



Fireside

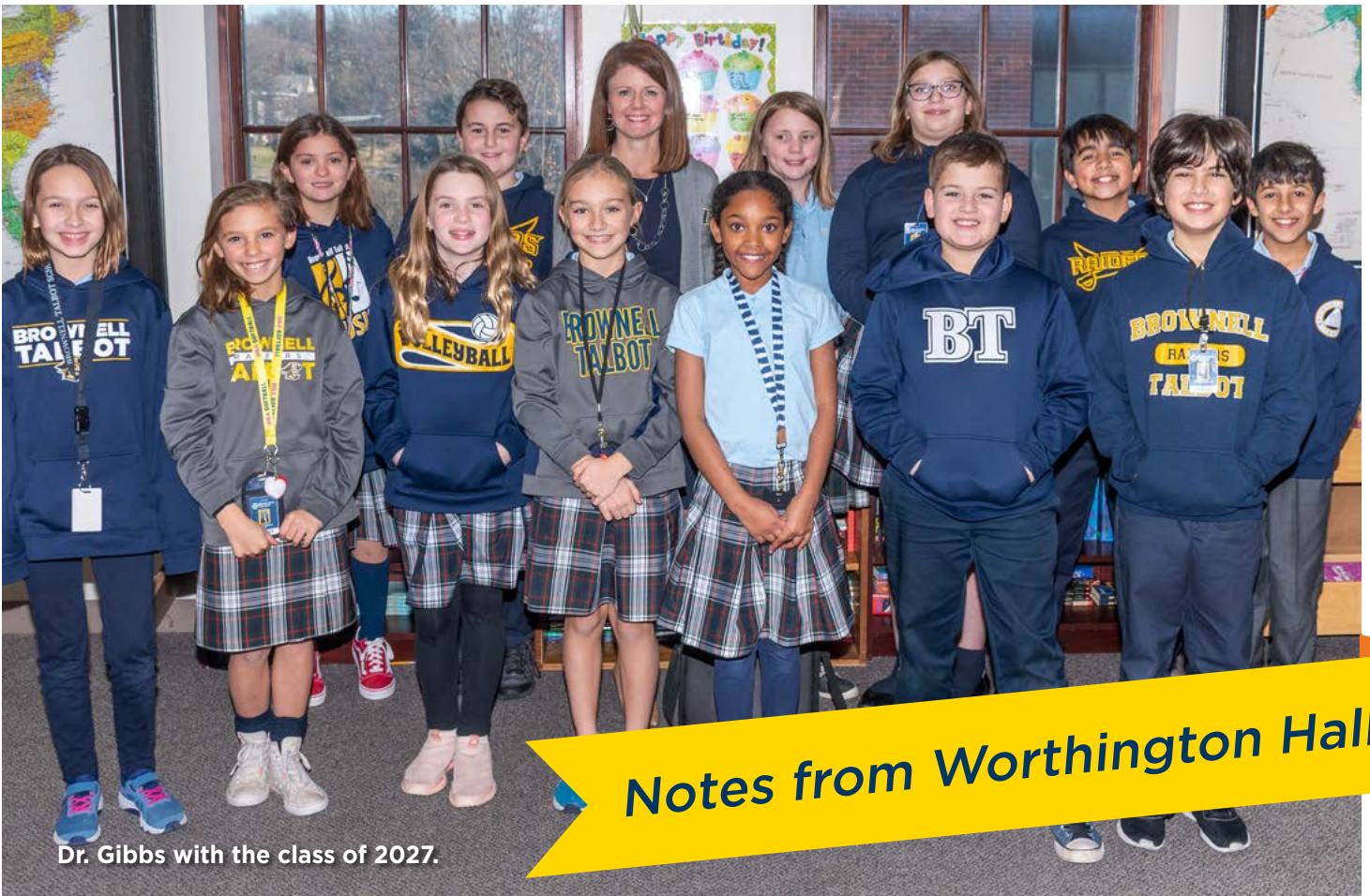
A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF BROWNELL TALBOT



**2019-2023
Strategic Plan**
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Dr. Gibbs with the class of 2027.

Over the past two years, the school's strategic planning process created many opportunities to engage in conversations with different Brownell Talbot community members as part of an excavation of the unique characteristics of a BT graduate. Alumni shared with me the ways in which BT supported their personal and professional successes, which in turn helped the strategic planning committee hone in on what defines the BT educational experience and how that marries with the needs and demands of colleges and employers.

What we learned is that to ensure the continued success of our graduates, we need to be more intentional about our focus on global education. One of the first tasks of the strategic plan is to define global education at BT and introduce a framework to support it. While we are still working toward this, we recognize our students need to:

- Understand the importance of diversity, inclusion, and tolerance.
- Think about their values and what's important to them.

- Take learning into the real world.
- Get involved in their local, national, and global communities.
- Feel empowered to positively impact and influence the world around them.

Through our strategic plan, we intend to hold firmly to the traditions and values that have always defined a Brownell Talbot education - a rigorous academic environment with high-quality faculty and staff supporting our students and families - while evolving to meet the changing needs and expectations of the world. I encourage you to explore the three pillars of our plan on pages 5-6 and then visit brownell.edu/the-plan to learn more and stay involved in its implementation.

Kristi N. Gibbs

Kristi N. Gibbs, Ed.D.
Head of School

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Fireside is published for alumni, parents, and friends of Brownell Talbot College Preparatory School. Send story ideas and comments to Brownell Talbot, attn: Renae Mackender, 400 N. Happy Hollow Blvd., Omaha, NE 68132; email renae.mackender@brownell.edu.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING — ON CAMPUS? —



1. Voted Omaha's Best

For the third year in a row, Brownell Talbot's Lower School has been named Best of Omaha's best private elementary school. The school celebrated its 3-peat win with basketball, cupcakes, and the ultimate hype video. Watch now at brownell.edu/3-peat.

2. New Year, New Shoes

At the start of the 2019-2020 school year, Dr. Gibbs announced a change to the dress code that allows tennis shoes to be worn with the daily uniform. Students have seized this change as an opportunity to infuse a little bit of their personal style into their uniform.

3. BT Storytime en Français and Español!

BT has expanded its storytime offerings to include events hosted in French and Spanish. The monthly bilingual storytimes are led by BT's French and Spanish teachers and AP students. These events are free, open to the public, and perfect for families of children ages 1-4.

4. Students, Scholars Present on the Sixth Extinction

On August 29, Upper School students participated in a forum about Elizabeth Kolbert's *The Sixth Extinction*, this year's summer reading, collaboratively chosen by BT's science and English departments. The forum included presentations from BT English teacher Dr. Matthew Low, Creighton University's Dr. Theodore Burk, University of Nebraska Omaha's professor John Price, BT chemistry teacher Mrs. Meg Harms, Cami Kotouc, '22, and Charlotte Hussain, '20 (clockwise from top left).

5. Seniors Prep for College Interviews

In October, current parent and Board of Trustees member Niki Theophilus, Caravaggio Caniglia, '15, and Creighton University's Assistant Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Director of Admissions and Scholarships Sarah Richardson, helped Director of College Counseling and Guidance Stacey Evert conduct mock interviews for the class of 2020.



6. Going for Gold Swim Lessons

Through the Fitter and Faster Swim Camp series, BT swimmers have had multiple opportunities to learn from Olympic gold medalists, including Roland Schoeman (*pictured*).

7. Over in BT's Garden

This year's fall Early Years Nature Night, "Over in the Garden," celebrated homegrown gardens with hayrack rides, digging in BT's gardens, and animal encounters with the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District.

8. BT Volleyball Wins Frontier Conference

With its win in late October, BT's varsity volleyball team earned back-to-back Frontier Conference Championships. Before the team's 2018 win, Brownell Talbot had not won its conference since 2013. Go, Raiders!

9. BT Puts Technology Away

This school year, BT is conducting four tech-free days. To the extent possible, faculty, staff, and students are putting away electronic devices to promote positive social interactions and quality engagement with others. In Upper School, students can earn House points for voluntarily handing over their phones for the day. Since cameras do not qualify as tech-free, art teacher Kat Anderson sketched a few special moments from September 27, BT's first tech-free day.

10. BT Theatre Takes to the Skies

Student thespians held nothing back in this year's fall musical, *Catch Me If You Can*. The comedy was sharp and the performances were a delightful mix of edgy and endearing.

Educating Leaders for Their World

BY KRISTI N. GIBBS ED.D., HEAD OF SCHOOL

For over 155 years, Brownell Talbot College Preparatory School has stood for educational excellence and has offered students a transformative experience. We are proud of our history — and equally excited about our future. Since 2017, faculty, staff, parents, trustees, and alumni have been working together to realize a path forward for the school through the creation of a new strategic plan — a path that focuses on building on BT's strengths and meeting the challenges of the changing landscape of education.

Through the 2019-2023 strategic plan, we intend to hold firmly to the traditions and values that have always defined a Brownell Talbot education — a rigorous academic environment with high-quality faculty and staff supporting our students and families — while evolving to meet the changing needs and expectations of learners, employers, and society.

The Process

In order to build a base of sound information to guide the planning process, the school completed a comprehensive research effort that, in addition to stakeholder surveys, included analysis of the competitive and educational landscape, market segmentation, and demographic trends. The strategic planning steering committee worked collaboratively through a series of exercises designed to establish priorities, specific initiatives, and action plans. This process allowed us to reevaluate the school's mission, the opportunities in the Omaha market, and the school's capabilities.

BT's Path Forward

We are a college preparatory school. We are focused on developing not just the most curious learners, but human beings who are well rounded and care for others. We excel at providing individualized attention, realizing innovative ideas, and creating experiences that help students reach new levels of success.

OUR NEW MISSION

**Brownell Talbot
College Preparatory School:**

EVERY STUDENT.

EVERY MIND.

EVERY HEART.

KNOWN.

INSPIRED.

CHALLENGED.

OUR NEW VISION

**A compassionate community
of diverse learners empowered
and determined to reach their
unique potential and positively
impact the world.**

There are three major initiatives that will guide our decisionmaking and sharpen our focus as we work to live our mission and achieve our vision. In the next five to 10 years we will:



Reimagine the Brownell Talbot experience by maintaining our rigorous academic standards while developing internationally minded students who live, work, and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

As students go beyond our campus, to college and on to careers, they will be prepared to effectively collaborate with people from different national, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds in Omaha or abroad. Equipping students with a global mindset and intercultural competency will provide a distinct and enduring advantage in college and within the competitive global economic environment.



Strengthen our community by creating meaningful connections with past, current, and future BT families as well as ensuring BT is an employer of choice in Omaha.

We will review our tuition structure and support for financial aid and scholarships to ensure sustainability for our families. We will take a close look at our enrollment goals and how we can make positive change to the long-term revenue of the school. We will also establish and implement a marketing plan that supports the strategic plan so that we are recognized as a leader in global education.



Create a culture of philanthropy and sustainability by identifying a business model that positions BT for another 150 years of excellence, diversifying our revenue streams, and collaborating with mission-aligned organizations in Omaha and the broader community.

Increasing BT's engagement with businesses, community organizations, educational providers, and government entities will lead to new academic programs, ventures, and experiences for BT students. These mutually beneficial partnerships will enable faculty, students, and community partners to work together to solve complex issues locally and across the globe.

Looking to the future, we have the great privilege to inspire and challenge the next generation of leaders and, through them, transform the world. We invite you to join us on this ambitious journey!

RAIDERS FOR LIFE

When Carson Propst, '20, graduates this upcoming May, it will mark an end of an era at BT. His family, composed of mom Lisa, dad Rich, and sisters Tanzi, '12, and Tenley, '15, is the last BT family to have come to the school in the 90s.

The Propst family has been part of the BT community since 1997 when their eldest daughter, Tanzi, started pre-K 3 (BT's three-days-a-week preschool program at the time). The idea that they've had a child enrolled at BT for 23 years is amusing to Lisa.

"It wasn't intentional. We lived in Plattsmouth and the town didn't have a preschool program," Lisa said. "My grandmother lived in the Dundee area and had sent my uncle to BT for preschool, so I thought I'd check it out. We had planned on moving Tanzi back to a Plattsmouth school for kindergarten."

But when the Propsts compared schools, they realized Tanzi had already completed the lessons in preschool that the Plattsmouth school was going to teach in kindergarten.

"She progressed so well at BT that anything else felt like a step backward," continued Rich.



The family purchased a van, adorning it with the license plate "2nd Home" in a playful tribute to the amount of time spent in the vehicle making the 40-minute drive (sometimes multiple times a day) between Brownell Talbot and their family farm in Plattsmouth.

After decades of making the drive, Lisa and Rich are adamant that it was worth it.

"I've seen the benefits and results firsthand," said Rich. "Kids leave BT head and shoulders above others. They are ready for college. They are mature, articulate, successful, and able to lead."

Another reason the Propsts love BT:

"At BT, you are known and you are genuinely part of the community," Lisa said.

Lisa gave many examples of this, but one that sticks out relates to Tanzi's first Thanksgiving in a new city. She had just started a new job in Park City, Utah, and she wasn't able to come home for the holiday. When Lisa shared this with fellow BT parent Michelle Randolph (mom to Noah, '20, and Josh, '22), Michelle immediately invited Tanzi to their Thanksgiving in Park City. Tanzi was hesitant at first to join the family for the holiday, as she had never met them before. But ultimately she decided to accept Michelle's offer and ended up spending the entire Thanksgiving weekend with the Randolphs.

"That sense of community doesn't go away," said Lisa. "We'll go years without seeing a family and when we do run into them, it's like nothing has changed."

It's a comforting sentiment given next school year will be the first in a long time without the Propst family on campus. We are thankful they have embraced being Raiders for life!





Sandy Melilli and two of her Early Years students are gathered around a sensory table removing corn kernels from cobs.

“Why is the cob that color?” asked Hazel, age 4.

“How come you can’t eat this corn?” asked Connor, 6.

Early Years director and teacher Sandy Melilli has answered a lot of “whys” and “hows” in her 20-year career at BT, inspiring curiosity and a love of learning in so many students. So we thought we’d give her the opportunity to offer a few more answers as we celebrate her contributions to Brownell Talbot and wish her luck on her retirement at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

Why does early childhood education matter to you?

Children at this age are so excited about the world. They want to know about the world they live in, themselves, their friends, and how things work. Even the most basic experiments, like mixing salt in water excites them. They ask how did the salt disappear, why did it disappear. As an educator, I find their enthusiasm to be really exciting and fun.

You were the impetus for bringing the Project Approach teaching method to BT. Why are you such an avid supporter of it?

The deepest, most enduring learning occurs with an emotional connection - whether it be an emotional connection to a topic or with a teacher. The early years are primarily about learning to understand emotions and how to positively connect with others. Growth as a person and true learning cannot occur without those understandings. This is why the Project Approach makes so much sense to me - a good project begins with that emotional connection. My job is to then guide students and teach them the tools and resources to explore the topic fully.

I do think the most important thing to remember is that even though pedagogy and philosophy change, the children don’t. It’s imperative that what you are teaching in the classroom speaks directly to the needs of this age group, and you get to know the students really well so that you are truly meeting each child’s needs.

What are your favorite moments in the classroom?

Teachers often talk about those “aha!” moments. I love the moments after the “aha” when the questions start coming. That’s when you know the students are engaged and ready to explore with you.

How would you describe BT?

The word that always comes to my mind is family. Our goals and hopes for our students are aligned. And we are collectively committed to constantly looking, not for “the next best thing,” but for what will help our students grow both as learners and as human beings. I also love that I can count on everybody - from my assistant to my co-teacher to the people in the front office to the maintenance staff.

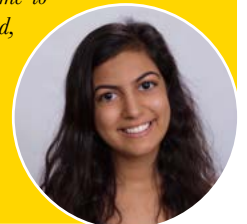
What’s next for you and your husband, Ken?

We are moving to Brookings, Oregon, which is 10 miles north of the California state line and puts us in close proximity to beaches, the Redwood National Forest, and mountains. For us, it’s a dream come true. We’re looking forward to spending a lot of time outdoors, hiking, and photographing nature.



“I remember crying my eyes out on the first day of junior kindergarten because I refused to go to school. The moment I stepped into her classroom though, Mrs. Melilli welcomed me with a smile and open arms. For the rest of the school year, I looked forward to each and every day in her class. From teaching me to spread kindness to helping me learn how to read, she influenced me to grow into the person I am today. I’m so thankful for her. Thank you for everything, Mrs. Melilli.”

- Aruna Bashir, '20



TAKING A 7,000-MILE



Imagine you are a teenager, maybe as young as 14. Education is very important to your family, and you and your parents feel the best opportunity for you is at a school 7,000 miles away. Attending the school means you will spend birthdays, holidays, and important life milestones in someone else's home, physically separated from your family and the friends you've known your entire life. At a minimum, eight hours of every day will include speaking and learning in a different language. You'll live this way for a minimum of three years, probably longer, if you obtain your ultimate goal of attending university in that same country.

It's a daunting thought to spend crucial years in your young life like this. But every one of BT's international students has risen to this challenge. This year there are 12 students from China and Singapore in BT's International Students Program. Occasionally called a flyover state, one of the first questions asked of BT's international students is how did they find Brownell Talbot in Omaha, Nebraska. English Language Learner teacher Amber Straka says the success and growth BT's program has experienced has been mostly from word of mouth. Since 2012, the average number of students has doubled without any marketing dollars being put toward the program.

Most of the international students live with host families they had never met before traveling to Omaha. A few live with family friends or friends of friends. For those few, the reason they ended up in Omaha is the ease and peace of mind that living with someone their parents know provides. But for the others, it is BT's unique mix of academic rigor, small class size, and independent status that draws them to Omaha.



Ferris Li, '20, (left) plays tenor sax in the band.

"I looked at schools in Omaha, Cincinnati, and Chicago. I chose BT because it was the only independent school," said Ferris Li, '20. "I also liked that BT had fewer international students. I thought it'd be a more authentic American experience."

"It is one feature of BT's program that is difficult to replicate at larger schools. Brownell Talbot's size requires the students to integrate into the community and improve their English skills because if they don't, they won't thrive here," Straka said. "At a larger school, the ELL teacher would teach every subject to a class of international students. At BT, they sit in the same classes with the same teachers as everyone else."

"Attending BT has given me a realistic perspective of America. It has cleared up a lot of stereotypes I believed before coming here," Shin Xin, '20, said.

Often times international students come from countries whose culture does not emphasize diverse experiences in athletics, arts, and activities in addition to academics. The opportunity to participate in extracurriculars is a treasured feature of BT's International Students Program.

LEAD

“I’ve been able to experience more than I would have at home or at another school. I am on the robotics team and play tenor sax in the band,” Li said. “I played basketball for a year and found out it wasn’t for me.”

Not only do they get to experience American extracurriculars, they are excelling in them. At the University of Nebraska Omaha’s 2019 Math Day, which equates to the state tournament for high school competition math in Nebraska, Lang Guan, ’22, took second place in the competition against 1,247 other students. Guan’s win made him the highest ranking BT student to ever compete in the competition. And Guan says he could have placed first if his English was just a bit stronger. Thankfully, he’ll have two more years to try to take the top place if he stays at BT.

An unexpected benefit of attending BT is the amount of freedom each student has in determining their own academic path.

“I was surprised by this,” Xin said. “BT gives students a lot of opportunities to make their own decisions and encourages you to become more independent.”

Xin is fairly certain she wants to study early education in college. Through cross-cultural activities in which Upper School Houses partner with a Lower School classroom, Xin has seen first hand the impact teachers can have on young children. It’s just one of many experiences unique to BT that helps international students challenge themselves to discover their strengths and prepare for the future.

BT Needs Host Families!

Expand your world view and create lasting relationships while living with a dedicated and motivated student. Every host family is different but each just needs a spare room and a welcoming spirit. Learn more about hosting a student at brownell.edu/hostfamily.



Alice Chan, '22, is part of the family; she lives with Assistant Head of School Jason Smith, Jeanne Smith, Kailer Smith, '27, and Gracie Smith, '26.



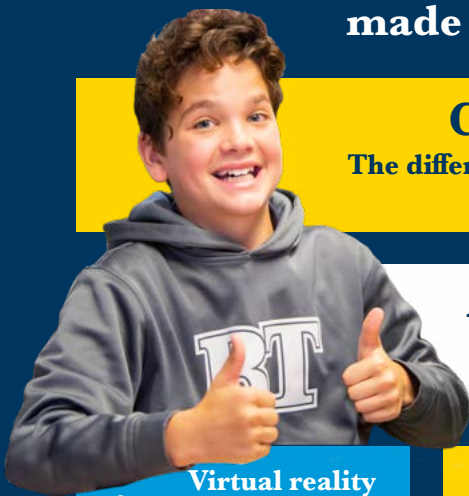
Host parent Lenli Corbett, Emily Wei, '19, Amber Straka, Iris Liang, '19, Roxy Hou, '19, and host parent Terry Nelson.

ALL IN FOR BT

WHAT DOES YOUR GIFT TO THE BT FUND SUPPORT?



Last year, gifts to The BT Fund made a huge impact!



Covered "The Gap"

The difference in tuition and the actual cost to educate a student is \$3,500.

Academic Programming

BT students scored 8 points above the state average on the ACT.

15

Virtual reality field trips around the world.

15

Concerts, musicals, and plays performed on the stage in Swanson Auditorium.

100

Percent of students who go to college.

11

Varsity team sports

17

Clubs and teams



Professional Development

512 hours of conferences, continuing education, and external training for faculty and staff.

Why I Give to The BT Fund



"I give to The BT Fund to give back to the teachers and staff that gave so much to me. BT has been a part of my life for 20+ years and although I am not around as much nowadays, whenever I come back to campus, see fellow alumni, or run into teachers from the past, we pick right back up where we left off.

This is the same principle that exists with my closest friends and family, and I consider my BT family a part of that circle."

-JD Haskell, '08

Gifts to The BT Fund support academics, athletics, enrichment programs, the arts, technology, faculty and staff professional development, and more.

Make your 100% tax-deductible gift at brownell.edu/BTfund today!

BT FUND

SUPPORTING OUR MISSION

New Scholarships Spotlight Student Achievement

2019-2020 leadership scholarship recipients Claire Cenovic, '23, Katherine Thaden, '23, Jack Cohen, '23, Elizabeth Goebel, '23, and Paige Birch, '23, with Dianne K. Desler



Upper School. It is a big deal. And that is true whether you are coming to BT as a ninth grader or you are a “lifer” who has been here since preschool. It is a period of change in which students experience more independence, responsibility, and obligation as they take a big step toward becoming adults. It is a period of life that should be acknowledged and celebrated. To that end, last school year Brownell Talbot introduced three new scholarship opportunities for rising ninth graders that put a spotlight on student achievement.



Established in honor of retired headmaster Dianne K. Desler and her 42 years of service as

a teacher and administrator, leadership scholarships are awarded to students registered and attending Brownell Talbot in eighth grade who demonstrate leadership in academics, activities, or character.

Scholarships are given in one of the three award categories and are based on many factors, which may include exceptional (or exceptionally improved) grades and assessments; participation in multiple and diverse activities; notable performance in one or more activities; and exemplary behavior in accordance with BT’s Points of Pride.



Students registered and attending Brownell Talbot in eighth grade are eligible for a one-time longevity scholarship

to be applied to ninth grade tuition. This award is given to students with continuous enrollment at BT with the award amount determined by the grade with which the student enrolled at BT.



Merit scholarships are available for new students entering ninth grade. This one-time scholarship is awarded based on entrance exam

scores. Qualifying applicants receive \$1,000 toward ninth grade tuition.



BT is committed to attracting and retaining high-calibre students who have the drive and desire to study at Brownell Talbot and to helping families find manageable ways to pay for their child’s education. For the 2019-2020 school year, BT awarded approximately \$1.2 million in scholarships and financial aid. To learn more about scholarship offerings and financial aid assistance, visit brownell.edu/myBT.

SUPPORTING OUR MISSION



GALA TAKES US BACK TO THE 90S

On October 4, 1990, a cultural phenomenon was born when living rooms across America were introduced to high school twins from Minnesota on their first day at a new school. *Beverly Hills, 90210* followed the siblings' journey as they navigated the trials and tribulations, joys and heartaches, and challenges and success of adolescence. The series tackled real-world topics and engaged a generation of young audiences for a decade.

"Brownell Talbot, 68132" is a nod to the impact a strong school community can have on our students and families. It also acknowledges the important role BT has in the 68132 zip code. The May 8 event will serve as a fun throwback to the essence of the 1990s.

Under the leadership of co-chairs Deb and Jim Dodd (parents to Jack, '24, and Sammy, '27) and Sue and Rick Thaden (parents to Lauren, '17, Grace, '20, and Katherine, '23), the steering committee is working hard to make gala into a memorable evening.



This year's gala will honor the many contributions of Liz and Larry Mazzotta, parents to Drew, '07, and Rachel, '16. Dating back to the year 2001 when their children enrolled at BT, the Mazzottas have been passionate and consistent supporters

of BT's academic priorities, athletics, and scholarship programs. Throughout their children's school years, Liz and Larry found a variety of ways to get involved and support the school. Liz served on the Brownell Talbot Board of Trustees for nine years and was also the chair of the Development Committee until the end of her term in 2017.

Brownell Talbot, 68132 promises to be a colorful and fun gala with our students, school, and community at the center of the event. Visit brownell.edu/gala for more details and to purchase your tickets for May 8!



GALA LEADERSHIP

HONORARY CHAIRS

Liz and Larry Mazzotta

CO-CHAIRS

Deb and Jim Dodd
Sue and Rick Thaden

STEERING COMMITTEE

ADVERTISING

Telena Brym and Angela Shull

ARRANGEMENTS

Laura Crosby

DECORATIONS

Patra Pakieser and Casie Schlueter

DISPLAY

Natalia Atchley, Juliette Lisco, and Kelly Reimer

EXCEPTIONAL EVENTS

Megan Belcher and Niki Theophilus

FAMILY BASKETS

Danielle Brown and Angeline Larson

LIVE AUCTION

Fatima Basith and Priyanka Borah

MAILINGS & PUBLICITY

Annie Linberg, '04, and Anna Lee Welch

RAFFLE

Jessica and Troy Blaine and Josh Vollertsen

SILENT AUCTION

Chloe Firestone, Valerie Garrigan, Ashley Rodriguez,
and JoAnne Sackett

SPONSORSHIPS & UNDERWRITING

Martha Crane, Amy Farha-Neary, and Brady Gibson

STUDENT PROJECTS

Jenn Sherer

SUPPORTING OUR
MISSION

Planned Giving Spotlight

Bill Beavers

“I made the decision to include Brownell Talbot in my estate plans because I am in love with the school. What the school has done for my children and grandchildren cannot be measured.

I encourage all families to join me by embracing BT and including the school in your planned giving. Your gift can be an incredibly meaningful part of your legacy. I cannot think of anything more impactful than committing yourself to something as good as educating children.”

-Bill Beavers

To learn more about how you can make a planned gift to BT contact Executive Director of Advancement Shannon Gilroy at shannon.gilroy@brownell.edu.



Brett Graves, '17, Shelby Bell, Belinda Beavers, '87, Bill Beavers, Bethany (Beavers) Graves, '86, Todd Graves, Amelia Bell, '25, and Audrey Graves, '18.

**SUPPORTING OUR
MISSION**

LEGACY S



ALUMNI
IN ACTION

STUDENTS



Back Row

Nathan Brown, '23
Chuck, x'95, and Danielle Brown

Dylan Scott, '23
W. David, '81, and Lori Scott

Jack Cohen, '23
Mike, '87, and Karen Cohen

Middle Row

Kaitlyn Scott, '21
W. David, '81, and Lori Scott

Lia Saxena, '33
Shikhar, x'99, and Kristin Saxena

Amelia Bell, '25
Belinda Beavers, '87, and Shelby Bell

Victoria Molai, '33
Annie Linberg, '04, and Nabil Molai

Ben Lanum, '31
Nicole (Rossi), '98, and Wade Lanum

Riley Hawkins, '22
Kim, x'98, and Amy Hawkins

Front Row

Addison Hawkins, '27
Kim, x'98, and Amy Hawkins

Olivia Bradford, '31
Erica (Aaron), '97, and Steffon Bradford

Sonu Saxena, '27
Shikhar, x'99, and Kristin Saxena

Noli Marsh
Krystin (Filipi), x'96, and Joel Marsh

Leah Hamilton
Rebecca Hamilton, x'90

Shaan Saxena, '29
Shikhar, x'99, and Kristin Saxena

Sai Saxena, '31
Shikhar, x'99, and Kristin Saxena

Not Pictured

Corbett Lanum, '26
Nicole (Rossi), '98, and Wade Lanum

Jonathan Massey, '23
Peter, '81, and Michelle Massey

Andrew Massey, '21
Peter, '81, and Michelle Massey

Dexter Clark, '26
David, x'74, and Kate Clark

Miranda Clark, '29
David, x'74, and Kate Clark

ALUMNI ON CAMPUS



1 Broadway star Q Smith, x'95, spent time with the cast of this year's musical, *Catch Me If You Can*. The students performed a section of the show, and Q provided feedback on the performance. The students were then able to participate in a Q&A with her. She talked about the positive impact Brownell Talbot had on her life, even though she was only a student at BT for a few years.

2 Angie Murthy, '15, and Sadie Rich, '15, stopped by campus to visit their former teachers. Pictured with third grade teacher Karin Rohrig.

3 Carly Dana, '09, signed a copy of her recently published book, *Identity*, for the James Middle and Upper School Library. The book is a young adult fantasy fiction. You can read more about it and where to purchase your copy on her website at carlyjdanabooks.com.

4 Coby Mitchell, '89, took a campus tour while in town visiting friends.

HARDWOOD HUSTLE

5 Pictured are the alumni in attendance at the Hardwood Hustle on November 27.



HOMECOMING

6 Bob Cohen, '73, and Stan Bauman, '71.

7 Stacey Evert, Chris Hamel, Megan Fowler, '11, Bryce Fowler, '10, Chelsey (Watson) French, '06, Jorge Sotolongo, '06, Alex Frantz, '06, and Dave Brown.

8 Scott Clinton, '94, and Paul Rohwer, '94.

9 Members of the class of 2019: Charlie Cohen, Jackson Henery, Sy Lim, Michael Bartz, Brandon Harrell, Colesun Wood. Seated: Cara Waggoner and Eliza Rice.

ALUMNI INSIGHT PANEL

10 & 11 Many alumni participated in a panel for current BT junior and senior students and parents. They shared their insight on the high school to college transition. Surya Buddharaju, '19; Jacob Clark, '19; Conner Crosby, '19; Delaney Fitzgerald, '19; Sean Gardner, '17; Shelby Gibbins, '17; Jada Griffin, '19; Jade Griffin, '19; Cheyenne Hanson, '16; Charlotte Hedican, '15; Chris Kjeldgaard, '18; Meera Nair, '19; Jordan Proby, '15; Ashton Reimer, '19; Alice Silberling, '19; Lauren Thaden, '17; and Katie Wiegand, '15.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Denisse Navarro-Perez, Class of 2018

I am currently attending Creighton University and am an education and outreach intern for the Creighton Cupboard, a food pantry that provides meals to Creighton students who are impacted by food insecurity. I live on campus through the Cortina Community, which is a living community that focuses on service in the local Omaha area and social justice issues. Through Cortina, I volunteer weekly at Omaha's community garden, City Sprouts. I am also a mentor for the Peer2Peer Student Support Services program at Creighton, which supports first-generation students. I just got back from the social justice conference Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice in Washington, DC. As part of the conference, we lobbied at Capitol Hill to advocate for migration and climate justice issues.

Which BT teacher had the biggest impact on you?

Mr. Hiebner had the greatest positive impact on me when I was a student at BT. He was incredibly supportive. In addition to teaching me US history, he provided so many life lessons for which I'm very grateful.

How did BT help prepare you for what you are doing now?

BT gave me many opportunities to challenge myself and help me believe in myself. I would probably underestimate what I can accomplish if it hadn't been for the ambitious culture at BT. I was able to explore different activities, from basketball to journalism to choir, and really figure out what it is exactly that I love to do.

What do you do for fun? How do you de-stress?

I love going thrift shopping to find hidden treasures. I de-stress by watching crime documentaries, baking, and doing yoga.

What's on your bucket list?

In no particular order, I'd like to road trip across the United States and visit as many national parks as possible; learn how to surf; experience the Northern Lights; learn how to knit; write a book.

If you had your own talk show, who would your first three guests be?

Amal Clooney, Rihanna, and Seth Meyers.

What advice would you give to current BT students?

Treat every person with kindness. Find people you love and people who love you. Have fun but also recognize that one day high school will end - and it'll come quicker than you think it will.

What is your favorite family tradition?

My favorite family tradition is hitting the piñata on birthdays!

What is something you learned in the last week?

I recently learned about the rise of the diamond industry through the Netflix series *Explained*. Did you know that all the diamonds we see today were created between 1.5 billion and 3.5 billion years ago?

ALUMNI NEWS AND NOTES

IN MEMORIAM

FRIENDS

Mary Ann Formico, former preschool and kindergarten teacher from 1975-1989
D. June 26, 2019

Amy Stevens; Survived by son, Beckett Stevens, '25
D. July 11, 2019

Rae Keogh, former mathematics faculty during the mid-1960s. Among her survivors are daughter Kathy (Keogh) Noel, '70, and son, Tom Keogh, x'73
D. August 9, 2019

Tom Fitzgerald; Survived by daughter Delaney Fitzgerald, '19
D. August 29, 2019

Harold Norman; Survived by daughter, Naomi Norman, '71
D. September 24, 2019

Rudy Smith; Survived by daughter Q. Smith, x'95
D. December 5, 2019

ALUMNI

Suzanne (Thompson) Williams, '48
D. 2018

Chris Swanson, x'84
D. July 26, 2019

Kim Knott, '82
D. August 1, 2019

Matt McConnell, '04
D. August 21, 2019

James (Jamie) P. Clinton, '90
Survived by his mother, Janie (Baker) Clinton, '62; brother, Scott Clinton, '94; cousins Billy Kroupa, '99, and Mike Kroupa, '03; and aunt Kathy (Duncan) Abernathy, '62.
D. December 28, 2019



Marshall (right) pictured with classmate Elizabeth "Libby" (Davis) Lauritzen, x'34, at the 2006 gala.

Brownell Talbot's oldest living alumna, **Sarah "Sally" (Johnston) Marshall**, died peacefully on December 24, 2019, at age 103. Sally graduated from Brownell Hall in 1934.

She is survived by daughter, Mary (Marshall) Kerr, '67, her husband, Tom Kerr, granddaughter, Emily Kerr, '07; son John, x'69, and his wife, Charlotte.

Sally's mother, Isabelle (French) Johnston was a member of the class of 1904 and her sister, Georgette (Johnston) Barlow was a member of the class of 1930.

NEWS

Elizabeth (Davis) Meyers, '52, proudly reports she has three grandsons and one granddaughter. Her grandchildren are: a lawyer, a PhD in geology, and business and accounting majors in college.

Nick Thielen, '01, was named to Omaha Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Omaha Class 42.

Ben Turner, '01, was named manager of marketing and community relations for Union Omaha, Omaha's new United Soccer League (USL) League One team.

Ross Jones, '04, performed the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber flyover at the 2019 College World Series Military Veteran Appreciation Night.

Gabe Schatz, '14, graduated from Belmont University in May 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in Audio Engineering Technology. Gabe recently volunteered with the school's fall musical running audio for the show and creating sound effects.

Chloe Tran, '14, chef and owner of The Bánh Mì Shop was interviewed in a segment about the Inner Rail Food Hall on *CBS Sunday Morning*. Tran opened her second location of the restaurant in fall 2019.

Charlotte Hedican, '15, was cast in the role of Janet in the Omaha Community Playhouse production of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Sadie Rich, '15, joined the Peace Corp and is spending 27 months in northern Thailand as a Youth in Development volunteer. Rich also spent four months living in Yellowstone National Park and working in the Operations Department.

Katie Wiegand, '15, was a member of the chorus in Opera Omaha's production of *Madama Butterfly*. She has also accepted a roster position with the group Résonance in Omaha and performed with them in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, as well as their Christmas Celebration.

Roman Constantino, x'17, played in the orchestra for Brownell Talbot's fall musical.

Shelby Gibbins, '17, was a member of the ensemble in the University of South Dakota production of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Mylie Ketterson, '18, was named an MVP following the Midland Women's Hockey Warriors victory on November 23, 2019.

Anna Kotula, '19, was selected to be a member of the Creighton University College of Arts and Sciences Student Senate. She is also a member of the Blue Crew, an Admissions Department tour guide, a Dean's Fellow, and was accepted to the upcoming MedLife and ILAC trip. Kotula also writes for the school paper, *Creightonian*.

Emma Kuhn, '19, made the University of Oregon premiere all-women a cappella group, Divisi.

Actor **Peter Fonda** died on August 16, 2019. Fonda was accepted in 1957 as a "special placement student" at Brownell Hall, an all girls boarding school at the time, in order to complete his high school course work and earn the required credits necessary to enter a college or university. After leaving his previous school, Westminster School, in Connecticut, Fonda needed to finish his current coursework and take two more required classes.

He completed the classes through a tutorial program including essays and exams with the headmaster and other teachers in 1958. While Fonda did not receive a Brownell Hall diploma, he did have an official transcript and certificate of completion.

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH! The Alumni News and Notes section of *Fireside* celebrates your recent accomplishments. Share information about births, weddings, anniversaries, career moves, retirements, and life-changing experiences! We publish alumni submissions and any other news we receive from friends, employers, and media sources. Update us at brownell.edu/hello.

A Page in Time

70th Anniversary of BT's Chapel

On April 12, 1950, Howard Rasmus Brinker, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska, officially consecrated St. Matthias as an Episcopal chapel.

Students attended chapel services at least once a week while members of the Altar Guild dutifully cared for the chapel as well as assisted with chapel services. Being a member of the Altar Guild was considered a privilege and an honor. An Acolyte Guild composed of young men was added in the 1960s. While the school no longer has either guild, students still attend a weekly chapel service, respectfully wearing their formal school uniform. Two special traditions that continue today are the senior holiday chapel and the Shrove Tuesday pancake breakfast. The breakfast was started by the 1961-1962 Altar Guild as a fundraiser for various items needed for the chapel.

Through the years, the chapel has been the home to many chapel services for students, graduation celebrations, weddings, and other special occasions.

Weddings:

1. Dave and Patty (Abel) Brown. W: December 29, 1973
At the time, Patty taught Lower and Middle School science while Dave taught physical education and was the Middle School basketball, assistant Upper School football, and head Upper School track coach.
2. Jeff Rohrig, activities director, and Karin (Christenson) Rohrig, third grade teacher. W: December 21, 2012
3. Marilyn (Gregory), '80, and Christopher Johnson.
W: October 14, 1989
4. Adrian, '70, and Loretta (Reinig) Fechner, Loretta was a fourth grade teacher at Brownell Talbot from 1977-1982.
W: October 5, 1991.
5. Kayla Keifer Anderson, '06, and Chief Petty Officer Brandon Anderson. W: July 7, 2012
6. Julie (Fowler), '76, and Rob Daugherty, '76. W: April 14, 1979

Other:

7. Members of the 1962 Altar Guild
8. Chapel today



If you are interested in helping the alumni office identify and organize photographs or assist with other archive projects, please contact Renae Mackender at renae.mackender@brownell.edu or 402.556.3772.

THE COUNTDOWN IS ON!

Kindergarten is an important milestone in your child's life. Countdown to Kindergarten gives parents the information and resources needed to better prepare your child!



5

Explore our philosophy and curriculum

4

Experience BT with our Raider for a Day program

3

Enroll by March 20 to ensure your child's spot in our program

2

Build excitement about the first day with BT's recommended reading list

1

Start school!
August 24

Visit brownell.edu/kindergarten and start your child's countdown!



BROWNELL TALBOT

Schedule your Raider for a Day visit by contacting Director of Admissions Kim Schinzel at 402.566.3772 or kim.schinzel@brownell.edu.



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GRADUATION

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Contact Renae Mackender at renae.mackender@brownell.edu today!



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