



John Gulla  
Head of School

## On a Personal Note: Supporting Blake

On June 30, 2008, I passed my ten-year mark as Head of School at Blake and it continues to be an exciting challenge and a great privilege to lead this wonderful School. Over the past decade, my wife, Andrea, and I have had the opportunity to see our two sons grow up within this community and receive their Blake diplomas. I have had the chance to work with dozens of talented and committed members of the Board of Trustees, hundreds of extraordinary faculty members and coaches, and thousands of students, parents and alumni, all of whom share a connection to, and affection for, this School.

During these past ten years, I've tried to sign and write a brief note of thanks on every single acknowledgement letter for every Annual Fund gift. Some have wondered if this is an especially wise use of any head of school's most precious commodity — time — but I feel that it has helped connect me and Blake with those whose support is critical to our ongoing commitment to excellence. It has certainly allowed me a chance to come to know, at least in a limited manner, and to establish something of a relationship with some of this School's most generous and loyal supporters.

This past May, on two consecutive days, an article appeared in the New York Times that served as the inspiration for these comments in this edition of the Bulletin. On May 25, in an op-ed piece, Carroll Bogert urged fellow Harvard alumni to attend their reunions but to forgo their gifts to the annual fund, arguing that Harvard's \$35 billion endowment, which has averaged an annual return on investment of more than 13 percent over the last few decades, didn't need their checks. The next day, and on a similar note, journalist Stephanie Strom wrote an article out of Red Wing, Minn., voicing concerns about tax exempt organizations and the legitimacy of their tax-exempt status. These concerns are being raised with increasing frequency from a number of directions. Blake is one of these organizations that has been granted tax-exempt status because it has been deemed that we

contribute to the common good, provide a public service and/or reduce the burdens on government.

Yes, Blake enjoys tax-exempt status and has a significant endowment. However, we still need the support of each alumnus/a, parent and friend of the School, and ask everyone to consider making a gift to the Annual Fund (you may have missed the deadline for the 2008 Annual Fund but it's not too early to make your 2009 gift or pledge!). Blake's endowment has a valuation of about \$50 million (a bit less than Harvard's). Some of the gifts that make up the endowment are unrestricted, some are restricted for specific purposes in perpetuity, and some have temporary restrictions. Nonetheless, even if every dollar in the endowment were restricted to provide financial aid to Blake families with demonstrated need, the full draw (4.5 percent on a three-year trailing average) on the endowment would not cover what we now spend annually on financial aid. (I remind everyone that all financial aid given at Blake is based on the documented need of a family, and that we do not give out any merit awards or scholarships.) I am proud to point out that Blake has one of the largest financial aid programs in the Midwest; in 2007-08 we awarded more than \$3 million in need-based financial aid.

On October 12, 1911, Charles B. Newton, Blake's second Headmaster, presented his ambitious plans to the Trustees of Blake at a meeting at the Minneapolis Club. He stated, "Let me add that I have in mind something larger in scope, something bigger and broader than anything which has yet been attempted in Baltimore, Boston,

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New York, Buffalo or any other city. I see the possibility of an institution which provides sound training and a healthful foundation, not for a very limited few, but for many — not only for the wealthy but for the worthy; a school so endowed that it could offer scholarships to some and could by reason of its numbers and its endowment make its tuition reasonable for all."

This is why I believe Blake deserves your support. Currently, we cannot provide financial aid to all students who qualify for admission and whose families have need. Beyond financial aid, we have faculty and

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# From the Board of Trustees



Kent Adams '81

*Kent R. Adams*

## Onward Blake Goes

As I look back on my seven years of serving on Blake's Board of Trustees and two years of serving as the chair of this Board, I am amazed at the changes and progress the School continues to make. Through thoughtful planning, our steps forward are building upon the School's strong foundation.

Only seven years ago, Northrop had wiring strung throughout its hallways and there was little dedicated art space. Highcroft had original ceiling and roof materials and limited options for Blake's early childhood education program. Seven years ago there was no Gordy Aamoth, Jr. Memorial Stadium, no windows in the swimming pool area, and our Hopkins acreage footprint was as it had been for years. The School's efforts at mapping its curriculum, establishing PK-12 department chairs, and more formally and regularly evaluating faculty effectiveness were in the infancy stage. We had no pre-kindergarten at Highcroft, a nominal focus on lunch nutrition, no Jack Edie World Citizenship Endowment Fund, and access to limited online classroom tools. In 2000-01, we enrolled 1,245 students (vs. 1,385 today), our student of color population was at 15 percent (vs. 18 percent today), our endowment stood at approximately \$29 million (vs. \$50 million today), the Annual Fund raised \$1.4 million (vs. \$2 million today), and our financial aid budget was \$2.2 million (vs. more than \$3 million today).

What hasn't changed is Blake's commitment to excellence, character and integrity. Today, the rich academic tradition continues; Blake's success on the athletic fields is unrivaled, the School's commitment to pluralism remains steadfast and Blake's outstanding faculty remains the core of Blake's success and reputation. We continue to see Blake students achieve impressive results in terms of standardized tests and AP scores, college placements, athletic honors and in the arts. We should all be humbled by Blake's continued strengths as we realize the society and community around us are not always so fortunate.

Going forward, we can expect that future changes will continue to build on Blake's strengths. Blake is completing

a Master Plan for the Hopkins campus (more about this in the fall). We are evaluating improvements and ideas around athletic facilities (such as artificial turf, tennis court locations and the possibility of introducing a field house), parking and traffic flow, lunchroom facilities, and academic and art space (particularly in the Lower School). In addition, the Board approved a new model of faculty compensation this spring, and the administration and faculty are working together to finalize the implementation of the program. Both the improvements to the Hopkins campus and the new compensation model will require significant fund raising in the next several years. Our current five-year strategic plan runs through 2010, and so shortly the Board and administration will begin work on a plan and path for the next generation.

As a Trustee, parent and alumnus, I want to acknowledge our Head of School, John Gulla, and all that he does for Blake. His vision for the School is singular and compassionate, and his leadership and management of our complex institution is unsurpassed. He has a strong appreciation both for Blake's legacy and our School as it continues to provide independent day school leadership into the 21st century. Blake is blessed with John's continued leadership, and he continues to have the Board's full support as Blake's Chief Executive Officer. Thank you John!

I also want to thank all of my fellow Trustees for their support over the past two years. Their collective commitment to Blake has been outstanding. My best wishes to the chair successor Karen Grabow, with whom I have had the privilege of serving on Blake's Board for seven years. Her dedication and leadership will serve this institution extremely well.

Lastly, a big thanks to my family — my wife, Mandy, and our three children — Addie '11, Charlie '15 and Olivia '16 — for their support and patience as I served on Blake's Board. I also would like to wholeheartedly thank my father, Steve Adams '55, my mother, Ginney Sue Ridgway '55, and my stepmother, Barbara Forster '55, for providing me with the opportunity to attend Blake, teaching me to respect and understand the great traditions of Blake and Northrop, and for instilling in me the importance of education and the duty we have to give back to our communities in terms of our time, our intellectual capacity and our monetary resources.

Enjoy the rest of summer! 🐾

*The Blake School is pleased to welcome four new members to the Board of Trustees. Their terms begin this fall.*

**Randall Barry '86**

Randall and his wife, Sara, have two children at Blake — Peter '19 and Catherine '21. Randall is a realtor with Coldwell Banker Burnet and he and his family live in Minneapolis. Prior to working in real estate, he was in restaurant management with Pluto's in San Francisco, Left at Albuquerque in Palo Alto and Caribou Coffee in Minneapolis. Randall has been a member of the Blake Alumni Association for the past four years and is a youth hockey and soccer coach with the Minneapolis Park Board. He is a past member of the Middlebury College Alumni Board and past president of the Twin Cities Middlebury Alumni Chapter. Randall is a 1986 Blake alumnus and earned his B.A. with departmental honors in art history from Middlebury College. "I feel very privileged to represent the interests of the entire Blake alumni community on the Board of Trustees as the new alumni representative," Randall says. "As a parent of two Lower School Blake students, I am also excited to contribute to the work of the Board from a parent perspective as well. Our School has faced many great challenges in the past and I hope to provide the same leadership and fortitude as those who have come before me in facing the challenges that will confront us."

**Forrest Burke '80**

Forrest has four children — Diana '09, William '14, Emma '18 and Bella '19. Diana, Emma and Bella attend school at Blake and William is a student at Benilde-St. Margaret's. Forrest and his wife, Renee, reside in Orono. He has been the president of Public Sector for UnitedHealthcare, since February of this year. Forrest joined UnitedHealthcare in 2005 as general counsel. Prior to this work, he was a partner at the law firm of Dorsey & Whitney LLP. He is currently a trustee of the Walker Art Center and formerly served as trustee/director for Summit Academy. Forrest is a 1980 Blake alumnus. He received his B.A. from Colgate University and his J.D.



from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. "I am thrilled to join the Blake Board of Trustees," Forrest says. "The Blake educational and cultural experience has nurtured three generations of life-long learners in our family. I look forward to building on Blake's tradition of excellence for generations of students to come."

**Lockie Markusen**

Lockie and her husband, Steve, have five children at Blake — Max '08, Jack '10, Carrie '12, Charlie '15 and Tripp '18. Their oldest child, Max, graduated from Blake this spring and will attend Colgate University in the fall. Since 1994, Lockie has been a dedicated volunteer, giving numerous hours to Blake. She recently ended a two-year term as the second vice president of the Parent Association where she oversaw all fund-raising activities and is the junior and senior internship program, Blake Connections, liaison. She has also served as a Blake Classic co-chair, the Middle School magazine drive chair, a room representative eight times, and the Middle School social chair, to name a few. She currently is on the board of The Landscape Plant Development Center in Chaska and the Brenton Arboretum in Iowa. She also is a past board secretary and has chaired numerous committees for the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery, worked as a CARE partner volunteer for pediatric bone marrow transplant patients at the Children's Cancer Research Foundation, and has been a member of the Junior League Minneapolis since 1989. Her previous work experience is in database software sales/account management, and in real estate. Lockie has a B.S. in biology from the University of Colorado, Denver and a B.A. in psychology from the University of Colorado, Boulder. "I am looking forward to serving on Blake's Board of Trustees. The values outlined in Blake's mission statement have been an important part of our family life for 14 years," Lockie says. "Serving as a Trustee of this exceptional school will be a privilege and I hope to bring value to the process of carrying our high educational standards into the future."



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## New Blake Trustees, continued

### Roger Sit

Roger and his wife, Michele, have three children and reside in Edina. Their daughter, Rachel '15, is a student at Blake and their sons, David '10 and Michael '11 go to Edina High School. Roger is the president and co-CEO of Sit Investment Associates, Inc., a firm founded by his father 27 years ago. Before joining Sit Investment Associates, he was a vice president at Goldman, Sachs & Co. in New



York City. Prior to working on Wall Street, Roger was a captain in the United States Air Force working at Headquarters Space Division. He is a past trustee of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Roger earned a B.S. from the United States Air Force Academy, an M.S. in systems technology from the University of Southern California, and an M.B.A. from Harvard University. Roger says, "I look forward to serving as a Trustee and helping The Blake School to continue to be a premier educational institution."

As they retire from the Board, Blake recognizes the following trustees for their commitment to and support of the School: **Kent Adams '81, Sandy Donaldson, Dave Floren, Kathy Martin and Margie Nelson.** Thank you!

## Blake's Inaugural Travel-Education Trip to China

This past March, Blake partnered with Alterra Global Education Initiatives to offer Blake's first-ever travel-education trip to China. Blake alumni, parents, students and faculty visited Beijing, Shanghai's Chongming Island and Xian. The trip was designed to deepen the participants' understanding of Chinese culture and to balance tourism with study and service. Be sure to check out their daily blog on Blake's web site at [www.blakeschool.org/News/08chinaTrip](http://www.blakeschool.org/News/08chinaTrip), which highlights photos and video clips from the trip.



In a small, walled garden just outside the Great Wall, trip participants planted several young trees. Their work was part of a service activity aimed at helping protect the Wall from erosion and dust. Pictured are Blake faculty members Laura Gilmer '89 and Shannon Young.



Blake participants included: Emily Arnold; Galen Bruer, Annamarie Daley and Alexa Daley Bruer '09; Karen, Doug, Ian '17 and Madison '15 Murray; Keri '86, Richard, Michelle and Jessica Pakonen; Allison, Bernard Jr., Paige '17 and Raine '14 Robichaud; Eugene Yeates '53; and Blake faculty members Laura Gilmer '89, Paul Huddy '71, Shirley Johnson and Shannon Young.



The theme of the trip, "Students Meeting Students," became a reality when members of the group visited with Chinese students at the Sha'anxi Athletic Training Center and when they traveled to a privately owned farm in the Sha'anxi Province to learn about Chinese agriculture.

## Passing the Baton 2008–09 Bettels Scholars Selected

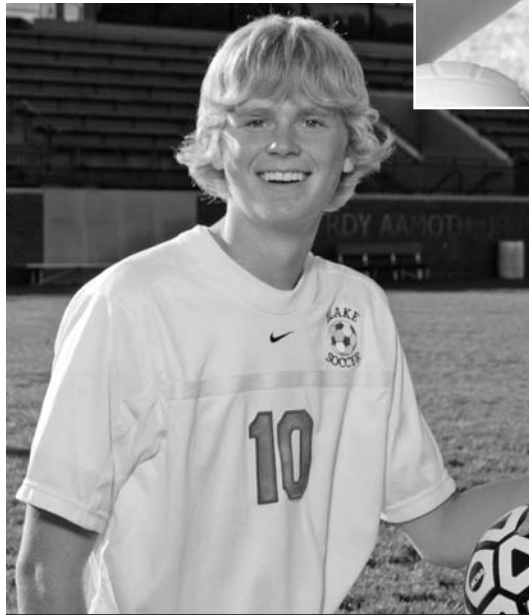
For more than 15 years, the Bettels Scholarship Selection Committee has had the honor and privilege of awarding the Bettels Scholarship to one or two outstanding young student-athletes. The most challenging part of the selection process each year: having to decide between so many talented nominees! The 2008–09 year was no exception. On May 1, the committee was proud to pass the baton from current scholars **Claire Goebel '08** and **Jimmy Yablonksi '08** to rising seniors **Jessica Abrego '09** and **David Brenton '09**.

Abrego and Brenton impressed the committee with commitment to their teams, strong community service work and peer leadership. Abrego plays volleyball in the fall and was the captain of the Blake softball team. Brenton was a member of the state runner-up boys' soccer team and a member of SIAC, a peer leadership group at the Upper School that promotes school spirit.

Abrego and Brenton join a distinguished group of 19 talented and motivated young men and women. Many former scholars remain in contact with the committee, and two are current members of the



Jessica Abrego '09



David Brenton '09

committee, **Cassidy Johnson Steiner '96** and **David Poindexter '95**. New and former scholars, as well as current donors and the Bettels Committee, unite each August at the Scholars Picnic to share news, welcome new members and promote the spirit of Chub Bettels and the values of hard work, sportsmanship and “The Team, The Team, The Team!”

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staff salary needs, ever-increasing employee health insurance premiums, and active and expanding arts and athletics areas that need support. We have a growing commitment to service learning and to our partnerships with community organizations (the flagship of which is our LearningWorks program, a partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools), a desire to fully integrate the tools of technology into our curriculum, and a long list of other commitments that create pressures on a budget of a school that has committed to steadily reduce the rate of annual tuition increases.

This is why I sign each Annual Fund acknowledgement letter — to thank you personally for your belief in this School, your belief in the importance of the work that we do, and for your belief in the role education plays in shaping the futures of the students we serve. For a decade, your commitment has informed my own, and I thank you.

John Gulla  
Head of School 