





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**6**

## LTC REDDING TAKES THE REINS

*Former Hargrave Cadet, LTC Redding takes the reins as Commandant.*

**8**

## COMMANDING THE CORPS

*Battalion Commander, Phoenix Johnson '24, writes a letter to the Alumni, Faculty, Staff, and Corps of Cadets.*

**10**

## CADETS TEST THE WATERS

*Hargrave has implemented a "swim test to graduate."*

**20**

## ACADEMIC CORNERSTONE

*The Academic Learning Center at Hargrave Military Academy is a cornerstone of academic development at Hargrave.*



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**22**

## A CADET IN THE SPOTLIGHT

*Cadet Sean Rose '24, speaks about his time as a Hargave Cadet.*

**24**

## THE CHOSEN

*Leadership School at Hargrave offers a rigorous and comprehensive foundation for honing essential leadership skills.*

**26**

## LIFE AFTER THE GRAVE

*Cadet Sebastian Medina '23 and Andrew Francis '23 update Hargrave on their lives after graduation.*

**28**

## ELEVATING FAITH

*Hargrave's Chaplain, Michael Washington, recently established the Faith Pillar Advisory Committee (FPAC).*



# ***FROM THE PRESIDENT***

Dear Friends of the Academy,

As I reflect on the recent developments and achievements at Hargrave, I'm filled with pride, and I am pleased to share these exciting updates with you, our steadfast supporters.

The Military Department and Corps of Cadets are thriving under our new Commandant, LTC Sam Redding HMA '93. His impressive military career and deep connection to Hargrave as a former student promise to infuse our residential life and leadership programs with invaluable experience and wisdom.

Two very special cadets from the 2024 graduating class are featured in this issue of the Guidon. Our Battalion Commander, Phoenix Johnson '24, has penned an inspiring letter to our community, exemplifying the outstanding leadership and character development that Hargrave fosters in our cadets. His words resonate with the dedication and vision that embody the spirit of our institution. Cadet Sean Rose '24 has also shared his transformative journey at Hargrave, underscoring the profound personal and academic growth that our academy fosters. His story is a testament to the life-changing impact of a Hargrave education.

Through a partnership with the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, the Hargrave Science Department has gained access to cutting edge technology in the form of a SMART (Spatially and Mechanically Accurate Robotic Table) table, which takes thousands of photographs over a plant's life cycle for experimental study. In another important initiative, Hargrave has introduced a mandatory "swim test to graduate," emphasizing the importance of aquatic safety and skills in our comprehensive education model.

We celebrate the successes of our graduates, like Sebastian Medina '23 and Andrew Francis '23, as they embark on prestigious paths at West Point and the Naval Academy,



respectively. Their achievements are shining examples of the caliber of young men Hargrave shapes.

These milestones and the ongoing support from each of you propel us forward. Your unwavering commitment to Hargrave Military Academy enables us to continue shaping future leaders who are equipped to excel in all aspects of life. As we approach the end of 2023, we eagerly anticipate the new opportunities and achievements that await. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and look forward to sharing our journey with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric Peterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Eric Peterson  
President  
Hargrave



# OTTERBOTS TAKEOVER



**S**aturday, July 29th, during the Hargrave takeover at the final Otterbots home game of the 2023 season, President Eric Peterson took center stage and delivered an unforgettable moment by throwing the ceremonial first pitch.

During our season-long partnership, Hargrave's presence in the ballpark was vital in fostering engagement and connection with the local community.





# LTC REDDING TAKES THE REINS AS COMMANDANT

LTC Sam Redding attended Hargrave in the early 90's for his sophomore and junior years. After graduation, he enlisted as an Infantryman in the U.S. Army in July 1993. After serving for four years, he was awarded a Green to Gold Scholarship and was commissioned as an Army Aviation Officer after graduating from Campbell University in North Carolina with a Bachelor of Science in Biology.

LTC Redding has held numerous leadership positions following his commissioning, including Platoon leader and Assistant Battalion Operations Officer in the 2-25 Aviation Regiment (Wheeler Army Airfield, HI), Assistant Battalion Operations Officer and Commander of A Company, 3-158 Aviation Regiment (Ansbach, Germany); Aviation Air Assault Observer Controller at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (Hohenfels, Germany); Current Operations Officer 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Fort Drum, NY); Battalion Operations Officer 2-10 Aviation Regiment and Operations Officer for the 10th CAB (Fort Drum, NY), Command Center Operations Chief at the National Airborne Operations Center (Offutt Air Force Base, NE), Battalion commander of the 2nd of the 210th AVN regiment (Fort Eustis, VA). In his most recent assignment, LTC Redding served as the Brigade Deputy commander for the 128th AVN Brigade at Joint Base Langley Eustis in VA. LTC Redding has deployed to Afghanistan three times in support of Operation







Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom Sentinel and Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. LTC Redding is a graduate of the Aviation Basic Course, Initial Entry Rotary Wing Course, the Aviation Officers Advanced Course, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Defense Language Institute (Mandarin Chinese), and Joint Professional Military Education. He is Joint Fires and Combatives instructor and Joint Missile Defense certified. He is qualified in UH-60A/L, UH-60M, and UH-1 helicopters. He also holds a Master of Science degree in Leadership from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.

LTC Redding's significant military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Joint Service Achievement Medal. He has earned the Expert Infantryman, Senior Aviator, and Air Assault Badges. LTC Redding has been married to the former Dana Thomas of Downingtown, PA, for 27 years. They have two sons: Willis (15) and Mark (11).




# COMMANDING THE





# CORPS

## *A Letter From the Battalion Commander*



“Battalion Commander holds a special kind of significance at Hargrave. Serving as the highest-ranking Cadet officer in the battalion, I’m entrusted with a wide array of responsibilities encompassing leadership, mentorship, and character development. One of my most important responsibilities is ensuring my brothers’ welfare and development. This position demands the ability to inspire, guide, and lead a diverse group of capable cadets. It is an honor to hold this position and embrace its rigors. Managing, leading, and guiding the Corps of Cadets necessitates successful leadership; however, this requires a clear vision. My vision is “To cultivate a battalion of cadets who embody excellence in all aspects of their lives while continually fostering the four pillars of Hargrave to include academics, athletics, faith, and character. My vision is not only to prepare the cadets for the challenges of today but to equip them with the necessary skills, values, and leadership qualities that will serve as the foundation for their success not only at Hargrave but for their future.” The impact of a Battalion Commander extends beyond the year of holding the position, leaving a lasting legacy of leadership and character development, which I strive to meet every day. As I continue to carry out the responsibilities given to me, I will ensure the well-being of the corps entrusted to my care.”

- *Phoenix Johnson ‘24*

# A HANDS-ON



## ***Q&A with Betsy:***

***What class/classes are utilizing these SMART Tables? How are students using them?***

The classes using the SMART table are my environmental and AP environmental science classes. The table is just a trial until we learn all the ins and outs of computer programming. We are growing lettuce and watering the plants normally.

***How does this opportunity to work with both plant sciences and computer science/automation/robotics help these students and improve the overall academic experience Hargrave provides?***

Currently, we are not offering any computer science classes, so it is exciting to provide that opportunity for my science classes in future experiments. The opportunity for students to work with plant sciences and computer science/automation/robotics at Hargrave improves their overall academic experience. By combining these fields, students gain a multidisciplinary understanding and develop practical skills that can be applied in various industries.

***The tables have only been at Hargrave about a month so far, but what has the learning been like for the students?***

The students are intrigued by the process and are excited to see the time-lapse video of the lettuce growing.

***Anything else that you want to add?***

We are just excited to be able to join forces with the Institute to help all students learn about the different types of agriculture and to work on this project. I look forward to additional projects and experiments that we can do together in the future.





# APPROACH



*Betsy Kent's AP Environmental Science class is currently growing lettuce in the SMART table. They water the plants consistently and track the growth and change through the photographs taken by the color-sensitive webcam.*

The *SMART* table, or the Spatially and Mechanically Accurate Robotic Table, takes thousands of photographs over a plant's life cycle. A webcam attached to an automated arm on the table called a gantry snaps photos of the plants within a thousandth of an inch every 15-30 minutes. This allows researchers to study the plants and how they grow and conduct experiments with different variables. Four *SMART* tables are currently used at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, VA, and one at Hargrave.





# HARGRAVE NEWS

## HARGRAVE WELCOMES NEW EMPLOYEES



**Kim Barbour**  
Registrar



**Leah Burnette**  
School Counselor



**Briley Hedrick '80**  
Math and Science Faculty



**William Holley**  
TAC Officer



**Kyle Kuhn**  
Athletic Trainer



**Candiss McBride**  
English Faculty



**Jon Mebane**  
Assistant PG  
Basketball Coach



**Krista Peterson**  
College  
Counselor



**Sam Redding**  
Commandant



**Luke Rosinski**  
Admissions Counselor  
Assistant PG Basketball  
Coach



**Beth Wyatt**  
Executive Assistant  
to the President

## TAPS

*Charles E. Canrobert '84*

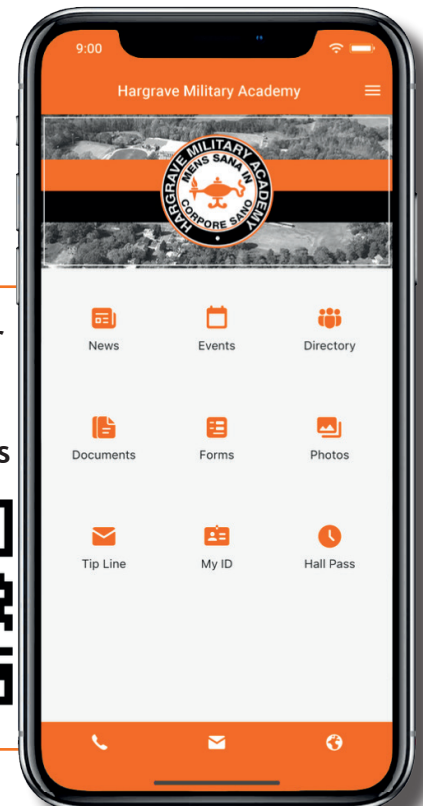
*Linden L. Fregia '69*

*Emerson L. Gravatt '65*

*John C. Smith '68*

*William L. Underwood*

*The Hargrave Community  
extends its deepest  
sympathy to the families  
and friends of the  
following alumni, faculty,  
and staff members of the  
school who have recently  
passed away.*



Download our  
mobile app  
for the latest  
Hargrave news





# ATTENTION ALUMNI

We want to know what's going on with you!



Please send any updates to  
[nikki.shields@hargrave.edu](mailto:nikki.shields@hargrave.edu) to be included in the  
next Guidon.

# HEART OF THE CAMPUS

## HOW GRANT COURT BECAME A REALITY

---

Nestled behind the centerfield fence of the Fuller baseball field, a new facility has been added to the campus, embodying the spirit of teamwork and community. It all started with a simple request. The Corps of Cadets had a vision—a multi-purpose court where they could play games outdoors during free time. The Hargrave Parent Association became the catalyst, willing to turn this vision into concrete reality.

Last year's Parents Weekend became more than just a series of heartwarming reunions and athletic competitions; it was the starting point of a transformative fundraising effort. With bake sales, silent auctions, and even a mini-carnival, the Parent Association went beyond just raising money; they captured the essence of what this court would symbolize—a community coming together for the benefit of its cadets. To bring this ambitious project to fruition, the E. Stuart James Grant Charitable Trust, a long-time Hargrave supporter, stepped in to cover the remaining half of the costs.

The end result is a sprawling 50' X 100' court, flexible and expansive, accommodating a wide array of sporting activities. Whether you're perfecting your three-pointers on one of its two basketball goals, challenging your friend to a Pickleball match, settling the score in Foursquare, or mastering Futsal skills, Grant Court is the place to be.

Since its completion, Grant Court has become a steady presence in daily cadet life. On any given day, the court is a hive of activity, a physical manifestation of what our school is all about: dedication, camaraderie, and mutual respect. Cadets don't just come here to play;

they come here to foster bonds, to take a break from their demanding schedules, and to grow as individuals.

The story of Grant Court is not merely one of fundraising and concrete; it's a narrative of a community that listens to its youth, understands their needs, and takes collective action to fulfill them. For every slam dunk, every Pickleball rally, and every victorious whoop heard on this court, there is an underlying melody—a song of gratitude and unity that echoes around the campus. So, the next time you step on campus, stop by Grant Court and take a moment to appreciate not just the games played there, but also the incredible journey of collaboration and support that has made it possible.









# CADETS TEST THE WATERS

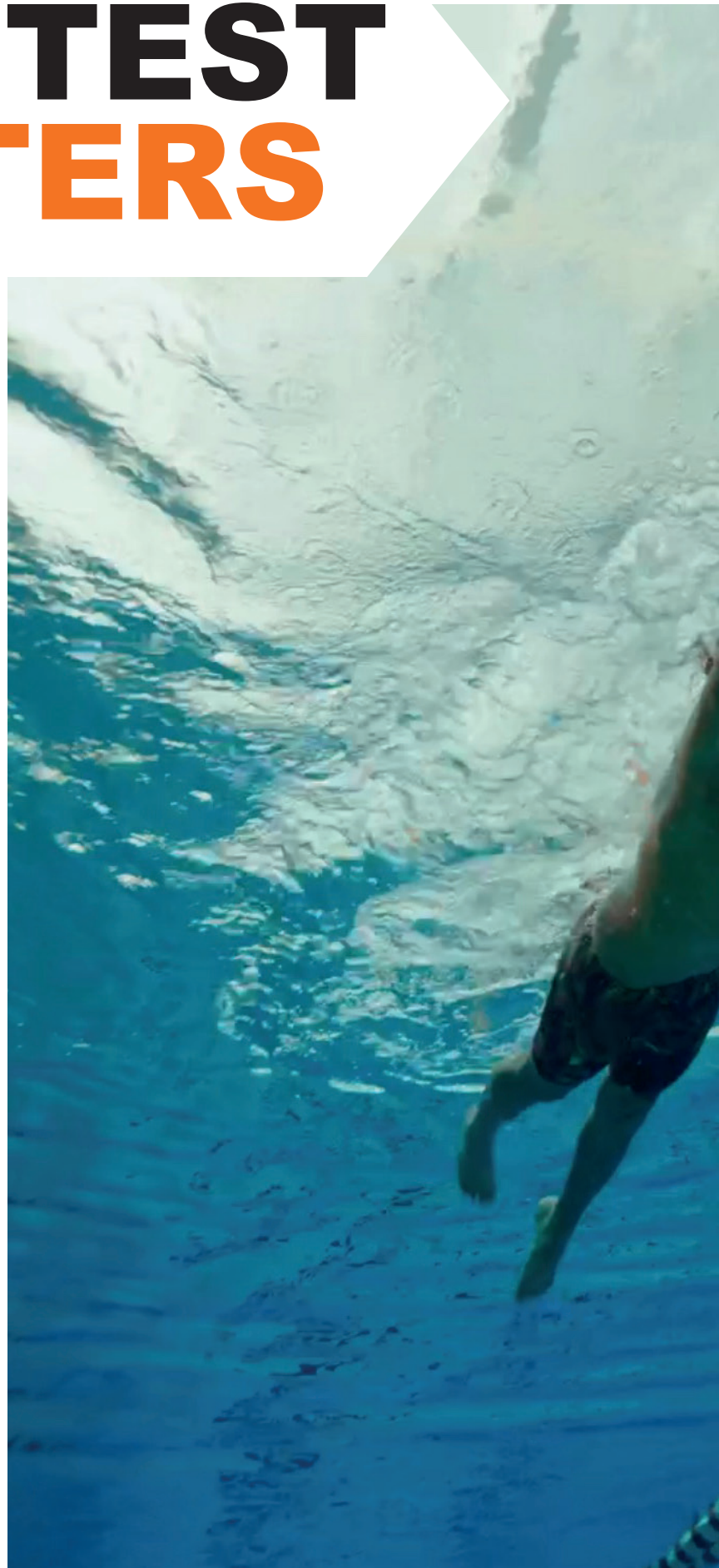
According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, for every child under age 18 who dies from drowning, another 7 receive emergency department care for nonfatal drowning. Nearly 80% of people who die from drowning are male. Many factors might contribute to higher rates of drowning among males, including increased exposure to water, risk-taking behaviors, and alcohol use. Over half of fatal and nonfatal drownings among people 15 years and older occur in natural waters like lakes, rivers, or oceans. In the United States, over a 10-year period, there was an average of 11 fatal unintentional drownings per day and an average of 22 nonfatal drownings per day.

With these sobering statistics in mind, Hargrave has implemented a “swim test to graduate” to ensure every junior and senior cadet has demonstrated the minimum skills and knowledge needed to be safe in and around water sources. They will be able to recognize and safely handle a water emergency such that they do not put themselves or others in further potential harm through an aquatics skills and safety training program.

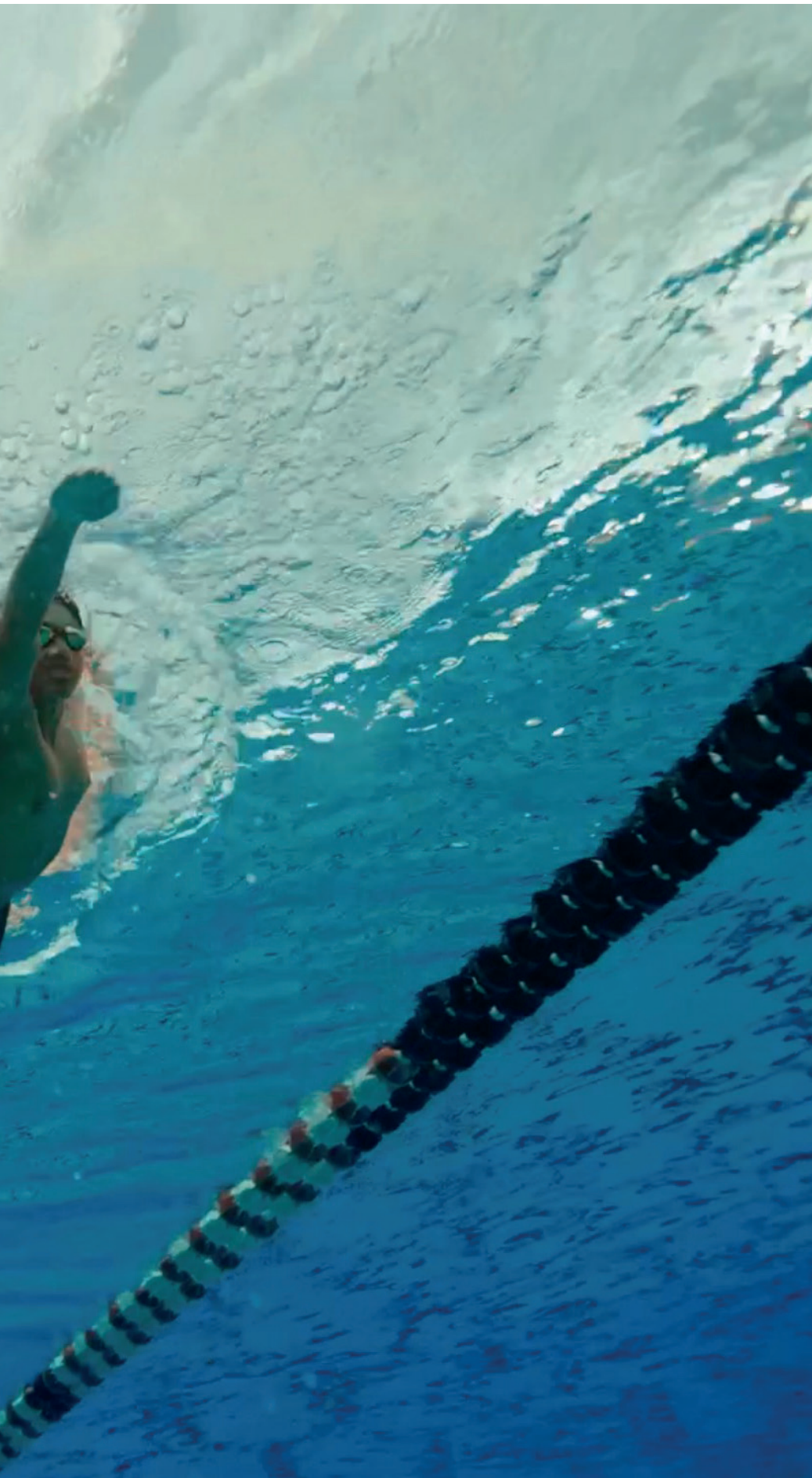
Designed by Athletics and Aquatics Director Amanda Weishaar, the test consists of:

- Jumping into 16 feet of water and surface
- Tread water for 2 minutes
- Perform a 360 spin
- Float for 1 minute
- Swim 50 yards
- Exit without using a ladder

This is Hargrave’s first year implementing this test. All seniors are required to take the test, while it is optional for the juniors, and they have three opportunities throughout the school year to attempt it. If they fail, they will receive 2 hours of instruction from Athletic Director Amanda Weishaar every







week for approximately 11-12 weeks if they are in a non-competitive sport. Alternatively, they have the option to join the swim team in the winter season. In addition, they have full access to the pool seven days a week in which to train.

When they pass, they are given extra instruction on some key water safety components, including:

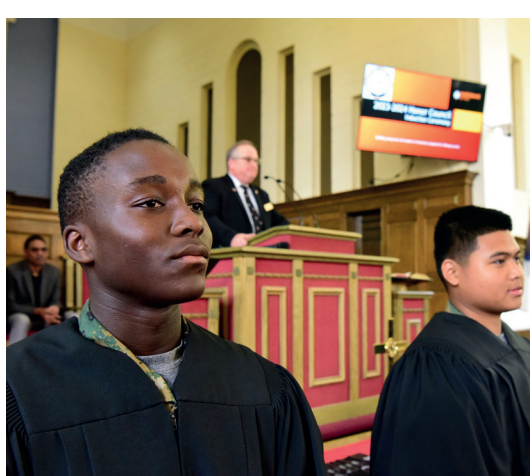
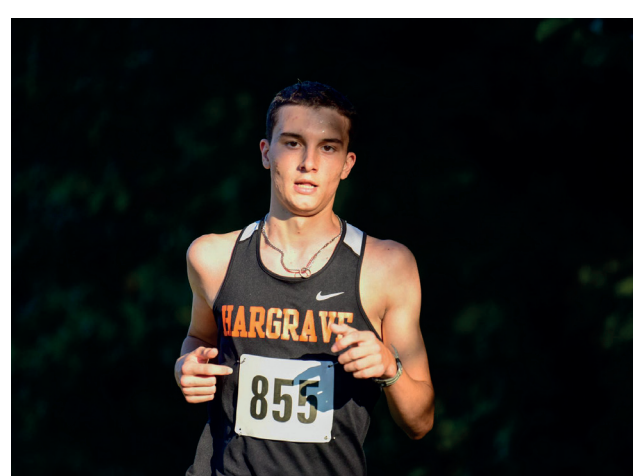
- Lifejackets - their usage; how to wear them correctly; jumping off the 1-meter and 3-meter diving boards; and how to float independently or as a group.
- Diving precautions and spinal injury - dangers of diving into shallow water; and a demonstration from Hargrave lifeguards on how to strap someone onto a backboard if they dive into shallow water or perform high-risk actions off diving boards.
- Reach and Throw, Don't Go - How to save someone without going into the water and becoming a victim themselves.
- Cold Water Exposure - They watch a video on the dangers of entering cold water. The video is a study from the British Royal Navy that used Olympic swimmers to perform the tests.
- Dangers of pool drains and flash flooding
- Riptides - how to spot one and how to survive one.

Upon completing both portions, the student will be awarded the “swim test ribbon” they can wear on their blouse. These ribbons will be awarded during the weekly chapel service.











# A CORNERSTONE OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Academic Learning Center at Hargrave Military Academy is a multifunctional space utilized for classes, meetings, club activities, and much more. The center is a cornerstone of academic development at Hargrave, designed to help cadets become independent thinkers and problem solvers.

Janice McLaughlin, a seasoned educator with over two decades of experience, has recently taken the helm as the Director of the Academic Learning Center at Hargrave Military Academy. Before this appointment, she served as the Director of the Center for Integrated Studies, where she led faculty workshops and participated actively in campus activities, including coaching JV Soccer and Varsity Golf.

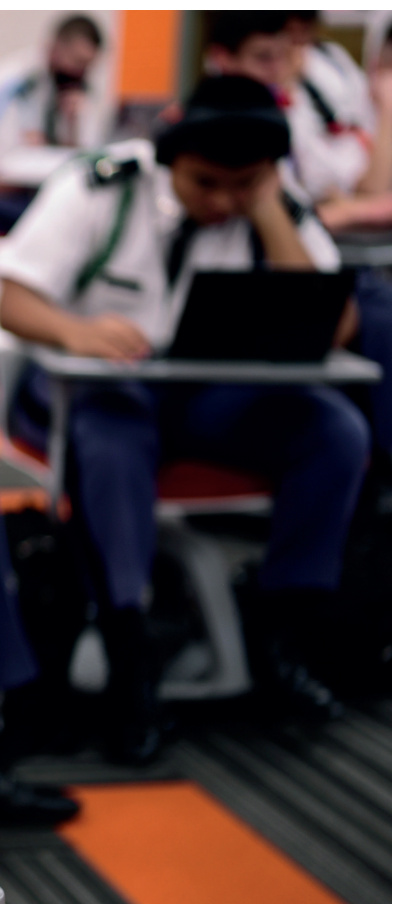
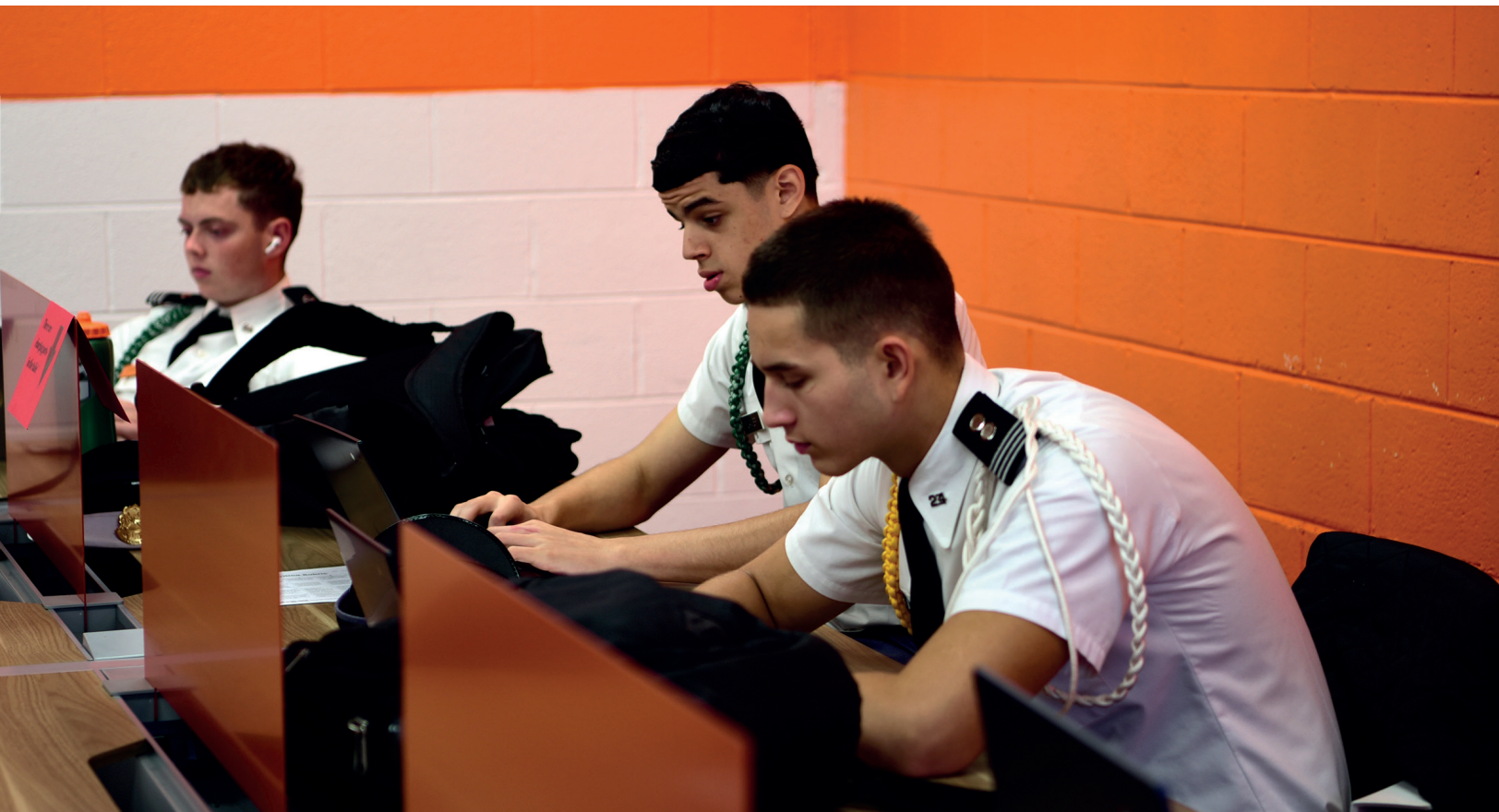
In her new role overseeing the Academic Learning Center, Janice envisions an inviting, dynamic environment where students are inspired to excel. Janice's rich background and enthusiasm make her an ideal leader to guide the future of the center, ensuring it remains a cornerstone in the development of Hargrave cadets.



**Cpt. McLaughlin served as the Director of the Center for Integrated Studies from 2020-2023 while teaching English.**







**“ I can take the time to work individually with each Cadet to ensure their success. ”**  
**-Cpt. Janice McLaughlin**

# A CADET WHO ROSE TO THE SPOTLIGHT



*Sean Rose, Class of 2024*

“In 2021, I started high school at my local Catholic school and had trouble adjusting to the new environment, mainly because of COVID-19. Each week would either be all in person or all on Zoom and I only really knew half of the school because those were the people I came in contact with. I struggled to make real friends, and my experience lacked natural substance. I would attend school every day, go through the motions in class, do the bare minimum in sports, and go home and play video games or sleep all day. For those who don’t know me, this cycle is a recipe for disaster. I need some kind of long-term goal or higher purpose to strive to meet, and I just felt I wasn’t getting that.

A few years before this, my mom had mentioned military school to me, not as a punishment, but as an environment where she thought I would do very well, and I agreed. So, I got my parents to search for possible

military schools for me to attend. As a resident of Pennsylvania, our natural first choice was the nearby Valley Forge Military Academy. My parents and I toured the school as a family and were impressed with the atmosphere, so we scheduled a day for me to shadow a cadet as he went through his day. While there, I noticed a need for more enthusiasm for the school. It seemed like everyone didn’t want to be there, and there wasn’t much care for the institution or even other cadets. This was not what I was looking for. My family and I thought we were out of luck until a former president of Valley Forge gave us some information. He recognized that I wanted to attend a military academy for the right reasons. He felt that Valley Forge wouldn’t do me well as it has fallen into the category of reform school in recent years, and I might do better at a place like Hargrave.

In the summer after my Freshman year of high school, my father and I traveled eight hours from our home in Yardley, Pennsylvania, to see Hargrave for a day. Immediately, we were struck with the total investment the faculty and staff had made into the lives of each cadet. Even cadets who lived in the area who came to help with the open house seemed joyful and glad to be there, a welcome change from Valley Forge. As we toured the campus, I envisioned myself standing in formation on company street, having fun with other cadets in the game room, or making my bed so tightly that I could bounce a quarter off it. However, what stuck with me the most was when Mr. Sloan Gibson, Interim President at the time, pulled me and my father into his office and spoke to us. Still, I don’t know why he did that, but I am incredibly grateful. Mr. Gibson asked me what I wanted out of life, and then he told me about some of his. He told me how he used to be a troublemaker and that he was only a wrong decision or two from being put in jail or worse. Then, he explained how Hargrave changed him. He showed me pictures of himself as a HMA and West Point cadet. My Father and I quickly concluded that if Hargrave could turn a rowdy young man into the cadet of the decade at West Point, it would be a good place for me. The following August, I shaved my head, headed down to the quartermaster, and waited several hours, like every cadet before me.



Over three years, I have held various leadership positions with very different duties and responsibilities. As a sophomore in my first year, I was chosen to be a squad leader, and I also stepped up for an extended period as the interim platoon sergeant when ours was dealing with family issues. The following year, I earned the rank of Command Sergeant Major, where I served in a much more administrative and managerial capacity than before. Finally, in my Senior year, I am the Bravo Company Commander, an unexpected and challenging appointment. It has been very jarring going from an environment where I managed hundreds of cadets at a high level with little intimacy. I am directly in charge of a small group of 35, whom

I am learning to treat more like people than a statistic. Even though it's hard, I am incredibly grateful for the challenges I've faced here. These different opportunities to lead and be led have been instrumental in forming who I am. Without Hargrave, I wouldn't be as mentally and morally strong as I am today.



Unfortunately, this year, I had to enroll without my dad there to support me. This past winter and summer, he had been home struggling to breathe. He had been fighting lung cancer for almost seven years and unfortunately contracted COVID last Christmas, which led to pneumonia and bronchitis. The following eight months for him was a cycle of fighting different respiratory illnesses, as well as struggling through chemotherapy and various other cancer treatments. My dad lost his battle with cancer on August 27th, 2023, surrounded by people whose lives he had directly affected positively. However, one of the most touching things to me was the support I received from Hargrave. Countless emails and calls came in from cadets and teachers. Our school's president, Mr. Peterson, even flew up for the day to attend my

Dad's funeral, as well as two of my baseball coaches and one cadet with whom I am very close. Without the support of the faculty and staff, as well as the cadets of Hargrave, I would be in a much more challenging position. I don't know what I would do if my dad hadn't taken me down that summer to tour campus. The decision has forever changed my life in ways that I wouldn't be able to imagine before."



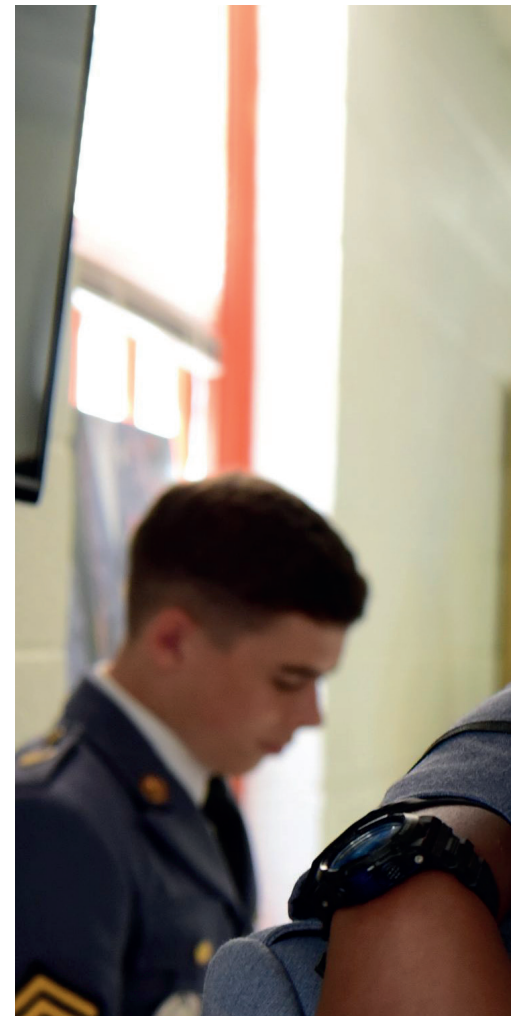


# The **Chosen**: Guide and Inspire

Leadership School at Hargrave offers a rigorous and comprehensive foundation for honing essential leadership skills. cadets are immersed in an environment that emphasizes discipline, teamwork, and effective communication from the start. The benefits of attending are numerous, ranging from the development of strong decision-making abilities to fostering resilience in high-pressure situations.

The structured curriculum exposes cadets to a range of leadership styles and strategies, while also instilling a sense of responsibility and accountability.

Upon graduation from Leadership School, the selection of new Corps leaders is a pivotal moment where cadets demonstrate their newly acquired skills and are chosen to guide and inspire their fellow cadets in their future endeavors









# LIFE AFTER THE GRAVE

**Sebastian Medina '23** is attending West Point. Medina reported to West Point, NY, for Reception Day on June 27 to begin his 47-month experience.



Sebastian Medina  
'23

**Gloria Suarez, Sebastian's mother:**

"He is doing wonderful at West Point! He has adjusted well to the grueling schedule. The first 2-3 weeks of classes were a bit tough, but he started doing much better once he got his rhythm. He has made friends and enjoys going to the shooting range, bowling, and eating out with them. West Point had their first home football game on Saturday, Sep. 9 (they won 57-0), so he experienced his first college football game. He had to stand up the entire game. They are not allowed to sit down even for a second, and he didn't want to find out what happens if a cadet sits down."



Andrew Francis  
'23



**Andrew Francis '23** is attending the Naval Academy. Francis reported to Annapolis, MD, for Induction Day on June 29 to begin Plebe Summer.

**From Agnes Francis, Andrew's mother:**

"Andrew is doing well at the Academy. He likes his new role as a midshipman with new challenges and responsibilities. He feels very proud that he will be able to serve our country."



# ATTENTION ALUMNI

Alums will receive a notification from Hargrave asking for data verification and participation in a project to create an Alumni book with stories and experiences they had while attending Hargrave.

## **HARGRAVE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

### WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

- Publishing Concepts/PCI is handling the project, and it is legitimate
- Participation does not require a purchase of the book or any merchandise
- Donations are not required to participate
- Merchandise bought from PCI does not fund Hargrave

### WHY PARTICIPATE?

- The book will have personal stories and experiences that can be shared with Alumni.
- The book will benefit Hargrave for marketing purposes
- The book will help preserve Hargrave's history and traditions
- The book will connect our Alumni
- This project will help update Hargrave's database

If you have further questions, don't hesitate to get in touch with our Alumni Director, Frank Thomas:

**frank.thomas@hargrave.edu.**  
**434-432-2692**



# ELEVATING FAITH TO A NEW LEVEL.



Hargrave's Chaplain, Michael Washington, recently established the Faith Pillar Advisory Committee (FPAC). This committee endeavors to increase the impact of the Faith Pillar in the lives of HMA cadets to improve interpersonal and spiritual relationships through discipleship. Comprised of multiple Hargrave employees and members of the local community, the FPAC strives to support the Hargrave Faith Pillar by providing input, ideas, and resources for special programs, as well as create connections with Hargrave cadets that increase their understanding of and desire to improve their faith.



## *Chaplain Michael Washington*

Michael Washington brings a wealth of experiences and a passion for working with youth. In addition to serving our country as a member of the US Marine Corps and US Army, he has been called to God's service. He has been an ordained minister for over 14 years and has several years of experience as both a youth pastor and an area director for Young Life, an international youth outreach ministry. During the first semester of the 2020-21 school year, he served as one of Hargrave's Delta Company TACs. As a guest chapel speaker at Hargrave, his messages were well-received and the subject of many thoughtful conversations around campus.

"I am grateful and look forward to fulfilling my life's mission and passion, which is to faithfully impact the lives of young men with the love and truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

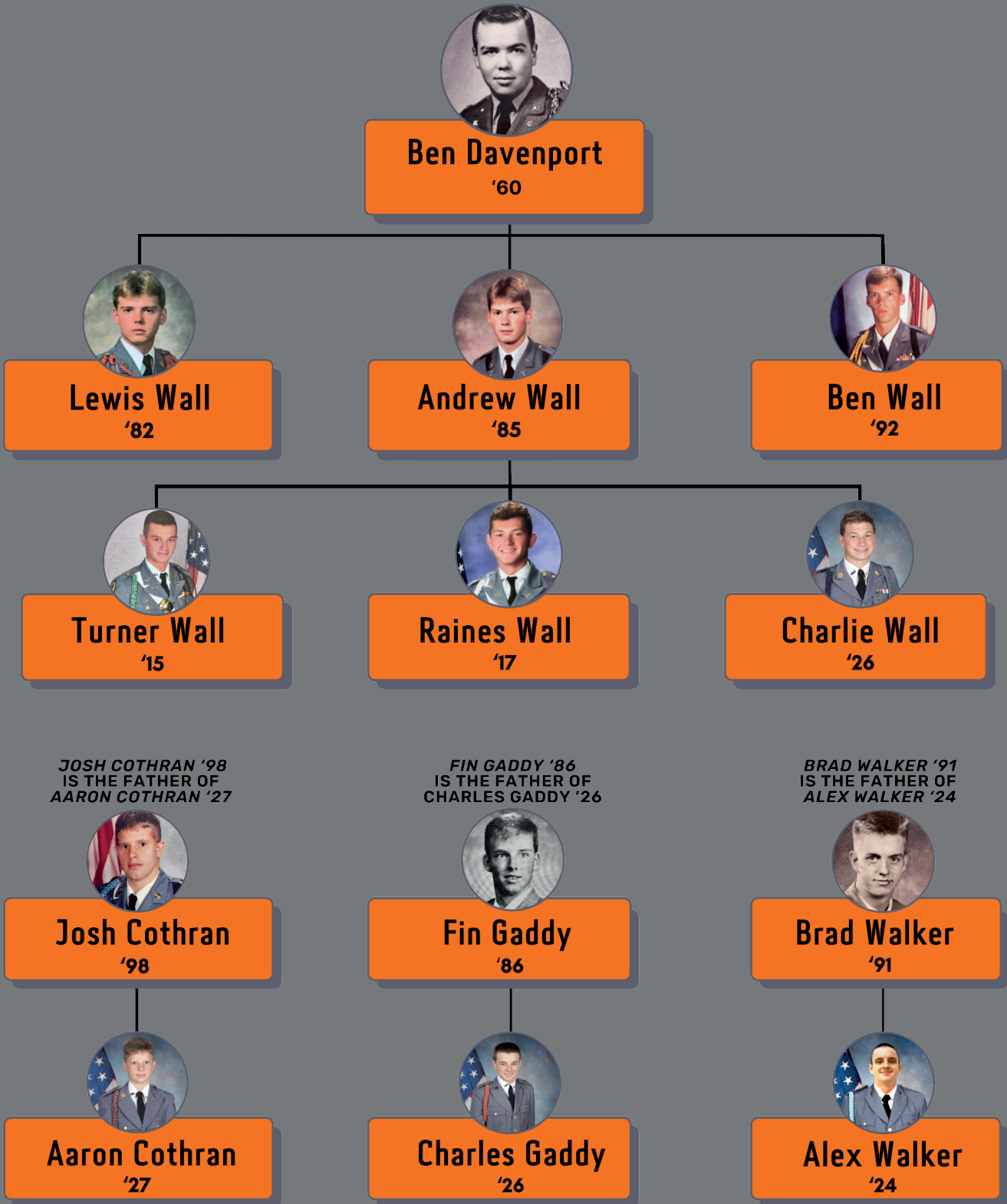
— Chaplain Michael Washington





# CONTINUING THE HARGRAVE LEGACY

HARGRAVE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBER,  
*BEN DAVENPORT '60*, IS AN UNCLE AND  
GREAT-UNCLE TO TWO GENERATIONS  
OF THE WALL FAMILY

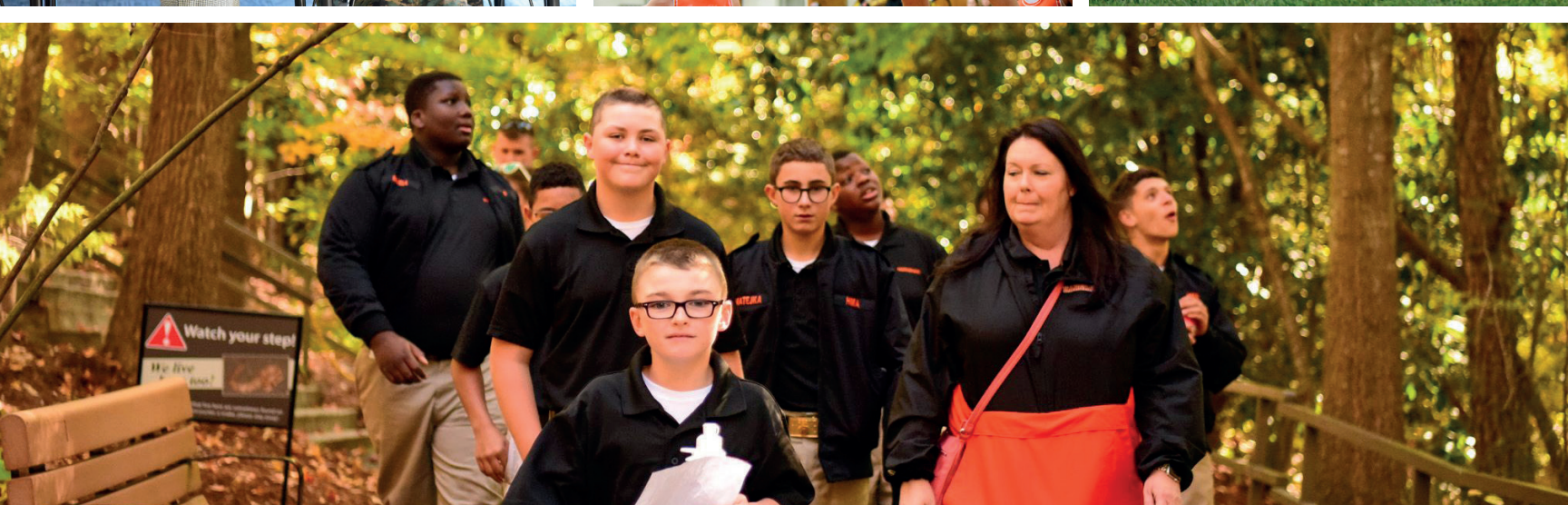




Fall Semester  
2023

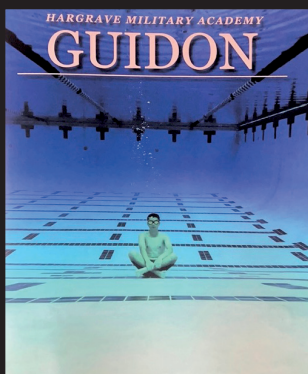
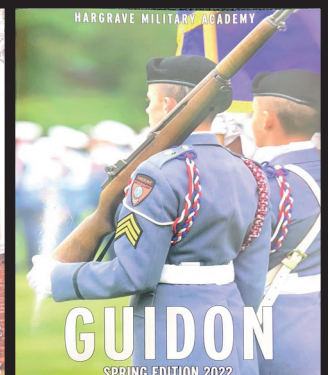
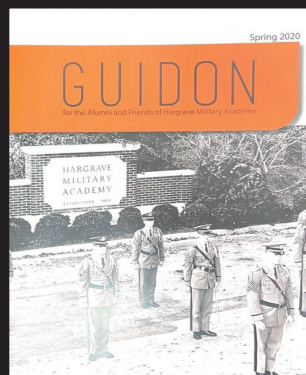
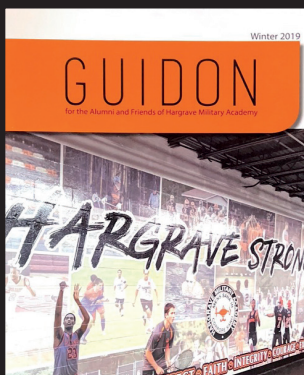
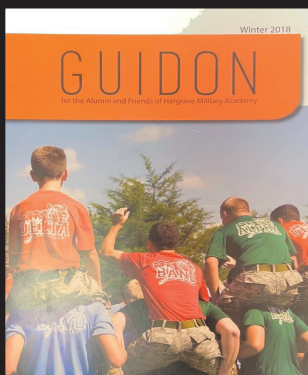
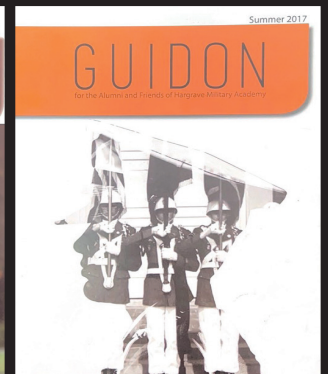
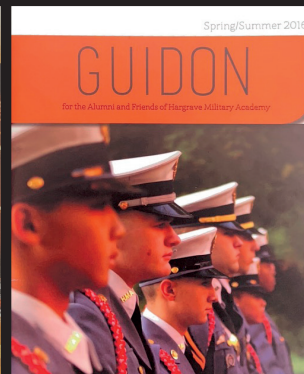








Hargrave Military Academy  
200 Military Drive  
Chatham, VA 24531



HargraveMilitaryAcademy



HargraveTigers



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Hargrave Military Academy

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