

Leadership Recognition Dinner

Lila Lohr's Remarks

Friday, September 15, 2017

Good evening.

Thank you so much to each and every one of you who made the time to be here with us tonight. September is always an incredibly busy time for everyone - whether your family is adjusting to the first days of school with all its attendant anxiety, excitement and required reorganization, or you are no longer packing children up for school every day and are simply coping with re-entry from the lazier months of summer and vacation.

Having spent my entire professional life in schools not unlike Garrison Forest, I greet every September with wistfulness about the end of my long, lazy days of summer; a bizarre almost primeval need to clean out my closets and put my life in order and a remarkable eagerness to be surrounded by students and teachers.

This particular September on this particularly beautiful campus, I have been reminded of the power of coming home. Although warned that you can't go home again; my experience would suggest that in fact you can go home and love going home as long as you understand that both you and your home will have changed.

I am no doubt a bit wiser, certainly much older, more focused and reflective than I was when I was a student here. Fortunately, like so many of you here tonight, I have had many opportunities to interact with and volunteer for Garrison over the last two decades, so I don't feel I have been completely "gone." I particularly enjoyed serving on the Board of Trustees for many years and, although I wasn't always able to attend this weekend, I have always looked forward to this opportunity to thank and celebrate some of our many outstanding graduates and volunteers.

At lunch today, we honored some truly remarkable, accomplished Garrison Forest graduates whose lives clearly embrace the authenticity, bravery, compassion, curiosity, and spirit we hold as our Core Values. Ally Lou Hacknet Allstatt (Class of 45), Sara Bleich (Class of 96), Marty Moss Coane (Class of 67), Eve Pell (Class of 54) and the 1994 Varsity Field Hockey Team were inducted into our Hall of Excellence and provide extraordinary role models for our girls to emulate.

This evening provides us every year with a great opportunity to thank the many, many people who have given so generously to this school. I love that Pat and Anne Deady make the time to join us year after year to present and thank the H. Brian Deady Volunteer Award recipient- this year's is Steve Saragianis.

This is a time to thank Kit Jackson, Class of 83, and the Chair of our Board of Trustees and all the many other Trustees who continue to donate their time, talent and treasure to make Garrison Forest the best it can be.

Every year this room is full of parents, alumnae and friends who are either part of our Parents Association, or our Search Committee or our Alumnae Board- all of which are important cogs in the wheel that keeps Garrison humming.

Every year this room is full of people who care deeply about this school and our commitment to teaching our girls habits of the mind and the heart that will inform their lives.

Having come to events like this and having served on the Board for a long time, one could argue that I have never really left. I, myself, might have thought that true. It's been said that when you leave a beautiful place, you carry it with you wherever you go. This is indeed a beautiful place and clearly I have taken much of Garrison with me. Over the years I have told anyone who asked or would listen that I found my voice and learned to be a leader at Garrison Forest.

For those reasons alone, I wanted to come back and in some way give back to the school that had given me so much. I think I underestimated the power of place; the strength of the memories; the desire to be sure that every Garrison girls feels like I did: known, heard and appreciated for whom she is.

I felt firsthand as a student that there was no "typical" GFS girl and my early days here this year affirm that there still remain 560 ways to be a Garrison girl. Interestingly, as we were reminded at lunch today, and as I am fortunate enough to be reminded every day, we are all focused on helping each and every Garrison Forest girl "to be and not to seem" and like the graduates we honored at lunch today- we want to help each girl to be:

- Authentic
- Brave
- Compassionate
- Curious
- Spirited

It is also the custom tonight, to present the Distinguished Alumna Award. Before we do that, I'd like to ask my fellow alumnae in the audience tonight who have also received this award, to stand. These are also a list of Garrison Forest graduates who have taken the voice they found here and used it to try to make their place in the world a better place.

And now it gives me great pleasure to introduce Molly Mundy Hathaway '61, a shining star in so many ways and someone who has given so generously for decades to the school she loves .

