



100 Years Young 1922–2022

A century ago, this school began when parents gathered in a Concord living room to share an educational vision ahead of its time. As former faculty member and dean Lucille Stott says in *Concord Academy at 100: Voices from the First Century*, CA’s earliest years were “distinguished by the respect given to the intelligence and capabilities of girls and women in an era when women’s suffrage was in its infancy and girls were expected to be ‘finished’ socially rather than equipped intellectually.” That progressive spirit, which began in a cozy living room, continues to shape this community.

CA has always been a day and boarding school—though over the last 100 years, our student body, campus, and program have substantially evolved, through the transition to coeducation in the 1970s to today’s commitments to strive for equity and build a more just and sustainable future. In a small town whose history and literature has reverberated around the globe, this small school has likewise had an outsized impact. Generations of CA graduates have pursued their passions with empathy, integrity, and responsibility to our larger world.

We’re proud that there is no CA “type.” Yet the memories of those who walked these halls in different eras show certain consistencies: the value of storytelling, devotion to learning, commitment to social justice, regard for both individual and community, and balance of purposeful collaboration, creative engagement, and a healthy dose of playfulness.

This exhibition highlights the thoughts of hundreds of alums who contributed to Stott’s book. We hope you will find here an echo of your own experience.



A special thanks to the following individuals for bringing this display to life:

Ingrid Detweiler '61, P'95

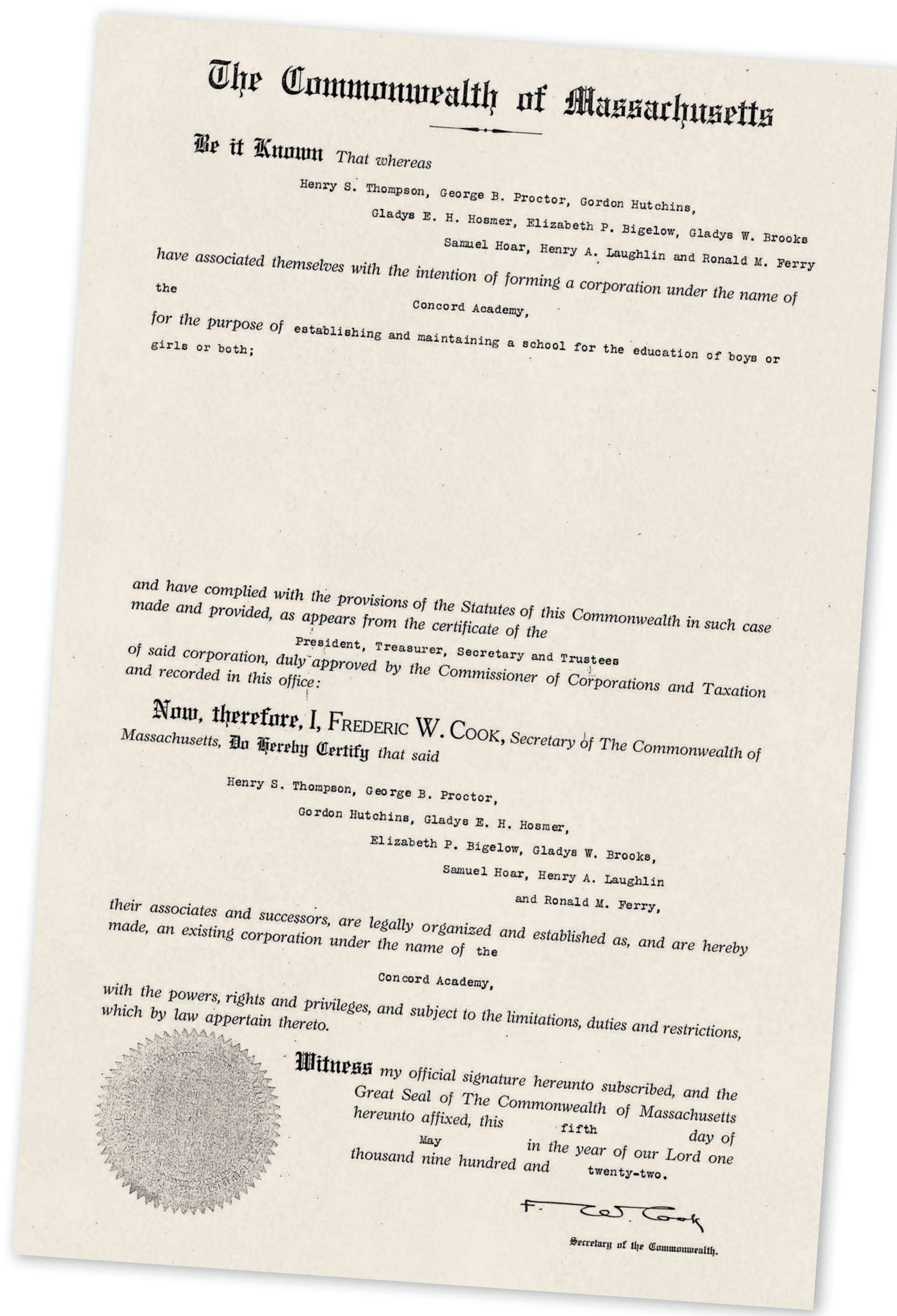
Irene Chu '76, P'20 '22

Sally Twickler Johnston '90

Martha Kennedy, Library Director & Archivist

1920s

On September 20, 1922, 52 students and 10 faculty members began classes at Concord Academy. The initial student body was for girls in the upper grades but also included a coed primary school. A single house on Main Street served as a dining hall, dormitory, infirmary, and offices; a barn and stables became the first classrooms. This modest start reflected the founders' wish for a "simple, homelike atmosphere." A *New York Times* classified ad promised the new school would "develop the qualities of initiative and self-reliance," "stimulate intellectual curiosity," and "give a thorough preparation for college." First headmistress Elsie Hobson, who earned a Ph.D. in classics from the University of Chicago, led with discipline and competitive awards for scholarship and athletics. Music, art, and theater were part of a rigorous curriculum that included Latin, French, English literature, mathematics, and science. Hobson modeled dedication to learning for its own sake, and by the end of the decade, enrollment had tripled and the school had gained a solid academic reputation.



Incorporation papers, 1922.



Elsie Garland Hobson, headmistress 1922-1937.

"A striking part of Miss Hobson's personality has gone into Concord Academy. There is a combination of intellectual rigor, industry, and simplicity which is appropriate to the traditions of [the town of] Concord and which stands as a rock, unchanging in a changing world."

— Henry Laughlin P'34, trustee 1922–1948



Upper School, October 1925.

"Glorious music, folk and classical, ... was such an important part of our education."

— Ruth Brooks Drinker '31, P'62



May Queen and her court, May Day 1928.



May Day in the mid-1920s.



Saturday picnic at Hutchins Pond, April 1927.



Students at the Sudbury River 1922-23.



A festive canoe trip along the Sudbury River in the mid-1920s.

"The Sudbury River [was the] site of secret rendezvous, daydreaming, and precarious launching of canoes."

— Janet Smith Teach '26



CA advertisement in *New York Times*, August 1922.

1930s

“Even the most hard-bitten renegade among us was won over to a new spirit of cooperation. Miss Knapp turned the school from the traditional female academy [into] a school related to the society in which it existed.”

— Katharine Tryon Bradley '38



Valeria Knapp on May Day in 1938.

Despite the stock market crash of 1929, the following February the school opened its first new building: a gymnasium that also served as a much-needed space for school assemblies and musical and theatrical productions. The 1937 Commencement honored the retirement of Elsie Hobson. Her successor, young and vibrant Valeria Knapp, ushered in a freer atmosphere. Though she remained at CA for only three years, she had an immediate and lasting influence on school culture. Just as Miss Hobson’s legacy of intellectual rigor and citizenry endured, so did Miss Knapp’s commitment to introducing young minds to outside speakers and conducting weekly discussions on current events as the world marched towards war.



Canoeing, late 1930s.



From the 1931 yearbook.



Cheering on classmates in 1933.



May Day in 1937 in the Senior Garden.



May Day in 1938, viewed from the Senior Steps.



The Mikado, the first performance in the new gymnasium, March 1930.

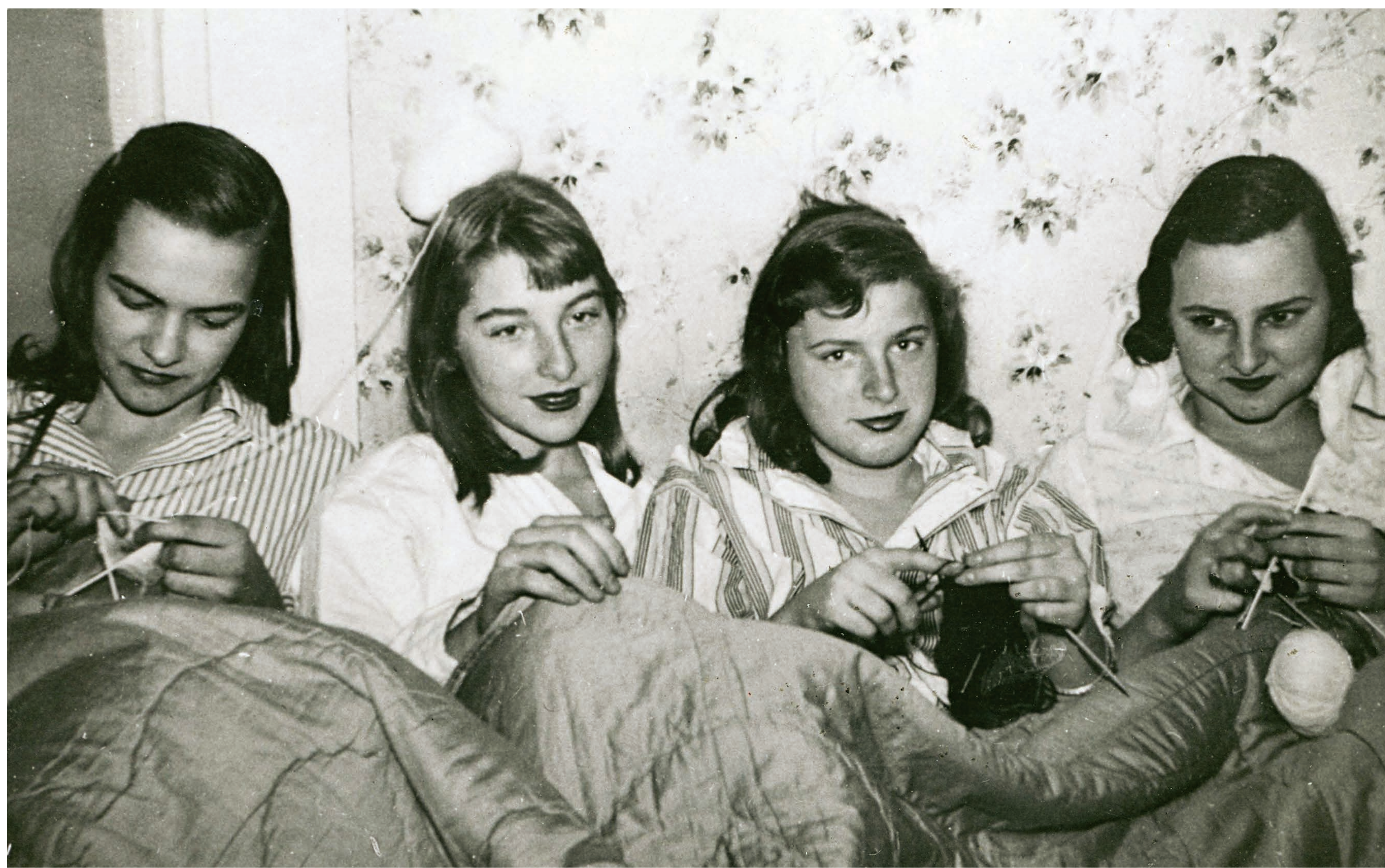
“Miss Hobson did not extort us to have pride in the school. . . . She did, however, exhort us to have pride in ourselves, to set high standards and apply every effort we could to meet those standards.”

— Rosemary Baldwin Coffin '40

1940s



1944 Commencement Ceremony.



Students knitting for the troops in the 1940s.

“To be a good citizen it is necessary that a person be honest and broad-minded, and while obedient to the present laws, be on the lookout for means of improving them. . . . above all, the citizen of tomorrow must be a citizen of the world and not of a single nation.”

— Mary-Dixon Sayre Miller '40

The Second World War brought volunteerism to new levels. Students offered their services by taking weekend plane-spotting shifts at the Nashawtuc Hill fire tower, knitting helmet liners and scarves for overseas troops, and establishing a bicycle-powered employment bureau to run errands for local citizens. Many teachers and more than 30 alums engaged in military service as members of the WAVES, WACS, WAAF, or the Red Cross. J. Josephine Tucker, head of school, led with grace and introduced innovations including the advisory system, a CA library, and a student council. She also ended the long-standing awards for scholarship at Commencement in order to celebrate the achievements of all graduates.



Canoeing in the 1940s.



Main Street mid-1940s.



Nancy Loring and the Chorus.



May Day 1948, Queen Mimi Frankenberg.



Class of 1947.



WWII Service Bulletin Board.



Nashawtuc Hill Fire Tower.



“The chameleon has traditionally come to mean fickleness and inconsistency. This is, we think, an unfair evaluation of that unfortunate lizard. How much more appropriately it symbolizes variety and adaptability!”

— Elisabeth Jenks '47, editor of *The Chameleon*

1950s



Evening Chapel Service.



Bill and Beryl Eddy carry a Chapel board for reconstruction.

“[The Chapel] has become the heart of the school—a place where, amidst the ‘whirly-girly’ of every day, one may still be alone.”

**— Doreen Young,
English teacher, 1940–1965**

Elizabeth Hall was named head of school in 1949 after serving two years as a history teacher. So began a modernization and campus expansion that would ultimately turn Concord Academy into one of the premier boarding schools for girls in the country. In a 1956 General Assembly, students voted to adopt “Honor is our Tradition” as a school tenet. Under Mrs. Hall’s leadership, the former Snackerty Brook meetinghouse in Barnstead, N.H., was purchased, dismantled by a small group of students and faculty, transported, and rebuilt at the school. The Chapel quickly became the most iconic building on campus. As the electrical work had yet to be completed, the first service was held in December 1956 by candlelight.

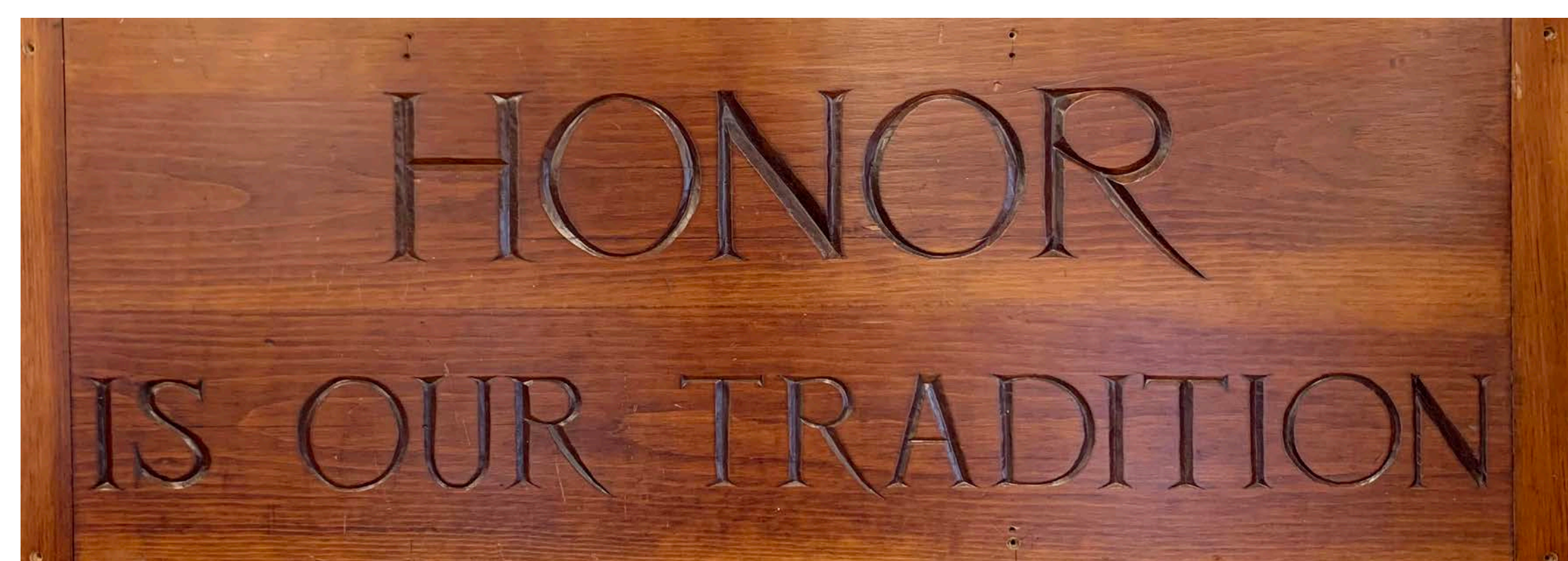
Elizabeth Hall reading to boarders.



Study hall.

“[The honor system] worked. We were all quiet and we really did our homework. We were on our honor to do what was expected, and for the most part, in that setting we did.”

— 1958 graduate



Panel carved by Elizabeth Hall.

Tip-off for the Reds versus Blues.



“Concord gave me stimulating intellectual excitement and a spirit of inquiry. ... We had splendid teachers, and my friends and I were concerned and aware.”

— Jane Fletcher Geniesse '54



Science lab.

“There was a pulsing energy emanating from all the teachers. Their behavior said: ‘You are smart; you can learn; work hard; ask questions.’”

— Susan Harris Curtin '56

1960s

“I know Concord Academy made a difference to me, but I had no idea I had made a difference to Concord Academy.”

— Jenny Cox Pertiller '69



Overflow lunch, class of 1961.



Bulletin board in the Main School.



The Jabberwock, 1968.

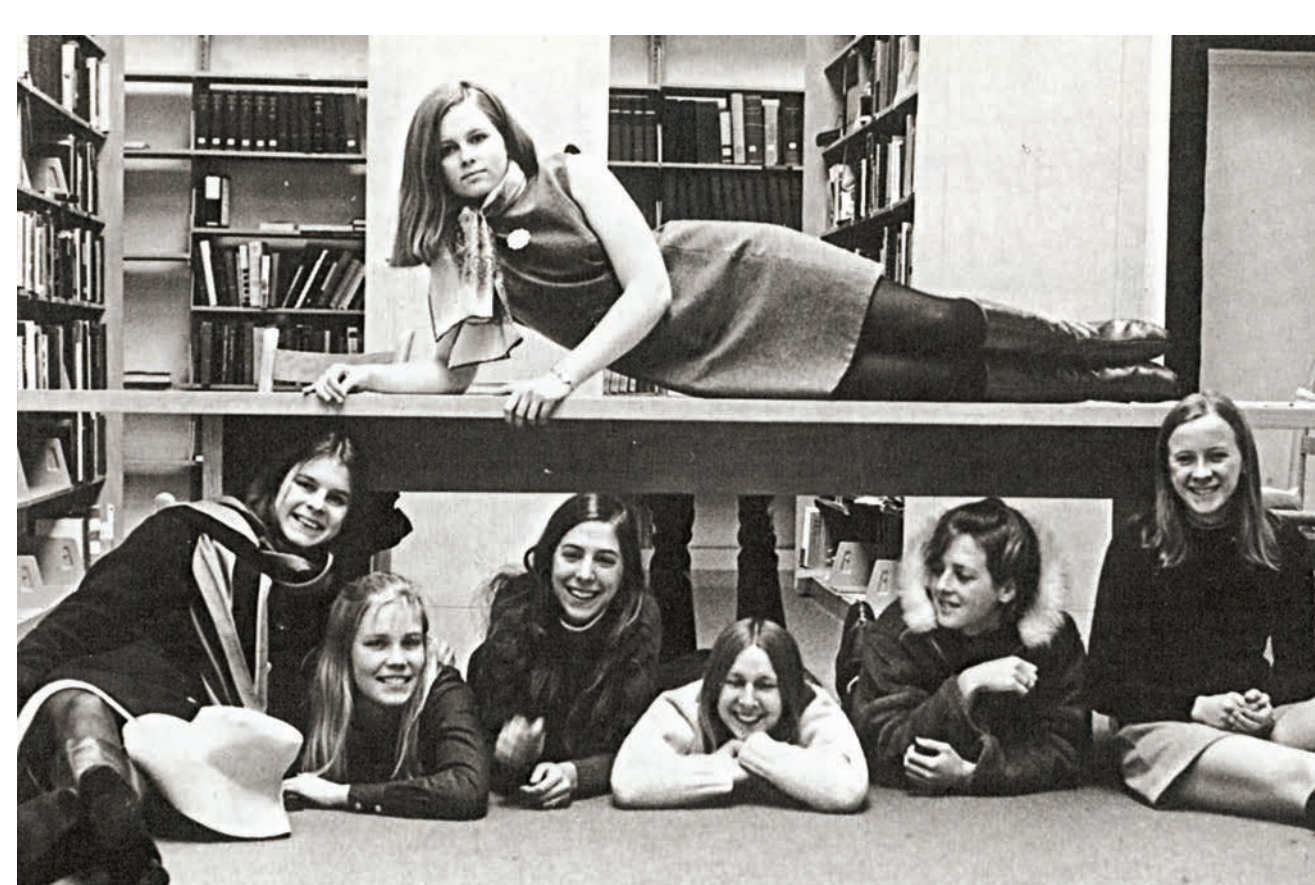
The 1960s at CA reflected the changing times in the country. National and global politics, the Cold War, and the Civil Rights and women's movements influenced life on campus. Elizabeth Hall's sudden resignation in May 1963 brought about a major change in leadership. When the trustees announced David Aloian as the next head, the school was starting to become more diverse. The first students arrived through A Better Chance, a new program that helped students of color choose and prepare for lives at independent schools. A five-year grant introduced Mandarin into the language offerings, two endowed speaker series were established, and *The Centipede*, the school's first official student newspaper, was founded. By the decade's end, trustees and administrators began seriously considering coeducation.



Heading to class in the winter, late 1960s.



Members of the class of 1969.



The Centipede board, 1969.

“Mrs. Hall called me aside and told me in so many words that I might make something of myself, but that I had better get my act together. She didn't chastise me for something I had done but rather for what I had not yet done and what she thought I might do.”

— Drew Gilpin Faust '64

“What Concord imbued in us, I think, was a strong sense of social responsibility, the expectation of hard work, the encouragement to make the most of who we were and what we had, and the importance of using our freedom wisely.”

— Kate Douglas Torrey '65



French class in Haines House.

1970s

“There was also a strong sense of respect for other people’s intellects and for what everyone brought to the table. Yes, we misbehaved. But, we misbehaved fairly modestly, and there was an unwritten code about treating each other fairly.”

— Christine Fairchild '75



Square dance with Groton School.



1972 Commencement, the final with all female-identifying students.

On May 19, 1970, the trustees voted to admit boys. Concord stands out as the only girls’ boarding school to make such a bold decision at that time. During the Vietnam War, the energy crisis, and the women’s liberation and Black Power movements, the school weathered financial strain and significant transition in leadership. However, the CA classroom remained transformative. The arts especially thrived, nurturing an extraordinary number of accomplished writers and artists. In this era marked by intellectual and creative vitality, students described their experiences as “rigorous” and “soul-searching.”



“[My CA teachers gave me] freedom to experiment and grow. I draw from their lessons every day, in my life and in my work as a journalist. They taught me the art of honest inquiry, how to observe, how to think, how to analyze information—all fundamentals that a person needs to report, to write, and to occasionally make a difference in the world.”

— Richard Read '75



Library Committee, 1970.



Reading the latest issue of *The Centipede*.



Alumnae Reading Room.



Boys soccer, 1973.

“We first 26 boys no more changed Concord Academy than Neil Armstrong changed the surface of the moon. As a matter of fact, on that fair September morning when we landed in the Performing Arts Center and took our first deep breath of the new world, Concord Academy changed us more than we changed it.”

— David Michaelis '75

1980s



Head of School Tom Wilcox with students.

The 1980s brought a young, visionary head of school, Thomas Wilcox. Under his leadership, Concord Academy took on the challenges it had been facing with a renewed sense of discipline, a more robust dedication to diversity, and greater financial savvy. The school took steps toward fulfilling his promise to open CA's doors to a wider range of students and allow them to help shape their living and learning experiences. By the beginning of the 1990s the foundations were in place to build CA, over the next decades, into the school we now celebrate today.

"We pushed back a lot. ... [Tom Wilcox] let us argue, rant, and occasionally overstep boundaries. To be given the latitude to challenge authority in that way was a rare opportunity for self-discovery and development."

— Pamella Pearl '86



Baseball camaraderie, win or lose.



Computer classroom.



Senior Holiday Chapel.

"The school knew it had to make progress [with diversity], but people still didn't know how to do it. ... What young people were just beginning to see was that we had to change systems. It's one thing to offer students independent studies to discover writers and artists of color; it's another to alter the curriculum to include them. That is changing the system."

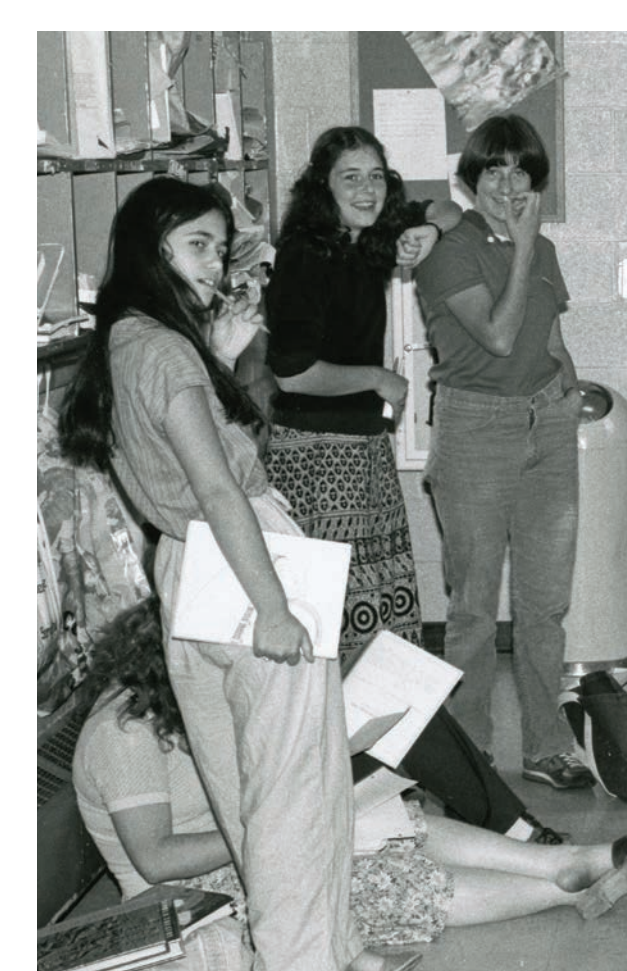
— Vivian Hunt '85

"Things were very open in a way I found refreshing, because it allowed us to express ourselves and get to know who we were as people. I don't think I would have gotten that from a more traditional prep school."

— Dean Forbes '83



Latin classroom.



Second floor cubbies.



Students at a basketball game, field house.

1990s

“The classrooms provided spaces for rich engagement. ... At [CA] I became more conscious of the value of measuring yourself against yourself rather than against other people.”

— Nicole Myers Turner '93

“I went in not feeling I had a voice and left knowing I did.”

— Ingrid Walker-Descartes '91



Physicist and author Alan Lightman with *Einstein's Dream* cast and crew.

“As difficult as it was at times, I wouldn't exchange my CA education for anything in the world. I was given permission to speak my mind in a way that was creative and that prompted conversation.”

— Georgiana “Georgie” Chevy '97

CA dialogues that had begun in the previous decade concerning privilege, difference, community service, and social justice continued. These impassioned discourses emphasized the need for representation within the school culture, and the negotiations between the various viewpoints could often be heated. However, CA's tradition of respecting the individual proved invaluable in navigating this tumultuous time as community members encouraged each other to challenge their assumptions and see beyond their own experiences. In the meantime, the arrival of revolutionary technologies broadened horizons even more and provided opportunities to connect students to worlds outside of their own.



Film crew in the library.



Class of 1997 Commencement.



Students gather outside Main School, 1990.

“Finding the CA community was life-changing for me. I could come out and not have it ruin my life. Being so warmly supported gave me confidence to be the person I wanted to be from then on.”

— Isabel “Izzy” Lowell '98



Student service projects, 1991.



Orientation programming, 1991.

2000s



All-school photo, 2009.

“I was still unaware that I might be held back or stopped in my single-minded intensity to accomplish something I really cared about. I would hit walls later in my life, but at CA you were allowed to try things out, so anything seemed possible if you were willing to work at it.”
— Katie Eberle '04

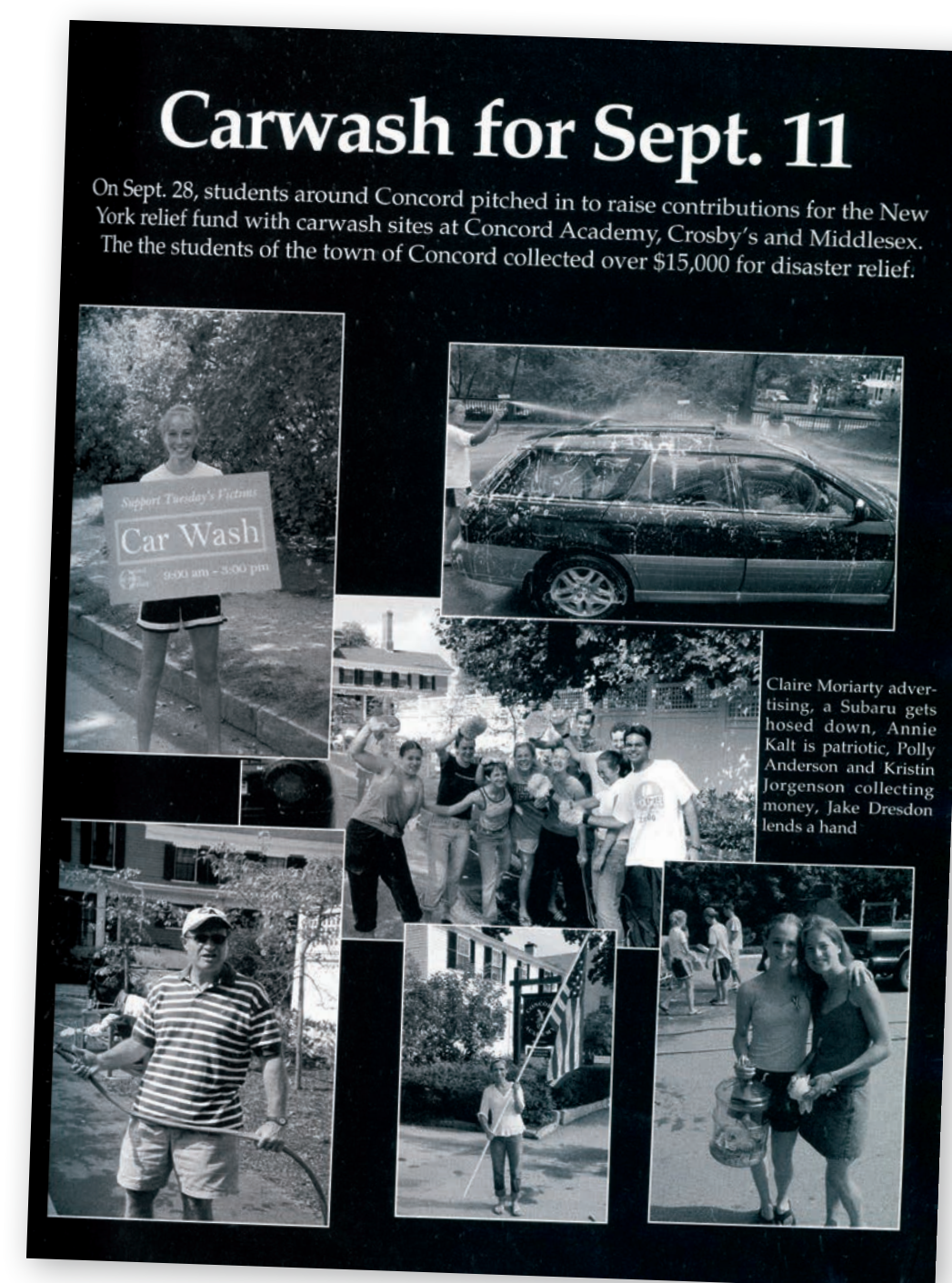
With Jacob Dresden as CA’s newly appointed head, the school was a strong and vibrant school in 2000. The terrorism of September 11, 2001, shook CA—but the community found strength in working collectively, spurring a new era of volunteerism. In the years to follow, service trips to Washington, D.C., New Orleans, South Dakota and Nicaragua brought students and adults together in purposeful work. On campus, a larger student body required an expansion of the Chapel, in 2004. The purchase of former farmland in 2007 allowed for plans to improve CA’s athletic facilities. Dresden’s retirement in June 2009 made way for Richard Hardy, the 10th head of school.



Service at Gaining Ground, fall 2008.



Morning in the library.



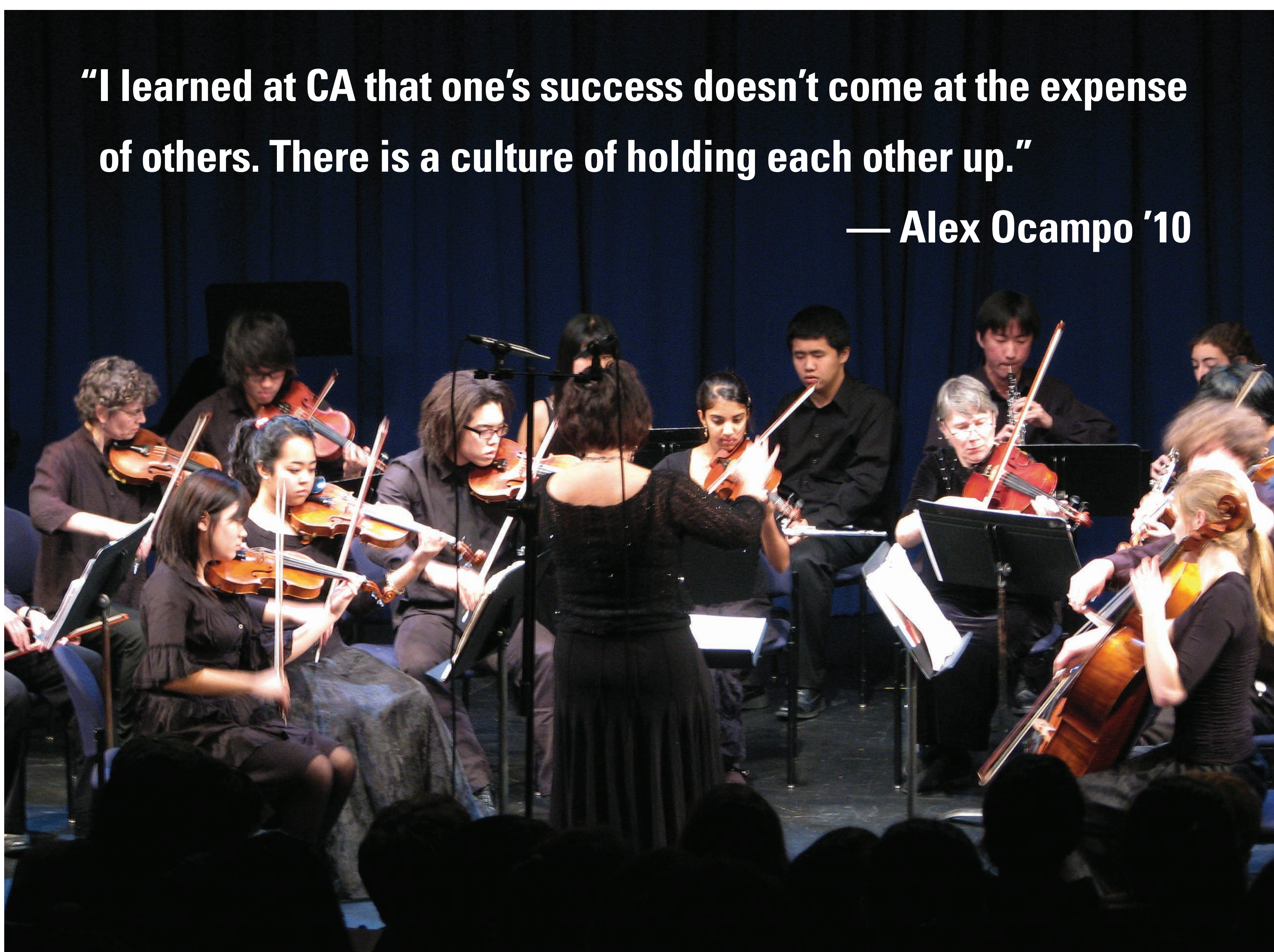
Car wash fundraiser for September 11.

“This was a place where you could be complex. ... You could have ownership of your own journey. I knew this was a place where I would grow and be challenged, and I learned during my time there what community could look like.”

— Cathy Marques '07

“I learned at CA that one’s success doesn’t come at the expense of others. There is a culture of holding each other up.”

— Alex Ocampo '10



CA Orchestra performance, 2009.



Performance of *The Women of Lockerbie*, 2008.



Cyanotype printing with Cynthia Katz.



Candlelit Holiday Chapel, 2005.

2010s



CA library, 2017.



Family Weekend on the quad.



Canoeing along the Sudbury River.



China trip, March 2018.



Convocation in the Chapel, September 2016.



Girls soccer at the Moriarty Athletic campus.



Revival of Field Day, 2018. Reds vs. Blues.

Against the backdrop of the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements, as well as the polarizing 2016 presidential election, CA students, increasingly drawn to activism, spoke up to address injustices and got involved in social movements to address climate change and wrongful conviction. They promoted philanthropy and gave back to the local community. They also embraced opportunities to learn while developing new technology to benefit others. The campus was greatly expanded, with new and re-imagined athletic facilities, science labs, campus housing, and study spaces by the decade's end. These investments created space for students and teachers to collaborate in creative pursuits and project-based learning.



Leaving Concord for the Boston Climate Strike, 2019.

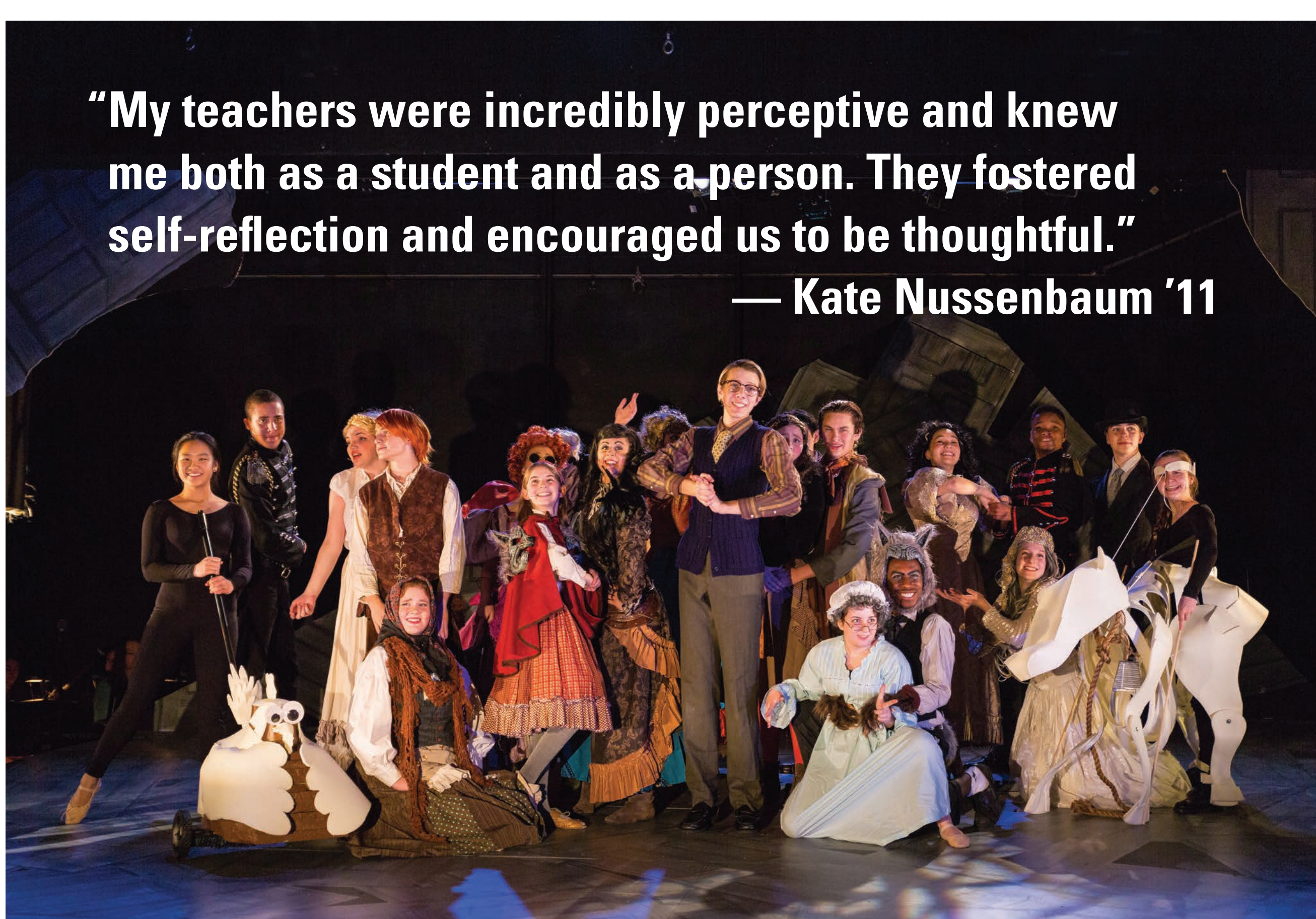
“At CA, the point of going to school was to actually learn something. You weren’t there just to punch a card and say you did it. ... Your own journey, your own story is celebrated.”

— Harry Breault '16



Educator and former faculty Kevin Jennings at CA for the GSA's 30th anniversary.

“My teachers were incredibly perceptive and knew me both as a student and as a person. They fostered self-reflection and encouraged us to be thoughtful.”
— Kate Nussenbaum '11



Cast of *Into the Woods*, fall 2015.

“I was scared about coming into a space that originally wasn’t made for people like me. ... [It] took me a while and many discussions to realize that my background and the community I come from not only gives me a greater perspective on the world but also helps others acknowledge and understand how different we all are.”

— Stefano Amador '19

2020s

“Our class came together in a remarkable way. We have gotten so close and become so endeared to one another in ways I couldn’t have imagined.”
— Jolyon Breckon '21



Virtual Commencement 2020.



Commencement, class of 2022 on Senior Steps.

When the COVID-19 pandemic challenged the school in unprecedented ways, CA discovered alternative forms to maintain traditions, from chapels to ring begs, vibrant and inclusive. While the community adapted, the school also prepared for its Centennial and a new era of leadership. In October 2021, an all-school meeting announced Henry Fairfax as the 11th head of school, and the 2022–23 academic year opened with 405 students. In classroom visits and as Hall Fellows, Davidson Lecturers, and Commencement speakers, alums continue to demonstrate the power of the CA network.



Students on the quad in front of CA Labs.



Installation of Head of School Henry Fairfax, May 2023.



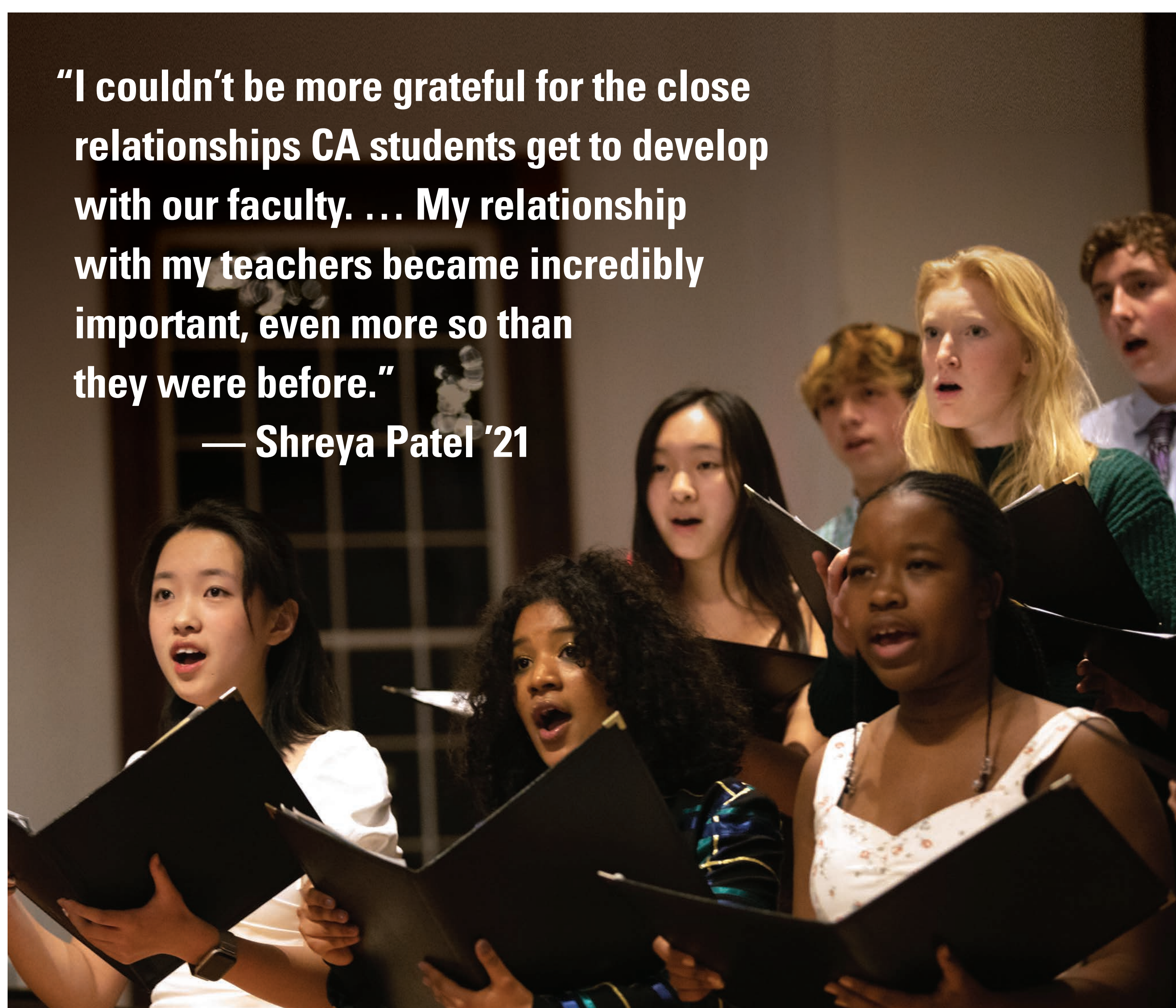
CA quad.



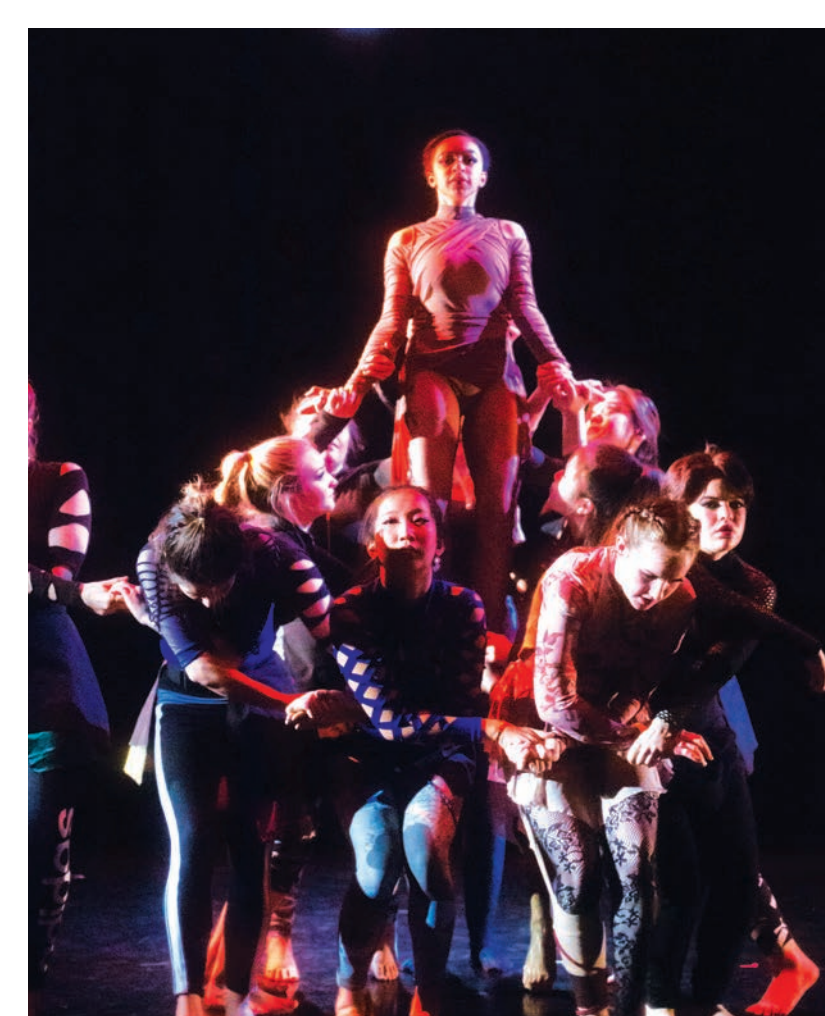
Boarding Council for 2022–23.

“I couldn’t be more grateful for the close relationships CA students get to develop with our faculty. ... My relationship with my teachers became incredibly important, even more so than they were before.”

— Shreya Patel '21



Holiday Concert, 2022.



Dance Project, February 2020.



Boys lacrosse ringing the Moriarty victory bell.

“I gained a new appreciation for the little things: in-person classes, sitting in the Chapel, Stu-Fac lunches where we all cram 10 chairs around a six-person table, hugs and high-fives and handshakes.”

— Kincaid DeBell '21