



CHATHAM HALL

A Letter from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

Dear Chatham Hall Community,

On Nov. 12, the Chatham Hall Board of Trustees enthusiastically and unanimously voted to approved Sara Stephenson as Chatham Hall's 18th Rector and head of school.

In spending time with Sara, it became immediately apparent she is a strong advocate for girls' education, holds a deep knowledge of boarding schools, and has a clear understanding of how vision and strategy will work together to define the future of Chatham Hall. She is energetic, vibrant, engaging, creative, hardworking, and a problem solver. Those who met her immediately recognized the positive influence she will have on Chatham Hall: "She understands who we are and what we do - most importantly she understands why we do it. I am confident she has the leadership qualities to propel us forward to truly reach our potential."

As we spoke with current and former colleagues, they were effusive in their praise of Sara:

"Sara blankets a community with her presence, and there isn't any task that she won't do."

"Sara is bright, energetic, charismatic, and terrific. At our school, she was loved by students, parents, and faculty alike. She is an all-around school person who made lasting contributions to the school."

Sara's keen understanding of our mission, values, culture, and needs prove that she is truly committed and poised to lead our beloved School into the next decade.

The Board is thrilled to have such a passionate and capable partner as we continue our important work equipping curious thinkers to live lives of impact. She organically recognizes and appreciates the value of Chatham Hall girls across the decades and is ready to invest with us as we envision the future of the School.

We would like to thank members of the Chatham Hall community for actively participating in this selection process and providing invaluable feedback. We would also like to thank the members of the Rector Search Committee for their extraordinary service and dedication to Chatham Hall.

Until you get an opportunity to meet her, my hope is this announcement will convey the true anticipation and excitement of all who met her. I am confident the Chatham Hall community will give Sara, along with her husband Paul, sons Jonah (17) and Jasper (13), and dogs Molly and Stella, a warm purple and gold welcome!

Esto Perpetua,

Alison B. Carter-Cady '91
Board of Trustees Chair

FROM THE COMMUNITY

"Sara had a strong presence and spoke intelligently and with ease. She exudes the expertise and passion to lead Chatham Hall to the next level without question."

"She has a good sense of humor and is approachable, humble, kind, and real. She's focused on relationships and building community."

"She has a wide range of experience and is networked in independent schools. She has a comfortable presence and is able to articulate strengths and messages of the School."

"I can feel her understanding of the present Chatham Hall, her thoughts on the future, and her enthusiasm and confidence in girls' schools."

"Sara is warm and understands what makes Chatham Hall unique and special. She is also about girls' education and seems very easy to work with."



CHATHAM HALL

A Letter from the Rector Search Committee Chairs

Dear Friends,

Following a nearly year-long search in conjunction with The Education Group, it is our distinct honor to announce Sara Stephenson as our next Rector.

Throughout the search process, our top priority was finding a candidate that was a great fit for Chatham Hall and could provide the School with long-term strategic leadership. Sara was one of many strong candidates; what set her apart was her extensive background and commitment to independent schools and her appreciation for the work being done at Chatham Hall, as well as the strong character of our girls and community.

During conversations and visits with community members, many remarked on Sara's love for education, dedication to girls, and kind and welcoming nature. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in independent schools from a long tenure across many areas. An expert in the field, she understands and excels in enrollment, student life management, and working with families on their educational journeys. We believe her international background will help strengthen and expand our already global community while also fortifying connections with current and prospective families.

We join many others who met Sara during the interview process in expressing our excitement for the years to come under her leadership. She will prove to be an outstanding Rector and dynamic role model who will champion Chatham Hall and our remarkable girls into bright and exciting futures.

"I really appreciate her focus on academics and faculty, while also having a strong administrative background. She is charismatic and warm, and I am excited to work for her. She also understands the challenges and opportunities of both boarding schools and single-sex education," a faculty member said.

Her appointment follows an extensive search which received applications from many competitive and attractive candidates. A semi-final group of candidates was reduced to three finalists who each visited campus for two days of meetings with the Rector Search Committee, faculty, students, and parents.

In the coming weeks, a Transition Committee, comprising members representing multiple facets of the Chatham Hall community, will be announced. This committee will execute a thoughtful transition plan ensuring a smooth headship evolution and an opportunity for our greater community to meet and welcome her.

We remain especially grateful to those who participated in this process by completing surveys, attending meetings, and sharing perspectives. We also express gratitude for our fellow Rector Search Committee members who committed many hours and provided wise counsel throughout the search.

Esto Perpetua,

Nina J. Botsford '72 & Adair Hendrickson Ravencraft '02
Rector Search Committee Co-Chairs & Members of the Board of Trustees

RECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

Chairs

Nina J. Botsford '72,
Board of Trustees

Adair Hendrickson
Ravencraft '02,
Board of Trustees

Members

Sonja Fields
Andrews '89 P'22,
Board of Trustees

Josh Doyon,
Dean of Students

Dr. Mary Edmonds,
*English Department
Chair & Faculty*

Venita Fields '71,
Board of Trustees

Stacey Goodwin '83,
*Former Board of
Trustees Chair*

Melanie Kirk Holton
'87, *Board of Trustees*

Danielle Thomas
Kimmel '04,
*Alumnae Council
President*

Kimberly Daniels
Taws '02, *Board of
Trustees*

Parents Advisory
Committee (PAC)
Representatives



CHATHAM HALL

A Message from New Rector Sara Stephenson



Dear Chatham Hall Community,

From the first moment I stepped onto the beautiful campus, I could feel the authentic and palpable warmth of the Chatham Hall community. During my visit I experienced the joyful and purposeful delivery of the mission in every part of the School. I was drawn to the strong intellect and emotional intelligence of the girls, the passion and investment of the faculty and staff, the commitment and drive of the Trustees, and the loyalty and dedication of the alumnae. At the conclusion of my visit, I knew unequivocally that Chatham Hall is an extraordinary school, uniquely dedicated to preparing and empowering young women for a life of impact. After a few short hours on campus, my family and I never wanted to leave.

I am deeply honored to be the next Rector, and I look forward to happily joining and wholeheartedly serving the Chatham Hall family.

Esto Perpetua,
Sara Stephenson

MORE ABOUT SARA STEPHENSON

Sara (pronounced Sahr-uh) Stephenson was born and raised in the United Kingdom and holds dual citizenship in both the U.K. and the U.S. She is a graduate of the University of Bristol where she was valedictorian of her class and holds a Master of Education from Cambridge University.

Sara and her husband, Paul, have been married for 23 years and have two sons: Jonah, who is a student at McCallie School, and Jasper, who is a student at Charleston Day School. Paul, who currently works virtually for Peet's Coffee, is an enthusiastic outdoorsman.

The Stephensons are looking forward to a long residence in Chatham and embracing the strong sense of community it offers. They were drawn to the unique nature that both the School and town communities emanate, building upon a belonging and connection anchored in rich history and traditions. The family is well-known for enthusiastically receiving students and friends into their home, and hope to do the same in the Rectory.

Sara and Paul grew up in the Anglican tradition in England and are members of the Episcopal Church. They value Chatham Hall's Episcopal identity and its commitment to faith-based traditions.



CHATHAM HALL

Sara Stephenson Named New Rector

Sara Stephenson has been appointed to lead Chatham Hall, one of the nation's preeminent girls' boarding schools, into its visionary next chapter.

On Nov. 12, the Board of Trustees enthusiastically and unanimously approved the Rector Search Committee's recommendation to appoint Sara as Chatham Hall's 18th Rector and head of school.

The announcement concludes a nearly year-long comprehensive search process led by Rector Search Committee Co-Chairs Nina J. Botsford '72 and Adair Hendrickson Ravencraft '02, both graduates and current members of the Board of Trustees.

"The search committee was thoroughly impressed not only by the competitive caliber of the candidates, but by their compelling desire to lead Chatham Hall. This, along with the active engagement from all our constituencies and community, truly underscores how special and beloved Chatham Hall is by so many," they said.

In Sara's own words, "I knew unequivocally that Chatham Hall is an extraordinary school, uniquely dedicated to preparing and empowering young women for a life of impact ... I am deeply honored to be the next Rector."

Sara comes to Chatham from Ashley Hall, a school for 660 girls in Charleston, SC where she is currently the director of strategic enrollment management and director of Upper School admission. During her more than five years at Ashley Hall, the school has significantly increased enrollment and advanced its educational mission.

Sara brings 27 years of experience as a teacher and administrator at several outstanding schools. Prior to Ashley Hall, she was director of enrollment at the University School, a school for boys in Cleveland, OH, and previously served as Middle School head at

Hathaway Brown, a school for girls in Shaker Heights, OH. She also served as assistant director of the Middle School at the Blake School in Minneapolis, MN and started her career as a teacher at the Greenhill School in Dallas, TX. Sara thus brings to Chatham Hall a wealth of experience in very strong and diverse schools.

A strong voice in independent schools, Sara has presented and shared her knowledge at national conferences throughout her tenure in education. Most recently, she led a workshop at the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Annual Conference about engaging parents in 2023, and co-wrote an article on the same topic for the Southern Association of Independent Schools. In 2024, she will return to the NAIS Annual Conference to present "Mind the Gap: Making the connection between new families and long-term ambassadors and donors." In the 2022-2023 school year, Sara was named the NAIS Aspiring Head Fellow. She also served as an Association of Independent School Admission Professionals cohort leader in 2020-2021.

In the wider community, Sara is currently the vice president of the Greater Charleston Admission Professionals Society. She also previously served on the Sunbeam Board of the Vocational Guidance Services in Cleveland, OH, and attended the Racial Equity Institute in 2020.

Sara Stephenson stood out for her experience, enthusiasm, commitment, and personality. She holds the qualities and skills that the Board, the Rector Search Committee, and the Chatham Hall community feel are essential to successfully leading the School into its exciting future.

The Rector Search Committee and Board of Trustees were assisted in the search by consultants Katherine Stuart, Dennis Campbell, and Margaret Moore of The Education Group.



CHATHAM HALL

The Rector Search Timeline & Process

In an ever-changing and complex world, the importance of selecting a school's leader cannot be understated. As Chatham Hall enters the newest era in its long history, the Rector Search Committee embarked on the elaborate and vital task of finding and selecting a new Rector. The following timeline details the major project milestones of the process that led the School to who it believes will be a strong and committed Rector starting in the 2024-2025 school year.

May
Search
Consultant
Identified

The Rector Search Committee, which consisted of Trustees, faculty, alumnae, and parents, lead a comprehensive RFP process leading to the selection of The Education Group (TEG) to help conduct the search. The committee was impressed by TEG's experience in leadership searches, their collective understanding of independent and boarding schools, and their commitment to helping us create a collaborative and inclusive search process. Additionally, all three consultants, Katherine Stuart, Dennis Campbell, and Margaret Moore, have a deep understanding of Chatham Hall, our culture, and our region. TEG visited Chatham Hall to round out their understanding of our community and its needs in our next leader.

June
Community
Feedback
Collected

In June, the Rector Search Committee collected feedback from community members via surveys to determine what our constituents view as our most pressing needs in a Rector. The results and feedback were used to create a School & Position Profile to help promote the School to potential candidates. Constructive feedback and ideas from the Chatham Hall community were integral throughout the search process and eventual candidate selection.

July-October
Applications
Received

TEG spent several months actively developing a candidate pool for Chatham Hall. Applicants, both recruited and those who expressed independent interest, submitted their applications throughout the summer and into the fall. The applicant pool was very strong, and garnered interest from candidates across different areas of the country. TEG reviewed many formal applications for the role and presented the top candidates to the committee.

October
Finalists
Determined

The Rector Search Committee reviewed an impressive and diverse pool of candidates. Keeping in mind the future needs of Chatham Hall, the committee identified a long list of semi-finalists who were interviewed to narrow the pool down to three to meet in-person.

November
Finalist Campus
Visits & Rector
Selection

In November, the top three candidates visited Chatham Hall for meetings across two days with students, faculty, staff, and the Rector Search Committee. The meetings yielded invaluable information about each candidate and their visions for Chatham Hall. Following the campus visits, the committee provided the Board of Trustees with a recommendation for the next Rector and Sara Stephenson was unanimously appointed. Sara will begin at Chatham Hall on July 1, 2024.