TFS President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy onto the Student Activity Center floor and through a gauntlet of cheering middle schoolers extending the length of the basketball court. It took a bit of stealth to keep the secret, but Peevy and middle school students and staff handled it perfectly.

During a brief ceremony witnessed by members of her family as well as students and staff, Womack expressed complete surprise at the honor.

"She loves this school; it is evident in the way she interacts with our students when she visits," Peevy said. "She greets many with hugs. And, according to our board chair, Amy Atkinson, some of our students even call her by the name given by her grandchildren – 'NeeNaw.'"

The victory bell, whose history was detailed in the Fall 2016 TFS magazine, is already serving as a tangible symbol of TFS school spirit.

"Our students are gathering after winning basketball games to ring the bell," Peevy said. "This new TFS tradition is added to the rich history that includes the countless contributions of Gewene Womack; she has contributed mightily to the strong legacy of success here at Tallulah Falls School."

TFS Chairwoman Amy Atkinson also shared her appreciation for Womack, referring to her mentorship and advocacy for the students.

"The fact is, she loves being around young people," Atkinson said. "She thrives on that energy."

Everyone at Tallulah Falls School, whether student, faculty or staff, thrives on the energy and love that Mrs. Womack has brought to TFS every day for more than thirty years.



**"SHE LOVES THIS SCHOOL; IT IS EVIDENT IN THE WAY SHE INTERACTS WITH OUR STUDENTS WHEN SHE VISITS. SHE GREETES MANY WITH HUGS. AND, ACCORDING TO OUR BOARD CHAIR, AMY ATKINSON, SOME OF OUR STUDENTS EVEN CALL HER BY THE NAME GIVEN BY HER GRANDCHILDREN – NEENAW."**

**LARRY A. PEEVY  
PRESIDENT AND HEAD OF SCHOOL**

*Shown, from left are, Ray Womack, Gewene Womack, Dennis Womack and Andy Womack.*





# A season of surprises

## TFS President Larry A. Peevy celebrated for vision, commitment to community

by E. Lane Gresham



photo credit: Brian A. Boyd

It has been a season of surprises for Tallulah Falls School President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy. In September 2016, the TFS Board of Trustees voted to name the Upper School Academic Complex to honor Peevy's commitment to excellence in education at TFS. That vote was kept as a surprise for Peevy.

On Dec. 5, 2016, as Peevy assumed chairmanship of the Habersham Chamber of Commerce board of directors at the Chamber's annual meeting, he was stunned to be named the Ottis Stonecypher Habersham Countian of the Year. This honor was also a complete surprise to Peevy upon hearing the announcement from TFS Board of Trustees member Dr. Judy Forbes.

And at the Jan. 18 community celebration for the naming of the academic complex, Habersham County

Commissioner and TFS parent Natalie Crawford revealed a resolution from the commissioners paying tribute to Peevy's contributions to the school and broader community.

These special accolades are no surprise to those who have supported Peevy's long-term vision for the school and its mission to elevate academics and character for its students.

TFS Board Chairwoman Amy Atkinson said Peevy represents a rare combination of managerial ability, sound judgment and imagination.

"Some people do one thing well and some people do many things fairly well, but Larry Peevy is unusual. He does many things very well," Atkinson said. "His administrative accomplishments and innovative ideas have lifted TFS to new heights. In recognition of the many school advance-

*Shown above, from left are: Previous board chairs Ellen Alderman, Carolyn Friedlander and Gewene Womack pose for a photo with President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy and current Board Chair Amy Atkinson.*



ments, the Board of Trustees made the unanimous decision to name the Larry A. Peevy Upper School Academic Complex as a tribute to his present accomplishments and his establishment of a foundation for the school's future success."

Dean of Students Jimmy Franklin, a long-time TFS staff member, agreed. "He has elevated the status of TFS in the quality of students through an emphasis on character and academics," Franklin said. "What we are providing students has grown by leaps and bounds; it is truly phenomenal."

Franklin said the community awareness is another area he has seen enhanced under Peevy's tenure at the school. Ten years ago, the school was predominantly boarding; the day student population has grown to serve families in surrounding counties.

"The community has embraced the school and embraced the boarding population," Franklin said. "The boarding students have been able to experience southern hospitality."

He appreciates, too, the emphasis on serving students from the local community.

"We have returned to our roots to serve our students by providing a quality college preparatory education. That's what makes us special," he said. "Mr. Peevy is a visionary; he follows through with a vision to make sure it is well thought out and properly planned so that it will benefit our students. He's just fine tuned that vision to make us the best."

During the community celebration several people delivered remarks, including Atkinson, former Dean of Students and TFS Board of Trustees member Rev. James Turpen, Forbes, TFS graduate Betsy Bartholf and TFS Class of 2017 President Michael Weidner. TFS senior Tori Sesam delivered a powerful version of "Wind Beneath My Wings," one of Peevy's favorite songs.

Forbes serves both as a board member but is also invested in the TFS community as the grandparent of three students.

"Mr. Peevy's contributions to the community, as well as Tallulah Falls School, are well recognized in the Habersham County community," Forbes said. "This was significant in his being named the recipient of the Ottis Stonecypher Habersham Countian of the Year Award. He is a leader in economic development and a visionary."

Weidner, an accomplished student and athlete has contributed greatly to his school community. His remarks, along with those of Bartholf, were especially meaningful to Peevy.

*continued on next page*



Larry A. Peevy accepts the Otis Stonecypher Habersham Countian of the Year award during the annual Habersham County Chamber dinner on Dec. 5. Peevy was also installed as chamber board chairman that evening.

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*"Some people do one thing well and some people do many things fairly well, but Larry Peevy is unusual. He does many things very well. His administrative accomplishments and innovative ideas have lifted TFS to new heights."*

Amy Atkinson  
TFS Board Chair

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TFS Board Chair Amy Atkinson addresses members of the board of trustees and TFS senior staff at the special dinner honoring Peevy.



*"TFS has surrounded me with the best resources and people, and it all starts from the top. Mr. Peevy makes sure TFS is the best environment for learning and success by bringing in the best faculty, staff and students."*

Michael Weidner  
TFS senior



"I drive onto a beautiful campus in the mornings; I walk into a state-of-the-art academic building with the best faculty and staff members in the world; I sit in small classrooms with peers who influence me to be my best; I play basketball in a state-of-the-art gym with the best teammates and brothers imaginable; and I play sports for coaches who work hard to see me succeed in school, athletics, and life," Weidner said.

"TFS has surrounded me with the best resources and people, and it all starts from the top. Mr. Peevy makes sure TFS is the best environment for learning and success by bringing in the best faculty, staff, and students."

Bartholf, a TFS Class of 2015 graduate is a Pre-Medical/Biology major at Georgia College & State University. She established a strong bond with both Larry and Dinah Peevy when she was at TFS.

"I often try to imagine what my life would be like



Senior vocalist  
Tori Sesam sang  
"Wind Beneath  
My Wings" at the  
community  
celebration.



today had I not gone to this school. I believe I speak for all of my fellow alumni when I say that that future looks dull in comparison," Bartholf said.

"It has been said that the greatest gift that one can give is one of knowledge: the knowledge to know that you can attain and do more than you could have ever imagined. I believe I have done so undeniably through the guidance, compassion and selflessness of Mr. Peevy."

In addition to the community celebration, the board and senior staff celebrated Jan. 17 at a formal dinner, with a program featuring remarks from Atkinson, a special thanks to Ron Cantrell for his contributions to the building project and acknowledgments to the board and senior staff for supporting the evolution of the school and its mission. Additionally, a sign and a portrait were unveiled. ■

*Shown above: the Peevy grandchildren perch playfully on their grandfather's new sign in front of the upper school. From left: Avery, Caiden, Hanna and Aubrey.*

*"It has been said that the greatest gift that one can give is one of knowledge: the knowledge to know that you can attain and do more than you could have ever imagined. I believe I have done so undeniably through the guidance, compassion and selflessness of Mr. Peevy."*

Betsy Bartholf  
TFS graduate - Class of 2015





# Lost in learning

**zSpace** - ultimate virtual reality learning tool is now part of the TFS classroom experience

The world's first all-in-one desktop virtual reality solution for education is now in the eager hands of the students of Tallulah Falls School. zSpace Inc., a leading-edge technology company, recently introduced its innovative product to the classroom. zSpace for Education is a streamlined hardware and software solution that allows students to visualize and manipulate virtual 3D objects ranging from human hearts to complex machinery. The technological innovation greatly assists students as they learn math, physics, engineering and biology concepts.

Tallulah Falls School has purchased and installed two zSpace STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) labs - one in the middle school and one in the upper school. Each lab consists of a set of five student virtual reality stations and one teacher station, each outfitted with an interactive stylus as well as a wide variety of educational software.

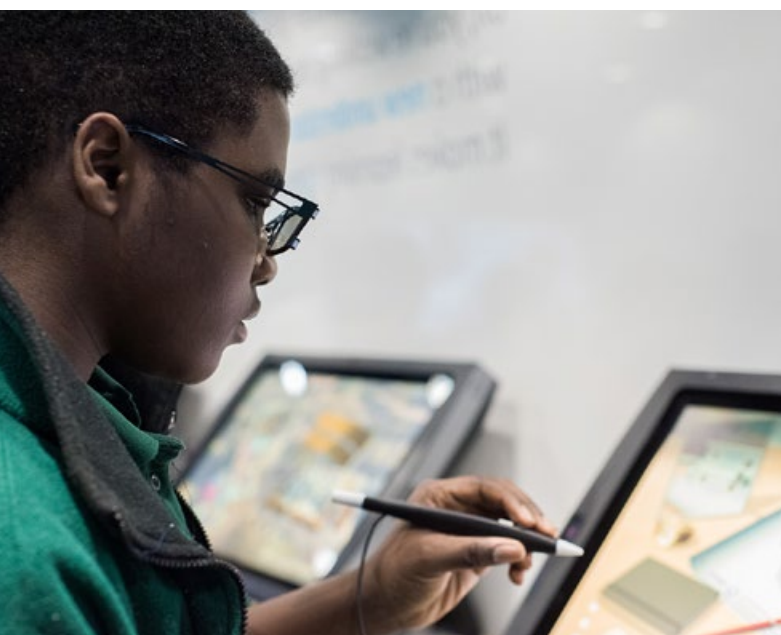
“STUDENTS LIKE USING zSPACE BECAUSE IT IS HANDS-ON AND FUN TO USE. THIS TECHNOLOGY ENGAGES OUR STUDENTS AND IMMERSSES THEM IN A VIRTUAL REALITY WORLD THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RECREATE IN A TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM.”

-DAVID CHESTER  
MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC DEAN

“zSpace is working really well. It encourages students to explore, solve problems and actually apply their learning in a way that builds confidence,” Chester added.

“We have set up a calendar for teachers and students to use the lab. Teachers have been through one professional development session and we are in the process of scheduling another so they are able to fully utilize this wonderful product.”

*continued on page 22*





# Citizen Seniors

## Lessons in leadership

Hearing from real-world leaders is a hallmark of the Tallulah Falls School student experience. A trio of individuals with ties to the school visited with members of the Class of 2017 recently. Georgia Court of Appeals Court Judge Brian R. Rickman, former Georgia Governor and recently-nominated U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and Mountain Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge B. Chan Caudell delivered talks infused with real life leadership lessons.

### Judge Brian R. Rickman • Georgia Court of Appeals

On Oct. 17, 2016, Judge Rickman shared insight on the legal profession, telling students he was initially interested in pursuing a career in criminal justice, perhaps working as a Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent. He changed course after spending time serving in a district attorney's office, subsequently attending the University of Georgia School of Law.

Rickman has experience working in private practice and serving as an assistant DA before being appointed district attorney for the Mountain Judicial Circuit in 2008. He was appointed to the Georgia Court of Appeals in 2015, taking office in January 2016.

He stressed the importance of the judiciary's role as independent and free of influence.

One topic of interest to TFS students was which college major best prepares a candidate to be successful in law school. According to Rickman, a course of study where critical thinking is emphasized as well as strong writing skills provides that background. However, Rickman said, many majors can translate to the legal field, using the example of a biochemistry major working in patent law for medical research.

"I thoroughly enjoyed speaking with the students, who clearly were very well prepared and highly interested in our justice system," Rickman said. "In order for our system to continue to function and to have the confidence of our citizens, it is vital that our young people hold on to their idealism and sense of fairness, and that many make the choice to take that passion with them to careers in the legal field."

### Sonny Perdue • 81st Governor of Georgia

On October 27, former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue shared his take on leadership and fielded questions from the seniors.

Perdue, the 81st governor of Georgia, served from 2003-11. He was the first Republican governor of Georgia since Reconstruction. He also served as a state senator from 1991-2001. Perdue's granddaughter Sunni Brett is a member of the senior class.

Economic development was a topic of discussion after Perdue fielded a question from Aida Roberts of Clarkesville about the number of countries the state leader visited while in office. The simple answer was 52 countries. While some of these visits had a diplomatic itinerary, the impetus behind many of the trips was to court overseas corporations interested in locating manufacturing facilities in Georgia.



Judge Brian R. Rickman



Former Gov. Sonny Perdue. Perdue was recently nominated by President Donald Trump to serve as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.





“Many of those European and Asian countries were home to automobile manufacturers,” he said. “That’s why we would travel.” He noted Kia and Kubota as successful economic development initiatives, representing thousands of jobs for Georgians.

He explained several types of economic development incentives offered to corporations, acknowledging job tax credits are a better avenue than cash grants. A natural segue to workforce development honed in on the importance of education in the economic development equation.

“We need skilled, bright creative employees,” he said. “Any business, large or small, depends on its people.”

He noted the quality of Georgia’s university and technical systems as incubators for the talent needed for the state’s businesses. For Atlanta based companies, Georgia Tech has been a huge draw, he said.

“My sense is we can continue to invest in education to fuel the fire for continued economic growth,” he said.

He shifted the conversation to leadership philosophies, explaining the difference between convictions and preferences.

“There were principles that I tried to drive home to my staff,” he said. “These are things that are immutable, unchangeable.”

Regarding issues involving preferences, he said it was important to be flexible when working with others. “We need people who will stand up for their convictions,” he said. “You need to know yourself to know what your convictions are.”



Former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue with his granddaughter, TFS senior Sunni Brett.



Judge B. Chan Caudell



Judge B. Chan Caudell

*All seniors are required to take TFS upper school social studies teacher Dallas Barron’s government class, which explores the foundations, key components and various roles of government in the United States.*

*“Experiential learning is emphasized at TFS and having students hear from community leaders is an important part of the student experience,” said President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy.*

*“We are grateful to Judge Rickman, Gov. Perdue, Judge Caudell and so many others who have invested in these important life lessons for our students.”*

## **Judge B. Chan Caudell • Superior Court Judge Mountain Judicial Circuit**

Tallulah Falls School seniors had their ‘day in court’ when the members of the Class of 2017 visited the Habersham County Courthouse on Nov. 28.

Judge Caudell provided an overview of courtroom procedures and explained the role of key personnel before inviting the students to observe a child support hearing.

He told students there were two opportunities for citizens to participate in government – voting and jury duty, urging them to exercise both duties responsibly. Regarding jury service, he said it important to report when called.

“When you are dealing with someone’s freedom, you have the ability to take that freedom away – it’s very serious,” Caudell said. “When you receive a summons for jury service, it’s important you heed it.”

He explained the court system was one of advocacy.

“It’s about discerning what the truth is through both sides doing the best they can,” he said.

“A lot of cases are settled.”

Magistrate Judge Gerald Johnson, representatives from the Mountain Judicial Circuit Assistant District Attorney’s office, the county clerk’s office, the court reporter and the Habersham County Sheriff’s Office explained their roles in the judicial process.



## TFS sophomore performs at renowned Carnegie Hall

**T**Fs sophomore Madeline McClurg of Clarkesville fulfilled the dream of every serious musician as she performed in New York City's famed Carnegie Hall in February. McClurg was chosen to participate in the 2017 High School Honors Performance Series. She performed second soprano with the Honors Concert Choir.

Participation in one of the five Honors ensembles is limited to the highest-rated high school performers from across the world. Participants came from 49 states, Guam, two Canadian provinces and a number of foreign countries. For many, performing at the world-famous Carnegie Hall is a venue that marks the pinnacle of musical achievement.

"Taking a trip to New York City and getting to perform at Carnegie Hall was definitely the most exhilarating, breathtaking, and amazing experience that I have ever had," McClurg said. "Not only did I get to take in the pure magic of the city, but I got to rehearse and perform with top singers from around the world under one of the best directors I could have had."

"I feel that besides growing vocally, I have also grown more as a person. I realized that there is a far bigger world out there and that where I live is just a small portion of it," she added.

McClurg has studied music for 12 years. In addition to her musical studies at TFS she also takes private piano, voice, and guitar lessons. This past summer McClurg participated in the auditioned Summer Music Institute at the University of Georgia. She has also participated in local musical theater productions with the Habersham Community Theater, and dances with the Gainesville Ballet Company. She has attended summer dance intensives with the Atlanta Ballet, Orlando Ballet, Ballet Tennessee and Joffrey South. And by the way, she is also an honor student at TFS.

Madeline is the daughter of Matt and Kim McClurg of Clarkesville. Madeline's mother, Kim, teaches fifth and sixth grade English at the TFS middle school.



*"I loved the constant hustle and bustle of city life and how the city never seemed to sleep. There is always an ecstatic energy running through it, which is something that really excited me. Of course, my favorite part was singing at Carnegie Hall, one of the grandest performing venues in the world, with 257 others in my chorus...My eyes drank in the golden theatre and the red velvet seats, and I just couldn't get enough of its splendor. Singing there brought tears to my eyes and made me gain an even bigger appreciation for music."*

- Madeline McClurg

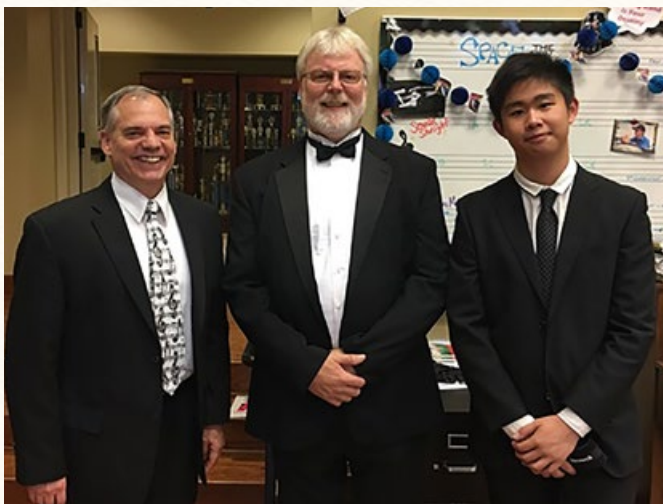


Sophomore Madeline McClurg is flanked by her parents, Kim and Matt in Carnegie's massive theater.



The magnificent Stern Auditorium in New York City's renowned Carnegie Hall.





*Shown from left are Curt Frederick, Dr. Jeff Luball and Mengfan Huang.*

## Huang named to GISA All-Select Honor Band

Sophomore Mengfan (Frank) Huang of China was selected to play alto saxophone with the Georgia Independent School Association (GISA) All-Select Honor Band. The event was hosted by Mt. Paran Christian School in Kennesaw.

Sixty-four students participated in eight hours of rehearsals which were spread over two days preceding the Jan. 21 concert. TFS music instructor Curt Frederick played the school's nine-foot grand piano for the contemporary percussive piece, "Ruckus." The band was conducted by Dr. Jeff Luball, Chair of fine arts and music professor at Darton State College in Albany.

TFS was one of the 30 participating GISA schools sending students to the 2017 GISA All-Select Honor Band, Chorus and Orchestra.

"We congratulate Mengfan for his work and dedication to musical excellence," Frederick said.

## Chorus spreads yuletide spirit at Georgia Governor's Mansion

The middle and upper school choruses found themselves Atlanta-bound for the holidays as both choruses were invited to perform at the Governor's Mansion. The upper school chorus, The TFS Singers, performed on Dec. 5, 2016 while the middle school chorus performed on December 12. The choruses, under the direction of music instructor Memrie Cox, performed during periods when the festively decorated mansion was open for public tours. Both choruses performed an impromptu song (at the request of the manager) at the Chick-fil-a in Flowery Branch after a lunch break at the restaurant.



## BRENAU UNIVERSITY'S THEATRE ON THE SQUARE



*Middle school Honor Chorus off to practice. Front row, from left: Nancy Fisher, Sophie Daves, Maddie Clouatre. Back row, from left: Selah Anderson, Megan Zimmerman, Ava Wehrstein, Emily Smith and Reagan Brode.*

## Middle and upper school singers represent TFS at GMEA Honor Chorus

A select group of Tallulah Falls students attended the 14th District Georgia Music Educator's Association (GMEA) Honor Chorus held Nov. 17-18, 2016 at Brenau University in Gainesville. The choral division of GMEA sponsors the annual gathering as a means of bringing together top choral students from grades seven through 12 from schools in the district to spend a fun-filled weekend making music together.

Five TFS high school students were selected for the 2016-17 Honor Chorus: Clarke Bailey, Sarah Catherine Fordham, Julia James, Madeline McClurg and William Shanks. Eight middle school students were also selected: Selah Anderson, Reagan Brode, Maddie Clouatre, Sophie Daves, Nancy Fisher, Emily Smith and Megan Zimmerman. TFS choral students are under the direction of music teacher Memrie Cox.



# 2017 STAR student STAR teacher

**Faingold named Habersham system winner  
Names Scott Davis as STAR teacher**

*by Ethan Jordan, reprinted with permission of The Northeast Georgian*

**T**allulah Falls School senior Mark Faingold has been named a STAR (Student-Teacher Achievement Recognition) student, as well as the Habersham County system winner of the STAR program. To represent in the STAR program, TFS selected Faingold, who in turn, selected TFS educator Scott Davis, as STAR teacher.

“So far, I’ve been accepted to UGA and Georgia Tech,” Faingold said Thursday before the Habersham County Rotary Club, prior to his winning the system title. “I’m planning to major in electrical engineering and computer science, [but] I’m still waiting for some other colleges to send me acceptance letters – U.C. Berkeley, Princeton, Cornell and Stanford – lot of hopes.”

The STAR program honors Georgia’s highest-achieving high school seniors and the teachers who have been most instrumental in their academic development.

“I’m very proud he is our STAR student, and profoundly humbled by his choice of STAR teacher,” Davis said. “As his former sophomore honors English teacher, I can attest to his focus and to his understanding of both the nuts and bolts and the more nuanced aspects of academic English. As the assistant tennis coach, I can further attest to his commitment to athletic excellence, sportsmanship and success – perhaps his greatest accolade is his commitment to service.”

Faingold currently serves as president of the TFS Math Club, TFS Recycling Club, co-founder and co-officer of the TFS Computer Science Club, International Club senior advisor, Presidential Scholar, TFS ambassador and member of the National Honors Society.

“He is a stellar performer. He is a star,” Davis said of Faingold.

The statewide STAR program was created in 1958 by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and in the mid-’90s the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) assumed responsibility for the program.

To obtain the STAR nomination, high school seniors must have the highest score on any single test date of the SAT taken through the November test date of their senior year and be in the top-10 percent or top 10 students of their class based on GPA. Each high school STAR student is asked to name his/her STAR teacher.



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MARK FAINGOLD CURRENTLY SERVES  
AS PRESIDENT OF THE TFS MATH CLUB,  
RECYCLING CLUB, CO-FOUNDER AND CO-  
OFFICER OF THE COMPUTER SCIENCE CLUB,  
INTERNATIONAL CLUB SENIOR ADVISOR,  
PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLAR, TFS AMBASSADOR  
AND MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL HONOR  
SOCIETY.

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Locally, STAR students and teachers are honored by their schools and receive special recognition in their communities from one of more than 165 civic organizations and businesses that serve as local STAR sponsors.





## NHS chapter inducts 23 new members

Tallulah Falls School's chapter of the National Honor Society inducted 23 new members in a Dec. 9, 2016 ceremony. New inductees joining NHS in Fall 2016 (in alphabetical order): Akinloluwa Akisanya, Madison Ball, Logan Bramlett, Sutherland Cope, Sarah Fordham, Jennings Gallagher, Katharine Gilmer, Caleb Griffis, Norah Griswold, Virginia Griswold, Kaila Hoffman, Will Jackson, Robert Maxwell, Madeline McClurg, Ajani McIntosh, Sanson Navarrete, Michelle Thevenin, Jiayi Wang, Marly Welborn, Nyah Williams, Emily Wonders, Yuting Zhang, Zhihao Zhong.

Returning members include (in alphabetical order): Grace Brewer, Laura Brothers, Meredith Church, Anna Davis, Anne Edwards, Isaac Elias, Mark Faingold, Perry Gresham, Abby Hulsey, Josey Keene, Shanna Lewallen, Chen Lin, Collin Mickels, Deneeka Nelson, Clara Pence, Kayley Pugh, Mackenzie Rainwater, Victoria Sesam, Shyam Shukla, Draper Smith, Max Teems, Jordan Teng, Marcus Thompson, Cynthia Trusty, Michael Weidner, Xuan Yang.

## scholarship • leadership service • character



photo credit: Shelby Day

*The National Honor Society is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. More than just an honor roll, NHS serves to recognize those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. These characteristics have been associated with membership in the organization since its founding in 1921.*

## dressing smart-ly

### Presidential scholars recognized with distinctive uniform option

There's a new clothing option that will help high-achieving students at Tallulah Falls School brave the elements. Students who earn Presidential Scholar honors for two semesters may purchase a special jacket from Parker School Uniforms.

To be eligible for Presidential Scholar status, a student must maintain a 4.0 GPA with 15 or fewer demerits and incur no major infractions.

The high-quality apparel is shown here being modeled by eighth grade Presidential Scholars Gigi Welch of Gainesville and Jack Greene of Clarkesville.





# In-state colleges and universities battle for graduating seniors in an increasingly competitive process

## UGA Early Action provides qualified TFS seniors with expedited admissions decision

Acceptance into the University of Georgia has become extremely competitive over the last decade, and for six Tallulah Falls School seniors, the wait is over with news of an early action acceptance [EA]. Receiving the coveted acceptance are Mark Faingold of Russia, Emma Peacock of Dillard, Victoria Sesam of Sautee-Nacoochee, Michael Weidner of Clarkesville, Xuan (Arthur) Yang of the People's Republic of China, and Yuting Zhang of the People's Republic of China.

EA, with a deadline of Oct. 15, provides an avenue for highly-qualified students to apply to UGA for those interested in an expedited process. Acceptance is based on three criteria: grades through the end of the junior year; the rigor of the student's curriculum relative to the curriculum offered at his/her high school; and the result of the either the SAT I or the ACT.

According to TFS College Counselor Bobby Hammond, EA is highly competitive and selective. President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy said, "These accomplished students are among the brightest of the Class of 2017 and have maximized their experience here at TFS."



E. Lane Gresham

Shown, front row, from left: Yuting Zhang, Victoria Sesam and Emma Peacock. Back row, from left: Mark Faingold, Michael Weidner, Xuan (Arthur) Yang.



# UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



E. Lane Gresham

Shown, from left: Victoria Sesam, Xuan (Arthur) Yang, Mark Faingold and Emma Peacock.

## Four TFS seniors accepted to Georgia Tech under Early Action program

Four Tallulah Falls School seniors also received an early action acceptance to the Georgia Institute of Technology. Seniors accepted to Georgia Tech are Mark Faingold of Russia, Emma Peacock of Dillard, Victoria Sesam of Sautee-Nacoochee and Xuan (Arthur) Yang of the People's Republic of China.

More than 15,700 students applied for Early Action [EA] admittance to the 2017 class with a deadline of Oct. 15. According to the Georgia Tech website, this is a 5 percent increase over last year and among Georgia residents, applications are up 25 percent over the last six years.

Students accepted under EA are automatically considered for academic scholarships.

"We are extremely proud of these accomplished students," President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy said. "This group of four are among the brightest of the TFS Class of 2017."



# Georgia Institute of Technology





## Georgia Economic Development official tours TFS



*Shown from left: Mark Rasmussen, TFS Vice President; Stella Xu, Director, Greater China Region Initiatives, GaDED; Yuting Zhang, TFS senior; Larry A. Peevy, TFS President and Head of School; Hank Wu, consultant for US China Connection, Inc.*

A senior official with the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GaDED) toured Tallulah Falls School in December. Stella Xu, director of Greater China Region Initiatives for the GaDED met with President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy on Dec. 14, 2016 to discuss the school and its mission.

Xu told Peevy she was part of former Gov. Sonny Perdue's first trips to China when she was on staff at Kennesaw State University. She later came to work for the state and now travels several times a year to China, representing Georgia's economic development interests.

Peevy provided an overview of the school's growth over the past decade, highlighting its role in educating area students as well as its growing stature as a top-quality college preparatory option for international students.

"This meeting was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the work TFS is doing to prepare students for a global workforce," Peevy said. "Our students are developing relationships with peers from throughout the world. This will enhance their future success."

During lunch, TFS senior Yuting Zhang, a student from China, joined the group for lunch. Xu was delighted to learn they were both from Shanghai.

"I was honored to represent the international student body of TFS during Ms. Xu's visit. We shared our stories and had a wonderful conversation," Zhang said. "It was an amazing opportunity for the Georgia Department of Economic Development to learn about the high standards of campus life here and the great potential of students at TFS. I hope the information will help the officials when they make economic decisions for the future of Georgia."

Accompanying Xu was Hank Wu, a senior consultant for US China Connection, Inc., a consulting firm that matches Chinese families with boarding schools in the U.S.

## New additions to TFS Plant Services

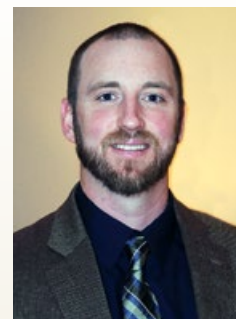
**Jeremy Pirkle** of Hall County has been named Director of Plant Services. Pirkle will succeed Wallace Dodd, who will retire as Director of Plant Services in July. Pirkle assumed his duties on February 15.

Pirkle has most recently served as Wastewater Manager for the city of Roswell, managing a \$1 million annual budget. He has a broad range of experience in project management as a manager of facilities, water systems, parks, public facilities and systems. He has 12 years experience in public works/water utilities operation, formerly working for the city of Clarkesville as the Waste/Wastewater Director and the city of Cornelia as a Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator.

Pirkle has an Associates Degree in Environmental Science from North Georgia Technical College and is currently completing his Bachelors of Science in Business Administration at Piedmont College, with a projected May 2017 graduation date.

With the expansion that the school has experienced over the last decade, Pirkle's role is critical to the success of the school. He will provide oversight for 36 buildings, a 500-acre campus, the department budget and leadership of the maintenance department.

Pirkle is married to Laura and they have three children, Lily Belle, 5; Joseph, 2; and Elly Rose, born in mid-January.



Jeremy Pirkle

**Michael Rogers** of Tiger will become Assistant Director of Plant Services in March. Rogers comes to TFS with an extensive background in property management, machinery maintenance, construction and general maintenance.

Rogers is working on an Associate of Arts degree from Liberty University and is the current pastor of Wolf Creek Baptist Church.

Rogers is married to wife, Susan, and they have three children: Kenndy, 21; Brayden, 20; Gracyn, 17.



Michael Rogers





Sixth grader Tommy Crawford of Mt. Airy is just a bit excited as he gives Smokey a big hug during his recent TFS appearance.

# an American icon

This past fall the Northeast Georgia mountains experienced the most damaging and destructive wildfire season in decades. In October Tallulah Falls School middle school students received a well-timed visit from representatives from the U.S. Forest Service and the Georgia Forestry Commission. Students learned about the ecological and economic importance of our Southern Appalachian forests and what was being done to suppress the destructive fires. However, the follow-up guest, Smokey Bear, ultimately stole the show. After learning the fascinating details of Smokey's historic survival story the students had an opportunity to get an individual photo with the American icon.

**Smokey Bear joins U.S. Forest Service and Georgia Forestry Commission representatives for a chat with middle school students.**



## 2016's - Outstandings!

In a yearly tradition that has become a big part of the TFS Christmas celebration, end-of-year awards were bestowed on deserving members of the faculty, staff and student body. Shown from left: Michael Weidner, outstanding 2016 upper school student; Jim Van Hooser, outstanding upper school teacher; E. Lane Gresham, Director of Community Relations, outstanding staff member; Bryan Freeman, Director of Information Technology, Light in the Mountains Award (outstanding member of the TFS senior staff); Caroline Turpin, outstanding middle school student; Zac Roland, outstanding middle school teacher; Elizabeth Kyle, outstanding staff member. Congratulations to these members of the TFS community for modeling excellence each and every day.

*Recognizing  
Excellence*



# Rockin' it

## making history fun



Fifth grade - Stone Mountain adventure



TFS fifth graders journeyed to the Big Rock, aka Stone Mountain, on Nov. 14, 2016 for a day of history, botany and geological discoveries. The students were accompanied by fifth grade teachers Chrissy Van Hooser and Stacie Besier. The group experienced a colorful slice of pre-Civil War history as they toured the park's historic antebellum plantation. They were able to learn how textiles were produced, how food was grown on the farm and how various tools and household gadgets were used in plantation life. The group finished their visit with a scenic ride in the skylift to the top of Stone Mountain where they explored the geologically rare granite dome.



Shown from left are Keygan Antosiak, Jake Wehrstein and Tyler Cook.



Local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Commander Bill Miles and Auxiliary President Belinda Baragona recently made a surprise visit to TFS seventh graders to present them with a certificate of appreciation. Last November seventh grade students created Veterans day cards that were delivered to the Grant-Reeves Post 7720 in Cornelia. The cards were distributed to veterans in different hospitals across the region. The certificate of appreciation stated, "Sincere appreciation of your loyal and dedicated service and demonstration of patriotism. Our local Veterans THANK YOU for your contribution..." Pictured above with Ms. Baragona and Commander Miles is TFS seventh grader Josh Jackson of Alto.





## Linden Pederson '15

### TFS alum working out the bugs

One talented and creative Tallulah Falls School alum is creating a buzz in Athens, Georgia. Linden Pederson [TFS Class of 2015], a junior at the University of Georgia works as the Husbandry and Outreach Coordinator for the UGA Entomology Insect Zoo. Pederson is majoring in both Scientific Illustration (BFA) and Entomology (BSES).

The UGA Insect Zoo provides free insect and arachnid educational outreach programs to Athens and surrounding areas. According to its website, the UGA BugDawgs, along with the student club, annually lead hundreds of events reaching more than 20,000 Georgians. Living insects, centipedes, millipedes, scorpions, and spiders, as well as museum specimens from Georgia and other parts of the world, are brought to schools, libraries, organizations, or community centers for interactive display.

To raise funds for the zoo and the UGA BugDawgs, Pederson is planning the Ta-ran-tula run, a 5K fundraiser set for 8:30 a.m. April 22 at the State Botanical Gardens of Georgia.

Pederson developed the concept for the race and is the primary contact for sponsors, volunteers. She also designed the event poster, medal and T-shirt.

TFS Upper School art teacher Tina Cheek is proud of her former student.

"Linden is amazingly creative, motivated and organized," Cheek said. "It does not surprise me that she developed this entire project!"

President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy echoed that pride upon hearing of Pederson's involvement in her academic community.

"Character development is equally important as academic excellence at TFS," "We are proud of Linden for continuing to exemplify great character through community service."

For more information on the event, visit <http://tarantula5k.wixsite.com/ugainsectzoo>.

## Goodman '11 to work with organization fighting child exploitation

Kylie Goodman, a graduate of the TFS Class of 2011, was recently employed with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Arlington, Virginia. Goodman is a 2015 graduate of Presbyterian College and will receive her Masters in Forensic and Legal Psychology from Marmount University in May 2017.



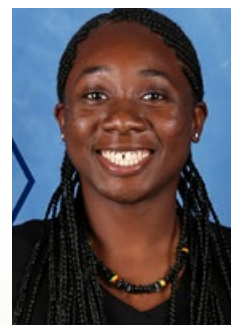
*Linden Pederson also designed the race poster.*

## Johnson '10 named head lacrosse coach at University of Dallas

Destinee Johnson, a 2010 graduate of Tallulah Falls School, has been named the head coach of the women's lacrosse program at the University of Dallas in Irving, Texas. Johnson assumed the head coaching duties in October.

Johnson most recently had served as the assistant women's lacrosse coach at the University of Alabama of Huntsville. In her one and only season at UAH the team earned a 14-4 record. The team also earned a number two seed in the 2016 Gulf South Conference Invitational. Johnson served as an assistant coach with the BLU Lacrosse Club since May 2016.

Johnson earned a Bachelors in Sports Management in 2015 from Emmanuel College. While a student at Emmanuel, Johnson was named captain of the lacrosse team. She ranks second all-time in ground balls, was named to the Community College All-Academic Team and was a student-athlete advisory committee representative.







*The late Mrs. Kocica at Alumni Homecoming in 2014*

## Milam Nicholson Wilson Kocica '34

### Oldest alumni dies at 100 years young

**T**he Tallulah Falls School community has lost one of its dearest treasures. Milam Nicholson Wilson Kocica, age 100, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2016. Kocica lived in nearby Hollywood, Georgia.

Mrs. Kocica was born on Feb. 25, 1916 to the late Benjamin Hill and Acie Vance Anderson Nicholson. She held the distinction of being the oldest known TFS alumni, graduating in 1934. Mrs. Kocica was one of seven children, six of whom graduated from TFS. She was a member of Ebenezer United Methodist Church and was an active volunteer at the Victory Home in Tallulah Falls. Mrs. Kocica had also been a substitute teacher at nearby Woodville Elementary.

She was preceded in death by her first husband, Clarence Gordon Wilson; second husband, Joe Kocica; and son, Benjamin Clarence Wilson. She is survived by one daughter, one sister, two brothers, three grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Mrs. Kocica was a regular attendee of TFS Alumni Weekend and was a strong supporter of the school.

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## Angela Exley Dearing

### Former TFS trustee devoted her life to the service of others

**T**allulah Falls School is mourning the recent death of Honorary Trustee Angela Exley Dearing. The Savannah native died on Dec. 1, 2016. Mrs. Dearing spent her life in service to others which included more than 25 years a member of the TFS Board of Trustees. Dearing served as the TFS Board of Trustees Chair, GFWC-Georgia President and GFWC-Georgia Junior Clubs Director.

Dearing was also a founding member of the Fragrant Garden for the Blind in Savannah. She also served on the National Board of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in Washington, D.C. Other involvements included serving on the Board of the Humane Society, working and with the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce. Because of her volun-

teer service to others, the late Savannah Mayor John Rousakis declared an *Angela Dearing Day* in Savannah in her honor.

She was married for 52 years to Ashley Dearing, Jr., who passed away March 2009.

TFS President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy offered the following tribute to Dearing: "Angela's enthusiasm to serve and deep love of Tallulah Falls School will long be remembered. We will miss this true southern lady and loyal friend."

Tallulah Falls School has established a perpetual scholarship to honor the life and service of Angela Dearing. If you would like to contribute to this scholarship, please contact Sonya M. Smith, Executive Director for Advancement, at [sonya.smith@tallulahfalls.org](mailto:sonya.smith@tallulahfalls.org).



*Angela Dearing*





photo credit: Kelly Allen

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*"TFS has been a blessing to our family. They really encourage their students to do for others. That is one of the things that we love the most about TFS because that is what we have always taught our daughter."*

*Kelly Allen  
mother of TFS fifth  
grader Piper Allen*

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# the icing on the (cup)cake

***TFS fifth grader uses a love of baking as a means to help future TFS students***

by Trevor McNaboe  
reprinted with permission of *The Clayton Tribune*

Piper Allen, a fifth-grade student at Tallulah Falls School, loves her school. Piper is part of the school's first fifth-grade class, something she takes pride in.

According to the school website, more than 70 percent of their student body is awarded financial aid to make the cost of an education more affordable. One of the costs incurred is that of uniforms.

Last year, Piper's great-grandmother gave her money for Christmas to cover the cost of her uniforms. Piper then wanted to give new and incoming students the same gift she received.

As Piper and her mother, Kelly, share a passion for baking cupcakes at Annie's at Alley's, she soon thought to combine her desire to help other students with baking.

"We decided that by donation only, we could do a cupcake tasting at the store and we could donate it all to TFS," Kelly said.

The mother-daughter duo discussed how much it would cost a student to purchase two sets of casual uniforms, one set of dress uniforms, one set of physical education uniforms, and a winter jacket. They set a goal of \$350.

The Allens baked approximately 300 cupcakes and set up a table at the store. "She would explain to people as they came in that she was a (Tallulah Falls School) student down there and that she wanted to give back and welcome new students next year," Kelly said.

The customers reacted well to Piper's plan. In fact, one couple early on was so impressed they asked Piper to go and count her donations, then offered to make up the difference to make sure she met her goal.

"She's always been the type of kid that loves to give and she's had such a good experience this year," Kelly said.

By the end of the day, the Allens raised \$700 in total - doubling their original goal. Then, Kelly said, they received a \$100 donation. That brought their total to \$800.

"I'm so proud of Piper. She is a perfect example and the epitome of what a TFS student should be," said TFS President and Head of School Larry A. Peavy.

The Allens have been thankful for their daughter's giving heart and are thankful the school she goes to reinforces that.

"TFS has been a blessing to our family. They really encourage their students to do for others. That is one of the things that we love the most about TFS because that is what we have always taught our daughter as well," Kelly said.

Piper and her mother look forward to holding another cupcake sale in the future to continue to raise money to help fellow students.



## Girls basketball raises funds for Richard's Kids

**T**he varsity girls basketball team recently presented a check for \$330 to Clayton, Georgia based Richard's Kids, Inc. Richard's Kids is a Christian-based non-profit organization whose goal is to help children in neighboring Rabun County whose families are experiencing financial difficulties.

Richard's Kids has assisted more than 600 Rabun County children primarily at Christmas each of the past several years, spending an average of \$100 per child. Richard's Kids is a totally voluntary organization with no salaries taken, so all contributions are passed through to those it benefits.

"We dedicated the Providence Christian game earlier this year to collecting money for Richard's Kids," said head coach Tom Tilley. "We had a collection box and raised more than \$300. Thank you to everyone who had a hand in helping kids at Christmastime."



## 6th grader's birthday wish benefits sick children

**S**ixth grader Mason Dawe of Demorest recently celebrated his 12th birthday. But whereas most 12 year olds might have a lengthy list of birthday wants, Mason's wish was just a bit unusual for a middle school boy.

Instead of birthday gifts for himself, Mason asked his friends to make a donation to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA), the nationally-renowned hospital that serves injured and sick children from across Georgia, the Southeast and the U.S.

Within a week of his request Mason was on his way to Atlanta to hand-deliver a donation of more than \$700 to CHOA. Mason's donation was in honor of his cousin, Kennedy Crawford, and friend, Brooklyn Littleton, both of whom received treatment at CHOA.

"Mason's action is a perfect example of a student living up to the mission of our school," said TFS President and Head of School Larry A. Peevy. "He is not only getting an excellent education, but is developing the character necessary to make a difference in the world."



Mason Dawe

*Instead of birthday gifts for himself, Mason asked his friends to make a donation to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.*



## Teachers demonstrates the ART of giving

**T**he Circle for Children has a long and proud history of support for Tallulah Falls School. Currently the Circle provides monetary scholarships for several deserving seniors each spring. Recently TFS art teachers Tina Cheek and Georgann Lanich decided to show their TFS spirit and give a little something back to the Circle. Each teacher donated a piece of art to the Circle for Children to be auctioned at their gala fund-raiser, "ARTitude" in Atlanta.

Cheek donated a signed and numbered print, "Sunset," while Lanich donated an original oil painting titled "French Country Road." In addition, Cheek's classes made eight batik pillows to be donated and auctioned as well. Cheek was actually the recipient of a Circle scholarship in 1975 and two other TFS graduates who returned to work at the school, Sara Boyd Roberts ('04) and Irene Henry Gray, ('73) also received Circle Scholarships upon graduation.



Tina Cheek

Georgann Lanich



The zSpace learning experience creates student engagement through exploration and experiential learning in a student-centered environment. In a nutshell, it's hands on and the student is in control of the zSpace learning process.

Cutting-edge hardware and software allow high-speed head tracking, enabling smooth interaction between the students and 3D objects.

So what do the students have to say about using zSpace?

"Using zSpace is really cool," said sixth grader Mason Dawe of Demorest. "Everything's in 3-D and it makes learning really fun."

Fifth grader Brooke Hayes of Cornelia was in complete agreement with the coolness factor. "zSpace is so much fun to use - I love it. My brother used to dissect frogs in class. Now I can do the same thing on zSpace, but without all the grossness."

**"zSPACE IS SO MUCH FUN TO USE - IT'S COOL.  
MY BROTHER USED TO DISSECT FROGS IN  
CLASS. NOW WE CAN DO THE SAME THING  
WITH zSPACE, BUT WITHOUT ALL THE  
GROSSNESS."**

**-BROOKE HAYES  
TFS FIFTH GRADER**



*The zSpace system stimulates student involvement in the learning process.*



*Photo credit: Kimberly Brown, The Northeast Georgian*

## **TFS Sixth grader steals the show in Habersham Community Theater production**

Tate Shaw, sixth grade student at Tallulah Falls School, stole the show at a community theater production late last year.

*Welcome to Mitford*, staged at the Habersham Community Theater, was great fun for Shaw who enjoyed making the audience laugh. Another highlight for Shaw was acting with two special women – his mother Meridith Shaw and grandmother Ginny Allison.

"It's a good experience even if you don't like acting," Tate Shaw said. "It's just awesome to be able to express your feelings."

Shaw, playing the young friend of a small-town Episcopal priest, channeled the mischievousness of the character, Dooley.

"I wanted to make them feel like they are up on stage," he said, when asking about the positive audience response.

In addition to acting, Shaw likes to play soccer and baseball.





# BIRMINGHAM CROSSPLEX

## TFS track & field shines at elite indoor event

*photos courtesy of coach Scott Neal*



Sophomore Aaron Hughes set three TFS indoor records at the CrossPlex.



Junior Anna Davis on the victor's platform.



Davis takes the baton from 800-meter relay teammate Sunni Brett en route to a record-shattering performance.

**T**FS athletes set seven indoor school records and established two others as they competed at the magnificent Birmingham CrossPlex on Jan. 27-28.

Eight TFS athletes were among 2,500 entries from 168 schools from multiple states participating in the elite event.

Sophomore Aaron Hughes of Demorest earned TFS Athlete of the Meet honors with indoor records in the 800 meter (2:10.75), 1600 meter (5:06.46) and 3,200 meter (10:58.33).

Junior Anna Davis of Clarkesville won the 1A-5A pentathlon (fourth of 21 overall) with 2,670 points to establish a new TFS record. Davis also set new TFS indoor standards in the high jump (4' 9-1/2"), pole vault (8' 6"), and 60 meter hurdles (9.86).

The 800-meter relay team of Briana Docsol, Madison Ball, Sunni Brett and Anna Davis shattered the school indoor record by over five seconds with a 1:58.35 performance.

The 4,000-seat CrossPlex features a Mondo surface, eight straightaway lanes for sprinting and a hydraulically-banked track. This impressive facility hosts national championship events from youth level to NCAA. There are only six similar facilities in the U.S. and eight in the world.



Senior swimmer Julia Nichols, a team captain, reacts to Tallulah Lake's icy waters in December.

The TFS swim team celebrated Winter with their fifth annual Polar Bear Plunge into the icy waters of Tallulah Lake on Dec. 15. "Team members buddy up to plunge, go solo and have contests to see who can stay in the longest," said coach Susan Nichols. Twenty-five TFS swimmers (plus four brave coaches) and five swimmers from Habersham Central High School took the chilly challenge. Following the icy dip swimmers were treated to hot chocolate and s'mores around a roaring fire.

## Fire and ice - swimmers take polar bear plunge





# Varsity Basketball

## RESPECT - Indians earn it during a memorable season

**Teamwork, hustle and unselfish play pave the way as the boys roar to a school-record 19 straight wins to start the season**

The 2016-17 basketball season was one for the record books. Both the boys and girls teams were playing in the beautiful new Student Activity Center on the middle school campus, and both teams responded with inspiring campaigns.

In just a few short seasons coach Jim Van Hooser has built the TFS boys team into a very respectable program. As the team enters the state tournament in mid-February the record stands at an impressive 23-4, including a first-round win in the region tournament.

"We have one of the best teams to ever play at TFS," Van Hooser said. "The reason is not because we were so talented but because we genuinely love each other. This allowed us to play hard for each other."

"We broke a school record with 19 consecutive wins to start the season. That's difficult to do under any circumstances, but particularly in our region, which is very competitive," he said

Van Hooser had seven experienced seniors to lead the way this season. With the exception of one, each senior had been in the TFS program for several years.

"All of our players really bought into what we were trying to accomplish, and the results speak for themselves," he said.

In such a successful season, Van Hooser mentions that a common favorite memory among the team was ringing the victory bell outside of the gym after each win.

As to what the future holds, Van Hooser remains optimistic.

"We have several talented freshmen coming up as well as a number of returning juniors who played a great deal this year. The future of boys basketball at TFS is indeed bright," he added.

*Note: as of press time, the boys team was victorious in the first round of the state tournament, defeating Landmark Christian by a score of 69-41. They are slated to play St. Francis in round two.*



Coach Van Hooser on senior night



Michael Weidner



Thala Freeman



Zatrick Pearce



Michael Van Hooser



Josey Keene



Sanson Navarrete



Trey Wilcox





Nyah Williams

# Youth movement- Lady Indians defy the odds

**Freshman-laden squad ties  
TFS girls varsity season  
record for wins**

In the days leading up to the 2016-17 Lady Indians season, coach Tom Tilley was looking at a major rebuilding project. Twenty-six games later, his team tied for the most wins in school history (lucky 13) and ranked No. 25 in the state in the Class A private classification.

"We had a great season," Tilley said, "and considering that most of our squad are freshmen, the future is very bright."

Indeed, Tilley had nine freshman on the varsity roster and loses only one senior to graduation. However that senior, Aida Roberts, was a team captain and not only quarterbacked Tilley's offense for the last several seasons, but provided tremendous hustle and leadership on the court.

Three Lady Indians were recognized at season's end with All-Region honors. The aforementioned Roberts (11 points per game); sophomore Nyah Williams, the team's leading scorer (16 points per game); and freshman center Ashley Crosby (10 points per game/13 rebounds per game).

"It was amazing the amount of respect we gained from the region coaches," Tilley said. "Coaches cannot vote on their own players, and we still had three players voted to the All-Region team for the first time in school history."



*"We had a great season, and considering that most of our squad are freshmen, the future is very bright."*

Coach Tom Tilley



Aida Roberts



Ashley Crosby



senior night at the last regular season home game

## SENIOR moment

Senior night 2017 was a huge success. With the TFS Student Activity Center packed-out for the Feb. 3 region game versus Prince Avenue Christian, 12 happy seniors were able to enjoy their moment in the spotlight with members of their family (or campus family).

Shown, front row, from left: Trey Wilcox, Aida Roberts, Sola Sofela, Emma Peacock, Emma Caldwell. Middle row, from left: Zatrack Pearce, Michael Weidner, Jason Lin, Sanson Navarrete. Back row, from left: Josey Keene, Thala Freeman, Michael Van Hooser.





# On Deck

Record participation in JV and middle school Winter sports means a promising future for TFS varsity programs



**JV Boys Basketball**



**JV Cheering**



**MS 'A' Boys Basketball**



**MS 'B' Boys Basketball**



**MS 'C' Boys Basketball**



**MS Girls Basketball**



**MS Cheering**



**MS Swimming**



## Swimmers finish strong at STATE

**T**FS swimmers capped off an excellent year with a strong performance at the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) state swim meet in Atlanta on Feb. 3-4. The event was held at the McAuley Aquatic Center on the campus of Georgia Tech. The team received an enthusiastic send off on Friday morning as they boarded their bus to leave TFS.

The TFS girls finished 41st and the boys 45 of 105 scoring teams from classification A through AAAAAA. According to assistant swim coach Susan Nichols, every TFS swimmer achieved personal best performances at the meet.

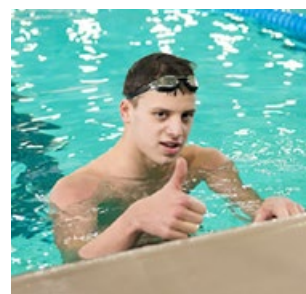
"After months of disciplined training they were able to race at an elite level with many skilled athletes," Nichols said. "Our goal was to make the finals in as many events as possible, with a realistic chance in the men's and women's freestyle relay events."

In the boys 200-yard freestyle relay each swimmer swam a personal best. The team of John Nichols, Hunter Weyrich, Riley Barron and Nick Stelmack finished in 1:35.39 which earned them 19th place and a birth in the finals. In the finals the team swam a 1:34.73, earning 18th place.

The girls 400-yard freestyle relay team came into the meet seeded 21st. The team placed 18th in the preliminaries, good enough to compete in the finals on Saturday. The dynamic team of Julia Nichols, Reid Kafsky, Norah Griswold and Virginia Griswold turned in a school record time of 3:53.94 which earned a 16th place finish.

Notable individual performances were turned in by sophomore Nick Stelmack in the 100-yard butterfly (school record - 21st place) and 100-yard backstroke (school record - 17th place). Sophomore Virginia Griswold finished 23rd overall in the 100-yard butterfly with a time 1:02.25. Freshman Hunter Weyrich made his state debut in the 500-yard freestyle with a 29th place seed, and finished impressively by setting a personal record of 5:09.64, earning 24th place.

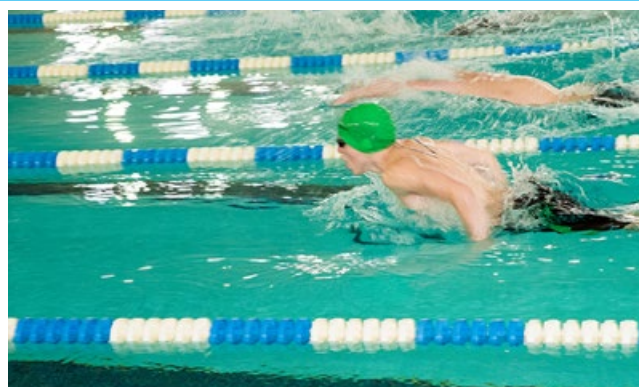
"The coaches are extremely proud of the accomplishments of the swimmers at the state meet, and all of the TFS swim team members for the work and results achieved this season," said Nichols.



Nick Stelmack



Julia Nichols congratulates an opponent on a good race.

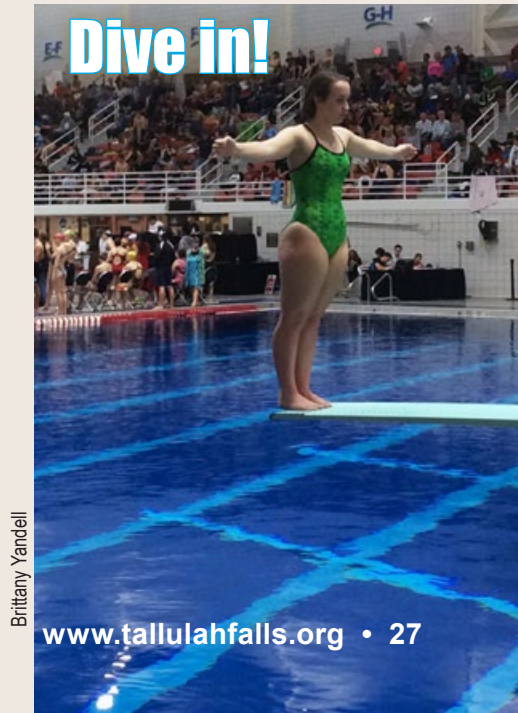


## Seniors make a splash



TFS seniors pose for a commemorative shot during the Jan. 14 meet at the Ruby Fulbright Aquatic Center in Clarkesville. Shown, from left: Coach Susan Nichols, Rachel Richardson, Shyam Shukla, Yuting Zhang, Julia Nichols, Tianqi Zhang, Anne Edwards and coach Annette Cochran.

Sophomore Jenni Gallagher of Clarkesville is a one-woman show when it comes to TFS diving. For the second year in a row, Gallagher competed as the only diver on the TFS swim team. She finished the season placing first in the Girls' 6-Dive format. Gallagher competed in four meets this season, and according to dive coach Brittany Yandell, she showed significant improvement, earning a varsity letter for the second year in a row. She is shown here competing at the Ramsey Center at UGA.



Brittany Yandell

**Dive in!**



# TRIBE TELLERS

**Innovative program provides an opportunity to develop mentoring skills and fosters bonds between students**

**A**n innovative new program at Tallulah Falls School allows the fifth graders to be nurtured by members of the varsity boys basketball team. The program, known as 'Tribe Tellers,' was developed by varsity boys basketball coach Jim Van Hooser and wife, Chrissy, a fifth grade teacher at the middle school. The two were looking for a service project for the basketball team and Chrissy Van Hooser related her fifth graders loved to have someone read to them.

Tribe Tellers provides a meaningful opportunity for the basketball team to serve as approachable role models to the youngest and most impressionable students on campus. Van Hooser's players come to the middle school once a week and stay for about 30 minutes.

"My favorite part about the Tribe Tellers program is helping the fifth graders and bringing smiles to their faces," said Michael Van Hooser, a senior captain. "I enjoy making their day better by spending time with them. This program has made Tallulah Falls School have more of a community feel for me because I get to interact with the other [middle school] campus."

"My kids LOVE when they come," Chrissy Van Hooser said. "We read most of the time, but about once a month we let them go outside and play. They played Zombie Red light/Green light in October. The last time we went out they played Four Square."

"I love how they tell funny jokes," said Lilly Kate Farrar of Toccoa. Lawson Fulbright of Toccoa added, "I like that they read to us, plus I look like Trey [senior basketball player Trey Wilcox]."

It's not certain which group of students gains the most from this unique program, but certainly the campus, as a whole, greatly benefits when student bonds are developed and strengthened.



## 2016-17 Tribe Tellers

Jake Carver  
Thala Freeman  
Josey Keene  
Sanson Navarrete  
Zatrack Pearce  
Michael Van Hooser  
Matthew Weidner  
Trey Wilcox







# face the FUTURE

## TALLULAH FALLS SCHOOL

2017 Tallulah Fund



**YOUR GIFT** will help Tallulah Falls School students excel in a rapidly changing world, both inside and outside of the classroom.

# IMPACT

**70%**  
of TFS students  
receive financial aid.

**1:15**  
Teacher/student ratio

**1/2**  
Day and domestic boarding  
tuition is half the national  
average.

**50%**  
percent of annual budget  
is dependent on charitable  
gifts and donations.

BY THE NUMBERS



Piper Allen



Mason Dawe



Lilly Johnson



Jordan Seamon



Reid Kafsky



Will Jackson



Hunter Zhong

faces  
of the  
future

By contributing to the Tallulah Fund, you provide funding for the education of deserving and motivated students. You help fund dreams, ambition, transformation, innovation and excellence by assisting young people as they take their first bold steps into a promising future. Tallulah Fund gifts ignite opportunities for our students and inspire excellence every day.

On behalf of our students, thank you for your support.

*Michael Weidner has attended TFS since the ninth grade. He is the senior class president, a Presidential Scholar, TFS upper school student of the year, NHS Parliamentarian, TFS Ambassador, Georgia Certificate of Merit Scholar, FCA Huddle Leader. He has excelled in cross country (captain), basketball and golf (captain) during his TFS athletic career.*

*Julia Nichols has attended TFS since the sixth grade. She is the senior class vice-president, TFS Ambassador and FCA Huddle Leader. She has enjoyed a stellar athletic career, participating in cross country (captain), cheerleading, volleyball (captain), track & field, swimming (captain) and golf.*

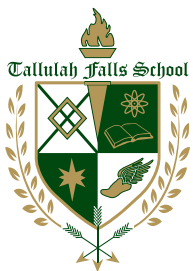


**YES,** I want to make a difference at TFS by supporting the Tallulah Fund.

Please use the remit envelope included, make an online donation at [www.tallulahfalls.org](http://www.tallulahfalls.org) or call Sonya Smith, executive director for advancement, at (706) 839-2021.

**Thank you for your generous support**





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*Parents of alumni: If this issue is addressed to your child who no longer maintains a permanent address at your home, please notify the Executive Director for Advancement of the new mailing address at (706) 839-2021 or [sonya.smith@tallulahfalls.org](mailto:sonya.smith@tallulahfalls.org).*

# ALUMNI 2017 Homecoming

## Friday evening, April 21, 2017

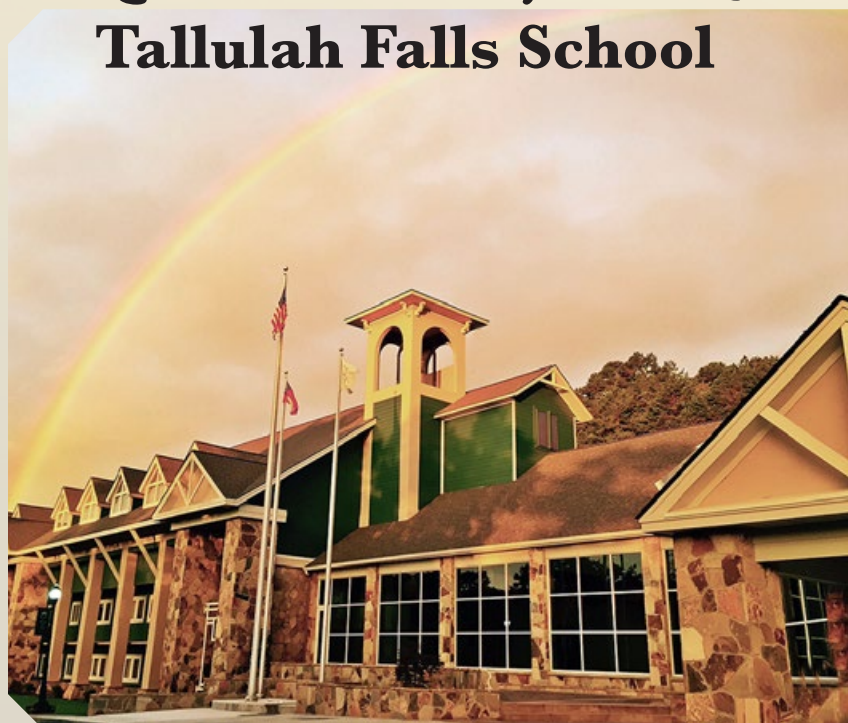
Varsity baseball vs. Providence Christian 5 p.m.  
Alumni will receive a complimentary ticket for 2 with voucher for free hot dog and soft drink.

## Saturday, April 22, 2017

- 9 a.m. **Fury at the Farm** adventure/obstacle race at the TFS farm on the scenic loop
- 10 a.m. to noon - Bus tours of the TFS campus
- 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Registration in Circle Bldg. lobby
- 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.: **Honored classes luncheon** in Federation Hall
  - **Presentation of Outstanding Former Student awards**
  - **Recognize honored classes:** 1947 • 1957  
1967 • 1977 • 1987 • 1997 • 2007

*TFS Alumni will receive a personal invitation with additional details by mail in the coming weeks.*

## Reconnect April 21-22, 2017 Tallulah Falls School



[www.tallulahfalls.org](http://www.tallulahfalls.org)

