

Monday, October 24

Dear Parents,

Friday afternoon, a group of freshmen walked with purpose across the patch of green at the top of the entrance-driveway circle at Duke University. They were headed for the statue of James B. Duke. The Chapel, as massive as a European cathedral, climbed the sky behind Mr. Duke.

The girls took out their iPads, snapped a portrait, and continued on to the Chapel steps.

A group of undergraduate men who were tossing a Frisbee on the same green stopped and looked at the girls. One spoke, with envy and admiration in his voice: “Hey, what’s with all the iPads?”

And so, your daughters are already in the Chatham Hall tradition, striding into the world and making a strong impression.

It’s only been a week since many of you (a recent record of more than 200 family and friends) departed from a wonderful Parents Weekend. However, this week has been loaded, and your daughters have been figuratively and literally off and running—and will remain so until you see them at Thanksgiving.

- The Sunday night of Parents Weekend we held a major tradition, involving lanterns, a walk through the woods after dark, some serious talk about what it means to be a Chatham Hall girl, and singing at a sacred spot on campus—and thus those of you who have daughters who were New Girls now have daughters who are Old Girls! The sophomores threw a party for the “new” Old Girls and much dancing took place,

particularly after it was announced that Monday would be a free day. We all slept in and got caught up on our work!

- Yes, the Freshmen spent Friday at Duke University—a handful of them, Carolina fans, under a bit of a protest. They spent the morning at the Nasher Museum of Art, first on tours of two major exhibitions: *The Deconstructive Impulse: Women Artists Reconfigure the Signs of Power, 1973-1991*, a dynamic survey of leading women artists, and *Becoming: Photographs from the Wedge Collection*, works by artists from around the world exploring how Black identity has been shaped by the photographic portrait within the last century. They then spent time working individually in the galleries on assignments relating these exhibitions to work in their English classes. Following a picnic lunch (a gorgeous day in North Carolina!) they took self-guided tours of the Duke campus. Thus the encounter with the Frisbee-tossing boys ...
- Major athletic wins. The cross country team won the Danville Metro Championship for the third year in a row, finishing five runners in the top fifteen places. Field hockey concluded the regular season with a 4-0 win over North Cross. Both teams are now on to league championship play (or running).
- Sophomores spent Saturday morning taking the PLAN test, a standardized test that will help us evaluate their progress toward the PSAT and the SAT. As freshmen, they took the EXPLORE test. This sequence of freshman and sophomore in-house tests is our way of monitoring that our preparation in class is moving them in the right direction for college-entrance exams.

- Faculty worked feverishly following Parents Weekend to complete grades and comments for their students and advisees. You will receive your daughters' tomorrow. If you have any questions, contact the Academic Office.
- Robin Ghee from UNC-Greensboro's renowned dance program was on campus Friday afternoon for the workshop on West African dance. Dutch was rocking! Our own fall dance concert will be this Wednesday.
- Twenty-three girls (plus two hardy faculty members), flashlights in hand, made their quiet way at midnight on Friday from Pruden to the soccer field, where, with parkas, blankets, and gloves, they lay on the ground for an hour and watched the Orionids, a spectacular meteor shower, which peaked that very night. Ah, stargazers ...
- An energetic busload of scary-ride lovers headed off for a night at Kings Dominion amusement park on Saturday, where they screamed their way and churned their stomachs to, well, their hearts' content, I guess.
- Our riders were involved Saturday and Sunday with our IEA (Interscholastic Equestrian Association) horse show, with teams from other schools competing at our stables. Busy weekend at the barn. Ribbons won!
- Everyone headed off campus or to an advisor's house for dinner and activities on Friday night. Meals were prepared at faculty houses (my group made a fabulous lasagna) or consumed with energy in restaurants, haunted houses were visited, games (cards, Monopoly—I lost very badly at the latter) were played, some shopping took place, and on and on. [Parents, please note that there are two more of these

required Friday evenings this year (January 27 and April 13)—day students and five-day boarders should be prepared to be on campus until late. Be sure not to make family plans for your daughters on these evenings.]

- Father Sam Colley-Toothaker, Rector at Epiphany Episcopal in Danville, joined us for a Communion Service last night. The seniors had a special dinner in their honor at the Rectory before the service. Nice Sunday evening!
- Rehearsals are in full and final swing for *Little Women*, set to open next week, November 3-5. If you are planning to attend, be sure to contact (or have your daughter contact) the director, Shep Morrison. We've added an extra performance on Saturday, November 5. We're expecting tight seating.

So, as we used to say, that was the week that was. Our eyes are now focused on Halloween, which Chatham Hall treats with all due seriousness. I was Gandhi last year. This year, to be determined...

All the best,

Gary