

chatham RECORDER

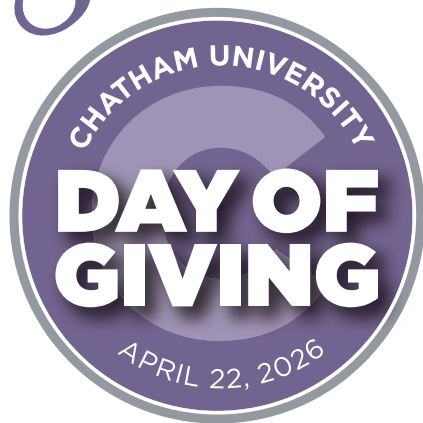
WINTER 2025-26



Natalie Callahan '23
Fulbright Scholar



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News & Events

NEW HRSA GRANTS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHATHAM GRAD PSYCH AND OTD STUDENTS

Chatham was awarded two grants totaling over \$3.7 million from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) which will allow occupational therapy and psychology students experience working in high-need, high-demand areas.

The grants will fund the Destigmatizing Relapse with Evidence-based Approaches Multidimensionally (DREAM) and Healthcare Alliance Promoting Pittsburgh Youth 2 (HAPPY 2) projects.

Master-level students in the programs will receive a stipend of \$25,000, while doctoral students will receive \$32,500, for living costs associated with their fellowship and education.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

TWO CHATHAM STUDENTS WIN NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIPS



Two Chatham University undergraduate students, **Sam Beall-Dennell '25** and **Syba Ismail '25**, were awarded fellowships from the National Science

Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Another student, **Allie Rutledge '25**, received an honorable mention.

Beall-Dennell received an award in the chemistry field studying chemical theory, models, and computational methods. Ismail's award is for materials research into polymers.

THREE CHATHAM STUDENTS PICKED FOR MICROBIOLOGY AND IMMUNOLOGY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Three Chatham undergraduate students were selected for the University of Pittsburgh's Microbiology and Immunology Department (MID) Scholars Program.

Zoe Reed '28, **Lillith Scheele '27**, and **Tomisin Sotomiwa '27** were admitted into the program, which had 42 applicants this year. Only five students were selected during this cycle of the MID Scholars program, which provides hands-on research opportunities to students at Pitt, Chatham, or Carnegie Mellon University.

FACULTY RECOGNITION

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY WILLIAM PFALZGRAFF AWARDED NSF LEAPS GRANT



William Pfalzgraff, Ph.D., an assistant professor of chemistry at Chatham, was awarded a Launching Early-Career Academic Pathways (LEAPS) in the Mathematical and Physical Sciences grant from the National Science Foundation.

The award, worth \$249,950 over two years, will go towards memory-based simulations approaches research. Pfalzgraff and his students at Chatham will develop computational methods to accelerate the calculation of molecular properties from computer simulations.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF WATER RESOURCES RYAN UTZ SELECTED AS FULBRIGHT U.S. SCHOLAR



Ryan Utz, Ph.D., assistant professor of sustainability and water resources, was selected for the Fulbright U.S. Scholar award and will travel to Guatemala for research in spring 2026.

Utz's project will involve collaboration with El Centro de Estudios de Atitlán to increase scientific understanding of the rivers and streams which feed into Lake Atitlán.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE DIRECTOR JESSIE B. RAMEY AWARDED ACLS FELLOWSHIP



Jessie B. Ramey, Ph.D., the director of Chatham's Women's Institute and an associate professor of women's & gender studies and history, was

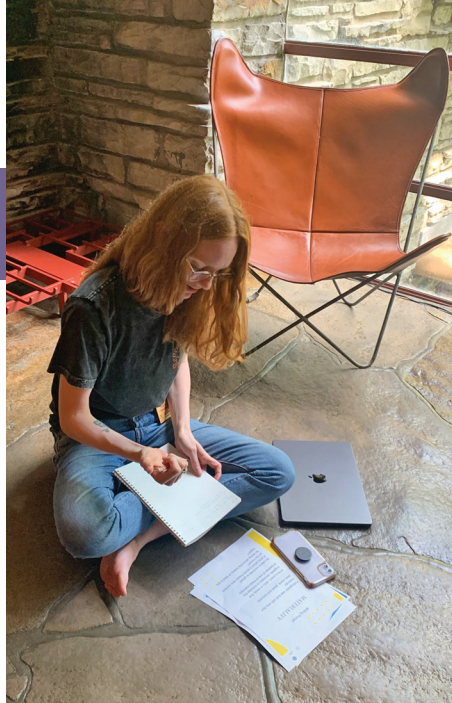
awarded an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Fellowship. The fellowship will support Ramey's work on her current book, a biography of activist, coal miner, educator, and Chatham alumna Kipp Dawson '94.

ALUMNI RECOGNITION

CHATHAM PROFESSOR, ALUMNI AMONG “40 UNDER 40” HONOREES

Chatham University professor Keratilo Mogotsi, Ph.D., and alumni Katrina Holdren '09, Debra Titus, MAT '09, Andrea Jacobs Stevens, MSBio '12, Rachel Wein Antin '13, Ryan Rydzewski, MFACW '15, and Diarra Imani Clarke '18 were named among *Pittsburgh Magazine's* 2025 40 Under 40 Honorees.

Lauren Amore, DNP '26, was named one of the Illinois Nursing Foundation's 40 Under 40. She was recognized at a ceremony where she accepted the award.



CHATHAM UNIVERSITY HOLDS FIRST-EVER WRITING RESIDENCY AT FALLINGWATER

On June 16-20, 2025, Chatham University and Fallingwater launched the inaugural Fallingwater Residency in Nature and Place-Based Writing, a new one-of-a-kind course offering for Chatham's Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program.

Developed by Sheila Squillante, director of the MFACW program, the residency is the first of its kind to ever be held at Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural masterpiece, Fallingwater, a house and museum that is recognized as a National Historic Landmark and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



CHATHAM AGAIN NAMED A BEE CAMPUS

Chatham last year renewed its certification as a Certified Bee Campus USA Affiliate. The certification, which Chatham was first awarded in 2019, comes from Bee City USA. As an affiliate of the program, Chatham works to minimize hazards for pollinators across campus, raise awareness about pollination issues, and host events and provide information to the campus and regional community about bloom times and pollinator needs. Chatham is one of 215 schools in the program in the United States; when the University joined in 2019, there were only 63 affiliate schools.

◀ QUANTUM THEATRE STAGES OUTDOOR PRODUCTION AT SHADYSIDE CAMPUS

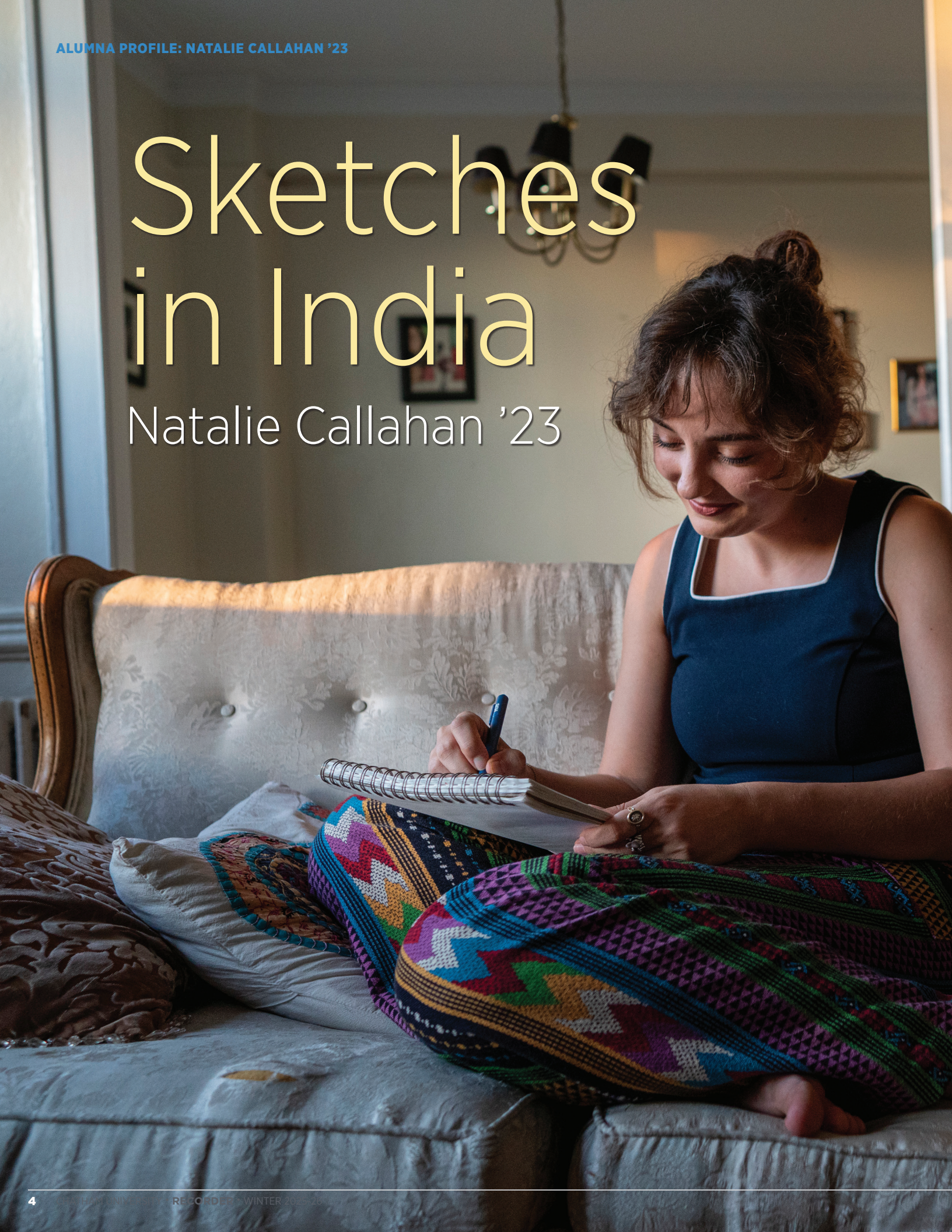
The iconic Anne Putnam Mallinson '61 Pond at Shadyside Campus was a key set piece in a Quantum Theatre adaptation of Anton Chekhov's classic play *The Seagull* this past summer. Hundreds of people came to campus for the show, which ran from July 24-August 16. The play was adapted and directed by Joanie Schultz, the associate artistic director at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.



Visit pulse.chatham.edu for the latest news, announcements, and community highlights.

Sketches in India

Natalie Callahan '23





Natalie Callahan spent nine months in Varanasi as a Fulbright Scholar documenting the Banarasi weaving process with her art.

Natalie Callahan '23 was seated on the back of a scooter, speeding through the streets of Varanasi, her fingernails digging into Ajay's shoulders. When he parked, Ajay, her Fulbright scholarship facilitator, joked he'd have to bill the prestigious cultural exchange program for any medical damage caused by her white-knuckle grip.

That was just the beginning of Callahan's nine months in India on a Fulbright scholarship, which she was awarded after she graduated from Chatham University with a degree in arts management and international studies. She went to Varanasi to do graphite sketches of the people and processes behind Banarasi weaving—a traditional craft known for its intricate designs and its connections to the city's Muslim community.



Above top: Natalie (in black) with (left to right) Omesh, her host's nephew; Ajay, her host; and Poonam, Omesh's mother (and Ajay's sister)

Above bottom: Natalie with her translator, Sundar, both posing in front of the portrait Natalie drew of him

Opposite page: Graphite portraits drawn by Natalie while in India

“If you go in with expectations, it’s harder to learn, because you have to unlearn what you thought and then build on top of that.”

A native of Mount Lebanon in the South Hills of Allegheny County, Callahan learned to do graphite portraits from her high school art teacher, Jennifer Rodriguez. “It was really cool to me that I could get such an accurate picture” from the process, Callahan said. “I was really interested in developing that, because the illusion is really cool, it can look so real.”

Callahan first started thinking about the Fulbright Program during her second year studying arts management at Chatham. She received guidance from Karin Chipman at the Office of Global Engagement, as well as various members of the visual arts faculty at Chatham, who helped guide her ideas, wrote letters of recommendation, and reviewed her submitted materials.

She arrived in Delhi in late August 2024 for her orientation. There, she met about 30 other Fulbright Scholars, each of whom was studying their own subject. “Mine was the only art project,” Callahan said. “Pretty much everyone else was doing really intense research, very STEM-oriented.” The juxtaposition gave her a feeling of imposter syndrome, which she detailed in a blog she updated throughout her project.

“Every time that I decide I want to draw, I am worried that I am not able to draw anymore,” she wrote shortly after arriving in India. “Each time I create a graphite portrait, I worry that the next one will not be as good; this leads to me taking more and more time in between drawings. First it was a month between portraits, then it was three, and now it has been a year.”

She realized she had to start by rebuilding her confidence before she could begin her project in earnest. “Remembering that I do actually enjoy making art was how I ended up tackling that,” Callahan said. “It was a great way to disconnect from the culture shock and the stressors in my environment by doing something that was so familiar to me.”

Once she got to Varanasi, she met Ajay, the Fulbright facilitator. Eventually, she began living in an apartment above his home, which allowed her to develop a close friendship with him and his family. He also tutored her in Hindi, introduced her to a translator, and helped connect her with the local weaving community.

“He really took ‘host dad’ to another level,” she said. “He was such a father figure and so funny. He is really well read and knows everything about his city and India in general. I really appreciated his commentary.”

Callahan also did her own background research into the history of the weaving process. “I think that was really important,” she said. Because of that research, “I had an understanding of how ancient the art is and a lot of the modern problems in the industry that the artisans are facing.”

According to some sources, the origins of Banarasi weaving go back nearly 2,000 years, and the trade is passed down through families from generation to generation. Traditionally, women in the industry do not work in the same space as men do. For Callahan, that meant she was speaking

almost entirely with men throughout her project. That presented some challenges.

“It was hard to make it seem like I wasn’t intruding on them,” Callahan said. “Having been there for only nine months, it’s hard to make lasting relationships with people you only meet a couple times.”

The first person she met was a man she only referred to as the “Master Weaver” in order to respect his privacy. His family has been in the business for more than 250 years, he told Callahan.

The Master Weaver learned from his father, Callahan said. When he was around 15 years old, he would hang around the weavers, watching and learning. When they took breaks, he would jump in and continue their work. That’s how he began to learn the trade himself. “He still believes to this day that there is always something new to learn about the process,” Callahan wrote in her blog.

When she visited him, the Master Weaver and his family spread out a plethora of colorful, intricately woven textile samples for Callahan to observe. Because his

workspace was also connected to his house, Callahan then joined him and his family for tea, cookies, and dates that the Master Weaver’s son had brought home from Mecca.

She hadn’t originally planned to sketch a portrait of the Master Weaver for her project, but when she watched him speak, she knew she had to capture his face in graphite.

Was this what she expected to experience when she first started filling out her Fulbright application? Well, Callahan said she tried her best to go into the project with as few preconceived notions as possible.

“If you go in with expectations, it’s harder to learn, because you have to unlearn what you thought and then build on top of that,” she said. “Going in, I did not expect anything, so I could start with a blank slate.”

She spoke to several people in the Banarasi weaving community during her time in the program. Additionally, she gave talks at local colleges and universities, such as Banaras Hindu University and the De Paul

Institute of Science and Technology. She also took advantage of the opportunity to travel throughout India, often accompanied by friends she made in the Fulbright program.

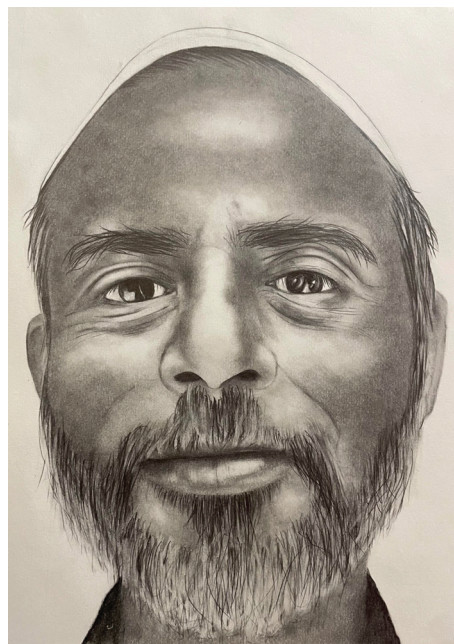
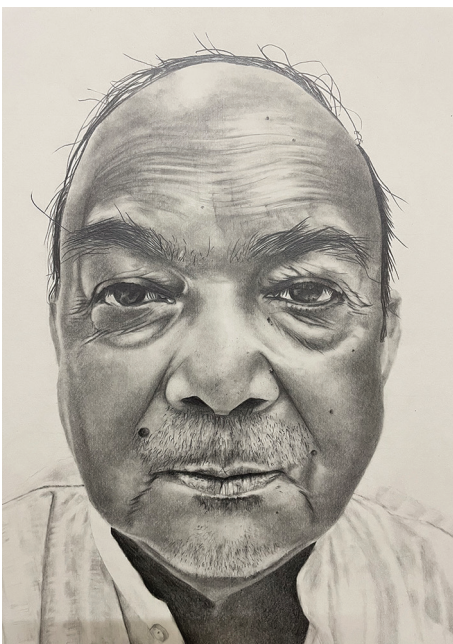
The day before she was supposed to return to the United States, Callahan realized she needed another bag. She and Ajay set out on his scooter for a store. She got a new suitcase—a big one. Wearing a dress, she sat side-saddle on the back of the scooter with both her arms wrapped around her large suitcase while Ajay drove them back home.

That brought back memories of their first ride together, when she was clinging to his shoulders like her life depended on it. It was a final reminder of how much her time in India changed her.

After returning to the U.S., Callahan started working at the Carnegie Museum of Art’s Arts Ed Collaborative, an independent project of the museum that works with educators and schools in southwestern Pennsylvania.

“I’m really glad I found this organization that works with arts education,” she said, noting she’s wanted to get into the field for years.

She’s also continued making art, working on new projects and trying different styles, like fantasy illustrations. “I have a very active imagination, but I haven’t been able to figure out how to put that on paper,” she said. She’s taking inspiration from Tony DiTerlizzi, who illustrated and co-authored *The Spiderwick Chronicles*, one of Callahan’s favorite childhood book series. ●



PRESIDENT LISA LAMBERT, PH.D.

“My background, and my knowledge of people and the school, I think, comes together now, in this role, in a way that I never expected it to... It’s almost like all of the things I learned along the way, unbeknownst to me, were preparing me for this.”



Q&A with Lisa Lambert, Ph.D.

Chatham's 21st president

You've worked here for over 40 years now, so I wanted to start by asking about what it was like when you first came to Chatham.

The very first day I started work, I went to the cafeteria with my then-boss. A faculty member came up to me and looked at me and said, "Well, you're new here." I said, "Yes, this is my first day!" in that bright, sort of cheerful voice you use. And he said, "Well, I hope you're not expecting to get tenure here." What am I wearing wrong? What did I say wrong? What happened here? And I said, "Oh," not really knowing what else to say. And he said, "Yeah, we're going to fold in about four years, so you won't have a job here."

That was my first introduction to the inevitable cycle that every small college and university faces over time: You go for a while, and you're good, and then something changes and you have to react to it. And that was that first bump in the road that I encountered. And we had a different president at the time, that was Dr. Rebecca Stafford. She declared, Well, Chatham is going to close unless we change. The board brought in, eventually, Esther Barrazonne, who brought in graduate programs. And we got over our first hump.

Chatham was very much the same, but very different. And that sounds kind of confusing, kind of an oxymoron, but it was always focused on faculty and student interactions, staff and student interactions. The students felt connected

to the school, and the school felt connected to the students. That has always been what Chatham is, who Chatham is. It's in our DNA. And it's why places like Chatham exist.

I'm wondering what it was you saw during your first days working here that made you think that this was a special place.

It would have to be the meetings with the students. I was taking over from a faculty member who had just retired. The very first thing I did was to start meeting with his students, the ones he was going to be doing the senior tutorial research project with, and learning all the different things that they were planning to do. I thought, oh my gosh. I don't know how to do any of these. I said to the students, "Look, I know a lot about my field, but I don't particularly know anything about the chromosome makeup of East Coast clams. But we'll do it together, and we'll learn together." And that's what happened over the years, I was learning with my students, from my students, at the same time I was teaching them. And that's what really engaged me.

You talked about that faculty and student relationship, but do you see any other similarities between Chatham then and Chatham now?

I think the location can't be ignored in terms of a key to what makes Chatham what it is. There are lots of beautiful campuses in this country. I would certainly stack Chatham up against any of them. Our location being a quiet, beautiful setting, but still in the city—I won't say it's unique, but it's

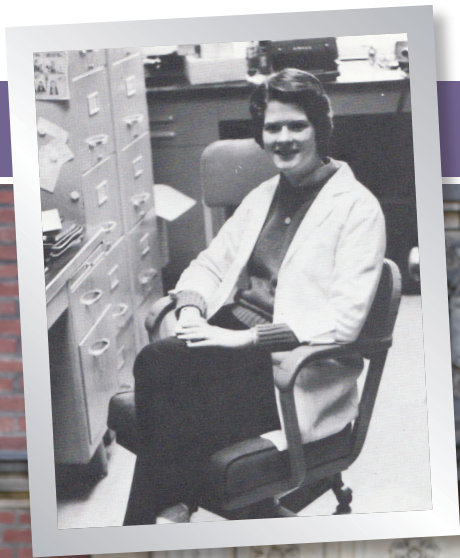
certainly special. And it allows students to have a pond to sit out by and read. Yet, they can walk down the street, catch the bus, and go to any big company, hospital, museum. It has the best of both worlds, and I think that is one of the many things that makes Chatham special. We are very fortunate to have this setting in Pittsburgh. It's a great combination.

And is there anything that's different that you think is a good change?

I think certainly, while it was traumatic at the time, going all-gender was a good thing for Chatham. We were shocked at the time. The research all said, when an all-women's college goes co-ed, you'll get a few male students coming in at first. You will grow slightly.

We were shocked. The numbers from the previous year to the 2015 year were amazing. It wasn't just that we had more students who were male. We had more students who were female. And our basic mission, which was, at that time, was to provide education for women—we were educating more women. And we were educating more people, period. It really opened up a lot of discussion about what our mission was in terms of education, and the idea that we didn't want to limit what we could offer.

We'd started it, really, in some ways, with the graduate education, which was not limited to women. But by doing that at the undergraduate level, I think we were all happily surprised by the pent-up demand there was for a Chatham education out there by everybody.



“I want us to stop being the hidden gem

Could you tell me, what is it that you like about teaching? How long did you teach here?

I guess it's a little trite to say, but when you start talking about something you enjoy talking about, and you're looking into the classroom, and you're trying to make that connection. Then, you're describing something, and all of a sudden, you see that light flash. Oh, you get it too. You see what's fun about this. You see what's cool about this. And it doesn't always happen, I know. But, being able to share something that you're so passionate about, and you find so cool—it's like you've just been to a movie, or you've just read a book, and you start telling all your friends about it until they're sick about it. Well, that's what teaching is like, because you love your subject, and you want everybody else to love it too.

More importantly, you want them to understand it in the context of the broader education, which is more of a challenge. And of course, it doesn't hurt that I was teaching the coolest subject in the world, which is genetics.

What's changed since you've become president? How is the work different from your last position?

There were a lot of things that I saw that needed to be done, and I felt like I had the expertise and experience, having been a professor so long, to see what needed to be done and to try to help fix things. One of the problems that we encountered when we went all-gender was that rapid period of growth—we never really were prepared for it, and we were always playing catch up with policies, with procedures, with processes that we were continually tripping over. I saw, I could come in, I could make a difference. I could make things better.

My background, and my knowledge of people and the school, I think, comes together now, in this role, in a way that I never expected it to. Some people want to



Top: Dr. Lambert in 1986 Chatham College Cornerstone yearbook.

Bottom: Dr. Lambert speaking at 2025 Homecoming in front of Mellon Center.

that everyone calls us. Being a gem is fine. Hidden is not.”

become presidents because they like the title and they like the job, they like the perks. For me, it's maybe the most effective way to solve problems. And what I have found since becoming interim president, is that the job is not at all what I expected it to be. It's less about being down in the data in the weeds—and, again, I love my data—but it's a lot about storytelling. And I know a lot of good Chatham stories. I can go out, and I can talk to people. I'm very comfortable talking. It's almost like all of the things I learned along the way, unbeknownst to me, were preparing me for this. I found it much less difficult than I thought it would be.

There are so many things that are still to be done, but when it comes to trying to work with a team, to tell stories, to analyze data, it's like my whole career's prepared me for that. I'm comfortable with it. I had to think long and hard before saying yes, but I am absolutely happy where I am now.

What problems are you focused on solving? What goals are you focused on?

I am not going to be president forever. I'm not going to be here for some 20 odd years. Not at my age. My goals are more over the short term. They are to continue to support the academic excellence that makes Chatham Chatham. That connection that we've talked about with the students and the faculty, and the staff, because the students connect to more than just faculty. They connect to this whole Chatham community, the idea of one Chatham. We are all here, as a community, trying to make this education better for students,

but also to be responsible, part of a broader community as well. I want to make sure that the things that are working continue to work. That's one.

Then, we need to get on a more stable financial basis. That's something that I can bring my analytical skills, along with my team members and building a strong team, to make sure that we recognize problems before they come up and fix the problems that we have. We've got to do a better job of catching problems when they're small and fixable before they get larger. That's another thing.

I want to leave Chatham in better shape when I finally retire. That includes sound fiscal, and increasing our position in the community—the Pittsburgh community, our broader community of alumni, donors, supporters—while still maintaining and nurturing that academic excellence. I want to leave Chatham a better place. I know we can do it. I really do.

I'm a realist. This is a tough time for higher education. If I really thought that a smaller university, like Chatham, couldn't make it—I'm not one to beat my head against a wall. But I see a clear path forward for us. And I know we can do this.

When you talk about making Chatham a better place, what kind of place do you want Chatham to be?

I think Chatham is pretty outstanding the way it is. The great features I've already mentioned. I don't want that to change. But I want us to focus more on those good

things. I want us to streamline and focus and not get distracted by getting involved in things that are not directly mission focused. I want us to stop being the hidden gem that everyone calls us. Being a gem is fine. Hidden is not.

When Quantum Theater was on campus over the summer, and I went and chatted with people who were attending, people said, “I've lived here for 30 years, and I've never been here.” No, no. There's something wrong here. We've got to make sure that we keep doing what we're doing, but we need to get the recognition for it.

As you know, this is an alumni magazine, so, I did want to ask, do you have any plans to engage alumni?

Absolutely. I think that the alumni, more than anyone else in the world, will recognize the value of Chatham. And I want to engage with them more, see what they can do, what advice they have—everything from what can we do better on the academic side to how can we make sure that Chatham is recognized for its accomplishments. They are our biggest accomplishments. I'll be looking for suggestions about how we can raise Chatham's profile, how we can feature the work and accomplishments of our alumni. That's what will inspire the current group of students. If I can get out to visit student groups, I want to do that. I can always set up video calls with alumni groups if I can't make it out there, but I absolutely want to hear from them. ●

“This is a tough time for higher education...But I see a clear path forward for us. And I know we can do this.”

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BRAUN HALL: SCHOOL OF BUSINESS CLASSROOM EXPANSION

The lobby and two classrooms at the entrance of Braun Hall were renovated, with some walls removed to open the space and create two new, state-of-the-art classrooms for the School of Business & Entrepreneurship. The Impact Investing Lab features state-of-the-art equipment and flexible furniture, and the Applied Learning Lab across the hall incorporates four huddle spaces for students to work together, just as they would in a professional office setting. This project was made possible thanks to a donation by Kent McElhattan, chair of Chatham's Board of Trustees, and his wife, Martha.



JKM LIBRARY: ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

A grant from the McCune Foundation is enabling Chatham to explore bringing the Academic Success Center into a single central location. A series of space and feasibility studies led Chatham to select the library's first floor for the new location, helping make it a functional, inclusive, and resource-rich area for all students. This project will bring together library services, academic advising, learning support, global education, career development, and information technology support services in one location dedicated to student success. The project planning is underway, with a target construction date in 2027.

THE SUSAN BERGMAN GURRENTZ '56 ART GALLERY

The Susan Bergman Gurrentz '56 Art Gallery was moved to a new location just across the hall from its former space in Woodland Hall. It now features additional elements, including an immersive space, a curating exhibit space, a curating workroom, and a storage room. These additions greatly enhance what the art department can do in the gallery.

This project was primarily planned and designed in conjunction with the arts faculty, and the space is modernized with updated technology, power, and lighting. Since its move, two gallery exhibitions have been held in the new space: *Wearing the Movement*, which displayed a vast collection of activism-related ephemera collected by Kipp Dawson '94, and *The Weavers of Benares*, which featured art by Natalie Callahan '23. The continued and generous support of the Gurrentz family funded the project.



ampus

Professor Kyra Tucker contributed writing ←.....

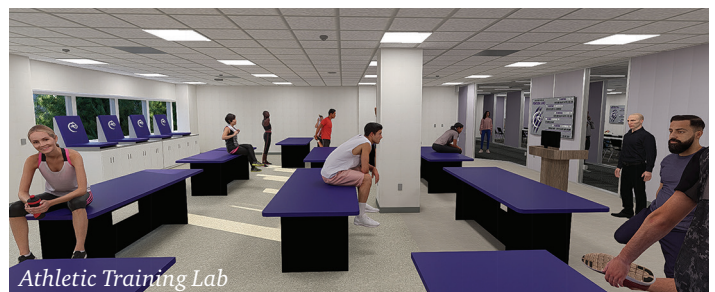
CHATHAM EASTSIDE EXPANSION

The Health & Human Performance Center and Athletic Annex at Chatham Eastside is a 35,000-square-foot renovation that reimagines the upper floor of Chatham Eastside as a vibrant hub for health, movement, and innovation. As Leonard Trevino, vice president and director of athletics & recreation, notes, “This project embodies what Chatham does best—integrating learning, wellness, and community to help every student reach their full potential.”

The Health & Human Performance Center (HHPC) will span approximately 13,000 square feet, bringing Chatham’s growing College of Health Sciences programs into one state-of-the-art location. Currently housed in the basement of the Shadyside Chapel, programs such as exercise science and athletic training will gain the modern environment they deserve, with room for two new programs launching in 2025 and 2026.

Just next door, the new 22,000-square-foot Athletic Annex will support Chatham’s expanding teams while improving recreation opportunities for all Eastside students. The facility will include a premier weight and training room accessible to all students, modern locker rooms, and a wrestling practice room for the new men’s and women’s wrestling programs, and batting cages and bullpens for softball and baseball athletes.

The renovation and expansion will open in August 2026.



Join Us in Building the Future

Help shape the next generation of Chatham students by supporting these and other renovation and expansion projects at Chatham. You can make a one-time or recurring gift online at chatham.edu/give, or explore naming opportunities within labs, classrooms, and training spaces.

Every gift—of every size—helps build a stronger, healthier Chatham.

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Three Humanities Faculty Members' Overseas Experience



From sailing around the lagoon surrounding Venice, Italy, to the walking the halls of a Polish university with a history as a haven from Soviet dogma, a few of Chatham University's humanities professors engaged in fascinating scholarly trips to Europe in 2025.

Take a look at their travels and get a peek at what's next for these faculty members at Chatham.



APRIL-MAY 2025



Heather Cunningham

Associate Professor of Education, Education Program Coordinator

Heather Cunningham has been a traveler since she spent a year living in rural Honduras teaching English as a second language after she finished her undergrad. This summer, she spent two weeks in Cluj, Romania working with the Fuller Foundation.

There, she spoke with teachers, students, and professors to learn about Romania's multilingual education system—something that connects to her own studies.

“My research in the past decade, pretty much since my dissertation, has looked at how a person's cultural and racial self shapes how they perform their work as a teacher and how they interact with students,” Cunningham said. “That has to do with your racial identity, your cultural identity, your gender identity—all the different ways we are shaped. Language is also one of those identities.”

In Romania, even some of the youngest students go to “mother tongue” schools, where they are educated in their native language and also learn Romanian, Cunningham explained.

That style of education continues through university. Cunningham spoke to a professor who teaches in both Romanian and English. Majors were organized by English, Romanian, and Hungarian tracks, with German and French options, too.

“I was just really wowed with learning how that came to be so,” Cunningham said. It had to do a lot with the overlap of

Romania's history as part of the Roman empire, the fact that its border used to be controlled by Hungary, and other social and political contexts.

For a scholar like Cunningham, learning about the multilingual school systems provided both a window into the past and context for the present. “The more you understand a person's language and how they use it to express themselves, the more you get to know them,” Cunningham said. “I think it's very fascinating.”

Next, Cunningham made a visit to a nearby Hungarian-language high school recommended by a Romanian professor. She spoke with a Hungarian language teacher and a high school senior, the latter of whom had just returned from studying abroad in Kansas. “I just loved talking with them and with the student in particular, seeing what was interesting to him and what the school was like,” she said.

At the end of the trip, Cunningham found herself falling in love with Cluj, Romania's second largest city and the historic capital of Transylvania. “It's very walkable, it's about the same size and climate as Pittsburgh,” she said. “There's a lot of comparisons between the Appalachian Mountain Range and the Carpathian Mountains.”

Inspired by her trip, she plans to write a paper about the layers of politics and history that shape the current education landscape in Romania.



MAY 2025



Carrie Helms

Associate Professor of English, Chair of Humanities & Education Department

In May 2025, Carrie Helms flew to Poland for five days of educational exchange at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin as part of a visit funded by the country's Ministry of National Education.

Between a short course aimed at doctoral students and some lectures for undergraduates, Helms shared her knowledge and passion for studying cookbooks. In the class "Methodologies of Cookbook Scholarship," she spoke to students whose studies spanned literature, rhetoric, history, communications, race, and women & gender.

"Not all of them were interested in American texts or contexts to begin with, but they were interested in ways they could apply these things to texts from their space," Helms said.

But there were two students both working on dissertations on American food culture—something connected to the research Helms does. "I think they got the most out of the class, in terms of pages they would add to their dissertations."

Of course, the trip couldn't be entirely focused on lecturing about food; there had to be some eating. "They brought me a lot of food gifts," she said. "Every time we had class, someone had something to share." There were dishes she'd never had and lots of regional specialties, too.

One student who came from a dairy farming community brought cottage cheese, a sour cream and beet soup, and kefir. Another brought a box of chocolate-covered plums. Someone else made rhubarb cake, and there were lots of small candies carried into class from convenience store shelves. "I learned so much about Polish food from them," Helms said.

But Helms joked that pierogi—that delicious dumpling often associated with Pittsburgh's Polish immigrants—perhaps isn't as popular in Lublin as it is in western Pennsylvania.

"The thing that binds Pittsburgh and Poland is the pierogi," Helms said. She'd start her undergraduate lectures talking about the pierogi mascot races that happen during the Pittsburgh Pirates' home games.

"So, I showed them a YouTube clip of the pierogis running, and they were like, 'No one even likes that,'" she said. "One student said, 'Even if you do like them, don't tell anyone you do. It's gauche.' It's too obvious to like pierogi; it'd be like building your identity around liking hot dogs or hamburgers."

Nevertheless, when her birthday occurred during her trip, Helms marked the occasion with a pierogi tattoo. "It was a good way to spend a birthday," she said.

With an edited collection of writing connected to her travels, called *Food and American Television: Constructing Identity in Bite Sized Narratives*, forthcoming from Routledge next year, Helms said she hopes this trip will be just the beginning of her cultural exchanges in Poland.

"There were lots of other discussions of future opportunities," she said. "What would it be like to bring a group of American students to Poland?" And she hopes interested Chatham students will let her know about their desire to potentially travel there with her.



MARCH-APRIL 2025



Marc Nieson

Associate Professor, MFA in Creative Writing program

Marc Nieson has history in Venice. He first traveled there as a young man on a whirlwind trip across Europe. “It’s a singular city in the world,” he said. “It’s a bizarre, beautiful place. My head was spinning. I felt I was lost there; it’s a place you’re supposed to be lost, in many ways.”

He knew then that he wanted to come back, and he did several times over the next few years, living there for months at a time. But he hadn’t been back for an extended stay in decades—until last year, when he spent two months in residence during his sabbatical.

He chose to return so he could perform on-site research for his upcoming essay collection, *Treading the Tides*, in which he’ll explore varied perspectives on sustainability. Nieson saw Venice, with its narrow canals and an infrastructure buckling under rising tides and an ever-increasing flood of tourists, as the perfect location for the book’s centerpiece.

“I wanted to go back there and check in on a few things,” he said. “We all end up, from our travels, finding a place that is your special place, where you feel you really belong on some level. Venice is it for me. More than anything, it’s about the rhythm. It’s a slow rhythm; you can’t get anywhere fast.”

Living in an apartment overlooking a public square and a couple of canals, Nieson went to work researching the social and ecological changes that have affected one of Europe’s most beautiful cities. He connected with an old friend, a onetime postman now working as a vogatore—a rower of a small boat. He took Nieson out to remote corners of the surrounding Venetian Lagoon. There, they saw the effects of annual flooding, marshland erosion, biological degradation, and other changes to the area.

“There’s an area in the lagoon now where there are two flocks of flamingos,” Nieson said. “You’d never think they’d be in Venice, certainly not at that latitude. They started showing up seasonally some 10 or so years back, and now they’re there year-round.” That provided Nieson with a vibrant image of how much the temperature of the water and other aspects of the lagoon had changed.

While Venice provides the spine of the collection, the rest of *Treading the Tides* will cover other topics and locations, including some closer to Pittsburgh. For Nieson, whose writing has covered fiction, personal memoir, and screenplays, focusing on climate change for this upcoming book started with thinking about what he felt compelled to write at his age and in this time.

“I’m living at this period of time, and writers get a chance to weigh in on what’s going on,” Nieson said. “I can’t think of anything more important than to get involved with sustainability at this juncture.”





Student-Led Feminist Summit Brings Activists from Six Local Universities

By Lyn Bigley '26

What started as an offhand idea in one of Professor of Gender Studies Jessie Ramey's classrooms became an event that united Chatham's feminist community with those of the greater Pittsburgh area.

In just five short months, an amalgamation of passionate Chatham students put together the first Pittsburgh Feminist Student Summit, hosted in Mellon Center during the spring '25 term. It brought in students from all over the area, providing a safe and educational space for emerging Pittsburgh feminists to share ideas, experiences, and opinions. The project was spearheaded by a group of students from Ramey's gendered resistance, riots, and rebellions course.

This event was held largely in memoriam of the late Laura Lovett, who led the University of Pittsburgh's gender, sexuality, and women's studies program and joined Ramey's class as a guest speaker on the day the idea was born.

"... her knowledge and connections, combined with Dr. Ramey's, gave us a wide well of resources to plan this event with," said Kiera Baker '25, an organizer who

graduated from Chatham with a degree in political science and women's and gender studies.

"Without her, this would not have happened, and it is important to highlight that she was the catalyst for this event happening. It was great getting to see her students at the event, knowing they were there for her and how much she would have loved that."

Baker, alongside a handful of other students—such as Mary Stanton '27, Rachel Coleman '26, and now recent alumnae Sydney Altfather '25, Arden Begley '25, and Mackenzie Lewis '25, to name a few—quickly got the ball rolling.

"The planning of the summit was a very collaborative process," said Begley, the recent English alum, who dealt with many of the summit's technology-related tasks, such as DJing.

Starting in November 2024, a group of officers from different Chatham female-aligned organizations, Women's Institute student employees, and other Chatham students began to gather in the Women's Institute every week to develop plans for the summit, Begley said. The small group of students quickly garnered support from

various clubs and organizations, such as Chatham's Feminist Coalition, the Triota Honors Society, Women's Leadership & Femme Aligned LLC, Chatham Democrats, the Creative Writing Club, and Chatham's Film Club.

Tiana Eicher '26 majors in creative writing and is a member of Chatham's Planned Parenthood Generation Action chapter. "I remember Mary Stanton bringing up the idea of gathering all of the feminist organizations across Pittsburgh into one big event," Eicher said. Then she, along with some other people in the class, decided to make the idea a reality.

In the coming months, a variety of students joined in on the planning process, working on things like social media promotions, T-shirt designing, communication, outreach,





and playlist curation. "... the number of hands that had a major impact on this event cannot be understated," Baker said. "We organized it in a way that anyone was able to join for whatever they could do."

Before they knew it, it was time for the summit on March 29, 2025.

"From when I woke up that morning to when we finished our clean up, it felt almost electric," Baker said. "We were all so passionate about this event and the topics we were covering that nothing could stop us. Seeing your friends light up when meeting new people at this event, especially in a time of loneliness and political burnout, was the most valuable part of the whole summit."

"On the main floor in the JKM Library, various student organizations set up tables for student networking, complete with business cards prepared by the summit staff in advance, featuring attendees' names and information," Altfather described.

There was food, tabling, quiet areas to decompress—even student art exhibits,

such as immersive media and interior architecture alum Abby Vendura '25's integrative capstone, "Homeland: Exploring Belonging Amidst Occupation."

As students from surrounding colleges trickled into the Mellon Board Room, Gwenn Painter '25 and other impact hosts assisted guests with check in, creating name tags, and getting situated. Students from not just Chatham, but Pitt, Duquesne, Point Park, Carnegie Mellon, La Roche, and CCAC were in attendance.

As an impact host, Painter played the role of conversation facilitator. After listening to different pieces of feminist work, the attendees split off into discussion groups. "My job basically was to make sure the conversation stayed on topic and made sure that everybody was being respectful to all the parties involved," Painter said. "I think everyone was doing a pretty good job anyways at being respectful during the conversations. I really loved it."

Eicher oversaw set-up of the crafting room. "I was also in the crafting room for a bit that

day which was super fun because it was just a place to relax and have fun, while still having feminist conversations," Eicher said. This space ended up being the most popular, according to Baker.

"People were bonding in a new, fun way that was not such 'serious networking' as the title may have suggested," Baker said.

"What I can take away from that experience was the pride I felt that we were about to accomplish a feminist student summit in a short amount of time," Altfather said, "and that we were able to reach some many likeminded individuals within the Greater Pittsburgh Area."

The impact of the Feminist Summit on Chatham's community was immense. Months after the event, buzz exists on campus on whether or not the event will occur again—which it will, this spring. The event echoed the passions and dedication of Chatham's student body, and the collaboration that went into it exists as a testament to the power of unity in the face of oppression. ●



GEAR SHOP

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY

Get the Latest Cougar Merch at the New Gear Shop!



Chatham's gear shop now boasts a new campus location and a new online store.

Now located next to Café Rachel on the Shadyside quad, the official gear shop is stocked with an assortment of merchandise. Browse a wide selection of Chatham-branded apparel, accessories, drinkware, and more.

You can even find retro Chatham College alumni shirts, mugs, and keychains. Show off your school spirit while honoring Chatham's legacy and history.

Men's and women's apparel includes T-shirts, hoodies and sweatshirts, polos, jackets, hats, and more. The store even carries seasonal merchandise, like the Chatham "Ugly Christmas" sweater.

Visit the store on campus or visit chathamuniversity.officialgearstore.com to browse the selection.



Honoring a Legacy, Inspiring the Future Planned Giving at Chatham

This year, Chatham is increasing awareness around the power and accessibility of planned giving, inviting alumni and friends to explore how easy it is to include Chatham in their future plans.

Whether through a will, trust, beneficiary designation, or other estate gift, planned giving allows donors to create meaningful impact while supporting the programs and values most important to them. To learn more about how you can make a planned gift that reflects your personal vision, visit plannedgiving.chatham.edu for resources, stories, and tools to guide your planning.

A LEGACY OF LEARNING: THE KATHERYN SALVER ENDOWED CHAIR IN ENGLISH



Katheryn Hopkins Salver '66 lived with a love of language, literature, and lifelong learning. She grew up in Pleasant Hills, near Pittsburgh, and attended Jefferson Hills schools until she went to Chatham College to major in English education.

She graduated in 1966. Afterwards, she began teaching in Philadelphia before returning to Pittsburgh in 1971. She then

started teaching at the Woodland Hills School District, where she worked for the rest of her career.

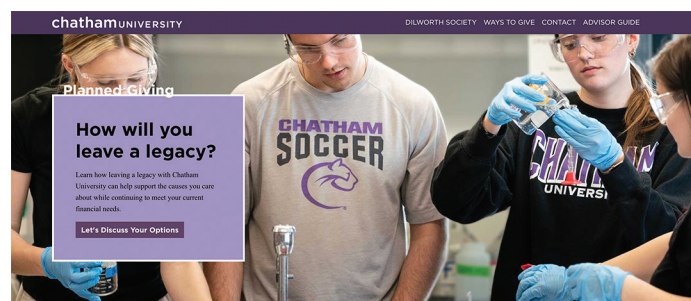
Katheryn passed away in October, but her legacy at Chatham will continue to enrich the University community for generations to come.

A year ago, her husband, Henry Salver, made an extraordinary \$4 million gift to Chatham in her honor, establishing the Katheryn Salver Endowed Chair in English within the College of Arts & Sciences. Created in partnership with University Advancement, this endowed chair serves as a beacon of academic excellence, supporting faculty research, innovative teaching, student engagement, and departmental growth in perpetuity.

Through this gift, the Salvors have strengthened Chatham's longstanding commitment to the humanities and the study of literature as a force for connection and reflection. Their generosity ensures that future generations of students will continue to benefit from inspired teaching and creative exploration in English and the liberal arts.

Planned gifts, both large and small, create lasting change. They allow donors to reflect their passions, preserve their values, and empower Chatham's mission far into the future.

To learn more about how you can make a legacy gift or to join those who have chosen to include Chatham in their estate plans, please visit plannedgiving.chatham.edu or contact the Office of University Advancement at giving@chatham.edu or 412-365-1581.



A legacy gift enables you to support Chatham University, secure the financial needs of your loved ones, and provides you with tax benefits. Legacy gifts of all sizes combine to help us meet our current goals and reach further into the future.

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[Get in touch with us](#)



Visit our Planned Giving website at plannedgiving.chatham.edu or scan this QR code.



2024-25

Athletic Triumphs



Basketball

In March, the men's basketball team won the 2024-25 Presidents' Athletic Conference Championships with a score of 81-69 against the Washington & Jefferson Presidents. The team has won the PAC championship three times now.

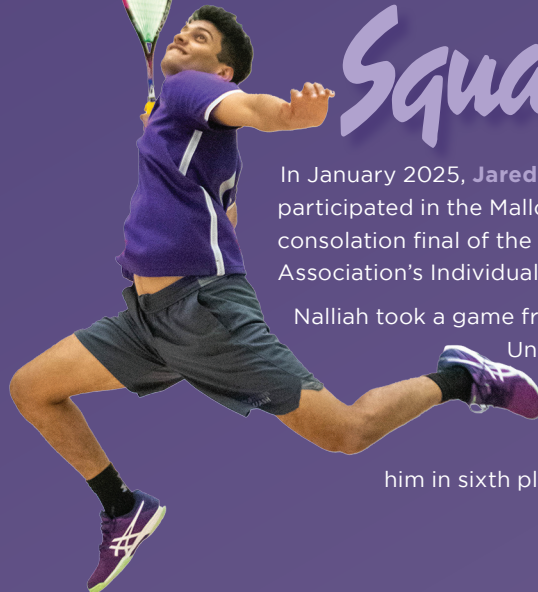


Soccer



Betsy Warren, who started as the Cougars' women's soccer head coach in 2012, had her 100th victory with the team in September 2025. Warren, a three-time PAC Women's Soccer Coach of the year, is the longest serving and winningest coach in the program's history.

Squash



In January 2025, **Jared Nalliah '25** participated in the Malloy North division consolation final of the College Squash Association's Individual Championships.

Nalliah took a game from Columbia University's Varun Fuloria, but he ultimately lost the match 3-1, landing him in sixth place in his division.

Visit GoChathamCougars.com to follow all of our athletic teams.

Diving

Ali Cowan '25 represented the Chatham diving team at the NCAA Regionals from February 28 to March 1, 2025, landing in 22nd place. Cowan was a 2024-25 President's Athletic Conference champion in the 3m dive and was named the Women's Diver of the Year.



Hockey

In March, the men's ice hockey team competed in the United Collegiate Hockey Conference semifinals against the Utica Pioneers, who ultimately defeated the Cougars.

Four players— **Zack Conner '25**, **Nick Cyprian '26**, **Geno Pichora '28**, and **Tyler Samodral '28**—were honored by the conference, with Cyprian named UCHC Player of the Year and an ACHA All-American.

Conner was signed in March by the Huntsville Havoc, an SPHL team in Alabama.

Evan Mitchell '25 was signed in March by the Port Huron Prowlers, an FHL team in Michigan.



Track & Field

Aurielle Brunner '25 in May 2025 earned a spot in the top five at the NCAA Outdoor Championships in Geneva, OH. She ended the championship—and her Chatham career—with her 10th NCAA All-American finish. She was also named the PAC's Overall MVP and Field MVP.

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY PURPLE & GRAY CLUB



This year, Chatham introduced a new recognition society, the Purple & Gray Club, which honors the generous alumni, parents, and friends who have given a total of \$250 or more in a fiscal year to support student-athletes.

At every level of annual support, Purple & Gray club members make a positive impact on the experience of current and future student-athletes by making it possible for them to become champions in the classroom, in the community, and in competition.

Purple & Gray Club Giving Levels

- Bronze** An annual gift of \$250
- Silver** An annual gift of \$500
- Gold** An annual gift of \$1,000
- Platinum** An annual gift of \$2,500
- Cougar Circle** An annual gift of \$5,000

Young Alumni Society

for recent graduates An annual gift of \$100

Purple & Gray Club members receive access to exclusive Cougars merchandise, special events, discounts, and more.

Leave a lasting legacy with a naming opportunity that celebrates your commitment to Chatham Athletics. From scholarships to facilities, your name can inspire generations of Cougars to come.

To join the Purple & Gray Club, please contact Doug Caputo at d.caputo@chatham.edu or 412-365-1262.



Purple & Gray Club members' support of Cougar athletics helps student-athletes succeed in competition and in the classroom

Homecoming Weekend 2025 Recap

Homecoming Weekend 2025 was action-packed, with alumni, students and their families and friends, and faculty and staff all enjoying both old and new traditions. Classes ending in 5 and 0 were celebrated.

Save the date for Homecoming 2026, September 25-26!





1. Members of the Class of 1975 celebrate their 50th Reunion in Mellon Center
2. Prajna Parasher, Ph.D., associate dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, showcased faculty art during the Susan Bergman Gurrentz '56 Gallery reception
3. Alumni shared their favorite memories with current students at the tailgate party before the women's volleyball game

4. Christopher Barzak, MFACW '10, visiting alumni author and Young Alumni Award recipient, discussed his book *One for Sorrow* during an Alumni Book Talk Session moderated by Dr. Heather McNaugher '95

5. Family and their student celebrating tailgate festivities

6. Marita Garrett, MAP '15 and Rebekah Heilman '00 are all smiles at the Friday evening Alumni Awards Dinner

7. Members from the Class of 1990 enjoying each others company at the Bloody Mary and Mimosa Alumni Awards Brunch

8. Sofia Pinto '26, Alexandra Marks '26, and Sarah Holt '27 share their internship stories during the Experiential Learning Panel

9. Jenalee Schenk '10, MAFS '12, Alice Adams '82, and Terri Thomasma '82 share their henna tattoos from the Friday evening event hosted by Chatham Activities Board

10. Jina O'Neill '05 and Aviance Taylor '05 enjoy the Young Alumni Reception

11. Alumni Award Recipients, Pam Bradley '70, Susan Salyards '85, Maryanne Yingst '80, Suzy Colt '80, Rebekah Heilman '00, Marita Garrett '15, Jessie Buckner '10, Christopher Barzak, MFACW '10, and Jina O'Neill '05 pose for a photo at the Bloody Mary and Mimosa Awards Brunch





12

- 12. Dr. Lisa Lambert greets Linda King '75 and Barb Cross '75 at the 50th and 55th Reunion luncheon
- 13. Family and friends celebrating tailgate festivities
- 14. Guests enjoy the Purple & Gray Club reception while cheering on the women's volleyball team
- 15. Students enjoyed late night line dancing at the Friday night SEAL and CAB Homecoming Fun event



13

- 16. Joan Bretz '65 poses with faculty member Carrie Helms at Milestones Reception honoring the College of Health Science, the Women's Institute, and the Center for Women's Entrepreneurship
- 17. Lynne Jacobson '65 poses with Carson Cougar



15



14



16



17

CHATHAM NOTES

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68 Kathleen Kratt Neele has written a memoir of her years as a student of Chatham chemistry professor W. Dale Richey and his influence on her life. Kathleen lives in Lawrence, Kansas, with her husband of 57 years. Her two children and four grandchildren live nearby.

.....

74 On Saturday, December 13, 2025, the Alumni Association and the University re-energized a beloved holiday tradition—the Alumni Christmas luncheon. This year’s theme was “Jingle and Mingle!” Alumni, staff and friends enjoyed food, drinks—including a signature holiday cocktail—and chances to win big by bidding on over a dozen donated baskets of fabulous services, trips and gifts! We raised over \$2,400, all of which will go to the Student Emergency Fund.



Attendees included Marilyn Russell Miller and her sister Cathy Russell (top photo) and Ann Ruddy Manoli, Margy Whitmer, and Carole Wood '71 (bottom photo)



.....

76 Carol Ratliff Drury is enjoying volunteering in the gift shop at Burnham Block in Milwaukee WI. It is a block of dwellings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Ordering items for the shop is fun! A new addition to the family is Bosco, a kitten rescued at four weeks old.

Rachel Richman has been appointed by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Alameda Health System. AHS is an integrated public health care system with four hospitals, wellness centers, rehabilitation programs and skilled nursing facilities centered in Oakland, California.



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82 Terri Thomasma reported that several Chatham University alums set sail this past October on the inaugural trip for the Alumni Association’s Voyagers Club. The 12 day cruise on Oceania’s Vista took them to ports in Italy, Greece and Turkey. They had a wonderful time!



83 Laurie Gruhn: I retired as Head of School this summer after 41 years on education. My daughter, Susanna, is taking a gap year between Freshman and Sophomore year of college and is starting training as an EMT. We just had a wonderful week long cruise to Bermuda!

07 In 2024, Julie Tulba reached her goal of visiting 40 countries before she turned 40 when she traveled to Jordan for her 39th birthday. From Roman ruins in the capital city of Amman, to the Mars-like landscape of Wadi Rum, to floating in the Dead Sea, and, of course, being awestruck in Petra, one of the “new” Wonders of the World, her visit to the tiny Middle Eastern nation was one she’ll never forget. Last fall she also published her fourth book, a historical fiction novel entitled *Last Call, Cairo*. As one reviewer wrote, it’s a “love letter to Egypt and its history.” More information on *Last Call, Cairo* and Julie’s other books can be found at her website, julietulbaauthor.com



12 Lincoln University Assistant Professor of Political Science Dr. Elizabeth Dorssom has been elected vice chair of the American Political Science Association’s (APSA) Civic Engagement Section, serving through 2027. Founded in 2020, the section promotes civic engagement in teaching, research, and practice. As vice chair, Dr. Dorssom will help guide its strategic direction and support national initiatives advancing democratic participation. A 2025 ALL IN Standout Faculty Award recipient recognizing her commitment to leadership in advancing nonpartisan civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation among college students for the 2024 election, her leadership and research on civic learning have been featured in *Forbes* and top academic journals.

19 Kristina Block: So much has happened over the last six years! I graduated with my MS in Criminology from the University of Pennsylvania in 2020, then graduated with my Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from Sam Houston State University in 2024. I got married in the summer of 2023 to my wonderful husband, Jacob, whom I met at Penn (he was a Ph.D. student at the time). I’m now an Assistant Professor of Law and Justice Studies at Rowan University in New Jersey, and Jacob and I are expecting our first child in May!

To Submit

To submit a Class Note or photo for publication in the *Chatham Recorder*, visit chatham.edu/classnotes.

For more information, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at alumni@chatham.edu or 412-365-2731. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

20 Jessica Miles: I just moved from Virginia to Anchorage Alaska for my dream job! I’ve loved the arctic and polar bears all my life and it’s been a dream of mine to live in Alaska. While I was at Chatham my graduate thesis was about my experience in the arctic. I also happen to be very passionate about Indigenous issues. I am now a program manager for an organization that works with Indigenous communities on their wildfire preparedness. I’ve already visited a nearby glacier and I can’t wait to go on more adventures!



In memoriam

ALUMNI

Elizabeth McBride '45

Mary Ann Brown '48

Eleanor Wenning Atwell '49

Mary B. Schwartz '50

Miranda Blair '51

Nancy Waddell Shuck '51

Helen Woods Lucas '51

Betty Hirsch '52

Nancy Courtney '53

Nancy Lutz '53

Rose Spoa '54

Mary Ellen Ploeger '55

Carolyn Joiner '56

Barbara Goodstein Selbst '58

Barbara Levendorf '59

Patricia E. Meyer '60

Jinny Long Springen '60

Margaret Ballay '61

Marjorie Honig '61

Martha Hostetter '61

Arlene L. Koegler '62

Rhoda Kramer Yanus '62

Mary MacConnell Ferry '64

Sheila Harris '65

Patricia McNeill '65

Beverly Robinson '65

Anne Smith '65

Sage Mumma '66

Elizabeth Shelor '66

Donna Kwall Smith '66

Leslie Miller '68

Constance Kobalka '70

Cynthia Folsom '75

Lucy Millman '75

Lynn Frederick '90

Ellen Chisdes Neuberg '91

Gerene Konow Starratt '92

Bryan Vogel MSCP '10, PsyD '15

Elizabeth Albright '11

Linda Gates '15

FACULTY, STAFF & FRIENDS

Linda G. Allison, former faculty member & director of physician assistant studies program

Willeen Benedum, former Board of Trustee member

Mary Kay Poppenberg, former vice president of university advancement

Stanley G. Russell, Jr., former Board of Trustee member

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