

# C mmuniqué

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF THE ARTS AT YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE

WINTER 2019

## “BELLA!” Tour of Italy Provides a Unique Learning Experience for YHC Students

In the summer of 2018, several Young Harris College students embarked on an immersive tour of Italy led by Art Chair and Associate Professor of Art Ted Whisenhunt and English Department Chair and Associate Professor of English Dr. Eloise Whisenhunt.

The group studied Italian art, literature and culture while touring museums, cathedrals and historical monuments in many of Italy's cultural and historical centers. The group stayed in the city of Florence throughout the duration of the trip and embarked on multiple day trips to Pisa, Lucca, Siena and Rome.

“By staying in one place, we avoided the stress of extra travel and had more time to enjoy and relish the sites in Tuscany,” Mr. Whisenhunt said.



To prepare for the excursion, students enrolled in a comprehensive course that enhanced their experience abroad. Through lectures, selected readings, class discussions and hands-on activities, the course provided students with an introduction to many aspects of Italian culture and history, as well as helpful tips about traveling abroad.

“The class focused on giving students background information that would prepare them for what they would see and experience,” said Mr. Whisenhunt. “They studied the major works of art, architecture and literature of Florence. They also learned about the culture and some basic Italian phrases.”

During the trip, each student made an on-site presentation regarding specific landmarks or cultural elements of the cities. They learned to identify and evaluate important works of art and architecture from ancient Rome, the Italian Renaissance and the Baroque Period.

“I will never forget this experience and would encourage each and every student to explore the idea of studying abroad,” said senior communications major Abby Betts. “I found that learning about a place that is ‘outside of my world’ really broadened my outlook on life and helped me further appreciate different cultures.”

Students also had the opportunity to apply valuable skills and knowledge gained during the course regarding travel etiquette, photography, the philosophy of travel, language and regional foods.

When asked what he thought surprised the students the most about the experience, Mr. Whisenhunt responded, “That they were actually—physically—there. They were walking the streets Dante walked and hearing the same bells mark their days that marked Dante’s. It closed the time gap and made them think differently about their own time and lives.”

A percentage of all 2018-2019 gifts to YHC's Friends of the Arts fund will benefit future travel experiences for students. In addition, FOTA patrons have the opportunity to sponsor a student to attend the trip, in keeping with FOTA's goal to promote the exploration of new endeavors and learning experiences.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Oh Canada!

For the Love of the Arts

A Tangible Impact

Beyond the Enchanted Valley

Message from the Dean

#### LEFT TO RIGHT

Students soak in the view overlooking Florence. ■ The group poses in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. ■ Students hunt for flowers in the fields of Tuscany.

Young  
Harris  
COLLEGE

EST. 1886

# Oh Canada!

## THEATRE STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN STUDY ABROAD TRIP

A group of Young Harris College theatre and musical theatre students, led by Theatre Department Chair Anne Towns, recently traveled to Toronto and Stratford, Canada, for a one-of-a-kind immersive experience.

"Experience is a wonderful teacher. Actually traveling and experiencing new places and ideas can teach students far more than I can in a classroom," explained Towns.

The group learned about many facets of theatre while experiencing first-hand a variety of professional live theatre performances and styles.

"Traveling to Toronto and Stratford gave the students an opportunity to see a lot of theatre in a short period of time," said Towns, who noted that the trip gave many students the opportunity to experience professional theatre for the first time.

In Toronto, the students visited Casa Loma, a once-private home that has been turned into a venue for filming, weddings, tours and other events. During the evenings, the venue operates several escape rooms that feature actors who help guide guests through the interactive theatrical experience. "It was such a fun group activity that gave the students a broader idea of the types of careers they can hold as actors after college," said Towns. "And we escaped!"

While in Stratford, the group saw multiple shows, including "Romeo and Juliet," "Guys and Dolls," "The School for Scandal," "HMS Pinafore" and "Twelfth Night." The students had the opportunity to meet with the actors from "Guys and Dolls" during a private, post-show Q&A, and they also met Tony Award-winning actor Brent Carver, best known for his performances on Broadway in "Kiss of the Spider Woman" and "Parade."

"The 10-day experience left me feeling even more inspired to pursue a professional theatre career," said junior theatre major Aly Olvera. "I am so blessed that Theatre Young Harris grants us the ability to experience these opportunities!"

The group also visited The Second City, the world's premier comedy theatre, to watch sketch comedy and improv. They also took a day trip to Niagara on the Lake, home to the world-famous Shaw festival, where the group viewed a production of Shaw's "Saint Joan" and took a boat trip around Niagara Falls.

"When traveling to a different country, students are exposed to different ideals, lifestyles and customs," said Towns. "Travel is crucial to impart the values of world citizenship to our students."



**ABOVE** Students pose in front of the Toronto sign. ■ The group meets Tony Award-winning actor Brent Carver (fourth from right). ■ The group visits Niagara Falls. ■ Students try on various theatre costumes.

# Communicqué

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# FOR THE LOVE OF THE ARTS

## MEET THE GUTENSTEINS, GOOD NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS OF YHC

Gerry and Diana Gutenstein reside close to Young Harris College in nearby Hiawassee, Ga. They are friends of YHC and generous donors to the College's fine arts programs.

The Gutensteins became friends with past YHC President Cathy Cox and her husband Mark Dehler. Through them, the Gutensteins learned about the many benefits YHC offers the local community.

"At YHC, each student receives personal attention from the professors and staff," the Gutensteins observed. "The quality of the talent the College produces from its student body is impressive."

The Gutensteins attend many of the fine arts programs to support the hard work of the students, and they especially enjoy the musical programs, art shows and plays.

"The fine arts programs the students do are on par with productions on Broadway and at the Lincoln Center," said the Gutensteins. "YHC is an asset to the community—almost all of the programs are open to the community at little or no cost."

To honor the memory of Gerry's brother and sister-in-law, the Gutensteins started a fine arts scholarship for juniors and seniors.

"We believe it's important for the fine arts students to have the opportunity to travel to different foreign locations and learn more about the art they plan to make into their careers," said the Gutensteins.

In addition to supporting the fine arts at YHC, the Gutensteins also enjoy cheering on the Mountain Lions at sporting events. "We like to be involved with the entire College and its programs," they said.

Beyond YHC, the Gutensteins are also involved in the community through the Towns County Food Pantry, Rotary Club of Lake Chatuge, Citizen Law Enforcement Academy, Towns County Lions, Georgia Mountain Fair and Chatuge Hospital.

Prior to retiring, Gerry worked for 39 years in the hotel business for companies like ITT Sheraton Hotels, Starwood Hotels and Holiday Inn. He then worked as a real estate appraiser. Diana worked in retail sales for Saks and in baggage service and ticketing for American Airlines. They have two daughters—Michelle lives in Tampa, Fla., and Lauren lives in Decatur, Ga.



The band facility is expected to be operational during Fall 2019 semester

Thanks to the generosity of YHC Trustee Pam Rollins, the Young Harris College campus will soon expand. A new band building will be constructed behind the Fine Arts Annex, which is across the street from Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church. The groundbreaking will occur in February 2019, with construction beginning in April or May 2019. Interim Chief Operating Officer Bo Wright said, "Our plan is to have the new band building operational for faculty and students at the beginning of the Fall 2019 semester, but construction is contingent on weather."

The need for a new band facility where band directors can hold class and students can practice was determined in April 2018. Practices are currently held in the Fine Arts Annex, but the tight space causes many issues, like sound traveling throughout the building into class lectures and studio classes. The space is so limited that band

### A TANGIBLE IMPACT

## YHC TO BREAK GROUND ON A NEW BAND BUILDING

students cannot house their instruments in the current facility. Director of Bands Dr. Kerry Bryant said, "Band students have to drag their bulky instruments to and from practice across the highway. We also have to wear earplugs as we practice because our current space is small and doesn't have proper soundproofing."

Over the past couple of years, YHC has seen growth in the number of students participating in band. YHC President Dr. Drew L. Van Horn said, "A new facility dedicated to band will be vital in growing the College's student body and community engagement. Your support of and membership in Friends of the Arts will ensure the continuation of world-class concerts, theatre performances and art exhibits."

For more information on the new band building, please visit [yhc.edu/band](http://yhc.edu/band).

# Beyond the Enchanted Valley

No matter where life takes a student after graduation, they bring along the knowledge and experiences gained during their time in the Enchanted Valley. With a strong foundation built at YHC, these four alumni share how their professors educated, inspired and empowered them to pursue a path of excellence within the arts.



**Courtland Walters, '16**  
Stockbridge, Ga.

"Art, music and theatre are my second language that sometimes say more than my first," said Courtland Walters, '16. Walters' ability to speak through music led him to be accepted into every graduate program he auditioned for

before ultimately deciding to attend Eastern Illinois University. After graduating with his master's degree in May 2018, Walters became a full-time multi-instrumentalist who specializes in all strings, woodwinds and piano. Walters says that without support from YHC, he would never have been able to grow into his fullest potential. "The students, professors, grounds staff and community members I was able to connect with constantly inspired me and helped me through the struggles that come with the college experience, as well as life in general," said Walters. Though Walters thinks in many ways he's already reached his aspirations, he hopes to play in more pit orchestras, create more music and continue to strengthen his abilities.



**Craig Ford, '81**  
Young Harris, Ga.

"At YHC, there seemed to be a lot of hope and optimism for the future, and I felt like I was noticed in the classes as opposed to a larger university, where you are just a social security number and not a person," said Craig Ford, '81. Ford remembers his years and the

connections he made at YHC fondly. He credits Dick Aunspaugh and Vee Brown with aiding him with the skills he needed to succeed outside of the Enchanted Valley and has been fortunate enough to stay in contact with both of them for more than 35 years. Ford said, "A few years after I completed my college education, I fully realized just how much I learned from these two." Ford now serves as a professor at YHC and hopes to pass down what he has learned throughout the years to current YHC students. He looks at the arts as an important way to communicate emotions that we all experience, regardless of cultural or language barriers. "If we are to understand one another and achieve just a modicum of empathy for one another, we need to support all the arts," said Ford.



**Gina Dropp, '15**  
Chicago, Il.

Directly after graduating from YHC in 2015, Gina Dropp made a big move to Chicago, Ill., where she had previously spent eight weeks studying with the well-known comedy theatre The Second City. Dropp navigated her strengths and

weaknesses through another theatre and found that things were more challenging than she originally thought. "Young Harris taught me that there is no use wasting your time feeling defeated when you should be coming up with your next game plan," said Dropp. With her new game plan, Dropp found her love for writing and will soon begin working toward a Master's in Playwriting at Spalding University. She hopes to continue to tell real stories and get back to directing theatre. "This is art. Find your truth and better understand those around you. Respect and love thy fellow human!" said Dropp.



**T'Arica Crawford, '15**  
Atlanta, Ga.

T'Arica Crawford, '15, said art teaches her students about human experience, problem solving and empathy. "Art can teach all of us so much and can be a mirror to humanity in a way that nothing else can," she said. Now a voice teacher at The Performer's Warehouse in

Alpharetta, Ga., Crawford hopes her students never feel afraid to ask for help when needed—something she learned from her YHC voice teacher Karen Calloway. "She always saw the best in me and knew how to push me when I wasn't giving my best. She gave me such great foundations as a singer and was always willing to keep learning to make sure she did everything she could to help me succeed," Crawford said. Crawford hopes to take her talents as a singer to international levels to sing with big bands and orchestras, and she wishes to give back to her community as an arts leader. "Many people have welcomed me in with open arms even though I didn't have many resources, and so I want to continue to pay it forward by lending a hand up in any way I can."

# Message from the Dean



Mark Rollins,  
Dean of the Arts and  
Humanities Division

## DEAR FRIENDS OF THE ARTS,

Another exciting year of arts programming is in full swing at Young Harris College. As the Dean of our newly combined Arts and Humanities Division, I am thrilled and humbled to be working with the talented faculty and students who make our programs so special. I am also grateful for the generous contributions of alumni and supporters like you who help make our performances, exhibitions and cultural opportunities possible.

Highlights of the 2018-19 season include Theatre Young Harris' production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's popular musical "Oklahoma!" The department will also perform Sarah Ruhl's "Eurydice," which reimagines the Orpheus myth from the perspective of his wife. The Campus Gate Art Gallery has many intriguing exhibits planned as well, including works by practicing clinical psychologist Karen Schwartz. Musical events feature traditional favorites such as the Valentine's Day Cabaret and Acapalooza, as well as showcase performances by YHC student ensembles, including the Jazz Band, Guitar Ensemble, Concert Band, Percussion Ensemble and Concert Choir. The Department of Music will also feature faculty artist recitals by Dr. Richard Knepp on guitar and several others. Our Creative Writing program features readings by nationally acclaimed poets Barbara Hamby and David Kirby. The YHC fine arts calendar includes all of this year's sensational events and performances.

We are also excited to welcome some new faculty and open new facilities and programs this year. Former Georgia Music Educators' Music Educator of the Year (2016) Dr. Kerry Bryant joined us as Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Bands, and trumpeter Dr. Javian Brabham began teaching as Instructor of Music and Assistant Director of Bands. Both will work with students in our new band building opening fall semester of 2019, made possible through a generous gift from the Rollins family. We have also launched our new major in graphic design under the direction of award-winning art professor Stan Anderson, who brings a wealth of experience to share with students training for careers in the field. Professor Anderson has designed for clients such as CNN, Lifetime Television, E! Entertainment, Oxygen Network, HLN (Headline News), Nickelodeon Network and the Georgia Aquarium.

Fine Arts students will enjoy enriching opportunities off campus as well this year. Friends of the Arts funding will enable Dr. Richard Knepp and Professor Cynthia DeFoor to direct a study abroad experience for music students, who will trace the footsteps of Mozart, Beethoven and Schumann in the heart of Europe, with stops in Prague, Venice, Vienna and Salzburg.

Our ability to offer the very best in culturally enriching entertainment through our talented students and nationally acclaimed artists and performers depends largely on the support of donors through YHC's Friends of the Arts program. Our faculty, students and I appreciate your generous support. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Mark Rollins, Ph.D.  
Professor of English | Dean of the Arts and Humanities Division

# 2018-2019 Friends of the Arts

MEMBERS LISTED BELOW MADE A GIFT TO FRIENDS OF THE ARTS JULY 1, 2018-FEB. 1, 2019.

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Becky and Ron Beal  
Cindy and Keith DeFoor  
Linda, '68, and Gary, '68, Dye  
Carol and Carlos Martel  
Shirley and Richard McGinnis  
Men on the Move  
Gerardo F. Ojeda Rojas, '13  
April and Robert Rhodes  
Sharp Memorial UMC  
Deborah and David Steed  
Mary V. Weil  
Mary Beth Wiles and Leslie Davis

## GOLD

Anonymous  
Barbara and Bob, '57, Bone  
Karen and Sandy Calloway  
Lu and Phillip, '63, DeMore  
Clara and Frank, '61, Erwin  
Luis O. Garcia  
Diana and Gerry Gutenstein  
Kathleen and Jim Hancock  
Judy and Mike Hohn  
Richard H. Holbraten  
Rebecca and Marvin  
McArthur, '65  
Charlotte, '64, and Jim  
McCloskey  
Jean Miller  
Kathy Fox Powell, '73  
Peggy, '59, and Albert Thrasher

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Bill Carter, '76  
Harvey S. Cohen  
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Linda and Rod McClamon  
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Christine and Greg Mishkin  
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M. Webb  
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Kerry Bryant  
Betsy Chamberlain  
Roberta Chereck and Vince  
Cooper  
Carolyn and Bill Duckworth

Woodie and Bud Dyer  
Susie and David Fann  
Michelle and Bill Gernannt  
Mackenzie and Marvin, '89,  
Harkins  
Charlotte J. Headrick  
Patti and John, '56, Kay  
Carolyn M. King  
Judith and Leon H., '55, Lee  
Brenda W. Maynard  
Margaret L. McCamy  
Janice and Carl Moore  
Jean and Arthur Nethery  
Katherine S. Pierce  
Susan and Darrell Rich  
Diana and Donal Rich  
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Rosemary, '89, and Rusty, '88,  
Royston  
Elaine and Steve, '65, Sharp  
Frances and Larry Smith  
Norma Jean Stewart, '55  
Barbara and Tom Thomas  
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Anne Towns and Bart Hansard  
Carolyn and Jack Towns  
Camille and Drew Van Horn  
Jackie and Tom Volk  
Tommy Walker, '62

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Peggy and Leonard Celaya  
Jo Ellen Clow  
Betty Cooper  
Kathleen E. Crawford  
Michelle and Chris Crawford  
Rosalie DeVane and Steve Sloan  
Karen and John Gallogly  
Anita and Reynard Jants  
M. Ellen English Kiszka, '70  
Zadie Cunningham McCall, '58  
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Doris and Arthur Mott  
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Tess Wieland



## PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN THE ARTS

### at Young Harris College

Your support enables YHC's Division of Fine Arts to continue offering quality programming that benefits student development and enhances the local cultural landscape. Friends of the Arts supports the College's goals to enable students to grow and learn in an environment of uncompromised artistic and academic freedom and integrity.

For more information, contact YHC's Office of Advancement at (706) 379-5173 or visit [yhc.edu/fota](http://yhc.edu/fota).

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\*The tax-deductible portion of your FOTA contribution will be reduced by the value of the goods and services provided by events.



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