

Colby·Sawyer

MAGAZINE

WINTER/SPRING
2026



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EDITOR

Beth Staples

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER &
PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Dayna Carignan '04

COPY EDITOR

Mary McLaughlin

CLASS NOTES EDITOR

Tracey Austin

PRINTING

R.C. Brayshaw & Company,
Warner, N.H.

We like to hear from readers
and invite you to submit letters
for publication. Comments may
be edited for length and clarity.

Please send to:

editor@colby-sawyer.edu or
Beth Staples, Colby-Sawyer
College, 541 Main Street,
New London, N.H. 03257



colbysawyercollege
colbysawyer.edu
@ColbySawyerCollege

Greetings from COLGATE HALL



I'm writing to you today, looking out at a snow-covered campus, as we prepare to welcome students back for the spring 2026 semester. It is a time that invites reflection on both the progress we have made so far this year and the actions we'll take as we move forward. Through that reflection, I keep coming back to two things: First, I am honored to have served as the college's

10th president since June, and second, I am excited about the future we are building together for Colby-Sawyer College.

Since June, more than 500 members of our college community — students, faculty, staff, alumni, board members and community partners — have come together to work on a new strategic plan, which will be finalized this semester. The process has allowed us to identify our community's shared priorities and develop concrete steps to reach our goals. I look forward to sharing it with you in greater detail soon.

I'm also excited for you to learn about many of the other recent developments at the college that are highlighted in this edition of *Colby-Sawyer Magazine*. You'll read about the new Niblack Nursing Scholarship, made possible by the generosity of John and Heidi Grey Niblack '68, which will fully cover the cost of tuition, fees, room and board for selected first-time, first-year nursing students. You'll also learn about an \$800,000 infusion of scholarship funds for the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program, funded by a grant from the Helene Fuld Health Trust with matching funds from the Davidow Challenge for Endowed Scholarship.

Elsewhere in the magazine, you'll read about some exciting milestones in our graduate and professional studies programs, including the college's first doctoral program, the Doctor of Nursing Practice, which earned accreditation through 2030 by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and the Master of Social Work (MSW) program, which received No. 1 rankings from two different organizations in the span of six months.

And, of course, you'll read about the achievements of some of our remarkable faculty and staff members, who, through

their commitment to our community and passion for teaching and learning, continually provide outstanding instruction and mentoring to our students. This issue also includes a feature about Windy Hill, our amazing early childhood laboratory school that is marking its 50th year on campus.

As always, there are stories about our alumni, including talented writer Kim Walleston St. Lawrence '09 and six outstanding athletes and coaches inducted into our Athletic Hall of Fame.

Speaking of athletes, you'll want to read about Alicia Socia '28, a crime and legal studies major who will compete in March at the FIS Alpine Junior World Ski Championships.

As is evident, this is an exciting time to be a Charger, and my wife, Vivien, and I are proud to be members of this extraordinary community. If we haven't met already, we hope to meet you soon at Homecoming or other alumni events. We're also eager for everyone to meet Daisy Sawyer, the presidential pup. (She managed to sneak into the photo collage on Page 13.)

In the meantime, keep wearing your Charger gear with pride. Come support our students as they compete on the field or court; perform on stage in the Niblack Black Box Theater; exhibit their artwork at the Davidow Center for Art + Design; or share their internship and research experiences at Scholars Day.

Then share your Colby-Sawyer experiences with others. Stay connected with our college community and help us make additional connections we will need for success. And, if you are able, we would welcome a contribution to the Colby-Sawyer Annual Fund to make a difference today in the life of a student.

Go Chargers!

Sincerely,

Dean G. McCurdy, Ph.D.
President
Professor of Arts & Sciences
Volanakis Family Presidential Chair

On Learning & Change

By Hilary Williams



When I applied to college, I wrote my college essay about snowshoeing to the top of Bradbury Mountain in Maine on New Year's Day, getting situated for a reflective "moment of silence" to ring in the new year, and having it interrupted by the sound of a snowmobile arriving at the summit. At the time, I saw this interrupted moment as emblematic of the need not only to plan and be purposeful but also to be open to chance, to plans changing and to plans being changed. I have tried to carry this with me through my life and my career.

There is much talk in education of the importance of cultivating growth mindsets (versus fixed mindsets), grit and resilience. Skills such as communication, collaboration and adaptability — long referred to as "soft skills" — are now, along with cognitive skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, rightly being dubbed "durable skills" because of their transferable value over time.

At this time of rapid technological, social, political and environmental change, these durable skills that we cultivate in higher education — and especially in holistic, liberal arts education — are needed more than ever. Indeed, the World Economic Forum's *The Future of Jobs Report 2025* includes employer survey results about core skills needed for their workforces. The top five?

1. Analytical thinking.
2. Resilience, flexibility and agility.
3. Leadership and social influence.
4. Creative thinking.
5. Motivation and self-awareness.

Also in the top 10? 8. Curiosity and lifelong learning. (And yes, it is no surprise that technological literacy is in the top 10, too.)

Indeed, education is both the enterprise and the act of learning, and it does not — or should not — stop upon graduation. We tout the importance of lifelong learning for our students and alumni, and it's important to remember that lifelong learning — paired with adaptation to change, which I see as both a corollary and an imperative — is just as important for those of us who work in education. Lifelong learning has the potential to support not only career agility, sustainability and longevity, but also personal fulfillment, growth (both individual and organizational) and institutional evolution.

My personal and professional mission is to cultivate and facilitate transformation, growth, learning and connection. I have found this north star to be broadly relevant across many facets of my life; it informs what I do as an individual, as a parent, as an educator, as a leader and as a manager. It is the through line that has motivated me to move from the studio classroom to the administrative offices in Colgate Hall. We talk proudly of the transformational experience that Colby-Sawyer provides for our students. Being open to learning and change, the college can provide that for those of us who work here as faculty and staff too — and we can and should, in turn, foster and steward transformation of the institution to meet the current moment(s), both planned and interrupted.

We cannot choose the cultural, economic, historical or social moments in which we find ourselves, but we can choose how to respond to them. We are at a challenging time in higher education, facing both demographic and societal headwinds. I choose to respond by learning, growing, evolving and leading change.

For me, learning is the underlying spark and purpose in my work. VIA Character Strengths, purported to be the only scientifically validated character strengths assessment, includes "love of learning" defined as "mastering new skills, topics and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally" and "the tendency to add systematically to what one knows," as a strength within the virtue category of wisdom. Not surprisingly, it is one that ranks high for me.

I recall that when I was growing up, the mission of my K-12 public school system was "to empower all students to create fulfilling lives in a changing world." I'd like to think that I've lived up to that promise and am now carrying the torch.

Hilary Williams is the academic vice president and dean of faculty.

CAMPUS CURRENTS

Cahoon appointed School of Arts & Sciences interim dean



Assistant Professor Andrew Cahoon was appointed interim dean of the School of Arts & Sciences and began the position on July 7. He replaced Hilary Williams, who was appointed interim academic vice president and dean of faculty in May.

Cahoon said his academic expertise informs his administrative role. “My science and math background has trained me to collect as much data as I can, sort out the variables and consider how the key

variables interact with one another,” he said. “That process starts with listening to my colleagues and then relying on my analytical skills to assess the available options.”

Cahoon’s responsibilities include planning and assigning course schedules, hiring adjuncts, distributing funds, reviewing personnel and troubleshooting day-to-day issues. He also guides curricular

changes, facilitates development of new programs and promotes recruitment and retention in existing programs.

Prior to becoming interim dean, Cahoon led the development and launch of the data science minor and recruited a student cohort for the program. This fall, he taught Linear Algebra with Python, a new data science course.

Williams described Cahoon as thoughtful, positive and committed to the college, adding that his extensive service leadership on campus was evidence of his support for colleagues, students and initiatives.

Cahoon, who holds a B.S. from the University of Maryland at College Park and an M.S./M.Phil. from Yale University, said he’s grateful to have so many excellent faculty collaborators at Colby-Sawyer.

“Since my first day, I have appreciated that this is a place dedicated to teaching excellence,” he said. “I value being a part of the strong teaching culture and watching how much students develop and grow during their time at CSC.”

His colleagues think highly of him as well. During the interim dean search process, Cahoon’s peers said his strengths included strategic vision, thoughtfulness, a calm and level-headed temperament, effective communication skills, listening, care, collaboration and creative problem-solving.

Dick and Jane illustrator’s college paintings for sale



Generations of American children learned to read through the adventures of Dick and Jane — cheerful stories brought to life by the illustrations of Robert Childress (1915–1983). Known for his warm, realistic style, often compared to his friend Norman Rockwell, Childress became one of the most recognizable illustrators of mid-20th-century America.

Childress also painted a beloved series of college campus scenes that captured the spirit of academic life across the country, including several New London landmarks that remain close to Colby-Sawyer’s heart. Childress’ daughter, Sue, graduated with the Colby-Sawyer Class of 1975.

Now, through a partnership with Tatewell Gallery in New London, Childress’ other daughter, Nancy, is selling three of his original watercolor paintings depicting Colgate Hall, the First Baptist Church and the New London Town Offices (originally the first Colby Academy).

A portion of the proceeds will establish a scholarship for Colby-Sawyer art students, ensuring that future generations of creative minds can continue to flourish.



PEACEFUL NIGHT — Kathryn Quinn’s digital drawing of Colgate Hall illuminated by soft candlelight during an evening snowfall is the cover art for the President’s Office 2025 holiday card. Quinn ’26, from Warwick, New York, is enrolled in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. She gained graphic design experience while earning her first bachelor’s degree in communications at Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg.

Photo by Stacy Hannings ’14

MSW PROGRAM EARNS TWO NO. 1 RANKINGS

Colby-Sawyer’s Master of Social Work (MSW) program was named the best in New Hampshire by two different organizations in the span of six months.

In spring 2025, CounselingPsychology.org, an expert group that provides prospective students with information about schools offering counseling and psychology degrees, ranked the college’s MSW program No. 1 in the state based on acceptance and completion rates; tuition and fees in relation to the local cost of living; accreditation status; competitiveness of the institution; diversity of programs offered; size of the school and department; and years of experience/tenure of faculty.

In the fall, MSW Online, which creates informational, bias-free resources to connect students with the right programs, certifications and career paths, ranked Colby-Sawyer’s program No. 1 based on five factors: accreditation and academic quality; specialization options and career support; affordability and financial support; online learning design and support; and accessibility and scheduling.

“We’re honored that two independent organizations have recognized the exceptional quality of Colby-Sawyer’s MSW program,” said Professor Kate Turcotte, who founded and directs the program. “These rankings affirm our commitment to preparing compassionate, skilled social workers who are ready to make a difference in their communities. It’s rewarding to see our faculty’s dedication and our students’ success reflected in these national evaluations.”

ABSN FUND GETS \$800,000 INFUSION

Colby-Sawyer College received an infusion of \$800,000 in scholarship funding for students in the 16-month Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, which provides a fast track for people with a bachelor’s degree in a field other than nursing who want to become registered nurses.

The Helene Fuld Health Trust, the country’s largest trust devoted exclusively to student nurses and nursing education, awarded Colby-Sawyer a \$550,000 grant. Of that, \$110,000 will be used for current scholarships, and \$440,000 will establish the Helene Fuld Health Trust Endowed Scholarship Fund for Nursing.

The value of the gift increased to \$800,000 thanks to The Davidow Challenge for Endowed Scholarship, which will contribute \$250,000 in matching funds.

The fund will support ABSN students who demonstrate academic excellence and financial need with scholarships up to \$10,000. Most of the program’s students and graduates live within 25 miles of the college. Many are first-generation students and nearly 70% are from rural communities. Eighty percent are women and 2% are veterans.

TURCOTTE AND JUKOSKY INSTALLED AS ENDOWED CHAIRS

Colby-Sawyer formally invested James Jukosky and Kate Turcotte as the college's newest Sonja C. and William H. Davidow Endowed Chairs at an all-campus meeting.

Endowed chairs are among the highest tributes that a donor can give and one of the highest honors a faculty member can receive. They are selected based on how fully they embody the college's mission to combine liberal arts and professional education, its commitment to realizing students' intellectual and personal potential, and its awareness of the importance of community service. A professor who holds an endowed chair agrees to serve as a model for teaching effectiveness as well as leadership, mentorship and care for the intellectual life of the college.

Jukosky, a professor in the School of Arts & Sciences, is the natural sciences program coordinator. He holds a doctorate in molecular, cellular and systems physiology from Dartmouth College and a Bachelor of Science in zoology from the University of New Hampshire. His research interests include the effects of pollutants on reproduction in wildlife, how chronic exposure to arsenic in drinking water impairs the immune system, the effects of cigarette smoke exposure on antimicrobial peptides produced in the upper airways, and Canada warbler genetics.

Turcotte, a professor in the School of Business & Social Sciences, founded and directs the Master of Social Work program. She holds a doctorate and master's degree in sociology from the University of New Hampshire and an MSW from Fordham University and is a licensed clinical social worker. Her areas of expertise include poverty in the U.S., social construction of disaster, prenatal mental health, cognitive behavioral therapy and domestic violence.



The Sonja C. Davidow and William H. Davidow Endowed Chairs were established in 2021 through a generous gift from Bill and Sonja Davidow as part of a record \$10 million gift directed to support the Colby-Sawyer endowment.

Jukosky and Turcotte joined seven colleagues who hold endowed chairs: Professor Nick Baer, M. Roy London Endowed Chair; Professor Ewa Chrusciel, M. Roy London Endowed Chair; Professor Kathleen Farrell, David H. Winton Endowed Chair; Dean Randy Hanson, David H. Winton Endowed Chair; Professor Jon Keenan, Sonja C. Davidow '56 Endowed Chair of Fine Arts; Professor Russ Medbery, David H. Winton Endowed Chair; and Dean Peter White, Sonja C. and William H. Davidow Endowed Chair.

DNP program earns accreditation



Colby-Sawyer's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program has earned accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The accreditation, which took effect in March 2025, extends through 2030, said Lori Escallier, chair of the CCNE Board of Commissioners.

The CCNE board found that Colby-Sawyer's program substantially complied with all four accreditation standards. Three standards center on quality — mission and governance, institutional commitment and resources, and curriculum and teaching-learning practices. The fourth standard focuses on the effectiveness of assessment and achievement of program outcomes.

Peter White, dean of the School of Nursing & Health Sciences and professor of biology, said CCNE's accreditation is a testament to the high quality of the college's inaugural doctoral program and the commitment to excellence of its faculty and staff.

"This accreditation is more than a milestone — it's a promise to our communities that our graduates will lead with expertise, integrity and heart," he said. "Our DNP program empowers nurses to transform care and elevate health outcomes for all."

PORTFOLIO



Alicia Bergeron, an adjunct professor of photography, was a featured artist in *Visual Diaries*, a New Hampshire Art Association Photography Group exhibition that explored the book as a physical

and conceptual vessel for memory, thought and creative life. The exhibition was held in November at the Robert Lincoln Levy Gallery in Portsmouth. For her book, *Botanical Blues*, Bergeron created 15 wet cyanotypes (photographic blueprints; photography without a camera). One of her prints received honorable mention in August at the Lotte Jacobi Open Juried Photography Exhibition hosted by the New Hampshire Art Association.



Craig Gallagher, assistant professor of history, was a featured guest on New Hampshire Public Radio's award-winning podcast *Civics 101*, which is a refresher course on how the U.S. government works. During "The Grievances in the Declaration," Gallagher explored specific clauses in the Declaration with hosts Hannah McCarthy and Nick Capodice.

Gallagher said talking about the Declaration of Independence was particularly enjoyable because some Americans may not realize how many of the grievances in the document are rooted in civil liberties that we take for granted, including the rights to free elections and a fair trial. The episode is available for streaming at <https://www.civics101podcast.org/civics-101-episodes/grievances1>.



Adjunct faculty member **Leanna Lostoski-Ho**, a literary scholar who studies representations of the environment in early-twentieth century modernist literature, wrote a book chapter titled "Pointz Hall as Hyperobject: Woolf's Deep Geological History in *Between the Acts*" in *Virginia Woolf – Objects, Things, Matter*, edited by

Laci Mattison and published by Edinburgh University Press in May 2025. Her chapter explores Woolf's 1941 novel *Between the Acts* and how Woolf represents geological history alongside human history, demonstrating the ephemerality of humanity's existence on Earth. Lostoski-Ho's analysis draws on theories of ecocriticism, new materialism and object-oriented ontology.



The Council on Social Work Education appointed **Laura Krishnan-Mackie**, assistant professor and director of online MSW practicum education, as a member of the Council on Field Education (COFE) for a three-year term, effective July 1, 2025-June 30, 2028. COFE works to improve field

programs in social work by collaborating with the professional community, producing and distributing key knowledge and providing support to field directors and educators.



Adjunct professor **Shanta Lee Honeycutt** is co-editor, with poet Philip Brady, of an exciting new anthology. What happens when you challenge more than 40 national writers and artists across different mediums to choose "one page that sings" from among their work? *Sign & Breath: Voice and the Literary Tradition* (Etruscan Press, 2025)

takes this unique approach to examine the meaning of voice and craft. Featuring contemporary artists across different mediums and genres — including the current U.S. Poet Laureate, two National Book Award winners, an Ohio Governors' Award winner, NEA Fellowship winners, the Poet Laureates of Virginia, Idaho and Vermont, Guggenheim Fellows, and others, each interviewed by the editors — this critical anthology invites the reader to engage with the original interviews and highlighted work across prose, fiction, poetry, hybrid forms and more.



Director of Student Success and Retention **Karin Berthiaume** was one of four expert panelists on a November webinar titled *Redefining Student Success: A Global Conversation*. Berthiaume joined panelists from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs; the University of Leeds; and the Marino Institute of Education in Dublin.

They talked about how colleges and universities are rethinking success in belonging, well-being and academic outcomes. The webinar was sponsored by unihelper.io.



Jennifer Tockman, director of career services and the BOLD Women's Leadership Network, completed a yearlong immersive leadership training program hosted by Vital Communities. The program, Leadership Upper Valley, brought together motivated area residents to network about various aspects of life

in the region, including health and human services, education, arts, the economy, justice, government and politics, transportation and livable communities, and the environment. Program goals were to inspire, educate and connect leaders to better serve the Upper Valley communities.

Stewarding a noble mission

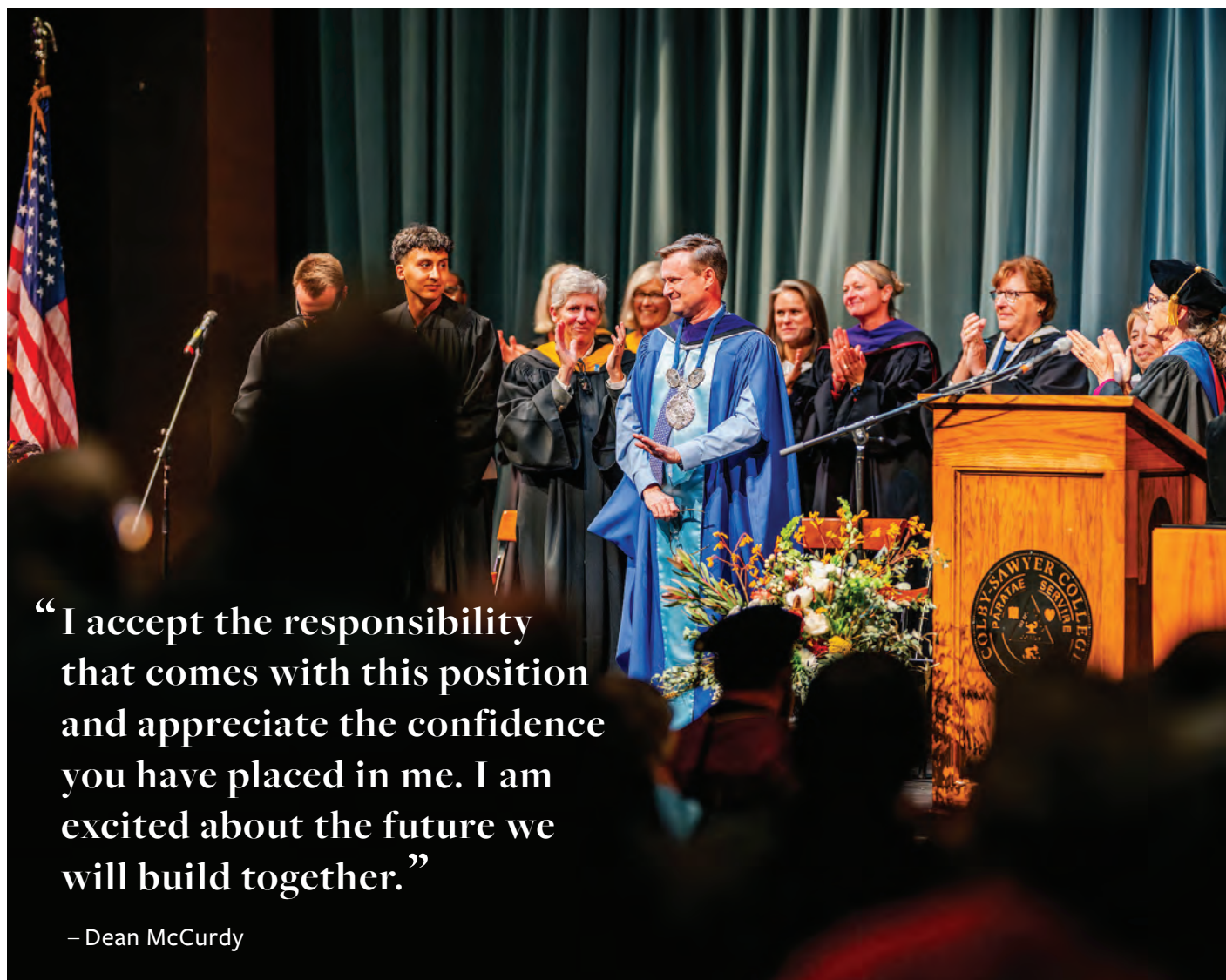
Dean G. McCurdy, who was invested as Colby-Sawyer's 10th president Oct. 16, 2025, told students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, friends, family and community partners that "together, we will harness the power of the college as a place to convene, study and act," including to address societal challenges. The 188-year-old institution will also bring higher education to a larger audience, he said, blurring the lines between traditional high school, the college experience and career.



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT: VIVIEN AND DEAN MCCURDY CONNECT PRIOR TO THE CEREMONY; PRESIDENT DEAN MCCURDY DELIVERS HIS SPEECH; THE PLATFORM PARTY INCLUDES DEREK MCCURDY, ABDALLA FAIAD '28, LISA HOGARTY '81, SHARI GOLDBERG, DEAN MCCURDY, JON KEENAN, NANCY STASZKIEWICZ, SUSAN GLASHEEN REEVES '88 AND BEBE HAMMOND CASEY.

NEXT PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: THE PLATFORM PARTY APPLAUDS PRESIDENT MCCURDY; LISA HOGARTY, RIGHT, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PLACES THE SILVER PENDANT AROUND DEAN MCCURDY'S NECK.

PHOTOS BY ANTHONY RISO '16



“I accept the responsibility that comes with this position and appreciate the confidence you have placed in me. I am excited about the future we will build together.”

– Dean McCurdy



“As you are now on the threshold of joining a long and distinguished group of presidents who have stewarded our beloved institution for nearly 200 years, know that each has left an indelible mark on the college’s history. We very much look forward to learning what yours will be.”

– Susan Glasheen Reeves ’88

COLBY-SAWYER WILL AWARD 16 ASPIRING NURSES A FREE, FOUR-YEAR EDUCATION

JOHN AND HEIDI GREY NIBLACK '68 CHAMPION EDUCATION ACCESS, GROWTH OF NURSING WORKFORCE WITH \$3 MILLION GIFT

By Beth Staples



HEIDI GREY NIBLACK '68 AND JOHN NIBLACK

Colby-Sawyer will award 16 four-year, full-ride scholarships to talented first-year Bachelor of Science in nursing students — eight entering in fall 2026 and eight in fall 2027.

The John and Heidi Grey Niblack '68 Nursing Scholars will be supported by a \$3 million fund that will cover their tuition, room and board, and mandatory fees, and provide them with a dedicated team of advisors and mentors.

The demand for nurses nationwide is greater than the supply, said benefactor John Niblack, who added that the demand will continue to go up as the country's population ages.

One way to shrink the gap between the demand and supply, he said, is to make sure that cost is not an obstacle for students to earn a degree.

Another is to increase the number of men entering the profession; according to 2023 U.S. Bureau of Labor data, about 12% of licensed practical nurses, registered nurses and nurse practitioners are men.

"The scholarships we are creating are intended to help in mitigating this crisis, by increasing the supply of well-trained women and men with a Bachelor of Science in nursing," he said.

Colby-Sawyer President Dean McCurdy said the Niblack's magnanimous gift reflects the college's mission to prepare students to thrive in, and meaningfully contribute to, their communities.

"John and Heidi are helping students gain education and training that will allow them to be leaders in healthcare for decades to come," he said. "Their investment in Colby-Sawyer and the next generation of nurses will build stronger, healthier communities."

Peter White, dean of Colby-Sawyer's School of Nursing & Health Sciences, said the Niblack's timely scholarships will help ensure that people — particularly in rural areas — will have compassionate, skilled nurses during this period of significant nursing shortages.

"This remarkable gift opens doors for aspiring nurses who might otherwise be unable to pursue their calling," White said. "This generosity strengthens not only our students, but also the health and vitality of the regions they will serve."

Easing students' financial challenges allows them to fully engage in academic and clinical experiences that are central to their professional preparation, said Joan Loftus, director and chair of nursing. "We are deeply grateful for their partnership and the profound and lasting difference they will make in the lives of our students and, ultimately, the patients they will care for," she said.

Nursing majors are also engaged leaders across campus, including in clubs, student government and athletics, where they comprise about 15% of the college's student-athletes.

Niblack Scholars will learn and train in the next-generation Janet Udall Schaefer '52 Center for Health Sciences. The 20,500-square-foot facility that opened in 2024 includes a simulation center, 12 beds in two skills laboratories, three clinical exam rooms, two anatomy and physiology labs, the latest hospital-grade instruments and devices, 24-hour study rooms, a nurses' station and café.

And because of the college's decades-long partnership with Dartmouth Health, Colby-Sawyer nursing students receive an outstanding clinical education at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, New Hampshire's only academic medical center and Level I trauma center. Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center consistently offers employment to 100% of the college's graduating nurses.

Susan A. Reeves '88, system chief nurse executive at Dartmouth Health, said Colby-Sawyer is fortunate to have benefactors such as the Niblack's who recognize the importance of building the future nursing workforce.

"The current nursing shortage continues to intensify, with a peak expected in the next few years, before abating sometime after 2035," she said. "There are encouraging signs that interest in nursing is again growing among prospective students. Thus, the elimination of barriers to high-quality nursing education, as will be the case with the Niblack Nursing Scholars program, will assure the best and brightest have opportunities to pursue the profession."

Colby-Sawyer nursing students regularly demonstrate their preparedness and competence. Graduates taking the required National Council Licensure Examination for the first time consistently score above the national average. In 2025, for instance, Colby-Sawyer's 97.06% pass rate was more than nine points higher than the national average.

Dan Parish, vice president for college advancement, called the Niblack's gift a sign of trust in the top-flight nursing program at Colby-Sawyer, which has as its motto, *Paratae Servire*, or *Prepared to Serve*.

Heidi Grey Niblack, who graduated in 1968 from then-Colby Junior College with a degree in liberal arts, exemplifies the motto. She worked as an office administrator, including as an executive secretary at Pfizer, Inc., and part time in an advertising agency that specialized in pharmaceutical clients.

Volunteerism has also been a significant aspect of her life and career. She currently is on the board of United Way of Palm Beach, Florida. Previously, she was president of her local garden club, volunteered at her church, was involved with the Salvation Army in New London, Connecticut, and contributed time and resources to High Hopes Therapeutic Riding in Old Lyme, Connecticut, which benefits individuals with physical, mental and emotional challenges.

Dr. John F. Niblack retired from Pfizer Inc. in 2002 as vice chairman of the board of directors and as president of Pfizer Global Research and Development. His 35-year career at Pfizer spanned almost every aspect of research and development operations. As president and principal scientific officer of the Global Research and Development division, he managed the largest pharmaceutical research force in the world — with 12,000 researchers and an annual research budget of more than \$5 billion. Niblack earned a

B.S. in chemistry from Oklahoma State University and an M.S. and Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Illinois.

He is now on the board of the Norton Museum of Art in Palm Beach, Florida, and is on the visiting committee of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Asian Art Department.

For years, the Niblack's have generously supported the college's highest priorities; their philanthropy has created opportunities that benefit students today and will continue to do so for future generations. The couple are members of the Legends Society, which recognizes people who have contributed \$1 million or more to the college. They have been leadership donors to the Colby-Sawyer Fund and were early donors to the Davidow Center for Art + Design; the John and Heidi Grey Niblack '68 Black Box Theater is named in their honor.

In 2018, the couple established a \$500,000 endowment to support student internships and engaged learning opportunities. And, in 2024, Heidi received the 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of her exceptional contributions to society. The Niblack's are also members of the Heritage Society, having made provisions for the college in their estate plans.

Beth Bryant Camp '92, Colby-Sawyer director of development, said the college is deeply grateful to the couple for this latest gift. "The Niblack's' decades-long philanthropy is truly inspiring," she said, "and we remain profoundly thankful for their continued investment in Colby-Sawyer and our students."

Visit the John and Heidi Grey Niblack '68 Nursing Scholarship website for more information and to apply for the fall 2026 scholarship by the March 1 deadline.

"This remarkable gift opens doors for aspiring nurses who might otherwise be unable to pursue their calling. This generosity strengthens not only our students, but also the health and vitality of the regions they will serve."

— Peter White



LEFT: NURSING STUDENTS HONE THEIR SKILLS. RIGHT: COURTNEY ROGERS, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PREPS STUDENTS IN A SKILLS LAB IN THE SCHAEFER CENTER.

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—Haleigh Daft '24 '25 MSES

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Nursing Education
Nursing Management & Executive Leadership
- Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)

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Project Management
Healthcare Administration
- 4+1 Master of Business Administration (MBA)*
- Master of Social Work (MSW)

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Mountain Day 2025

Higher education
provides perspective



Hundreds of Colby-Sawyer students, faculty and staff wearing tie-dyed T-shirts hiked Mount Kearsarge on Sept. 15, Mountain Day 2025.

They followed in the footsteps of the school's predecessors from the previous 170-plus years: Climbing the 2,937-foot mountain has been a custom at the institution since the 1850s, when Dr. H. Leslie Sawyer was headmaster of Colby Academy.

Chargers chose one of two routes to reach the bare rock summit, gain some perspective, enjoy the spectacular panoramic views and pose for photos. Anthony Riso '16 was there to capture the fun and beauty of one of the college's most-beloved traditions.





Finding meaning in new worlds: Kim Walleston St. Lawrence on writing, identity and hope

By Stacy Hannings '14

When Kim Walleston St. Lawrence '09 sits down to write science fiction, she isn't escaping reality — she's translating it.

Her debut young adult novel, *Thirsty Ground*, published by Union Square & Co./Hachette, imagines a distant future shaped by scarcity, survival and sacrifice. At its core, however, the story is deeply personal. The novel was inspired by the lived experience of her husband, Ryan St. Lawrence '07, an adaptive athlete who sustained a spinal cord injury in a biking accident in 2016. The book was a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection for 2025, which places it among the most distinguished titles for young readers nationwide.

For Kim, the seeds of *Thirsty Ground* were planted not only through her professional background in media and communications, but also through years of navigating uncertainty, grief and resilience alongside Ryan. "Our life effectively skidded to a halt," she said, recalling the early days following his injury. "Hospital rooms and rehab and old dreams on hold. Ryan and I would always describe the experience as like being dropped on a foreign planet with no understanding of the rules or the risks or how to get home."

That metaphor — of disorientation, adaptation and survival — became the conceptual foundation of *Thirsty Ground*.

Rooted in survival and identity

Set more than a millennium in the future, *Thirsty Ground* follows 17-year-old Conway, an elite MotoRover rider preparing to join the Hydroseeker League — an order tasked with finding water to sustain humanity aboard a space ark known as Tsimmaon. When a mission goes disastrously wrong, Conway is left for dead on the Arid Planet after he sustains a life-altering injury that threatens his body and sense of purpose.

Taken in by the hidden community of Mayanah, Conway discovers that survival comes with its own set of rules — particularly when it comes to water, power and trust. As his relationship with Mayanah's sovereign, Selah, deepens, Conway is forced to confront the values of his own society and question whether returning "home" means betraying everything he has learned.

While the novel unfolds as a cinematic, post-apocalyptic adventure, Kim was intentional about grounding the emotional arc in authenticity. "I really wanted the main character's assimilation to this new planet to parallel his assimilation to life in a wheelchair," she said. "There are these very literal threats he's facing throughout the story, but there's also an internal struggle as he recalibrates his expectations of himself and his life."

Identity — particularly athletic identity — plays a central role in the narrative. Like Ryan, Conway has anchored his sense of self in physical excellence and sport. The loss of that assumed future forces him to redefine worth, agency and belonging. "It wasn't even a question in Ryan's mind whether he would bike again," Kim said.

Writing across worlds

Kim is keenly aware of the responsibility that comes with writing beyond one's lived experience. Although a spinal cord injury shapes her daily life, she emphasized that representation in *Thirsty Ground* required humility, research and collaboration.

"I understand spinal cord injuries from a medical and contextual perspective, but I can't know what it's like to be in that body," she said. To ensure authenticity, the manuscript underwent extensive research and consultation, including collaboration with a sensitivity reader who is also a wheelchair user.

"Her job was to ensure the work felt representative and respectful," Kim noted. "This doesn't mean ableism doesn't exist in the story — it does — but that there's no ableist filter over the narrative."

The result is a story in which disability is neither erased nor romanticized. Instead, adventure, love, destiny and injury coexist. "I didn't want this to be a story about disability," she said. "I wanted it to be a story about adventure. Those things don't happen in spite of the injury; they happen alongside it."

From Colby-Sawyer to the page

Kim credited Colby-Sawyer with shaping her creative voice and professional versatility. The communications/media studies major with a writing minor described her education as imaginative and practical. "Colby-Sawyer's academic culture is equal parts inspirational and foundational," she said.

Creative writing and poetry courses expanded her literary imagination, while scriptwriting, media criticism and communications coursework grounded her in craft and clarity. "Those skills translated everywhere — from television production to marketing to writing a novel."

Long before *Thirsty Ground*, storytelling was a through line in her work. For her senior Capstone project, she wrote a children's book about befriending planet Earth — a hint at the environmental and allegorical themes that resurfaced in *Thirsty Ground*.

Her post-college career has been equally multifaceted. A former television producer and host, Kim won a New England Emmy Award for *styleboston* and explored regional ski culture with The Mountain Report on NBC Sports Boston. She transitioned into marketing and now is the chief marketing officer for a business training company. Kim is also a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and the creator of the viral digital short *Time to Come In, Bear*, which circulated widely during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Long road to publication

Even with her media background, publishing a novel required patience and perseverance. "The only process that takes longer than writing a book is publishing it," Kim said.

The initial draft of *Thirsty Ground* took approximately a year, written alongside a full-time career. Revisions and beta reading followed, before she entered the traditional publishing route — querying agents, securing representation and, ultimately, selling the manuscript to a publisher. From there, another year of developmental edits, line edits, proofreading and production followed.

"One of the biggest challenges was ignoring fears about external validation," she said. "You can't write with everyone else's expectations in mind. You have to honor your characters and your story."

The realities of modern publishing — including increased expectations around self-promotion and social media — were also a surprise. "I don't particularly enjoy those things," she admitted, "but it's difficult to stand out in a very crowded marketplace if you don't put yourself out there."

Power of Story

The response from readers — particularly those with lived experiences similar to Conway's — has been deeply meaningful. "I wasn't prepared for how much it would mean to hear from people who felt seen," Kim said. "There's so little representation of spinal cord injury in fiction, especially for young readers."

The novel's closing line — "This is just the beginning, but at least it is not the end" — captures the book's central message. "If you have air in your lungs, there is hope you can make something beautiful of your life," she said. "That doesn't erase struggle or loss, but it allows room for meaning."

Why not you?

For Colby-Sawyer students and alumni seeking to publish, Kim offers simple, powerful advice: Why not you?

"Imposter syndrome will give you a hundred reasons not to try," she said. "But every day, someone is writing a book, reaching a goal, making a difference. Someone has to be that one — so why not you?"

As *Thirsty Ground* makes its way to young readers, Kim Walleston St. Lawrence's story — like her novel — is a testament to perseverance, creativity and the enduring power of hope to guide us through unfamiliar worlds.



TOP: KIM WITH A COPY OF *THIRSTY GROUND*.

MIDDLE: RYAN ON HIS ADAPTIVE BIKE IN THE SELKIRK MOUNTAINS DURING A TRIP TO THE WEST KOOTENAY REGION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

BOTTOM: RYAN AND KIM AT A BARNES & NOBLE BOOK LAUNCH EVENT AND AUTHOR SIGNING.



Depth of Field



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ADRIANA NADEAU IS THE GREAT NORTHEAST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE RUNNER OF THE YEAR; THE MEN'S SOCCER SQUAD WINS THE FIRST GAME UNDER THE LIGHTS ON THE SALLY SHAW VEITCH '66 TRACK AND FIELD; JACKSON MUSIAL STRIKES AN AERODYNAMIC POSE; MATILDA MACOMBER SMASHES A RETURN; LAUREN MACDONALD AND THE WOMEN'S HOOP TEAM TAKE ON NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, THE TWO-TIME DEFENDING DIVISION III NATIONAL CHAMPION; THE WOMEN'S SOCCER SQUAD CELEBRATES; AVA BENNETT DRIVES THE BALL FOR THE GNAC RUNNER-UP FIELD HOCKEY TEAM; ANDREW BLUNT DISHES FOR THE MEN'S BASKETBALL SQUAD.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF COLBY-SAWYER ATHLETICS

McGrath '68 headlines Hall of Fame class



INDUCTEES ARE, FROM LEFT, DOUGIE AVELLINO, NIC DEZENZO, GENNY MOORE BARDAGLIO, NICOLE LAVIGNE MANUEL, ETHAN BETTS AND DEBORAH FIELD MCGRATH.

Colby-Sawyer College inducted six new members to its Athletic Hall of Fame at a ceremony Saturday, Oct. 18, during Homecoming & Family Weekend.

The Athletic Hall of Fame, established in 2006, celebrates individuals and teams whose athletic excellence and commitment to sport have elevated the college's reputation at the conference, regional and national levels.

The members of the Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2025 are:

DEBORAH "DEBI" FIELD MCGRATH '68

The Colby Junior College graduate who earned her bachelor's from Wheaton College was a field hockey and lacrosse standout at both institutions. She played on the U.S. Field Hockey Team and the U.S. National Reserve Lacrosse Team in 1973-74 and was inducted into the New England Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 2001. McGrath coached at Harvard, Brown, Dartmouth and Wheaton, where her 1983 field hockey team was inducted into the Wheaton Hall of Fame. She also coached the USA Field Hockey's Olympic Development Team. In 1986, McGrath became director of athletics at Colby-Sawyer and coached the women's lacrosse team from 1987 to 1991. During her 27-year tenure in New London, she led the college through its transition to coeducation, expanded the athletics program and oversaw major facility upgrades, including the Hogan Sports Center, three new fields, refurbished tennis courts and the planning of a turf field and track project, which she financially supported.

DOUGIE AVELLINO '18

A three-year competitor for the Chargers baseball team, Avellino is widely regarded as one of the program's top players. He was named All-NAC (North Atlantic Conference) First Team each spring and during his junior season he led the team in nearly every offensive category, including batting average (.365), hits (46), runs (23), RBIs (26) and stolen bases (18). That same season, he was fourth among NAC players in hits and batting average. Avellino, a 2017 All-ECAC

(Eastern College Athletic Conference) New England Team selection, is still in the Charger record book: He ranks fifth with a .356 career batting average and is in the top 10 for on-base percentage (.416).

GENNY MOORE BARDAGLIO '10

An all-time leader at the setter position, Moore broke the volleyball program's single-season assist record as a sophomore with 1,342. She also earned All-TCCC (The Commonwealth Coast Conference) Second Team honors. She remains the career leader in assists (4,120) and is one of only two players in program history to surpass 4,000. She also ranks third in assists per set (8.27) and third in career service aces (250). In the individual season assist record category, she ranks first, fourth and sixth. Her precision, consistency and leadership made her one of the most impactful players in Charger volleyball history.

ETHAN BETTS '03

A four-year member of the men's basketball team, Betts led the Chargers to Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC) championships in 2001, 2002 and 2003. He captained the squad in 2003. During his junior and senior seasons, he earned All-CCC Second Team honors, and during his senior season he was a New Hampshire Division III Basketball Coaches Association First Team selection and played in the NEBCA Senior All-Star Game. Betts ranks among the program's all-time leaders: 16th in career points (1,296), third in rebounds (838), and seventh in steals (162).

NIC DEZENZO '08

A four-year starter on the men's soccer team, DeZeno was a defensive powerhouse, earning All-CCC First Team honors as a senior and Second Team selections as a sophomore and junior. DeZeno also garnered regional accolades; he was a D3kicks.com Second Team selection and an All-New England NSCAA (National Soccer Coaches Association of America) Third Team pick. DeZeno played professionally in Australia and the United States, including for the Kangaroo Point Rovers, Massachusetts Twisters and Bayside United Football Club. DeZeno went on to coach soccer at the club, high school and collegiate levels, including stints as assistant coach for the University of New Hampshire women's team and head coach of St. Joseph's University women's team. He was recently named varsity boys' soccer coach at Riverhead (N.Y.) High School.

NICOLE LAVIGNE MANUEL '18

Lavigne is one of the most decorated players in Charger women's lacrosse history. She is the all-time leader in goals (232), ranks third in points (277) and ground balls (200), fifth in caused turnovers (104) and eighth in assists (45). She set single-season records for goals and draw controls in 2018, the same year she was NAC Player of the Year and earned her fourth-straight All-NAC First Team selection. Following graduation, the two-time ECAC All-Star and Academic Team honoree coached at her high school alma mater in Vermont.

Alicia Socia's unleashed

Sophomore to compete on world stage

By Beth Staples

When most Colby-Sawyer students are heading out for spring break, Alicia Socia '28 will be in Norway preparing to compete in the 2026 FIS Alpine Junior World Ski Championships.

The crime and legal studies major will be representing Peru in the giant slalom event Thursday, March 12, and the slalom event Saturday, March 14, at the Narvikfjellet ski resort above the Arctic Circle.

"The Peru ski team has two of us, and I'm the only junior; the other athlete is too old to compete at Junior Worlds," she said. "So, it's just me representing the entire country."

Socia's mother was born in Peru, a South American country of about 34 million people, which includes Machu Picchu and a portion of the Amazon rainforest.

Socia, who grew up in Albany, Vermont (population 976), will train for about a week in Norway before she and other 16- to 21-year-old elite skiers from approximately 60 countries race for a spot on the podium.

On race day, Socia keeps things simple rather than following a rigid routine. She talks with teammates and family, then warms up and focuses on feeling the course. "I ski better," she said, "when I'm reacting instead of trying to memorize everything."

For Socia, the 30 seconds in the gate prior to the start is the most stressful part of the race. "There's a clock right in front of you. It counts down the seconds until you're allowed to go and you're just standing there waiting while you know the cameras are filming you from a few different angles," she said. "It's 30 seconds of pain. I close my eyes, take a deep breath, remind myself to have fun, and then I go."

Once she's tripped the pin, Socia's nervousness vanishes. "It's pure instinct," she said. "It happens so fast that I don't really remember it afterwards."

This will be Socia's second time participating in the Junior World Ski Championships; in 2025, she placed 45th in the slalom in Tarvisio, Italy. While she wasn't thrilled with her times, Socia was proud that she completed the course; 56 competitors did not.

"It was the toughest course and longest course I've ever skied in my life," she said, alluding to the ice, trenches and gate placement. "I was just trying to finish. I thought, 'I need to get a finish for Peru,



especially since my family in Peru is watching. And I really want to wave to the camera at the bottom so they can see me.' By the time I crossed the finish line, I'd never been so tired. I was gasping for air."

This is Socia's first season at Colby-Sawyer with the women's alpine ski team. In fall 2025, she transferred from Colgate University, which didn't have a squad. Socia, who had trained at Burke Mountain Academy and Waterville Valley Academy throughout her youth, missed competitive skiing. So, during her first year at Colgate, she began looking at colleges that had teams.

Colby-Sawyer's small class sizes, its proximity to her family and its alpine ski program got her attention. And when Socia — who's interested in a law career and wants to be a judge — found out about the crime and legal studies major, she knew she'd found the right place to continue her academic and athletic careers.

Socia learned to ski a year or two after she learned to walk. "I would go straight (down the mountain). I had no fear and would get away from my dad," she said. "He got one of those leashes they put on kids when they're learning how to ski to hold me back."

Socia has been eager to fully explore other interests, as well. She loved gardening and caring for animals — pigs, llamas, chickens, cows, sheep and goats — on the family farm in Vermont. She's also played piano since the age of 5.

Making headlines isn't new to Socia, either; she was featured in newspapers and on TV for being the first baby born in 2005 in Connecticut.

She'd like to make headlines again in Norway. "When you're at the start, there's a camera behind you, and when you get to the bottom, there's a camera at the finish that you get to wave to," Socia said.

"They announce your name and where you're from, and they even know every ski team you've been on. There's also a huge TV screen at the bottom that you're projected on, and when the camera follows you through the finish corral, you can see yourself on it. It feels so professional."

In four years, Socia hopes to compete on an even larger stage. "My long-term goal," she said, "is to go to the Olympics and represent Peru."

Support the Colby-Sawyer student-athlete experience today



colby-sawyer.edu/give-now



Chargers return home, make new memories

What a spectacular Homecoming & Family Weekend! The golf tournament, Lake Sunapee foliage cruise and the ceramics workshop all sold out. It's no wonder as well over 900 alums, friends and family members reunited on campus during the sun-drenched weekend. The alumnae art exhibition, Athletic Hall of Fame induction, class photos, Quad Fair and dueling pianos performance were a few of the many, many highlights.

Planning is underway for 2026; mark your calendars for Oct. 16-18.



PHOTOS BY GIL TALBOT, STACY HANNINGS '14 AND ISABEL GABRIEL

Degree of Impact



“The MSW program has prepared me to work confidently in diverse settings, advocating for clients at both individual and systemic levels.”

– Joy Lang

MSW program deepened Lang’s commitment to service

Joy Lang is a 2025 graduate of Colby-Sawyer College’s Master of Social Work (MSW) program.

The Memphis, Tennessee, native earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology at the University of Memphis in 2021 and started the MSW program in 2023. She currently works as a counselor at the Volunteer Comprehensive Treatment Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a medically supervised medication-assisted treatment center for adults aged 18 and older recovering from addictions to heroin, prescription painkillers and other opioids.

The following is a lightly edited Q&A with Lang in which she reflects on her experience in the MSW program.

Why was the Colby-Sawyer MSW program the right choice for you?

Colby-Sawyer was the right choice for me because of its supportive faculty and commitment to nurturing my educational growth throughout a nontraditional learning path. I appreciated how inclusive and engaging the program was, making me feel prioritized as a student. The MSW program aligned perfectly with my goal of working with marginalized communities, particularly youth and families impacted by systemic barriers, providing the practical skills and knowledge I needed to become an effective and empathetic social worker.

How did you grow as a scholar and person in the program?

My experience at Colby-Sawyer was transformative. A particularly defining moment was my internship with Behavioral Health Group, where I worked directly with individuals navigating complex challenges related to substance use. Courses such as Leadership, Management & Supervision; Addiction, Trauma & Mental Health; Multicultural Mental Health Practice; Social Welfare Policy and Practice with Children, Youth & Families provided me with a strong foundation for understanding systemic inequities and applying effective intervention strategies. Faculty and peers were invaluable throughout this journey, offering insights, and encouragement that strengthened my passion for social work.

What impact has your Colby-Sawyer MSW education had on your career and life?

The MSW program has prepared me to work confidently in diverse settings, advocating for clients at both individual and systemic levels. I currently work as a medical social worker, where I apply the knowledge and skills I gained in the program to support individuals navigating mental health concerns. This education has deepened my personal commitment to social justice, service and meaningful impact in the lives of those I serve.

Anything else you’d like to add?

Colby-Sawyer provides not just an education, but also a true sense of community. Prospective students can expect a program that fosters personal growth, practical skills and professional development, with faculty and peers who are supportive and engaged. Employers can expect graduates who are knowledgeable, compassionate, adaptable and equipped to navigate the complexities of modern social work while making a tangible impact on the lives of clients.

America at 250

By Craig Gallagher

On July 4, 2026, the United States of America will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The declaration was drafted and signed by the members of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1776, in the midst of a war with the British Empire that, at the time, many in the room were not certain they could win. Declaring independence was in many ways a strategy by Congress to unite what had been 13 disparate British colonies under the single banner of a new republic, the first of its kind in the Western Hemisphere.

July 4, 2026, will also, however, be another notable anniversary in American history. It will be the 200th anniversary of the death of Thomas Jefferson, who famously died on the same day in 1826 as his longtime friend and rival (and fellow ex-President) John Adams, 50 years to the day after they affixed their signatures to the final draft of the Declaration of Independence.

The declaration was drafted and signed by the members of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1776, in the midst of a war with the British Empire that, at the time, many in the room were not certain they could win.

Jefferson has been much on my mind lately, and not only because my wife and I visited his estate at Monticello on a recent trip to Charlottesville. There are many aspects of Jefferson's legacy that historians argue about to this day, most especially the fraught and frankly disappointing contradiction between his belief that "all men are created equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" and the fact that he personally enslaved hundreds of people over the course of his lifetime. But on one issue, most agree that Jefferson is unimpeachable: his hatred for the institution of monarchy.

Recent protests against the policies of President Donald Trump have been organized under the banner of "No Kings!," which the organizers describe as "the foundation our nation was built on." By this, they are referencing the Declaration of Independence, which, if it is anything, is a comprehensive rejection of the right of King George III to rule over his American subjects.

As students in my America at 250 class learned last fall, Jefferson was inspired by the work of Thomas Paine, whose pamphlet *Common Sense* was a smash-hit bestseller in early 1776 because it made the then-radical argument for egalitarianism and the



CRAIG AND KAIT GALLAGHER VISIT THOMAS JEFFERSON'S MONTICELLO ON A VERY WINDY DEC. 21, 2025.

right of Americans to govern themselves rather than accept government by an elite ruling class who claimed political authority as their birthright.

As I discussed on the NHPR podcast *Civics 101* recently, Jefferson advanced Paine's arguments in the declaration by accusing the king of, among other things, failing to protect the constitutional rights of his subjects, subjecting them to unjust tariffs and taxes, and using unaccountable military force to suppress legitimate protests. He even went so far as to accuse the British king of imposing slavery on the colonies against their will, although southern delegates at the Continental Congress made him remove this clause and historians today find this argument unconvincing. Nevertheless, at the root of Jefferson's argument in the declaration was the belief that the king had lost his legitimacy to rule by governing in an arbitrary and tyrannical way.

Even those historians most sympathetic to Jefferson's arguments in the declaration acknowledge that much of what he accused King George III of doing personally ought better to be understood as a grievance with the constitutional system of the colonies as it existed then more generally.

In this way, we can see similarities between the "No Kings!" protestors today and the question of whether President Trump is personally at fault for what many perceive to be a general erosion in certain constitutional protections, especially as they relate to freedom of speech and the right to protest.

The declaration, however, is not a part of the Constitution. It was instead a statement by Jefferson of American justifications for creating a new nation based on egalitarian rule and which rejected the right of a single powerful king to rule over the people.

As we remember the declaration on July 4, let us also remember its author and how important it was to him to let the world know that the American people would be sovereign over their own lives. Assuming they could win the war.

Craig Gallagher is an assistant professor of history.

ALUMNI & COMMUNITY RELATIONS



TOP: SUSAN GLASHEEN REEVES '88 AND BETH CONSTANTINIDES MEURLIN '70.
BOTTOM: NISHCHAL BANSKOTA '15 AND AMIGO KHADKA '14.

Congratulations to the 2025 Alumni Award recipients

During Homecoming & Family Weekend, the college honored four alumni for their accomplishments, service and commitment to Colby-Sawyer College.

Susan Glasheen Reeves '88 received the Distinguished Alumni Award for her remarkable contributions to nursing, healthcare leadership and education.

Beth Constantinides Meurlin '70 was recognized with the Alumni Service Award for her leadership, volunteer efforts and philanthropy.

Nishchal Banskota '15 and Amigo Khadka '14 were honored with the Young Alumni Achievement Award for their outstanding entrepreneurial leadership, global impact and commitment to social innovation.

Read more about the recipients at colby-sawyer.edu/community/homecoming/awards.

Chargers Connect: Our new alumni-student mentor program

At Colby-Sawyer, our alumni community plays an important role in helping students succeed. Chargers Connect, the new alumni-student mentor program, connects current students with alumni who are eager to share their experiences, offer guidance and provide encouragement as students explore their goals and plan for the future.

Whether you graduated recently or years ago, your insight can make a real difference in a student's journey and help strengthen the connection between alumni and today's Colby-Sawyer.

To become a Chargers Connect mentor, sign up through the CSC Alumni Network at colby-sawyer.edu/alumni/pod.

Not ready to be a mentor at this time? You can still join the CSC Alumni Network at the link above to connect with fellow alumni and post job or internship opportunities that might be of interest to CSC students and fellow alumni.



Homecoming & Family Weekend

Save the date now for Homecoming & Family Weekend 2026: Friday, Oct. 16-Sunday, Oct. 18. Alumni, parents, family and friends are invited to campus for a fun-filled weekend, featuring the Colby-Sawyer Athletics Golf Tournament, food and live music at Quad Fair, workshops with faculty, campus tours and much, much more. Milestone reunion celebrations will take place for alumni with class years ending in 1 and 6. Additional information can be found at colby-sawyer.edu/homecoming.

Thanks to everyone who attended Homecoming & Family Weekend 2025. Photos from the event can be found by visiting flickr.com/photos/csc_alumni/albums.



GOOD NEWS TRAVELS FAST — ESPECIALLY FROM COLBY-SAWYER!

Not getting Colby-Sawyer news or event invitations in your inbox? Let's fix that!

Share your email address with us at alumni@colby-sawyer.edu or update your information at colby-sawyer.edu/alumni/alumni-relations/stay-connected or scan QR code to stay in the loop.

2025 Alumni Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2025 Alumni Survey. Of the 6,375 surveys emailed, we received 1,070 responses, resulting in a strong 16% response rate. The survey explored people's reflections on their undergraduate education, post-graduate and career experiences, alumni experiences with financial aid and loan repayment and patterns of alumni engagement.

Your thoughtful feedback provides invaluable insight into the Colby-Sawyer experience, both the impact it has had on your lives and the opportunities it creates for future generations. These results help guide the college's planning and priorities, inform our academic and student-support initiatives, strengthen alumni programming and ensure that we continue to foster meaningful connections across our community.

Several broad themes emerged. Most notably, 95% of respondents reported satisfaction with their Colby-Sawyer education, and 91% said they would recommend Colby-Sawyer to a high school senior. Below are highlights from the survey that further illuminate the experiences, successes and perspectives of our alumni.

We are grateful for your engagement and for the many ways you continue to support Colby-Sawyer.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Gender

- 81% Female, 16% Male, 2% Transgender or Genderqueer, 1% Prefer not to respond

Degrees earned at Colby-Sawyer

- 79 % earned a bachelor's degree.
- 23 % earned an associate degree.
- 2 % earned a master's degree.
- 3 % earned more than one of the above degrees.

Years since degree at CSC

- For most cohort-based analyses, the following groups were used:
 - ▶ within 10 years of degree (27% of participants)
 - ▶ 10-19 years since degree (22% of participants)
 - ▶ 20+ years since degree (51% of participants)

WHAT KIND OF COMMUNICATIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE FROM COLBY-SAWYER?

- Student achievements (78%), updates on campus life (73%), alumni achievements (63%), and the general state of CSC (60%) garner the most alumni interest.

WHICH ALUMNI EVENTS ARE YOU INTERESTED IN?

- Overall, alumni are most interested in Homecoming/Reunion (69%), social and regional connections (45%), and Virtual Alumni Speakers (32%).
- More recent cohorts are relatively less interested in virtual alumni speaker events and are relatively more interested in team and program reunions than older cohorts.
- Older cohorts are substantially more interested in presidential updates than younger cohorts.
- Cultural and family events are of most interest to the cohort that graduated 10-19 years ago.

IN THE PAST YEAR, HOW HAVE YOU RECEIVED NEWS ABOUT COLBY-SAWYER??

- Alumni are most likely to receive news from email (83%) and the alumni magazine (81%).
- Older cohorts were more likely to view the Alumni Magazine than younger cohorts, and very unlikely to view Instagram or LinkedIn.
- The 10-19 year cohort is more likely than other cohorts to view news on Facebook.

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR CAREER?

- 89% of alumni are satisfied.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND COLBY-SAWYER TO A CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR?

- 91% of alumni say yes.

CONTACT

the Alumni Office:

alumni@colby-sawyer.edu | 603.526.3426



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IN FOND MEMORY

1939

Mary Kay Scott Condit
Dec. 19, 2016

1941

Zada Lynch Travaglini
Aug. 25, 2020

1942

Ruth Kerney Scott
Jan. 28, 2025

1943

Pauline “Polly”
McCusker Watt
Aug. 19, 2024

1944

Myrtle Furbush Mansfield
July 1, 2023

Elizabeth “Betsy”
Van Gorder Minkler
March 18, 2025

1945

Anne Heuer Lewis
Nov. 12, 2024

Jane Seccombe Rice
July 23, 2020

Suzanne “Suzi” Curtis Smythe
Jan. 29, 2022

1946

Nancy Rhoades Gramm
Feb. 11, 2018

Mary Rose Hennessy Hays
April 4, 2025

Constance “Connie”
Foster Henry
March 24, 2025

Nancy Grinnell Sayre
Dec. 18, 2024

Elizabeth Bisset Simmelink
Nov. 5, 2018

1947

Jean Tiffany Evans
Feb. 4, 2024

Jacqueline Fidanque Lindo
Oct. 22, 2023

Betty Funk Smith
June 3, 2024

Cornella Fay Wilder
April 23, 2025

1948

Natalie “Nat” Taylor Dutton
Dec. 5, 2017

Mary Lewis Booth Edwards
Nov. 11, 2024

Anne Smith Jeffus
Sept. 21, 2025

Patsy Emrich Meyers
Dec. 22, 2024

Natalie Davis Rooke
June 16, 2025

Ann Ackerman Rourke
Sept. 15, 2019

Patricia “Pat” Anderson Schmitt
Feb. 20, 2025

1949

Jane Nicholas Birge
July 30, 2025

Beverly “Bev” Grant Dodge
June 7, 2025

1950

Jean Davis Bates
Feb. 19, 2007

Gloria Demers Collins
Oct. 9, 2025

Barbara Decker Egbert
May 22, 2025

Florence Fleming Hoffman
May 8, 2025

Lois Carpenter Nottage
June 5, 2025

Mary Hood Smith
April 30, 2025

Jeanne Marquis Williams
Aug. 1, 2025

1951

Margery “Marge” Bugbee Atherton
Sept. 12, 2025

Eleanor Merklen Cambrey
May 29, 2025

Ryna Greenbaum
Oct. 9, 2025

Elinor “Elly” Goodrich Jones
Dec. 18, 2024

Susan St. Clair Moore
July 9, 2025

Eunice Sandra Morse
Dec. 18, 2024

Meta Coane Spielman
April 20, 2025

1952

June Niedner Bernoth
Feb. 6, 2024

Nancy Nelson
July 20, 2025

1953

Jane Thompson Belsky
May 14, 2025

Susan Rivoire Hostnik
March 15, 2025

Maureen Maroney Kinney
Sept. 18, 2025

Sally Kunevsky Miller
Aug. 27, 2025

1954

Ruth Crimp Felker
Sept. 10, 2024

Norma Oksa Reeve
Sept. 19, 2024

Elizabeth Thompson Trentadue
Aug. 25, 2021

1955

Barbara Curtis Sturgeon
May 11, 2025

Nancy VanVoast Taylor
April 12, 2025

1956

Nancy Bryan Bentley
Aug. 4, 2025

Carole Zignone Capozzoli
April 5, 2022

Ellen Koeser DeMarco
March 3, 2024

Alma Gillespie Niemiller
April 3, 2024

Carole Scherer Judge
Sept. 13, 2025

Mary Jane Barbuto Wallace
Nov. 11, 2024

1957

Loretta Cefalo Mineo
May 1, 2025

Cornelia “Neill” Miller O’Malley
May 1, 2025

Elisabeth Thatcher Rafloski
May 7, 2020

1958

Barbara I. Doeschner
Sept. 30, 2024

Barbara Albright Gille
June 20, 2024

F. Antoinette “Toni” Galpin
Hodenfield
Dec. 13, 2023

Marilyn Heigl Michelet
Feb. 19, 2024

1959

Sara MacDonald Kerr
Nov. 1, 2013

1960

Nancy Lanman Cashman
Dec. 4, 2024

Sarah Macomber Nicholson
Sept. 19, 2023

Joanne Davis Osley
Sept. 15, 2025

Jacqueline (Eleanor)
Pinney Piligian
Sept. 29, 2025

Betsey Loveland Wheeler
April 2, 2025

1961

Susan Olney Datthyn
Oct. 20, 2025

Eleanor Geer Miller
Nov. 30, 2023

1962

Ellen “Julie” M. Forbes
July 16, 2024

Susanne Sweeney Kayyali
Feb. 26, 2025

Lynne Westerberg Lehman
April 15, 2025

1963

Sandra “Sandi” Thompson Grigg
Aug. 30, 2024

Julia “Jody” Rutherford Jeffrey
Sept. 16, 2020

Nancy Noyes Stanyon
Jan. 2, 2023

Leslie Hodsdon Woodruff
Nov. 18, 2021

1964

Joan Goldthwait
Dec. 12, 2024

Phebe Vance Piehler
Dec. 26, 2022

1965

Dale Kline Birkel
Feb. 18, 2024

1966

Barbara Anderson Carvey
July 16, 2025

Jane Beserosky Fain
March 5, 2025

Martha “Marcie” Cavagnaro
Gyllenhaal
June 13, 2025

1967

Wendy Beach Barry
June 28, 2018

Charlaine Steward Evans
March 6, 2025

Scott Van Nice
Feb. 20, 2025

1968

Sally Morse Wiper
March 20, 2025

1969

Saundra Bill Faraham
Sept. 1, 2023

Jane Needham Morrell
Oct. 2, 2025

1971

Nancy A. Gardner
Oct. 18, 2025

1973

Jennifer Tugeau Tranter
July 21, 2025

1975

Sally Hart
Aug. 12, 2019

Dulce Jones Marquis
Aug. 9, 2025

1976

Janet "Posie" Battey McElhaney
Feb. 8, 2020

Patricia Thrower
Feb. 22, 2025

1977

Karen Newhall Mathews
June 27, 2025

1981

Shawn Ingle Sartin
April 13, 2021

1982

Jill Cassidy Doelp
Feb. 4, 2021

1983

Penelope "Penny" A. Hansen
May 28, 2025

1986

Cheryl Duford Durocher
June 8, 2025

Deborah Weaver Wesoja
Oct. 7, 2025

1996

Jeffrey H. Pilibosian
Oct. 8, 2025

1996

Jean-Paul "JP" Huot
Dec. 27, 2024

Former Faculty

Patricia K. Dahme
May 26, 2025

Frederick M. Denny
March 26, 2025

John C. Ferries
May 25, 2025

Georgia G. McMahon
June 13, 2025

Jane Ann Sides McSwiney
Aug. 18, 2025

IN MEMORIAM

Natalie Davis Rooke '48, P'73 and Robert "Bob" Charles Rooke P'73



The Colby-Sawyer community lost two cherished friends in the summer of 2025. Natalie Davis Rooke '48, P'73 died June 16 at age 96. Her beloved husband, Robert "Bob" Charles Rooke P'73, age 100, died just 25 days later, on July 10. Both passed in Harding Township, New Jersey.

Natalie graduated from Colby Junior College in 1948

with an Associate of Arts in liberal arts. She also graduated from the Peabody Institute of Music in 1949 and was an accomplished pianist. Bob graduated from Dartmouth College in 1949 and earned a master's degree from Dartmouth's Amos Tuck School of Business Administration in 1950. They met as students at their respective colleges and married in 1951.

The Rookes were among Colby-Sawyer's most generous benefactors. In 2003, they were inducted into the college's Legends Society for lifetime financial contributions totaling more than \$1 million.

The couple supported the college with gifts through their family foundation, the Charles Foundation. Their support included purchasing a 20-acre parcel of land to expand the campus, underwriting annual trips for business administration students to the New York Stock Exchange and investing in institutional priorities.

For many years, they provided scholarships for more than 20 Colby-Sawyer students each year through the Natalie Rooke Endowed Scholarship and the Marianne Rooke Fairall Endowed Scholarship.

In 2020, Natalie was bestowed with an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Colby-Sawyer for her humanitarian character and superior intellect, and for initiating positive, far-reaching change for individuals and organizations.

In 1996, she was awarded the college's highest honor, the Susan Colgate Cleveland Medal for Distinguished Service, for her leadership as a member of the college's Board of Trustees from 1987 to 1996. She served on the Academic Affairs, Campus Planning and Enrollment Management committees, and she was a member of the 1995 Presidential Search Committee, which was instrumental in the hiring of Colby-Sawyer's seventh president, Anne Ponder.

Bob was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on Jan. 5, 1925, and graduated in 1943 from Culver Military Academy. During World War II, he served principally in southern Italy as an infantryman. He was honorably discharged in 1946.

After working as a securities analyst for Merrill Lynch Pierce, Fenner & Beane, Bob and his brother, William, formed the Rooke Company, based in Morristown, New Jersey. He worked in private investment until two weeks before his death.

The Rookes are survived by two of their four children, Robert Jr. (Anne) and Thomas (Alice); son-in-law, Martin Fairall; daughter-in-law, Cynthia Rooke; eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; and Bob's sister, Dorothy McCulloch. They were predeceased by their son, Christopher; their daughter, Marianne (Rooke) Fairall '73; Natalie's sister, Eleanor D. Howard '43; Natalie's brother, Leon D. Davis; and Bob's brother, William.



FIRST-GEN BRIDGE PROGRAM

4 days that enhance 4 years

By Beth Staples

Sophia (Soph) Carnevale's family moved several times in middle and high school. She often felt like she didn't fit in and she often walked with her head down.

Carnevale '27 was nervous before starting her first year at Colby-Sawyer; she was the first person in her family to ever go to college, and she didn't know what to expect. Today, the sociology and human services major confidently leads campus tours for prospective students.

When Brian Cal-Mallo '25 arrived on campus as a first-generation college student in fall 2021, he wondered, "Am I really supposed to be here?"

In May 2025, Cal-Mallo graduated with a degree in graphic design and a minor in business administration, and he delivered the student Commencement address. Cal-Mallo is now earning an MBA at his alma mater.

Both Carnevale and Cal-Mallo participated in Colby-Sawyer's First-Gen Bridge Program, which supports first-generation college students as they transition from high school to higher education.

During a four-day span prior to move-in day for all first-year students, First-Gen Bridge participants become familiar with campus.

They bond with peers, begin a one-credit class with dynamic professors, meet peer mentors, learn about helpful resources and take part in fun activities — including game and movie nights and trips to areas of interest.

Throughout the year, the group regularly reconnects and completes assignments and reflections.



The goal, said Karin Berthiaume, director of student success and retention, is for first-generation students to feel genuinely welcomed, supported and prepared so they can thrive personally and academically.

Carnevale said learning her way around campus and getting to know other first-generation students helped ease some of her worries. "And talking with professors solidified the feeling that there are people here who want to help me," she said.

ABOVE: FIRST-GEN BUTTON DESIGNED BY DESTINY CRUZ '25

BOTTOM: SOPH CARNEVALE '27 LEADS CAMPUS TOURS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

“For one, the program brought me my absolute best friends. It also made me more outspoken and confident in new settings, including preparing me for college life.”

— Emma LeConte



THE INAUGURAL COHORT CELEBRATES PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT 2025. IN FRONT, FROM LEFT: GIANNA GILMORE, EMMA LECONTE AND ERICA WEBB. IN BACK, FROM LEFT: MARIANNA CRUZ, SARAH FULLER, RAOUL KAHURWA, BRIAN CAL-MALLO AND KARIN BERTHIAUME.

Cal-Mallo was buoyed when faculty and staff warmly and enthusiastically welcomed him to campus. “They showed us a glimpse of what it meant to be part of this community,” he said in his Commencement address. “In a full-circle moment, many of us eventually stepped into those same roles, offering the same support and guidance to the next group of students.”

Carnevale has also come full circle. As a peer mentor and resident assistant, she enjoys helping others adjust to, and succeed in, college.

“When I arrived here, I didn’t know who I was or know what I wanted to do,” said Carnevale, who is leaning toward a career as a hospital child life specialist or a middle school social worker. “Now I want to make first-year students’ lives easier. Sometimes, it just takes somebody helping you.”

Emma LeConte ’25, a member of the second First-Gen Bridge cohort, appreciates the boost that the program gave her. “For one, the program brought me my absolute best friends,” said LeConte, who in three years earned a degree in child development education preparation and minored in child psychology. “It also made me more outspoken and confident in new settings, including preparing me for college life.”

LeConte’s college life was full; she was in the Wesson Honors Program, was a BOLD scholar and served as a peer mentor and student ambassador. She’s now pursuing a master’s degree in special education at the University of Maine.

Ed Heald provided seed funding for the First-Gen Bridge Program, which started in 2021. His mother, Jane Winey Heald ’40, and sister, Sally Heald Winship ’69, attended Colby-Sawyer. Heald, a retired financial advisor, enjoys helping people accomplish their goals.

“If I can do that, I will live a fulfilled life,” he said. “It’s great to make gifts when you’re alive because you get to see the benefit of what you have donated in person.”

Heald met students who have benefited from his generosity at a celebration for the inaugural First-Gen Bridge cohort. “The fact this program has enabled people to achieve what they achieved. I couldn’t be happier,” he said.

This past summer, Heald met Carnevale in Colgate Hall after she wrapped up a tour for prospective students and their parents.

“It was an instrumental program for me,” Carnevale told him. “I was so nervous about coming to college. I don’t think I would have made it this far if it weren’t for the Bridge program.”

A half-century of magical, child-centered education

Happy birthday, Windy Hill!

By Beth Staples



Nearly 30 years ago, when Jen James Ensign '99 arrived for her work study job at Windy Hill School in the basement of Burpee Hall, kindergarteners were painting, stacking blocks and exploring at the water table. Floor-to-ceiling shelves were crammed with art materials.

"I was kind of nervous because it was nothing like I imagined education would be. I envisioned myself standing in the front of the class and

talking to children like my favorite second-grade teacher did," Ensign said. "Windy Hill kindergarteners really changed my thinking."

So, too, did transcribing recordings of children's interactions during play and of teachers' conversations with children.

"I typed those up and teachers would use it for planning. That showed me how much what the children had to say influenced what teachers were doing," said Ensign. "I could begin to see that what looked like chaos to an inexperienced observer was respectful and intentional. And when I started taking [child development and psychology] courses, I could see children's autonomy, creativity and collaboration even more."

This year, as the early childhood laboratory school celebrates its 50th anniversary, through lines weave from Windy Hill's early years in Abbey Hall to today. Those building blocks — literal and figurative — led to educational innovation, research, play-based learning and friendships.

Today, Windy Hill is a stunning building imagined by and designed for children, families and educators. Created to nurture dreams, the center with toddler, nursery school and pre-K programs, is vibrant, comfortable, inviting and packed with resources and materials. It's also filled with energetic and curious children, just as the basements of Abbey and Burpee were for 34 years.

Ensign is now Windy Hill's director and pedagogical leader. She carries lessons from Janet Coggeshall Bliss '71, her advisor, mentor and founding director of Windy Hill, as well as from Marc Clement, a child psychologist and professor emerit who developed the college's child study program.

Throughout the decades, Colby-Sawyer alums have become teachers at Windy Hill. And Windy Hill alums have enrolled their children at Windy Hill. Some educators have taught two generations of local families.



TOP LEFT: JANET BLISS '71 GATHERS WITH STUDENTS AT WINDY HILL SCHOOL, WHICH WAS IMAGINED BY AND DESIGNED FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS.

ABOVE: JEN ENSIGN '99 SURVEYS MATERIALS IN THE RESOURCE LAB. "WE GIVE STUDENTS TOOLS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES," SHE SAID.

PHOTO BY ISABEL GABRIEL

LITTLE EXPERIMENTERS

When Bliss was a student at Colby Junior College, she adored and respected young children but had no interest in teaching. “I said, ‘I will not become a teacher ... I’m not doing that. I’m going to be an actor and go to Hollywood.’”

Thankfully, Bliss changed her mind. She earned a bachelor’s in elementary education, then she and a friend started a preschool in a church basement in New London. Friends threw them a party and gave them supplies.

Around the same time, Clement joined the college to develop a four-year child study program. That involved bringing an area preschool to campus to become the college’s lab school.

Clement espoused the Piagetian philosophy of early childhood education, in which the teacher, like an architect, designs an environment — with an arts center, water table, sand table, dramatic play area and library — that intrigues children.

“Piaget talks about children as little experimenters,” said Clement, who enrolled his daughter at Windy Hill. “You provide the materials, they experiment. When I was looking for a preschool, that’s what Janet was doing.”

Clement invited Bliss to apply to bring her preschool to campus and direct the lab school. She applied and was hired. For decades, Bliss and Clement formed a formidable professional team. Educators visited the lab school, Bliss and Clement spoke at conferences and the school garnered national attention.

“I think the success of Windy Hill had to do with hard work, had to do with the proper philosophy and had to do with the relationship that we had,” said Clement. “Because it was the perfect professional relationship between the college and faculty, and how we interacted with students.”

In courses, Clement covered various theories of child development. Colby-Sawyer students observed children at Windy Hill, then returned to class to talk about what they saw and learned.

In Bliss’ courses, students documented conversations and actions of Windy Hill students and faculty. The process was valuable for Colby-Sawyer students and gave parents insights about how and what their children were learning. Bliss also championed the value of teachers and the profession and immersing Windy Hill children into the greater college campus.

THEORY COMES TO LIFE

Garrett Lavalée ’05, principal and special education director at Spaulding Academy and Family Services, said Bliss was instrumental in his success academically and in life.

“She showed her students the same love and care that she showed the children at Windy Hill — holding me accountable, pushing me outside my comfort zone, believing in me and offering support when I needed it most,” said Lavalée, a 2024 Emerging Leader of Special Education for Private Providers and a 2011 State of New Hampshire Exemplary Leadership and Service Award recipient.

In early childhood education classes, Lavalée learned about the Reggio Emilia philosophy implemented by Windy Hill. Children, according to the philosophy, are curious and independent and



LEFT: LUKE GORMAN HOLDS A 1985 WINDY HILL ATTENDANCE BOOK THAT INCLUDES HIS NAME. PHOTO BY ISABEL GABRIEL

RIGHT: JACK GORMAN POSES FOR A PHOTO ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKE GORMAN

gain understanding by exploring in a collaborative environment. The child-centered, project-based approach highlights creative expression through a “hundred languages” — including art, drama, music and movement.

“Being there gave me the opportunity to witness theory come to life in practice, and it was honestly magical,” said Lavalée. “Seeing project-based learning unfold and observing the ‘hundreds of languages’ of children honored and celebrated in such authentic ways brought my love for education to a whole new place.”

BIG WHEELS AND FRIENDS

Windy Hill alums, including those in a Facebook group “for kids lucky enough to have gone to the school,” express similar gratitude.

“They’ve kept in touch with each other. They like each other,” said Bliss. “They talk about some of the best years of school they ever had were at Windy Hill, and riding Big Wheels, and that makes me feel really good.”

Luke Gorman, director of annual giving & operations at Colby-Sawyer, is one of those alums. His family moved to New London from Boston when he was 3, and his parents enrolled him in Windy Hill in 1984 so he could make friends. Those friendships have lasted: Two of the boys he met at the lab school were in his wedding party decades later.

Gorman’s son, Jack, now 10, followed in his father’s footsteps. Windy Hill “was the best place ever,” Jack said. “It was where I made all of my friends.”

When Gorman used to ask Jack where he went and what he did that day in school, Jack would rattle off a list of places — from Hogan Sports Center to the President’s Office. “There’s a benefit, I think, for them being a part of the larger college community. It enhances their development,” Gorman said.

One of Jack’s friends is Leon-C. Malan, faculty emerit. Jack’s Pre-K group often visited the campus garden that Malan tended.

“Leon just had this way of getting children to eat vegetables,” said Windy Hill teacher Suzanna Brown ’11. “He would be like, ‘Oh, do you want some garden candy?’ It would be husk cherries. He’d say, ‘See the wrapper? You have to peel it open. Oh, and would you like some lettuce that dinosaurs eat? This is dinosaur kale.’”



LEFT: PRESIDENT DEAN MCCURDY ADMIRES A CAMPUS MAP (SEE INSET) DRAWN BY PRE-K STUDENTS. THE MAP NOW HANGS IN HIS OFFICE.

PHOTOS BY MEGAN PERRY OMAN '13

JUST MAGICAL

Brown and Sally McDermott '86 now teach the “very social” toddler group (13 months to 3 years), that enjoys adventures on campus. Just as Bliss envisioned.

The toddlers recently visited the Schaefer Center, where their favorite stuffed animals got checkups. On a stop at the Hogan Center, they watched basketball practice and had a party in the aerobics room, complete with a disco ball. McDermott would like to restart the tradition of toddlers occasionally eating lunch in the dining hall.

She said it’s incredible the number of fun, enriching experiences that children have taken part in during her nearly 30 years of teaching,

from delivering the weather forecast on television to riding in a snowcat on a mountain. People often tell her that their education at Windy Hill was vital in shaping who they have become.

A big reason, McDermott and Brown said, is because Windy Hill values children, their experiences and feelings. Brown starts, “There’s just something about this place that is just ...” McDermott finishes the sentence with the same word LaVallee chose: “magical.”

Brown continued, “It sees who they are and what they’re capable of and gives them a safe space to explore. To explore friendships and our world.”

“And the empathy that these children have,” said McDermott. “Who doesn’t want to have empathetic adults?”



LEFT: WINDY HILL CHILDREN PLAY WHILE STUDENTS OBSERVE AND TAKE NOTES IN THIS UNDATED PHOTOGRAPH. PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE CLEVELAND COLBY COLGATE ARCHIVES



RIGHT: A CHILD FILLS THE TRUCK BED WITH SAND WHILE A FRIEND STEADIES THE DUMP TRUCK.

Do you have a favorite memory of Windy Hill? Or newspaper clippings or photos? If so, we invite you to share with them communications@colby-sawyer.edu so they can be preserved in the Cleveland Colby Colgate Archives.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Archivist Morgan Wilson keeps the past present

By Beth Staples



Morgan Wilson's love of history and old objects dates back to childhood trips to flea markets, yard sales and antique shows with her grandparents.

"The most exciting thing for me was to find a box full of stuff and to search through it. It was very much like a treasure hunt," said Wilson, the 2017 Colby-Sawyer graduate who became her alma mater's archivist and systems librarian in September.

"It still feels that way."

During a recent treasure hunt while taking stock of the college archives, Wilson came across Colby-Sawyer-themed dolls and stuffed animals. The curly-haired dolls have Colby Junior College blazers. The stuffed animals were Colby the kangaroo (which was once the institution's mascot) and a baby kangaroo, Junior.

Wilson's initial work priorities include surveying the collection and putting in place finding aids — documents that inventory and describe the materials. And she's researching software with a public interface that will allow people to search the college's collections online.

She's eager to also become involved with instruction. "It's cool to see students engaging with history and people from the past and feeling a personal, emotional connection that transcends time," she said. "It's meaningful to me when I can help students discover the magic of archives."

Wilson — who in 2025 earned a dual master's in history and library and information science with a concentration in archive management at Simmons University — also enjoys helping people with research requests.

"It's fun and I rarely get the same question twice," she said. "It's great to feel like I am helping people. Reference work and providing research assistance is where I can feel the value of my work."

Wilson welcomes requests to assist with research and encourages alumni, faculty, staff, students and community members to contact her if they have archival materials they're interested in donating.

One recently donated item: a student's biology notebook from the 1940's. "It's incredible," Wilson said. "It's so valuable. It has notes and doodles and drawings and captures a student's experience."

Wilson, who grew up in Newport, New Hampshire, first attended Emerson College to pursue a film degree. She transferred to Colby-Sawyer to study English, which she found was a better match for her personality and interests.

"I liked that Colby-Sawyer was more rural and natural, and it felt quiet and peaceful," she said. "I also found the old buildings charming; history feels really present at Colby-Sawyer."

Wilson learned about the college archives during her post-graduate presidential fellowship with Colby-Sawyer's Alumni Office. That's when Brantley Palmer, the college archivist at the time, brought a box of old yearbooks and other historical mementos to the Thornton Living Room for Homecoming.

"It's not just administrative records; it's not as dry and removed as that. These are records and objects that document the actual people who were here before us."

"I was immediately interested. I didn't know this was a job," said Wilson, who proceeded to pepper Palmer with questions. "What is that? What do you have? What do you do as an archivist?"

She was so intrigued that a few years later, post-COVID, she did a summer internship with Palmer.

"He was patient and helpful with all my questions. He offered so much guidance. And after that experience, I knew that this was what I wanted to do," she said. "It confirmed that I should go to graduate school and pursue this."

Wilson is a strong advocate for the archives, which preserve institutional memory and the history of the community and people.

"It's not just administrative records; it's not as dry and removed as that. These are records and objects that document the actual people who were here before us," she said.

"I think looking at what's been done before in our history can be useful guidance for what to do today and in the future. We can look to these archival materials for inspiration and guidance and for help to understand the current moment we're in."



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