

A PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE



CHANGE & TRADITION: THE DREAM FOR RENEWING SEYMOUR HALL



When the seminal wooden doors of Seymour Hall were first opened, the year was 1916. The number of students passing through Seymour was far fewer than our current 400. Course offerings were a little different too. There was a dairy lab in what is now the mathematics wing.

Despite these differences, the look and structure of this old and beloved building, for the most part, are the same today. While the building is still very much adored, Seymour Hall is showing its age.

For the first time in 100 years, Seymour Hall needs a significant makeover. Roof repairs, foundation work and window replacements are a few examples of the desired restorations to the building's exterior and infrastructure. Ideally, the renovations would go beyond the floors, walls and ceilings, modernizing and refurbishing the entire building as a proper complement to the school's curriculum, on the cutting edge of a classical education.

"Our goal is a facility that is befitting of the world-class school that is Western Reserve Academy," said Assistant Head of School for Advancement Mark LaFontaine. "Our intent is that Seymour's timeless, simple elegance will always remain. Whether you graduated in 2016, 1968 or 1948, when you are in Seymour, you know you are somewhere special."

THE CAMPAIGN

A \$13 million effort, the Seymour Hall project was created in tandem with *The Campaign for Excellence & Access*, which will support WRA's buildings and grounds, faculty development and financial aid.

The restoration of Brick Row is a pivotal element of *The Campaign for Excellence & Access*; it has been a longtime goal of the school to rejuvenate these iconic brick buildings. In recent years, The Athenaeum underwent restorations, as did the exterior of the Chapel. This summer will see the beginning of the restoration of President's House. Enabled by a generous gift, President's House will become the school's Admission Office, a fitting front door to the school.

"The President's House renovation project is something that I'm really excited about, especially as a former Director of Admission," said Head of School Christopher D. Burner '80. "This will provide a better-equipped location for our visitors. What I really like about it is, while the Admission Office will no longer be in Seymour Hall, it will stay on Brick Row. It will be a beautiful, historic and dignified entrance for our prospective families."

Next, if all funding is secured, it will be Seymour Hall's turn to receive such care and attention.

"Every alumnus has spent a significant part of his or her life in

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Seymour Hall, and the building shows it,” said Co-President of the Board of Trustees Timothy Warner '69. “Our view is that it’s time, after 100 years, to do a major renovation to bring it up to the level of Reserve’s academics and set the stage for another long run as the central academic facility of the school.”

The renovation and modernization of Seymour Hall will be a large stride on the school’s path to sustaining academic excellence. It is a promise to the students of tomorrow that they will walk through aged halls, take a seat inside century-old classrooms and fall in love with an old and adored building, just like so many others did before them.

THE GENEROSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY

In the year ahead, the school will focus on completing fundraising for the project. If the financial goal is achieved, shovels should go into the ground in the summer of 2017.

To date, the school has received \$9.8 million in support of this effort, contributed by 30 donors who were proud to commit to an effort to maintain the integrity and character of the building and to make Seymour Hall a place that will serve current and future students and faculty.

Co-President of the Board of Trustees Andrew Midler '79 was the first to make a lead gift for the project.

“I believe that Seymour is the heart of the school,” said Midler. “In some ways, it is the greatest need for the school, so it seems that the highest priority is the highest unmet need.”

Board of Trustees member Stephan Cole '66 followed Midler in making a generous donation.

“As a 1966 graduate, unaccustomed to creature comforts, air conditioning and windows that don’t leak, this sounded like a great idea,” said Cole. “Just as the Murdough Athletic Center created a great athletic facility and a wonderful environment for students to gather, study and meet, the renovation of Seymour will create a great place in which to learn and a warm and nurturing space for students and faculty to gather.”

Midler and Cole’s contributions, as well as the gifts made by other donors, are a testament to the community’s commitment to the future of the school.

“I speak for both Andrew and myself when I say that we’re very grateful for everything that people have done to contribute to these projects,” said Warner. “While we’re not quite there yet, we’ve made great strides and have received significant contributions from the Reserve community. People understand the importance of Seymour, the importance of the renovation, and there’s been enthusiastic acceptance of this challenge.”

THE PLANS: OLD RESERVE IN A NEW SEYMOUR HALL

Findings about energy inefficiency, insufficient classroom space, and limited faculty and department space surfaced after an assessment of the building in 2015 by Pittsburgh-based architectural firm MacLachlan, Cornelius & Filoni. The study revealed many building issues, which fueled the push from administration and the Board of

Trustees to restore the building to its historic grandeur.

Seymour Hall’s classroom count would grow from 24 to 29, including the addition of a classroom with movable walls for a potential integration of two classes. Faculty would gain four shared offices, as well as a conference room for meetings. An elevator would be added. And — perhaps the most anticipated change of all — for the first time in a century of academics, a proper heating and cooling system would be installed.

“It seems insignificant to some, but to be able to control the heating and cooling in this building is very important to us,” said Associate Head of School Kate Mueller. “It changes the atmosphere of the classroom. If the students and teachers are too hot or too cold, which is what they are now, it impacts learning and teaching.”

There would be technological enhancements throughout the building to allow new audio and visual capabilities, such as video conferencing equipment that would allow a guest speaker to chime in during class. Furnishings also would receive an upgrade to encourage flexible teaching approaches and any configuration a teacher might want for collaboration.

While students will certainly benefit from these planned improvements, the renovation would be an exciting development for Seymour’s faculty.

“The faculty love Seymour,” said Mueller. “They love the way it looks, with its beautiful big windows, and the way it feels, the historic nature of it. It’s one of those buildings that no one wants to leave. We don’t want to change Seymour, we just want to make sure it meets the needs of the kids today.”

Our outstanding faculty and students are committed to doing their best, whether on stage, on a test, in a discussion or in front of the class. It is only fitting that they teach, learn and grow in the best facility the school can provide.

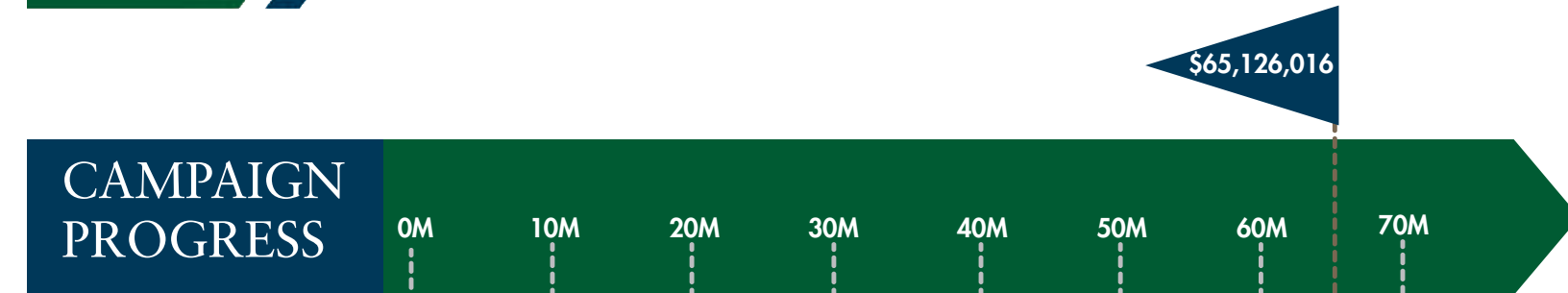
“We want to have the kind of facilities that will allow us to attract the best faculty and students and provide them with an academic experience that is second to none,” said Warner. “I think our dedication to this project indicates that Reserve is a school that cares deeply about its history, about the people who have come before. We want to maintain that connection with the past. Having Brick Row, and Seymour Hall in particular, fully restored and functional is a strong testament to that fact.”

The restoration of Seymour Hall, as well as all facilities on Brick Row, would not be possible without the extraordinary generosity of our school community.

“Good facilities are important to a great education,” said Bruce Featherstone '70, who, like Cole and Midler, made a considerable and impactful gift on behalf of the project. “Students like to learn there, teachers like to teach there, alumni like to feel good about their past there, and applicants want to go there. A renovated Seymour should help Reserve serve and educate its students and compete successfully for years into the future.”

Indeed, a second century. **WRA**

WESTERN RESERVE ACADEMY Excellence & Access



The Campaign for Excellence & Access **BY THE NUMBERS**



4 NEW ENDOWED Faculty Chairs

20 NEW ENDOWED Scholarship Funds

\$5,335,000 for THE NEW CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION & CREATIVITY

\$14,908,008
Gifts from CURRENT PARENTS

\$42,983,134
Gifts from ALUMNI

\$18,231,350 Future ESTATE GIFTS

For more information about *The Campaign for Excellence & Access*, contact Mark LaFontaine at lafontainem@wra.net or 330.650.9704. From sharing naming opportunities in Seymour Hall, to creating endowed funds for financial aid or faculty support, Mark would be happy to talk with you about the many opportunities to support WRA.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE

You never forget your favorite teachers. They make a lasting mark on your life. They change you for the better. They can make all the difference. This is something Western Reserve Academy celebrates with our iconic, prolific and classic faculty who, time and time again, surpass academic and personal expectations.

Recruiting, retaining and championing these faculty members is crucial to the continued excellence of WRA. It is, therefore, an important and fitting pillar of The Campaign for Excellence & Access.

“To me, it is pretty indisputable that the heart of our school is the faculty,” said Kate Mueller, Associate Head of School. “We have to make sure that our faculty is strong. When I say strong, I not only refer to their vast knowledge, but also their strength in the art of teaching. Our faculty work hard to be creative and innovative teachers. They relate to our students and are compassionate.”

To continue our longstanding tradition of teaching excellence, the school offers numerous opportunities for professional development and personal growth.

Todd Gilbert, English faculty, is currently pursuing his Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from New York University. Through this program, Gilbert travels to NYU in Paris (where he is again this summer) and has great opportunities to interact with and be inspired by world-renowned writers, such as Jonathan Safran Foer, author of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*.

“It’s pretty incredible to have these exciting interactions and chances to be that close to people who inspire me,” said Gilbert.



During his travels, Todd Gilbert attended a reading by author Lydia Davis. To her left [our right] is Jonathan Safran Foer.



Sarah Horgan stands in front of the Preah Khan, a temple located northeast of Angkor Thom, Cambodia.

“It makes such a difference, being able to pursue my dreams and passions, knowing that it will make me a better teacher. I will be able to bring this energy, these skills I’ve learned and the passion I’ve developed back to my students. These are opportunities I know I couldn’t have gotten everywhere, and I’m very grateful to WRA and all those who support our continued learning.”

Longtime mathematics faculty member Gerard Manoli agrees.

“I’ve always felt that professional development is exceptional at WRA,” he said, reflecting on getting his master’s degree early in his career and the continuing support of WRA thereafter, including the generous support of his sabbatical in 2010. Manoli now holds the Rollin W. Waite Chair in Mathematics and Science, which was established in 2010 by Mr. & Mrs. Charles J. Snyder Jr. ’61 (Susan) in honor of faculty master Rollin W. Waite.

“Thanks to Chuck and Sue, I have been able to continue my learning and reading without having to worry about the expenses that come with continued education. I really appreciate their generosity,” said Manoli.

Sarah Horgan, history faculty, recently returned from her Hallowell Sabbatical, which she was awarded for the 2015–16

school year. Horgan traveled abroad to many countries to enrich her expertise on Asia and Asian culture and history. When back in the U.S., she volunteered and was an intern at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where she enhanced her knowledge of art education.

“This sabbatical made it possible for me to finally see some of the wonders of the world that I had previously only read about, such as Angkor Wat in Cambodia,” said Horgan. “I believe travel is so, so important to be a good teacher. As Mark Twain said, ‘Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.’”

Now that her sabbatical year is over, Horgan looks forward to returning to Seymour Hall. “After traveling to places that pushed me out of my comfort zone and truly made me feel foreign, I have a better understanding of what it means to be an international student at WRA. I will approach topics related to this experience in my teaching with more empathy and be a much better teacher and advisor.”

Horgan hopes to allow the principles of global citizenship to form the basis of her lesson plans. “I want to foster in my students an awareness of other cultures, encourage them to contribute and work toward community improvements, and create more learning through experiences,” she said.

There is something powerful about learning from a teacher who also loves to learn. We are proud to work among an exceptional faculty who are constantly searching to know more and whose conversations are full of life and curiosity. We wonder what paths they will take to further their knowledge, and we look forward to the wisdom and experience they will bring with them when they return.

JUDE KEARNEY '76



To understand the profound impact of financial aid at Western Reserve Academy, you need only have a conversation with Jude Kearney '76.

A product of the Deep South, Kearney grew up in a town called Gould in Arkansas — population, per the 1960 census, 1,210. Number 17 of 19 children, Kearney lived in a house with no running water, no indoor plumbing and two supportive parents who envisioned bright futures for their children.

“My parents were intellectually very bright,” said Kearney. “But because they, themselves, were not educated, they insisted that above anything else we pursue education. They didn’t have the money to pay for any form of education outside the public school systems, but they instilled the importance of higher education in us.”

After visiting his brother Jerome '74 in Hudson during Jerome’s post-graduate year at WRA, Kearney was determined to apply to the school himself. Successful in his application, he joined WRA’s Class of 1976 as a junior in the fall of 1974. As Kearney describes it, he and his family unfortunately didn’t have “one red cent” to contribute to WRA, so he was grateful that WRA generously provided him a full scholarship, as well as a stipend for living expenses.

“It was crystal clear to me that this school seemed to take such pride in opening its doors to a diverse group of students without regard for their ability to pay what it would normally cost to be there,” he said.

His first year was, as he describes, a year of wonder.

“I was challenged in a way academically that I never had been before,” he said. “I was just used to sailing through school — not because that was a personality trait of mine, but because I was beyond what I was being taught at my grade level in Arkansas. It was an awakening to find out what kids my age were doing in schools like Western Reserve Academy.”

Today, he values his time at WRA in some aspects above his time at the higher-level institutions that followed. His educational experience at Harvard College and Stanford Law School, while fascinating and very rewarding, did not surpass the level of care and consideration that Reserve provided him.

It was at Reserve that Kearney was pushed to do well and, more importantly, to excel. Here, he made lifelong friendships, learned to value the spirit of camaraderie and felt privileged to be part of a melange of students from all parts of the country and abroad. In Ellsworth Hall, he was stopped by former English faculty John Boulden, who said: “If no one ever told you before that you can do anything, I’m telling you that you can do anything”

“It was gratifying, and still is, to know that institutions can have a persona,” said Kearney. “They can have a purpose of creating something important and something special. Reserve had that, and it was very, very important to me.”

Kearney is an attorney at the law firm Greenberg Traurig in Washington, D.C., and serves as Chair of the firm’s Africa practice. He is currently a member of WRA’s Board of Trustees and has been recognized over the years for his tremendous service to the school.

“I’ve never seen Reserve’s level of generosity equaled by any other institution,” he said. “Thus, it was very natural and easy for me, as soon as I was able, to contribute something, however much or little it was, to the school.”

At Western Reserve Academy, we are proud of our commitment to maintaining a student body with dimension and diversity. It is natural that *The Campaign for Excellence & Access* generates support for financial aid to allow future students to have the same opportunities a boy from Arkansas received.

“The difference between my pre-WRA and post-WRA prospects was night and day,” said Kearney. “It changed my life in ways that I couldn’t possibly have expected. I hope that through our efforts, through this particular campaign, but also through our other developmental efforts, we can continue to offer that opportunity to people who can’t afford this great institution on their own.”