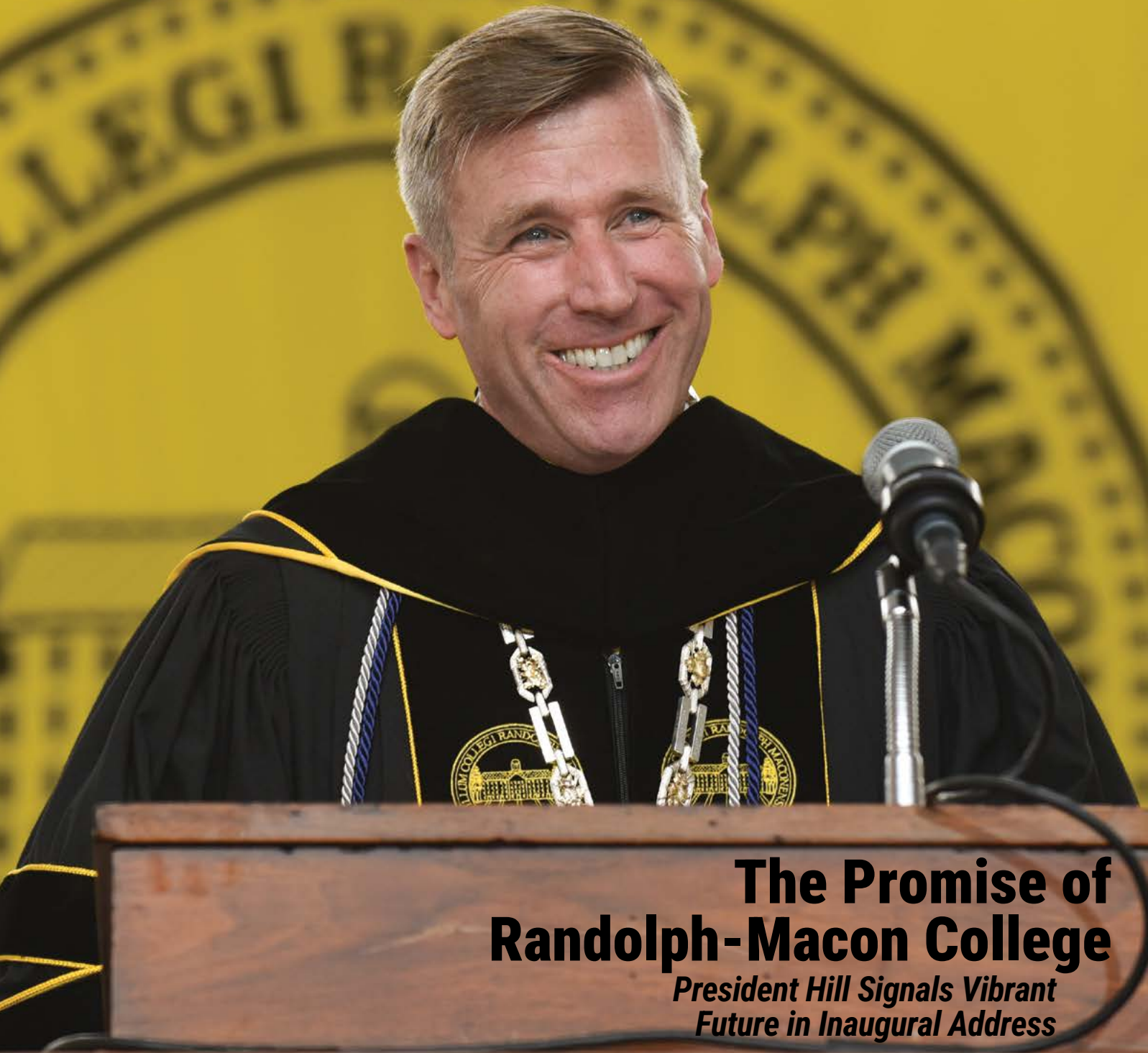


RANDOLPH-MACON **Today**

THE MAGAZINE • SUMMER 2026



The Promise of Randolph-Macon College

*President Hill Signals Vibrant
Future in Inaugural Address*

INSIDE

MEET THE CLASS OF 2026 • THE DOUBLE LIFE OF DR. MARISA CULL



STAR-STUDED WELCOME

With accompaniment from RMC student musicians, Broadway star Tiffany Mann delivered a powerful performance of “This Is Me” during the Inauguration of President Michael E. Hill. From the movie *The Greatest Showman*, this song was chosen by President Hill to serve as an anthem for students, particularly fellow first-generation students, to find strength in what makes them different and unapologetically sing it out to the world.





“It has been a joy to meet you, to share stories, and to dream about the future of our beloved RMC.”

Dear Yellow Jackets and friends,

As I cross the finish line of my first year, I am living the contradiction of feeling as though I have just arrived and as though I have been walking these brick pathways with Wilbur for years.

I'm still a-buzz with memories of Commencement (excuse the pun!), which was an incredible capstone to my first year as RMC's President. What a joy to celebrate the incomparable Class of 2026 and to honor Barclay DuPriest, Jane Parke Batten, and Kwame Alexander with honorary degrees. I count each of these incredible servant leaders as friends, and I was so proud that RMC chose to amplify and celebrate their lives as examples for our graduating seniors and, truly, for all of our students.

The Commencement stage was also the stage for my inauguration; both events were highlights in a year full of memorable moments. The investiture platform provided me with a stellar view of this remarkable community who had come together in celebration of the promise of Randolph-Macon College. In many ways this moment was symbolic of the year that I have had at RMC—an opportunity to glimpse the many who love this College and will do what it takes to ensure it thrives for years to come.

Speaking of the years to come, I am pleased to share more about the vision for the College that I outlined in my inaugural address in the pages that follow. I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to the inaugural committee and to all who helped create a week-long celebration that so beautifully reflected the breadth and spirit of the RMC experience. To everyone who was part of it: thank you.

And to everyone who has been part of this special year, thank you. Whether you marched in the processional, attended an event, said hello in the stands at a game, or simply followed along through photos and stories, I hope you found a way to feel connected to this energizing moment in our history. It has been a joy to meet you, to share stories, and to dream about the future of our beloved RMC.

Summer is here, and I am more grateful than ever to be part of the Randolph-Macon community and more excited than ever for the future we will shape together.

With optimism and appreciation,

Michael E. Hill, Ed.D.
President, Randolph-Macon College

RANDOLPH-MACON **Today**

THE MISSION OF THE RMC MAGAZINE IS TO ENGAGE AND CONNECT alumni, parents, and friends to Randolph-Macon College by sharing information about the College and alumni activities and providing opportunities for involvement and support.

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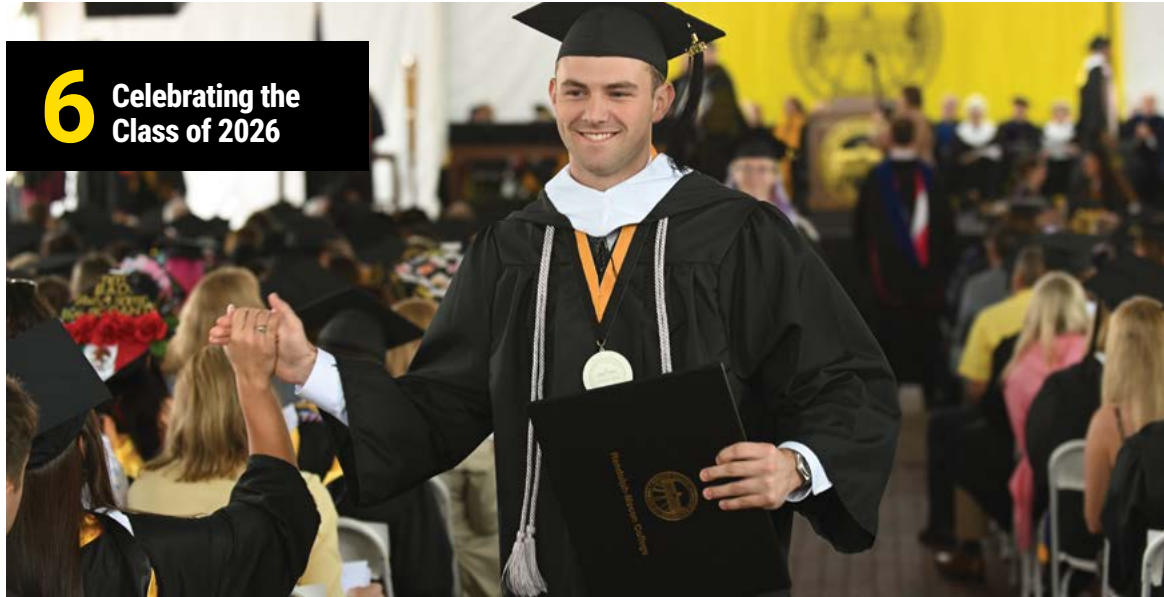
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Advising Pilot Sharpens Focus on Exploration and Student Success

Armed with curriculum maps, degree audits, and their own growing understanding of their strengths and goals, first-year students in the spring session of Yellow Jacket Success Strategies used an April morning to put their plans for college on paper.

The class activity was the culminating exercise in a reimagined first-year advising program at RMC. These students from the Class of 2029 are the first cohort to participate in a two-semester course designed to help students through the exploration stage of a four-year phased approach to their development and success, organized around the acronym EDGE, or "Explore," "Discern," "Grow," and "Embark."

Maddie Smith, the Academic Success Advisor who is the pilot course instructor, emphasized that the goal of the exercise isn't to lock students into a four-year course plan, but rather to help them understand the possibilities before them and the steps they can take now toward future success.

Born out of the College's recent Strategic Plan and its focus on

postgraduate outcomes, the pilot course pairs academic advising with a full curriculum of support as students transition to college. Its aim is to enhance belonging and build the foundation for a rich RMC experience that prepares them for life after graduation. Early indicators of its impact are promising, including improved first-year retention among the cohort, particularly among historically underserved student populations.

"How can we extend beyond a one-size-fits-all model and really meet every student where they are in this process?" Smith said of the philosophy behind her advising approach. "Knowing that students come to college really at different starting points, whether that be academically, emotionally, mentally, etc."

The expanded course time also gives Smith and her educational partners more time to expand the breadth of what future success can mean to students. "A common measure is 'What job did you get?' And that matters, but also, how equipped do you feel to make a difference in your community, out in the world?" said Associate Dean for



Maddie Smith led a pilot course designed to provide a holistic approach to student success.

Academic Wellbeing Jill Grant, who leads RMC's Higgins Academic Center and has played a key role in developing the pilot. "How do we spend the four years with them to help them figure out who they want to be, what they want to do?"

The fall semester of the pilot emphasized exploration, connecting students to campus resources, sharpening study and time management skills, and helping students learn more about themselves as college students. With that foundation, students have spent the spring semester creating a concrete resource for their next steps: a student portfolio, which consists of a resume, a four-year course plan, a LinkedIn profile, and an assessment of their personality and strengths.

Smith's approach is a holistic one, intended to tailor support to individual students. "A lot of my advising conversations really start with 'who are you?' and 'how are you?' without even getting into the academic piece," she explained. In its pilot year, Smith was able to evolve the course in response to student feedback. When students sought practical guidance on financial literacy, Smith set up a "game of life" session in which they picked a job and then sought to match its salary constraints with options for housing, healthcare, entertainment, and more. When asked how they felt after they completed their "adulting"



Students participated in a "game of life" session this spring, the result of feedback for practical financial guidance.



tasks, the refrain was an appreciation for “how realistic it was.”

For Kaiya Wilson '29, the value of the pilot became clearer over time. A Nursing major with a demanding courseload, Wilson was skeptical of being enrolled in an extra spring course and emailed Smith to say as much. But by the end of the semester, Wilson had applied to co-facilitate next year's program as an Advising Captain.

“I've gotten so much insight on what it is to be a Macon student,” Wilson said. “I really want to be that mentor to younger students, because I've really appreciated being mentored by my Captain.”

The final weeks of Smith's course are focused on the next transition—from first-year to sophomore student. She supports students with a plan to progress from exploration to discernment, with a goal of ultimately selecting a major (if they haven't already) and with it, a faculty advisor. Major advisors serve as expert mentors to help guide students through the major, connect to experiential opportunities like internships, and ultimately, support career and graduate school planning.

“The advising relationship is an incredibly important part of the student experience, and we want students to feel supported throughout their time at Randolph-Macon,” explains LaNea Winston, Assistant Dean for Academic Advising. “This approach helps ensure students have a strong circle of support that includes an Academic Success Advisor who helps students explore and discern their path, a Captain who supports their transition and connection to campus life, and a faculty advisor who provides mentorship and guidance within their academic discipline. Together, these relationships create a more intentional and supportive experience as students grow academically, personally, and professionally at RMC.”

Winston will lead an expanded team of Academic Support Advisors who will open this course to all new students at RMC next fall.

Kaiya Wilson and the rest of her cohort will level up to the next phase of their journey—individualized paths built on an even stronger foundation ●

Patrice DiQuinzio to Serve as Interim as National Provost Search Begins

Following Provost Alisa Rosenthal's departure to become Provost and Chief Academic Officer at Denison University, President Hill appointed Patrice DiQuinzio as the College's Interim Provost for the 2026-2027 academic year. During that time, RMC will conduct a national search for a new academic leader with the support of a professional search firm and a committee composed of faculty and staff.

DiQuinzio, who will not be a candidate for the permanent Provost role, brings a depth of experience in academic leadership to the interim role, including service as the Provost and Dean of the College at Washington College in Chestertown, Md., from 2017-2020.

DiQuinzio was selected from a strong pool of candidates identified through the Registry, through which she previously served in multiple interim roles, including as Interim Provost at York College of Pennsylvania and Interim Director of the Center for Access and Academic Success at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

Prior to her time at Washington College, DiQuinzio served as a Professor of Philosophy and Director of Women's Studies at Muhlenberg College from 1994-2008. DiQuinzio earned her B.A. from Villanova University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Bryn Mawr College.

“I'm delighted that I can help Randolph-Macon during this time of transition. As a premier liberal arts college that has broadened its focus to include pre-professional programs and is resolutely focused on student success, RMC is on the path to an exciting future,” DiQuinzio said.

DiQuinzio began her work on April 13, allowing for several weeks of overlap before Rosenthal's departure.

The College hopes to name its next provost next winter.

Rosenthal joined Randolph-Macon as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in 2019, bringing with her a distinguished academic record as a political scientist, educator, and leader. Over her tenure, she was a steady champion for faculty, a thoughtful steward of our academic programs, an advocate and fan for athletics, and a principled voice in institutional decision-making.

During her tenure, the College built and achieved appropriate accreditation milestones in a new graduate PA program, BSN nursing program, and Engineering program. She also shepherded other important innovations in the curriculum, like a new major in data science. In 2025, Rosenthal was awarded the Samuel Nelson Gray Award for her excellence as an administrator. ●



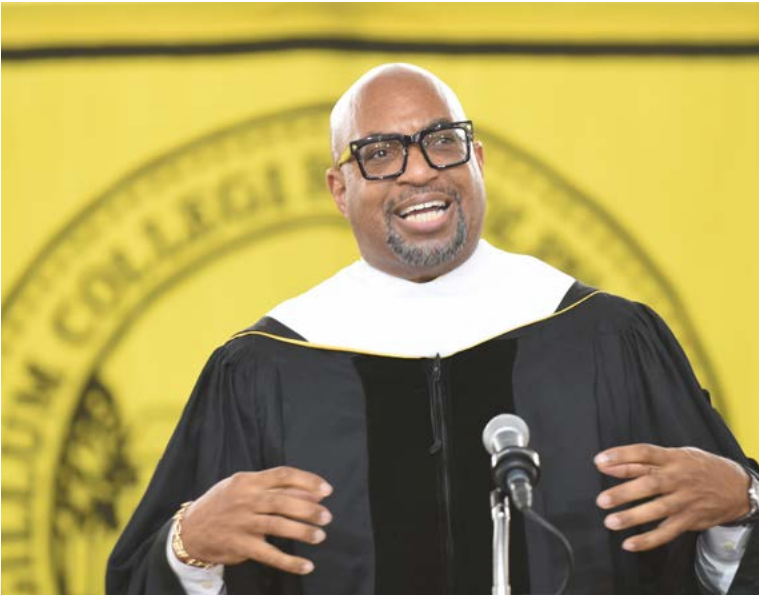
Commencement Celebration

Randolph-Macon College celebrated the Class of 2026 with Commencement ceremonies on Sunday, May 24 at Brown Fountain Plaza. The College community came together to cheer on 374 graduates as they walked across the stage, joining the ranks of RMC's passionate alumni and continuing their personal and professional journeys with purpose.



Senior speaker **Sydney Waldrop '26**, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Exceptional Education, commended her classmates for the resilience they showed throughout their collegiate careers. "Not every path here has been smooth or straightforward. For many of us, there were moments where things didn't go as planned, where we faced setbacks, self-doubt, or challenges that felt bigger than we expected," she said. "But what defines us isn't that those moments happened. It's that we showed up anyway. We adapted. We kept moving forward."





Kwame Alexander, a poet, *New York Times* bestselling author of 45 books, and Emmy Award-winning television producer, served as Commencement speaker, sharing stories from his artistic journey in the form of life lessons for the graduates. "Make sure that those around you help keep the flame of your aim and your aspiration lit, not try to extinguish it," he said. "Community is everything—people who are going to support your purpose and your progress." He ended his remarks in appropriately poetic fashion, saying "Congratulations, the next stanza is yours."



RMC conferred three honorary Doctor of Humanities degrees to eminent friends of the College, including Commencement speaker **Kwame Alexander**. **Jane Parke Batten** is a nationally respected philanthropist and civic leader whose lifetime of service has advanced education, environmental stewardship, and community well-being. The crowd got to its feet for a standing ovation when retiring campus store manager **Barclay DuPriest** was awarded her degree. 🟡



Vivian Blake-Hernandez '26, **Aubrey Hlubb '26**, **Aaliyah Hartwill '26**, and **Tanza Ferguson '26** marked their achievement as first-gen graduates at the First-Generation Student and Family Celebration the day before Commencement.





RMC Awarded SCHEV Grant for Summer Bridge Program

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) has awarded Randolph-Macon College a grant of \$30,000 to participate in the Summer Bridge Pilot Program for 2026. This grant, combined with matching funds from RMC, will support programming to ensure first-generation students begin their college journey academically prepared and confident in their belonging on campus.

The Summer Bridge program will serve up to 50 incoming first-year students enrolled at RMC for the fall 2026 semester. A collaborative effort across the College's Student Engagement Center, Office of Admissions, and Higgins Academic Center will provide structured academic preparation, early onboarding, and meaningful community building so that students arrive not simply admitted, but ready to thrive.

"As a first-generation college student myself, I know firsthand how transformative early support and connection can be," said Dr. James McGhee, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Associate Dean of Students. "This bridge program represents a meaningful investment in our students' success, and we are grateful to SCHEV for their support and to the College for its continued commitment to expanding opportunities and support for first-generation students." ●

Four Yellow Jacket Legends Named to Inaugural ODAC Hall of Fame

To celebrate its 50th year of operation in 2025-26, the Old Dominion Athletic Conference inducted 50 members into its inaugural ODAC Hall of Fame class, including four key figures from Randolph-Macon's athletic history.

- » **Ted Keller '53**, standout football and baseball player, football and golf head coach, and athletic director
- » **Carroll LaHaye**, women's basketball head coach for 38 seasons
- » **Megan Silva Schultz '06**, women's basketball standout and National Player of the Year
- » **Hugh Stephens '41**, baseball captain and basketball player, baseball coach, and athletic director

10 Under 10

Randolph-Macon College celebrated the 2026 class of recipients of the 10 Under 10 Awards on Saturday, March 14.

Established by RMC's Young Alumni Board, the awards recognize young alumni who have achieved remarkable success within 10 years of graduating from RMC. This year's honorees, listed alphabetically, are:

Tara Balasubramanian '18 (not pictured) Resident, University of Maryland Medical Center Department of Emergency Medicine

Neecole Gregory '18 Director, Morton Museum of Collierville History

Corbitt Grow '19 (not pictured) Director of Business Development, Anderson Technologies

Trent Kelleher '20 Founder and Managing Director, Olde Towne Smokehouse

Amanda Metell '17 Intellectual Property Associate, Mintz Levin

Sonny Murphy '16 Lieutenant, Arlington County Fire Department

Nichollette St. Martin '20 Postdoctoral Researcher, Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Chemical and Life Science Engineering

Kirby Struhar '18 Professional Staff Member, U.S. House of Representatives

Korey Turner '20 Senior Investment Analyst, Virginia Retirement System

Alexandra Wilhelm '17 Physician Assistant, VCU Health Bone Marrow Transplant Team

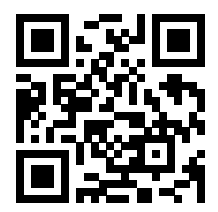


SEEN & HEARD



At the April 24, 2026 Inauguration of President Michael E. Hill, award-winning poet Kwame Alexander closed the ceremony with an original poem, encouraging Dr. Hill to “step purposefully into the work, speak confidently into the silence, and serve gratefully into the blue hour of each day.”

Scan the QR code to watch the full poem performance.



“Tell me what you love about your identity... how do we relate positively to each other? It’s diversity work as a potluck supper, not as a melting pot and not as a battlefield.”

- Dr. Eboo Patel on diversity work as a celebration of identity



Dr. Eboo Patel, founder and president of Interfaith America, delivered the Ira Andrews Lecture inside Blackwell Auditorium as part of the week-long celebration of inaugural events. His remarks touched on a range of subjects under the theme of “sacred unions.”



After he was officially invested as RMC President, Michael Hill shed his regalia from Vanderbilt, where he earned his doctorate in education, and was presented with custom-made RMC regalia by Amber Bellamy '26 and other students, a symbol of the student body choosing him as one of their own.



Annie Pruitt '27 shows a future Yellow Jacket field hockey player the proper technique during National Girls & Women in Sports Day.



The Virginia Museum of Fine Art brought its Artmobile to campus in March, displaying the exhibit "Virginia as America: Navigating 'Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness'" in recognition of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.



RMC Softball officially dedicated the Halie Dru Sadler Press Box in recognition of the Sadler family's deep commitment and generosity to Randolph-Macon athletics and as a tribute to their daughter.



“Poetry allowed me to be as vulnerable as I wanted to be, and so here I am all these years later, still writing, and still creating, and still crafting.”

- Roscoe Burnems

National Slam Poetry Champion and Richmond’s first poet laureate Roscoe Burnems visited McGraw-Page Library for an evening of poetry, performance, and conversation. The event, hosted in partnership with the Multicultural Programming Board, was part of what will become RMC’s new Virginia Creators Series, a signature focus of the College’s new Humanities Initiatives.

Victorian-era aristocratic norms and rules were critiqued inside the Cobb-Kesler Theater during this adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s famous play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. On stage, from left to right, is Dylan McGrory '29 as Reverend Canon Chasuble, Finnian Koehler '29 as Lady Bucknell, and James Lenihan '28 as Algernon Moncrieff.



On the 101st day of their Walk for Peace, the Venerable Monks—who became an international sensation walking across the country from Texas—stopped at Randolph-Macon to deliver a peace-sharing talk to thousands gathered inside the Brock Recreation Center.



“I always tell myself, regardless of what people give to you, you always give back love, kindness, and compassion.”

- Venerable Monk Pannakara



Raiva Khandpur '26 takes part in the colorful celebration of Holi, a Hindu festival commemorating the triumph of good over evil.



Computer science major Layan Bashir Abdalla '27 shares her work using code to simplify reading medication labels. Her presentation was part of the Student Symposium of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work, alongside hundreds of her peers.

STUDENTS

Randolph-Macon's Class of 2026 is off, with bright futures across a wide range of passions and careers. Get to know some of the newest members of our alumni community.

ABBY MCGOWAN

Major: Engineering

Minors: Physics, Mathematics, and Computer Science

Hometown: Rockville, Va.

Future Plans: Work for Dominion Energy at North Anna Power Station as a Site Nuclear Engineer.

Most Inspiring Yellow Jacket: Professor Renee Reisenweaver. Her passion and approach to teaching physics is why I became an Engineering major!

Favorite RMC Memory: Our rivalry game against Hampden-Sydney every year! It's so fun cheering for the winning team and hanging out with friends and family at the tailgate.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS



WILEY EUBANK

Major: Political Science

Minor: Communication Studies

Hometown: Raleigh, N.C.

Future Plans: Attending the George Washington University Law School, then working as an attorney.

Most Inspiring Yellow Jacket: Coach Josh Laux '02 of the Men's Soccer team taught me so much about being a great leader, listener, and man. He challenged me constantly, and supported me through both good times and bad. He taught me about extreme accountability, leadership through service, and pursuing meaningful goals relentlessly. His care and investment in me as a player and person led to immense personal growth. The opportunity to lead the team as captain pushed me to embrace the uncomfortable and develop critical skills.

Favorite RMC Memory: My favorite RMC memories were at the Theta Chi Pig Roast the last couple years. Surrounded by family, friends, food, and great music was the perfect way to cap off each year.



LILLY FOWLER

Major: Psychology

Minors: French and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

Hometown: Phoenix, Md.

Future Plans: I am pursuing a master's degree in School Counseling at Loyola University of Maryland as a CRISP (Culturally Responsive and Inclusive School-Counselor Preparation) Scholar.

Most Inspiring Yellow Jacket: Madame Sandrine Teixidor in the French Department inspires me to be bold, think critically, and chase my passions. Her energy and enthusiasm in the classroom allow her students to gain confidence in the French language. Madame empowers us to experience French through culture, conversation, and curiosity, and I am so lucky to have her as a mentor!

Favorite RMC Memory: My favorite RMC memory has to be beating 16th-ranked Christopher Newport during my junior lacrosse season for the first time in ten years!

AMBER BELLAMY

Major: Political Science

Minor: Black Studies

Hometown: Henrico, Va.

Future Plans: I plan to take a gap year working before applying to law school, with an eye towards employment law or working as legal counsel for a university.

Most Inspiring Yellow Jacket: Dr. Donelle Boose! One of the first classes that I took at RMC was Intro to Black Studies with Dr. Boose and this course challenged me, and taught me so much about Black history and how to think critically. Dr. Boose has continued to be an amazing professor, and she's also shown up for me in places I did not expect, including my New Member Presentation Show for my sorority! Dr. Boose solidified my decision in becoming a Black Studies minor and all of her classes have helped shape me into who I am as a student during my time here at Macon.

Favorite RMC Memory: My favorite RMC memory was traveling outside of the country (for the first time) for a study abroad course in Japan! I took Comparative Legislatures, taught by my advisor, Dr. Lauren Bell, in J-term 2025.





SYDNEY WALDROP

Majors: History and Exceptional Education

Minor: Secondary Education

Hometown: Studley, Va.

Future Plans: I will be a middle school social studies teacher at Oak Knoll Middle School for Hanover County Public Schools.

Most Inspiring Yellow Jacket: I have two. Dr. Mathias Bergmann, my History advisor, supported me since my freshman year and has pushed me to strengthen my knowledge of history. Dr. Julie Dauksys from the Education department was a huge supporter and pushed me to be more confident in myself as a person, teacher, and student.

Favorite RMC Memory: My favorite memory is getting to present a professional development session with Dr. Dyanis Conrad for the Education department in the spring of my senior year. My session was on Seeing the Whole Learner: Supporting Dyslexia in the Classroom. During this session, I was able to share my story of having a learning disability and support future teachers in creating a successful classroom for their students with learning disabilities, specifically dyslexia.

AMR AREIKAT

Majors: Economics and Business with a Finance concentration

Minor: Accounting

Hometown: McLean, Va.

Future Plans: Pursue a Master's in Business Analytics and AI at Johns Hopkins University.

Most Inspiring Yellow Jacket: Coach Josh Merkel. He shows up every day, along with his dedication, discipline, and work ethic towards the basketball program and relationships.

Favorite RMC Memory: Late night study sessions for Accounting and hanging out with my teammates after winning games.





PETER MARTINEZ

Major: Business with a Management concentration

Minor: Communication Studies

Hometown: Kutztown, Pa.

Future Plans: I will be commissioning as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army as a Field Artillery Officer and will be stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington.

Most Inspiring Yellow Jacket: My friend Patrick Moyer '24. He was a member of my fraternity, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, played on the lacrosse team, and was also a cadet in ROTC. After commissioning in 2024, he continued to mentor me throughout my ROTC journey and has remained a valuable mentor during his time serving in the Army.

Favorite RMC Memory: My favorite Randolph-Macon memory is Sigma Alpha Epsilon's annual Pig Roast and the opportunity to spend time with all of my friends.

AC TETTERTON

Majors: Biology and Chemistry

Hometown: Henrico, Va.

Future plans: I will begin VCU's M.D./Ph.D. Medical Scientist Training Program in June.

Most Inspiring Yellow Jacket: My labmate Hailey Pierce '28 inspires me. She's one of the friendliest people I know and greets everyone we pass in the hallways or on the street. She was one of the biggest encouragers to me as I was wrapping up my research project in the last few months.

Favorite RMC Memory: During Biochem II, the five students in the class (and Dr. Nora Green) traded off bringing breakfast every Friday. One time, we spent 20 minutes of class toasting bagels in the chemistry core toaster. It was great.



The Promise of Randolph-Macon College

*A Vision for a Liberal Arts
Institution on the Rise*

Written by Michael E. Hill, Ed.D.

When I sat down to write the address for my inauguration as Randolph-Macon's 16th President, I asked myself: what can I share at this time in our College's history that is worthy of the moment? How does Randolph-Macon fit into the world at a time when questions are swirling about higher education and the liberal arts?

If you attended or watched the inauguration ceremony, the following words may sound familiar. But I wanted to reiterate the vision I have for our beloved RMC, and the inspiration I found in two words from its mission: *mind* and *character*.

Randolph-Macon College has endured for almost 200 years because it has remained faithful to a central ideal: the formation of young people, and specifically of their mind and their character. RMC has not chased every passing trend or offered commentary on every burning issue. Instead, it has remained faithful to a central idea, which has allowed RMC to endure, developing generations of alumni ready to serve their communities.

When Peele Hall was gifted to the College by the Carnegie Corporation in 1922, it was dedicated to the memory of Walter Hines Page, a student at the College from 1872-1876 who served as U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain from 1913-1918. Ambassador Page reflected on his aspirations for the role of education in our nation, saying, "I believe in the perpetual regeneration of society, in the immortality of democracy, and in growth everlasting."

At its heart, education is not merely about imparting information. It is about perpetual regeneration and growth everlasting, of personal exploration and formation—of the mind, yes, but also of a person's character. It is about helping students learn how to think, how to judge, how to speak, how to listen, and ultimately, how to live.

We are in a moment when those capacities in our society are being tested. Our public life is marked by speed rather than reflection, assertion rather than healthy debate, certainty rather than curiosity. Disagreement too often hardens into division, and difference is mistaken as a threat.

In such a climate, the work of Randolph-Macon is not peripheral to society's needs, it is essential. This is a defining moment of strength and tremendous opportunity for Randolph-Macon College.

Our enrollment is growing, and we've charted a course to be even more selective; demand for an RMC experience is increasing. We've integrated what has long been an expectation of rigorous academic inquiry with a strong focus on real-world experiences to prepare our students for lives of meaning and purpose. Our financial position is strong, with balanced or surplus budgets for more than four decades. Our Yellow Jackets regularly dominate our athletic conference and beyond. Alumni giving and volunteerism demonstrate the enduring impact of an RMC education, and our participation percentage would make almost any institution envious.

With this momentum at our backs, it is time to shift our mindset from scarcity to abundance, or from what we can't do to what we can, from incremental improvement to bold ambition. What is the essential work for Randolph-Macon as it approaches its bicentennial and beyond?

The answer lies in our reaffirming and fully realizing our core mission: *A Randolph-Macon College liberal arts education develops the minds and character of each student.* We have an opportunity to fulfill the promise of our mission not through something new and shiny but rather through a reclamation of our long-held beliefs.

These long-held beliefs, grounded in our founding Methodist heritage, hold that education is a means of



of President Mic



attaining freedom from ignorance and prejudice, and that education itself must be accessible to all.

These beliefs promise an education that embraces each individual's journey while recognizing that we are strongest when the threads of those journeys create a unified tapestry in service to one another and to the world.

These beliefs promise an RMC education rooted in resilience, purpose, and contribution. An RMC education must be more than coursework. It must also be an experience of discovering one's potential. Our promise is to form leaders, change-makers, and citizens who go on to live lives of meaning and who believe they have an obligation to serve others.

Higher education does not exist to spare students from difficult ideas. Nor does it exist to tell them what to think. It exists to build minds capable of reason and characters capable of responsibility. It exists to prepare students not only for employment, but for citizenship, leadership, and moral agency in a complex world.

We proudly declare that an RMC education is one that is "up close and future ready." In an era where the legitimacy of higher education is almost exclusively measured by a starting salary, our mission of pursuing mind and character implores us not to forget the power of a liberal arts education. And here's the best part: this is not a binary choice between celebrating the liberal arts or preparing students for careers.

A recent study indicated that 70 percent of the skills used in most jobs will change by 2030. For anyone counting, that is less than four years away. If someone is to succeed in the marketplace of tomorrow, a college must transform its graduates into lifelong learners who can adapt as the world changes. In short, college can't be about preparation for the first job alone; it must also be about readying graduates for the one after that and the one after that. At a time when the future of work is at best hazy, the ability to adapt to uncertainty is priceless.

Given the tectonic shifts in our society, a liberal arts education—a Randolph-Macon liberal arts education—is the best form of professional preparation. It expands our horizons, develops our capacities, and increases our flexibility. It helps students understand our place in history, to ask and answer ethical questions, and to explore eternal concepts. It develops our students' capacity for interpretation, reflection, and expression. It strengthens their abilities to address big, difficult problems. And it will increasingly prepare them to lead meaningful careers and purpose-filled lives.

And all of these things match what employers are indicating they most want in their employees: problem-solving, the ability to work in a team, the ability to communicate, and creativity.

It is precisely that last ingredient that Randolph-Macon will strengthen in the coming years. We have recently launched the Humanities Initiatives to reinforce the importance of the humanities in a well-rounded education. We will prove that poetry and prose, history and religion, the richness of language—all those things that make us human—are not superfluous but critical. In a world that feels ever more automated, we can never let go of the question: what does it mean to be human?

This, coupled with a renewed emphasis on the importance of the arts at RMC, will ensure that our graduates can unlock the part of themselves that will not only set them up for successful lives but remember why life is worth living in the first place.

Further work will support professionalism within the humanities, with focus on internship opportunities and alumni networking. Plans also include an exploration of interdisciplinary work on campus, and how the humanities can integrate with medical, digital, and other fields to solve real-world problems. Finally, a new event series will bring important voices to campus and highlight creators from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

We will continue to nurture our growth in science, engineering, business, and health professions and continue to nourish and challenge our steadfast programs in other areas. We affirm that a liberal arts education must possess all these elements to ensure the full humanity and possibility of our graduates.

A Randolph-Macon College education must always train reason, cultivate empathy, invite reflection on purpose and transcendence. Together, these skills form habits of mind and heart that no society can afford to lose.

These foundational skills that come from a liberal arts base do not stand in opposition to innovation or professional preparation. They give both their moral compass. They ensure that progress is guided by wisdom, not merely speed; by judgment, not merely capacity.

ABOUT THE HUMANITIES INITIATIVES

Led by Dr. Bob Volpicelli, Professor of English and Director of the Humanities Initiatives, work is already underway to bring this multifaceted vision to life. One element will strengthen the ties between RMC and the Richmond arts community, with additional funding for students to visit museums, performance venues, and even plans to pilot a Richmond-based travel course scheduled for January Term in 2027.

At Randolph-Macon, we see this in the moral compass provided by our dedicated coaches, who insist that winning is second to the way we play and how we show up in life. We see this when one-third of our student body participates in a service day in Ashland, knowing that giving back is as important as what is given. We see this when our faculty insist that AI be used as a tool but never as a substitute for individual thinking.

I have long held a calling toward interfaith engagement, discourse over the divide, and a belief in a pluralistic society—one in which a diverse community not only maintains their unique identities but also allows different beliefs to flourish without repression. A society that does that well is one in which young people have the greatest chance to thrive.

“Our promise is to form leaders, change-makers, and citizens who go on to live lives of meaning and who believe they have an obligation to serve others.”



Randolph-Macon must form students who can engage difference without fear, debate without cruelty, and lead without arrogance. This notion of pluralism is not the absence of conviction—it is the discipline of holding convictions while remaining open to learning, open to civil dialogue as a strength. While this has always been a part of an RMC education, we will strengthen this commitment in the years to come, helping our students build communities in a divided world and develop habits of dialogue and mutual respect.

That is why I am so proud to announce the creation of the RMC Pluralism Project to help infuse collaborative thinking and discourse as a way to infuse character in practice. In this way and others, we will produce graduates ready to lead and young people ready to be the change-makers of tomorrow.

This commitment to the formation of mind and character matters especially for those students for whom this College represents a first step into unfamiliar territory. For first-generation students, a liberal arts education is more than an academic experience—it is an act of transformation. It provides not only knowledge, but confidence; not only skills, but voice; not only opportunity, but belonging.

I am a first-generation college student myself. My life’s story was only possible because a school like Randolph-Macon College saw potential in me and removed the hurdles not of my own making. Randolph-Macon must pay close attention to this as we seek to serve the increasing numbers of students who have all the potential in the world without the opportunity and privilege to pursue it.

Randolph-Macon is designed to cultivate potential. It recognizes talent before pedigree, and promise before polish. When we educate students of all backgrounds well, we do more than change individual lives, we strengthen families, communities, and the very fabric of society itself.

Our commitment is clear: every student who comes to this College deserves to have their mind challenged and their character strengthened. They deserve mentors who know their names, classrooms that demand seriousness, and a community that holds them to high standards because it believes in what they can become.

And those high standards mean this College must have even higher expectations for itself. Randolph-Macon College must meet this moment by adding new facilities to elevate the education of our students and to celebrate the research of our faculty. We must ensure our athletes have state-of-the-art facilities to be competitive, for sure, but also spaces that demonstrate our care for our athletes as human beings: facilities that value their health as much as their competitive spirits. Our growing enrollment has put pressure on our ability to preserve our identity as a residential college. We must add new places for an ever-increasing number of Yellow Jackets to live and to grow into the leaders of tomorrow. And to remain competitive, we must add to our endowment, ensuring access for a Randolph-Macon College education for anyone we welcome into our Hive.

It is time for RMC to seize this moment, to claim its rightful place as an exemplar of all that is right in higher education, and to resource itself not only for this bicentennial but for its many years to follow. And we must demand of ourselves that same excellence: in teaching, in serving, and in advocating, we must be an example of excellence in everything we do.

I am so often struck how the founders of a place can see something timeless. Our founding idea provides two words with a powerful roadmap for the future: *mind* and *character*.

I begin my presidency at Randolph-Macon College with humility, confidence, and hope—a hope rooted in the enduring power of an RMC education to change lives and to strengthen society. May we remain faithful to that promise, and may we continue, together, to build minds destined for greatness and characters ready to help heal a broken world.

This is the promise of Randolph-Macon College! This is the promise made by Randolph-Macon College!

As I begin my journey as Randolph-Macon’s 16th President, I promise to do all that I can and give all that I am to ensure that this college is a safe harbor for anyone who wants to harness the power of education to transform their own lives and the world. I join my promise with the promise of Randolph-Macon College, and I ask each of you to do the same.

Go Jackets! ●

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

President Hill's office in Peele Hall is a carefully curated treasure trove of artifacts that offer a glimpse into the life and journey of RMC's 16th President.

While president of the non-profit Youth for Understanding, Dr. Hill was a passionate advocate for student educational exchanges. He personally hosted one of the program's participants for a year in the United States. As a gift, his exchange son Alen, from Finland, brought him a mug featuring the character Moominpappa, the father figure from a beloved Scandinavian cartoon. Ten years later, this Moomin sculpture serves as a loving reminder of this lasting father-son bond.



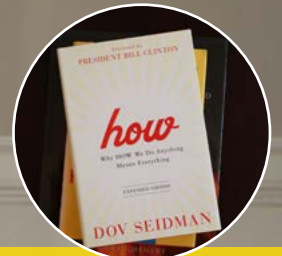
This Voltron toy was a gift from Chautauqua's executive team after Dr. Hill shared that he'd coveted it as a child. It doubles as a metaphor for leadership—five separate beings coming together to create a power greater than their individual parts. (And don't call it a Transformer, unless you want a lecture.)



Before introducing him as a speaker at Chautauqua Institution, Dr. Hill was recruited by world-renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma to participate in his backstage ritual: screaming in each other's faces to get endorphins flowing.



A gift from RMC's Captains to commemorate Dr. Hill's first move-in day.



Dr. Hill's shelves host a wide variety of subjects, including Professor Emeritus James Scanlon's histories of RMC and some of Hill's favorite leadership texts. This April, Hill was one of 22 invited guests for a Summit on Moral Leadership, co-hosted by Dov Seidman's HOW Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation in Italy.



This hard hat is a souvenir from one of Dr. Hill's earliest fundraising campaigns, a \$125 million bid to build a new theater complex in Washington, D.C. for Arena Stage.

A work from Herbert Gentry, whose paintings were featured in an inaugural exhibit at The Quick Arts Center at St. Bonaventure University, where Dr. Hill served as Executive Director. The African American expressionist went on to global acclaim, but the exhibit at Hill's alma mater was among the first major museum exhibits when the center opened its new F. Donald Kenney Museum under Dr. Hill's leadership. Gentry's work is now part of the collection of the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian Institution, among others.



Man's best friend, and officially the Dog Mayor of Ashland, Wilbur the golden retriever has his own spot in Dr. Hill's office. (Actually, Wilbur believes all the spots in the President's Office are his, but...)

FACULTY & STAFF

Each year at Commencement, retiring faculty with more than 10 years at RMC are recognized with the Bruce M. Unger Award, which honors the memory of Political Science professor Bruce Unger. This year, RMC recognized four beloved and distinguished professors who contributed a combined 115 years of service to the College.



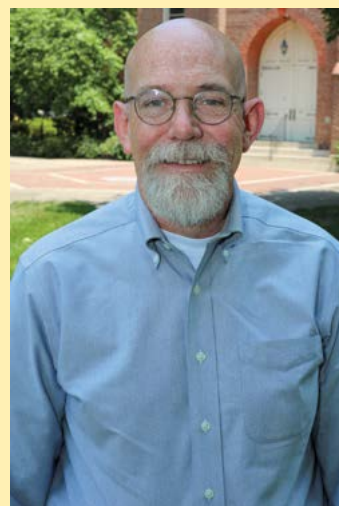
Dr. Tom Badey, Professor of Political Science



Dr. Chas. Gowan, Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies



Dr. Tom Peyser, Professor of English



Dr. Ed Showalter '84, Professor of Business

Kenya's Nairobi National Museum opened its 2,500-square-foot "Secrets of the Mara River" exhibition, featuring the work of Assistant Professor of Biology **Ray Schmidt** that studies fish and biodiversity in the region.



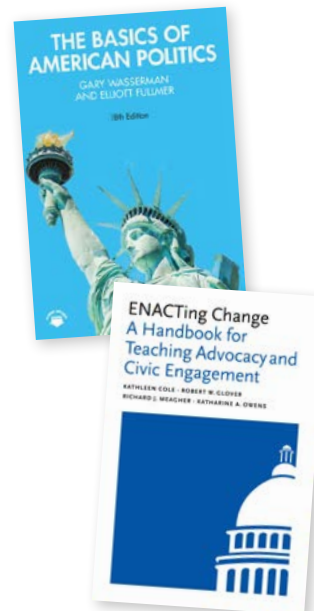
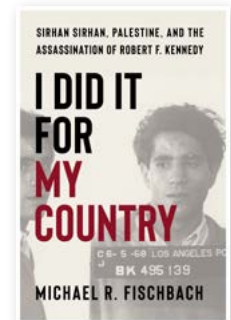
Volpicelli



Boose

President Hill has tapped Professor of English **Robert Volpicelli** as the Director of the Humanities Initiatives (see more on page 20), while Assistant Professor of History and Black Studies **Donelle Boose** has been selected as the Applied Humanities Fellow for the 2026-2027 academic year, when she will create a Public History Practicum course.

Professor of History **Michael Fischbach** published *I Did It for My Country: Sirhan Sirhan, Palestine, and the Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy* (Columbia University Press).



Professors of Political Science **Elliott Fullmer** and **Rich Meagher** have each published new texts. Fullmer co-authored *The Basics of American Politics* (Routledge), while Meagher co-authored *ENACTing Change: A Handbook for Teaching Advocacy and Civic Engagement* (Brandeis University Press).

RMC 1 2 3

3 QUESTIONS WITH TIFFANY BIRDSONG, ASSOCIATE PROVOST AND DEAN FOR STUDENT SUCCESS



Dr. Tiffany Birdsong joins Randolph-Macon as Associate Provost and Dean for Student Success, leading the College's new Center for Student Success and helping advance RMC's vision for an integrated and individualized path for each student toward post-graduate success. A former faculty member, Chief Academic Officer, and Chief of Staff at Richard Bland College, Birdsong is returning to RMC after serving as an American Council on Education Fellow on campus in 2024-2025.

Q1 *What drew you to student success work?*

My path began well before the classroom, as a clinical psychologist, helping individuals clarify their goals, overcome barriers, and build lives of meaning and purpose. That early work shaped how I understand success: as something that develops through support, structure, and belief in one's potential. It was this perspective I carried into higher education, where I saw every day how much students are balancing—and how powerful it can be when an institution helps them see a clear path forward. At Richard Bland, I had the opportunity to help shape a Guided Pathways to Success model built around clear academic maps, proactive advising, and embedded support. That work reinforced my belief that student success is not the result of one office or one intervention. It is built over time through relationships, structure, encouragement, and high expectations.

Q2 *You've described student success as a combination of "clarity, care, and challenge." What does that mean?*

Students thrive when they know where they are going, when they know people are invested in them, and when they are challenged to stretch toward their full potential. Clarity helps students make intentional choices. Care helps them feel seen and supported. Challenge helps them grow in confidence and capability. When those three things come together, students are better prepared not only to persist and graduate, but to launch into lives of purpose and opportunity.

Q3 *What are you most excited to help build at Randolph-Macon?*

I am excited to help bring together the people, programs, and partnerships that support students across all four years of their RMC experience—uniting our work around a shared purpose of helping every student thrive. Through the Center for Student Success, we have an opportunity to connect first- and second-year transition programs, academic support, advising, career preparation, and experiential learning in ways that help students move intentionally through each phase of their academic journey. RMC already does this work with tremendous heart and I'm looking forward to helping make the path even clearer, more coordinated, and more powerful for every Yellow Jacket. 🟡

The Double Life *of* Professor Marisa Cull



It was a Thursday morning in her 8 a.m., 200-level English course titled “Dangerous Women: Romance Heroines in the Modern Age” when Dr. Marisa Cull, the Jean Renner Short Professor in the Liberal Arts, shared a part of herself that she has never revealed to students.

Her carefully curated lecture slides pictured side-by-side headshots: on the left, a cropped photo featuring Cull in a blazer and dress on RMC’s campus, and on the right, a photo of her in a white t-shirt and trendy jeans on a pink bench with what she self-deprecatingly described as “fabulous lighting, hair, and make-up—obviously.”

The trendy headshot is Cull, but not exactly. It’s Cull as Kate Clayborn, the bestselling author of nine novels. Kate Clayborn is a pseudonym under which Dr. Cull has amassed both critical acclaim and commercial success in the red-hot fiction genre of romance.

As she shared her secret in her Haley Hall classroom, mouths dropped. An excited murmur went through the room. At one point, the whole class began to clap.

Cull explained to her students—the first students with whom she has shared the details of her parallel career—that she has sought to keep her professor and author lives separate in order to keep focus in both. “It is NOT because I am ashamed,” she said emphatically, referencing the very course in which they are enrolled. “I think I’ve made very clear to you in this class that I love and respect romance as a genre.”

Cull’s journey as a fiction author wasn’t exactly planned. A respected Shakespeare scholar, her academic publications focus on British literature, with a particular interest in postcolonial and feminist theory. She joined the RMC faculty in 2008, shortly after earning her Ph.D. from Ohio State University. She earned tenure in 2014, was promoted to full professor in 2019, and was honored with the endowed Jean Renner Short Professorship in 2021.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, she has always been a reader. But if you thought

English professors only enjoy a certain kind of literature, Cull is quick to disabuse you of this stereotype. “I believe all kinds of books can be worthy of careful study.”

She started reading romance novels as her academic work began exploring questions of gender, and as she developed her first course on feminist theory. Personally and professionally, their strong female characters appealed to her.

“It made me feel less alone, more empowered, and more happy,” she explained. She found surprisingly complicated stories that tackled questions about race, history, and gender stereotypes, which appealed to her intellectually.

Cull began wondering what it would be like to create the kind of books that meant so much to her. And then, she started writing.

Her first draft of a novel called *Beginner’s Luck* led her to an agent, and then to her first publishing contract in 2017 with Kensington Books. The title was perhaps prescient. Whether by luck or skill, her ebook edition found an audience. Two more books followed, and then her fourth novel *Love Lettering* was released widely in trade paperback. With each subsequent book, she enjoyed greater commercial success and a higher profile as an author. Her latest, *The Paris Match*, was released by multinational publisher Penguin Random House and immediately landed Kate Clayborn on the USA Today and IndieNext Paperback’s bestseller list.

To say Cull is modest about this success is understating her instinct to fly under the radar. While she does publicity as Kate Clayborn, she has very intentionally tried to avoid attention on campus, fearing a distraction

from teaching and work she cares deeply about. She disclosed her publishing plans only to administrators at first. But as the years passed and Kate’s work received increasingly high-profile press attention, including coverage in *The New York Times*, *People* magazine, and more, she knew that the time of flying under the radar was limited. When her eighth book won a coveted spot on the Kirkus Best Books of the Year list in 2024, she decided—with the encouragement of the Provost—to share the news more broadly with faculty colleagues.

“From my first Kate Clayborn novel,” explained Provost Dr. Alisa Rosenthal, “I’ve been struck by how the questions that animate Marisa’s teaching and scholarship are right there in the novels: how social and gender norms shape our lives and what forms resistance takes; how fulfillment can be had beyond the institutions that govern our daily lives; how literature helps us think more capaciously about the varied kinds of relationships through which we find deep connection with others. Professor Cull and Author Kate are not in tension but in conversation—two ways of pressing readers, and students, toward more careful thought

about the relationships, norms, and possibilities that shape a life.”

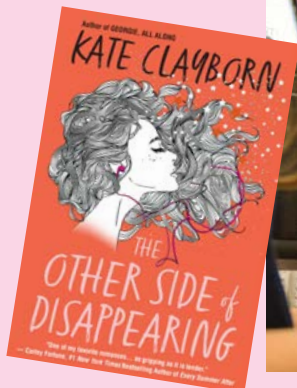
Cull’s creative life, paired with her commitment to her teaching, means she often works a punishing schedule with two full-time jobs. She sometimes writes at 4 a.m. (before 8 a.m. class), and often on weekends,



Cull/Clayborn’s most recent release is *The Paris Match*.



T'liyah Boyd '28 references her copy of *Slave to Sensation*, by Nalini Singh, as Dr. Cull supervises group work in class.



The Other Side of Disappearing was named to the Kirkus Best Books of the Year list in the Romance category in 2024.

The Rise of Romance

Romance generates over \$1.4 billion annually—making it the highest-earning fiction genre, according to Writer's Digest. It is the dominant category in all of publishing.

As tracked by U.S. print sales from CircanaBookScan, the genre has more than doubled in volume since 2021.

Growth particularly surged during the pandemic, and has been sustained by social media in particular, where "BookTok" and "Bookstagram" help readers connect directly with authors and each other.



breaks, and during the summer. She has been prolific as an author, but has very intentionally remained highly engaged at RMC, where she serves as vice chair of the Executive Committee of the faculty and recently chaired a special committee on the faculty handbook, in addition to her full schedule as a tenured and endowed English professor.

Cull's spring 2026 course Romance Heroines is her first to focus so directly on a genre she sees as widely misunderstood and unfairly maligned. Her syllabus does not include any of her novels, but rather some of the titles that first gave her an appreciation for the way romance's heroines were advancing feminist ideals in modern literature. For example, the first book students read is *Indigo*, a 1996 historical romance by Beverly Jenkins, a trailblazing author in the genre who paved the way for Black authors and Black-centric romances. With discussion about topics like body image, relationship dominance, and wedding culture, the class tackles the stereotypes and criticisms of the genre head-on and explores the very boom that has helped fuel her success.

"We have baggage we bring to any text we read. The baggage we have for romance happens to be very misogynist, very classist, and very

intellectually elitist," Cull explains. "At Randolph-Macon, we talk often about how we want to help students be lifelong learners, and, in my field, that means lifelong readers. I want students to find things they love to read, and to be able to think critically about the things they love to read. Romance is a great example of a genre that can do both of those things for you."

Her choice to reveal her pseudonym to her students halfway through the semester could have made the spring feel like a tale of two courses—the first half, taught by a passionate literary expert, and the latter, taught by a famous practitioner in the field.

Unsurprisingly, it only added to her classroom mystique.

"We already thought Professor Cull was cool," Linsea Martz '27 laughed on the day Cull shared her creative journey. "But now we think she is soooo cool!"

More importantly though, her students say Cull's full story deepened their experience with the depth of the romance genre.

"It teaches us to think about [romance novels] at a deeper level," explained student Caroline Smith '26. "It's not just marriage and kids and love as an end goal. There are lots of different kinds of novels. Just because they have similar covers doesn't mean what's on the inside is the same."

Her story also personalized her central argument—that romance does not deserve the shame that is so often heaped upon it.

"Seeing that romance can be both fun and academic—it's really inspiring to me as an aspiring author," reflected Martz. "I feel so encouraged when I see Dr. Cull talk about this work in an academic context."

That lesson, Cull might say, is at the heart of both halves of the life she has led for nearly a decade. In her classroom, as on the page, she believes no book should be judged by its cover. 🟡

Burning Questions

These are just a few of the questions her colleagues and students have asked Cull about her other profession.

Why did you write under a pen name?

Pen names are extremely common in romance fiction, in particular. Probably, yes, because of some of the criticism aimed at romance novelists, but also because it affords writers some privacy. I also had the unique circumstance of being published in academic circles under my real name, and that would be especially confusing.

How did you choose your pen name?

It's not an interesting story. I am always tired of people mispronouncing my name [Editor's Note: Marisa, with the emphasis on the "i" pronounced with a long eee]. So I chose Kate, because it's so simple. Plus, it's the name of one of my favorite Shakespeare heroines!

Has anyone ever noticed?

Yes! Two years ago, a student saw something on Instagram from a book creator who attended one of Kate's events. She approached me privately and asked me about it. And she kept it a secret ever since! I was very grateful for her discretion. Of course, maybe others knew and never told me!

Where do you come up with your ideas?

I think my life as an academic has influenced this part of my process. I am often thinking in thematic ways about stories I want to tell; I'll want to explore something I see happening in the culture or something that's piqued my curiosity. When I got the idea for *The Paris Match*, I was thinking a lot about the rising popularity of this phrase "amicable divorce"; I was also thinking about some famous classic French literature. All of it intersected into the book I eventually wrote.

What's the process for getting to know your characters, for researching specific professions or circumstances of their lives?

Being a fiction writer has probably been the thing in my adult life that has taught me the most niche information: I do a lot of research! I've read books and articles on everything from dock-building to sign-painting to catastrophic burn injuries. It's important to me to treat every aspect of my characters



Cull/Clayborn completed a book tour this spring to promote *The Paris Match*.

seriously, to know them deeply, and so I do a lot of research. Not all of it makes it into the books, but it all helps me know characters better.

How long does it take you to write a draft?

When I first started, I could probably do a draft in nine months, from idea to execution. I think the idea stage takes longer now—I spend a lot more time in my head with the characters and story before I start writing, getting things in line for when I'll have a break coming up, or the summer months. So now, probably closer to 14 months from start to finish.

Who are some of your favorite authors in the genre?

Laura Kinsale, Sherry Thomas, Loretta Chase, Sarah MacLean, Julie Anne Long, Kennedy Ryan, Christina Lauren

Do you think your heroines are dangerous?

I certainly hope so.

How RMC's costume shop led Katie Dodge '24 to a career in the arts.

FOLLOWING

the thread



Katie Dodge '24 moves seamlessly through the labyrinth of backstage dressing rooms and loading docks at Richmond's Altria Theater, preparing for another night in eight performances of *The Wiz*. The Tony Award-winning show is the Broadway adaptation of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* through the lens of Black culture.

Dodge rifles through racks upon racks of colorful costumes, consulting a notebook with her own meticulous shorthand, and sits down at a sewing machine to repair a dress. As the Assistant Wardrobe Supervisor on *The Wiz*'s North American tour, she is responsible for the maintenance and repair of hundreds of costumes, made up of nearly 1,000 individual garments.

Dodge, just two years removed from earning a B.A. in Theatre and Arts Management from

Randolph-Macon, operates as part of a mobile army whose work is crucial to bringing the musical and its vibrant colors to life.

"I love being backstage. I love working on a show, and that is what my spirit craves," Dodge said. "That is where I really feel like I am meant to be, and I am so unbelievably blessed and grateful to be 24 years old and doing what I love."

Proving Grounds

Theatre productions at Randolph-Macon are a hands-on affair. The costuming and set design all happen in house, driven by students working every afternoon for weeks before an opening night. Dodge came to the Theatre program with a strong desire to be involved, but with no interest in performing on stage. With a love of sewing and high school experience with SPARC (School of the Performing Arts in the Richmond



Community), her skills matched RMC's need for a costume designer.

"We don't have [faculty] full-time doing the costuming things, so students have always filled in," Professor Emeritus of Theatre Gregg Hillmar said. "And Katie certainly did excellent work in managing that and taking that over."

Dodge took ownership of the costume shop, making costumes from scratch for every show during her college career. Hillmar served as a mentor, calling on industry connections to teach Dodge the tricks of the trade, as well as a confidante.

Embarking on a career in the arts can be wrought with uncertainty; Hillmar counseled her that if she was considering other paths, to explore them fully. Community theatre would always be there on weekends after a 9-5 job. But if this is what she *needed*, she was in the right place. It wouldn't be easy, but she could have a career in the arts.

The "aha" moment came for Dodge her sophomore year working on *i could have had the earth*, the first show in the recently opened Cobb-Kesler Theatre. "I had never been so stressed in my life, everything was falling apart," Dodge recalled. "There was a moment where everything finally just clicked and fell into place. The costumes looked great, the lights looked great, the performers knew exactly what they were supposed to be doing."

"In this room with my friends, going 'oh my God, we just made something so beautiful,' it lit a fire in my soul," Dodge said. "I knew I had to do this forever."

Show Business

After graduation, Dodge gained membership in the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, a union that demands high-quality work, and set out on tour with *Paw Patrol Live! Heroes Unite*. In addition to wardrobe, she served as the head puppeteer for the live stage production of the beloved children's program.

Dodge spent a year on tour with Paw Patrol, visiting 30 cities across the United States ranging from Chicago to Idaho Falls, while learning and growing. A connection from that tour got a job with *The Wiz* and reached out to her when they needed wardrobe help. After a phone call on Monday, she was working on the tour by Thursday.

Dodge thrives in the chaos and maintains a healthy sense of humor about her line of work. "My joke is that I'm a professional zipper-fixer," she quips. "It's a silly job. I love it."

But she also understands how impactful her work on these shows can be. "Especially to work on a show that tells Black stories, to bring that to life, even if I am not a person of color, is really important," Dodge reflected. "It means a lot to a lot of people."

While Richmond is just one stop on *The Wiz* tour, it's a special one for Dodge to be close to home and her alma mater. The Altria Theater especially holds significance in her journey in the theatre world. She recalls going to see a production of *The Lion King* as a child, sitting at the end of the row in awe of the elephants walking down the aisle.

"I remember looking at that puppet and going, 'I need to know how that works right now. How did they build that? What's in there? How is that performer making that work? Look at those beautiful costumes. How do they make that?'" Dodge recalled.

"I remember sitting in the audience being amazed by the productions put on at the Altria," Dodge said. "To now be backstage at the Altria putting on a beautiful production, that's crazy!" 🟡



Katie Dodge '24 sorts through hundreds of costumes for *The Wiz* backstage at the Altria Theater.



Building a POWERHOUSE

The sport of men's volleyball is exploding in popularity. In 2018, there were 77 teams competing at the NCAA Division III level; this season, that figure nearly doubled to 134, reflecting a similar growth at the high school level.

As that explosion has hit the state of Virginia, growing from three DIII teams in the Commonwealth to 12 in that same stretch, Randolph-Macon has positioned itself to be a growing power and a dominant force in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference.

While RMC's women's team has competed since 1995, with a rich tradition and nine NCAA Tournament appearances, the Yellow Jacket men first hit the volleyball court in 2019. Originally playing in the Continental Volleyball Conference, RMC joined the ODAC when the conference started sponsoring the sport in 2025, aligning with the College's other 17 NCAA programs.

In those two ODAC seasons, RMC has won every regular season conference match (12 in 2025, 16 in 2026) and won both ODAC Tournament titles, earning back-to-back bids to the NCAA Tournament. This season, the Yellow Jackets put together a



Kody Rogan '26, the two-time ODAC Offensive Player of the Year



Brady Plucker '27, the ODAC Defensive Player of the Year



Bryce Matthews '27, the first All-American in program history

remarkable 30-5 overall record, the most total wins of any team in the country.

This year's squad was overloaded with talent: every member of RMC's typical starting rotation earned All-ODAC honors, including five selections on the First Team. Setter Kody Rogan '26 was named the ODAC Offensive Player of the Year for the second year in a row, and graduates as the program's all-time leader in assists (3,247) and aces (200).

Head Coach Christian Taylor describes Rogan as a DI-caliber player who could play anywhere on the court, but who is most valuable at setter, where he can be a catalyst for the offense. "He elevates every guy around him," Taylor said. "Everyone else becomes a better player if he's on the court."

The Yellow Jackets' back row also delivered elite play, led by libero Brady Plucker '27, the ODAC Defensive Player of the Year. On Feb. 25, Plucker recorded 24 digs in a win over Roanoke, the highest total ever in an ODAC match, a feat made more impressive by the fact that the match only lasted three sets. "It's just crazy to see how many touches he gets and the way he impacts our game," Rogan said of his teammate.

There are stars elsewhere in the lineup too. Outside hitter Ian Wagenhauser '26 was a First Team All-ODAC selection for the second year in a row and holds the program record for career kills (1,226). His offensive prowess often led to opposing teams shifting their blocks to cover him. That led to a breakout year for outside hitter Bryce Matthews '27, who earned Second Team All-American honors from the American Volleyball Coaches Association.

Middle blocker Phillip Van Essendelft '26 anchored RMC's presence at the net with a program-record 251 career blocks, while Nathan Karluk '28 and Landon Brinkley '27 provided crucial depth.

Even with all that talent, Taylor explained what set the team apart was its culture. "You can bring in really talented guys, but if they're not guys that buy into the values of the team, then you can only go but so far," he said.

For a sport where only six players can be on the court at one time, RMC's roster of 24 players is huge. The secret sauce to a winning culture, even with an enormous squad, is a collective dedication to team success, regardless of individual role.

The team developed a tradition of going to Wagenhauser and Van Essendelft's house after Saturday matches to hang out as a team. "We all incorporate everybody, we all hang out together, we don't leave anybody out," Rogan said. That bond quickly grew trust, which bolstered an environment of healthy competition, iron sharpening iron.

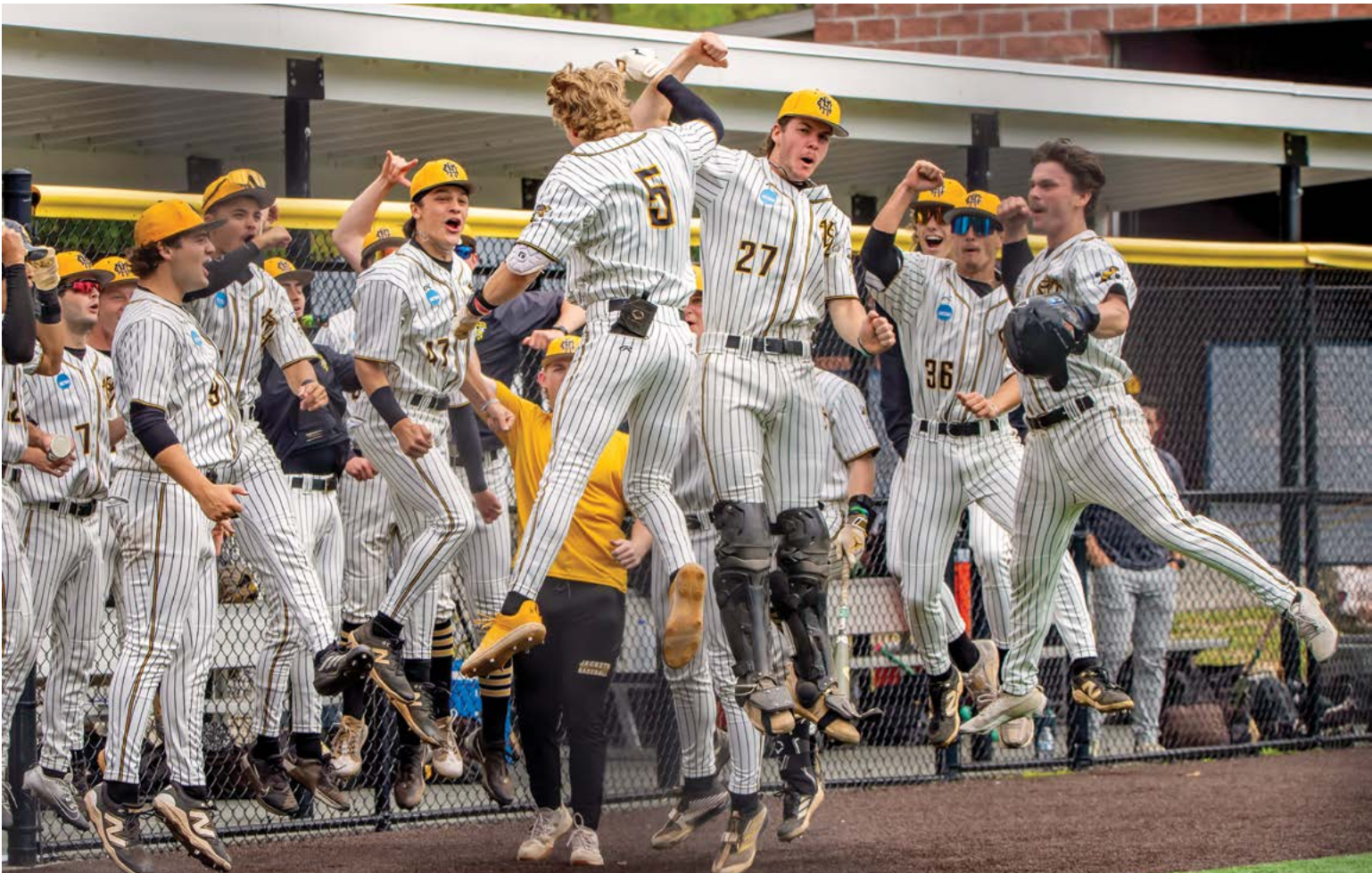
"We prided ourselves this year on most of our practices being tougher than what our matches were," Taylor said.

"Knowing that there's guys pushing you every single day, I think that has been a culture shift for us," Plucker reflected. "Supporting each other, making sure everyone is ready on game day, whether or not your role is to be on the court."

A March 7 match against Southern Virginia, the reigning national champion, proved to be a turning point in the season. With Karluk already out with the flu, Wagenhauser broke his foot in the first set, depriving the Yellow Jackets of two of their biggest weapons. But with a next-man-up mentality, Isayah Johnson '27 and Tyler DeMeritt '28 filled in their roles and helped RMC to a 3-0 victory.

From that point on, outside of a loss to Division II Tusculum, RMC won every remaining regular season match and powered through the ODAC Tournament, lifting the trophy in Crenshaw Gymnasium after beating Eastern Mennonite in four sets in the championship match. The Yellow Jackets earned a bye to the second round of the NCAA Tournament, the furthest the program has ever advanced. While a tough serving night ended the campaign in a four-set loss to Messiah, the Yellow Jackets continue to build with an eye to the future.

"30-5 is a great season, but the end of the season definitely left a really bad taste in our mouth," Taylor said. "Our guys are super hungry to come back and really push this thing to a new level." 🟡



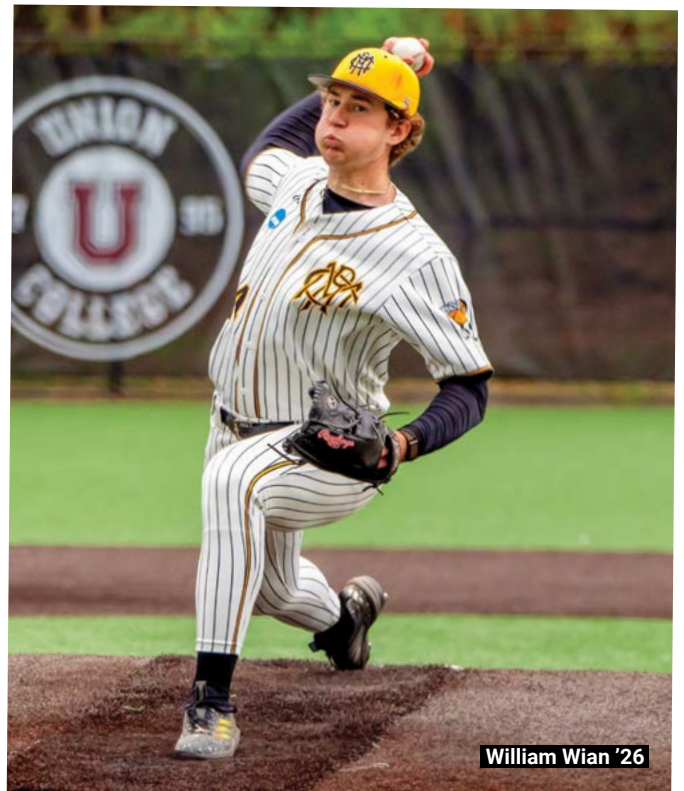
BASEBALL

RMC Baseball competed in the NCAA Tournament for the fourth straight season and advanced to the Super Regionals for the second time in three years. The Yellow Jackets finished the year with a 29-17 record and a 13-7 mark in the highly competitive ODAC. RMC won the Schenectady Regional with a 3-0 win over Penn State Harrisburg in Game 7, powered by 6.1 shutout innings from pitcher William Wian '26, before falling to Rowan in the Glassboro Super Regional.

Carter Schmitt '26 graduated with the school record for career RBI (150), while ranking second for career hits (224), and third for career runs (154). Catcher Logan Duff '26 led the team with a .379 batting average and 46 RBI in 2026, earning Third Team All-Region honors from the American Baseball Coaches Association.



Carter Schmitt '26



William Wian '26



WOMEN'S GOLF

RMC Women's Golf completed the best season in program history, winning the ODAC Championship and placing 12th at the NCAA Championship. The conference title was the first for the Yellow Jackets since 2014, beating Washington & Lee—the seven-time reigning champion—by six strokes. The Yellow Jackets improved on their 20th-place finish at the 2025 NCAA Championship, their debut in the tournament, making the cut after two rounds and finishing +55.

Morgan Mussatt '27 was named the ODAC Player of the Year and was joined on the All-ODAC First Team by Alexis Haller '27 and Lilly Hall '28. Head Coach Bryan Hearn also earned ODAC Coach of the Year honors.



Alexis Haller '27



Morgan Mussatt '27

MEN'S BASKETBALL

RMC Men's Basketball advanced to the Sweet 16 for the sixth time in the last seven NCAA Tournaments, dating back to 2018-19. The Yellow Jackets used balanced scoring and good defense to defeat North Carolina Wesleyan 76-52 in the NCAA First Round and beat The College of New Jersey 68-45 in the Second Round, before falling in a 59-57 heart-breaker to Christopher Newport in the Sweet Sixteen, all in Crenshaw Gymnasium.

RMC finished the year with a 27-4 overall record and a 14-2 mark in conference play, good for the program's fifth consecutive ODAC regular season championship. The Yellow Jackets were ranked No. 9 in the final D3hoops.com Top 25 Poll. Josh Merkel was named ODAC Coach of the Year for the eighth time, while Keishawn Pulley, Jr. '26 and Jabril Robinson '26 each earned their third straight All-ODAC First Team nod.



Jabril Robinson '26



Keishawn Pulley, Jr. '26



McKenzie Matheny '26

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

RMC Women's Basketball earned an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament, its second straight and 14th overall appearance in program history. The Yellow Jackets finished with a 21-8 overall record with a 13-3 mark in ODAC play. McKenzie Matheny '26 led RMC with 14 points in the NCAA First Round loss to Otterbein. Matheny earned Honorable Mention All-American honors after averaging a double-double of 14.0 points and 10.0 rebounds per game.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

RMC Women's Lacrosse ended the year 13-6 with a 6-2 ODAC record, advancing to the ODAC Tournament Final for the first time since 2019. A furious fourth-quarter comeback against Roanoke in the ODAC Semifinals forced overtime, where Lilly Fowler '26 found Cami McNeally '27 for the game-winning goal. The Yellow Jackets fell to Washington & Lee 8-6 in a hard-fought game in the final. MK Geratowski was named the ODAC Coach of the Year in her final season as head coach, while Fowler, midfielder Hailey Pierce '28, and defender Lydia Lesnevich '26 earned First Team All-ODAC honors.



Lydia Lesnevich '26

MEN'S LACROSSE

RMC Men's Lacrosse went 13-5 with a 7-3 record in ODAC play, the fifth straight season with double-digit wins and six or more conference wins for the Yellow Jackets. Defenseman Mike Allen '26 earned All-American honors for the third consecutive season, earning a First Team nod from the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association, and was named ODAC Defensive Player of the Year for the second straight year. Brodie Kent '26 and Grant Sobel '27 were also named Honorable Mention All-Americans.



Mike Allen '26



Charlie Wilkerson '28

MEN'S GOLF

RMC Men's Golf finished third out of 10 teams at the ODAC Championship, the team's best performance since 2015. The Yellow Jackets were led by Kole Kohut '28, who finished in fourth place at +11. Charlie Wilkerson '28, whose season was highlighted by a second-place individual finish at the Port City Classic, was named to the All-ODAC First Team.



Sierra Kegley '29

SOFTBALL

RMC Softball notched its 17th consecutive winning season, going 26-16 overall with a 13-7 record in ODAC play. Pitcher Sierra Kegley '29 was named the ODAC Rookie of the Year after posting a 14-5 record, a 1.80 earned run average, and 93 strikeouts. She tossed eight shutouts, including a perfect game against Sweet Briar on March 26.

WOMEN'S SWIMMING

RMC Women's Swimming finished third out of eight teams at the ODAC Championships, where Kelsey James '26 and Caroline Russell '26 were both named to the All-ODAC First Team. James collected four podium finishes, including second place in the 100 Back, and was a member of three school-record-breaking relay teams. Russell also had four appearances on the podium, including second in the 200 Fly and 500 Free, and helped break the school record in the 800 Free Relay.



Kelsey James '26



Alex Richardson '26

MEN'S SWIMMING

RMC Men's Swimming took fifth out of nine teams at the ODAC Championships, where Alex Richardson '26 was honored on the All-ODAC First Team. Richardson broke three school records at the meet, including the 200 Fly, where he finished second, the 400 Medley, and as part of the 400 Medley Relay.



Meckenzie Letellier '27
and Victoria Updike '29



John Paul Zano '29

MEN'S TENNIS

John Paul Zano '29 won a pair of matches at the No. 1 singles position, including against Division II Virginia State.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

RMC Women's Tennis finished the year with a 9-8 record, including a 5-4 mark in ODAC play, the program's fifth straight winning season. The Yellow Jackets earned a berth to the ODAC Quarterfinals, where they fell to Virginia Wesleyan. The doubles pair of Meckenzie Letellier '27 and Victoria Updike '29 was named to the All-ODAC Second Team after compiling a 10-5 record together, including 6-2 in ODAC play.



USEA Reserve Champions

EQUESTRIAN

The "Swarm Warning" team of Clay Cooke '28, Lucy Leff '26, Ariana Schmit-Chow '26, and Abby McGowan '26 claimed Reserve Champion honors at the 2026 USEA Intercollegiate Championship, the program's best-ever performance at the eventing championship. In IHSA action, Kelsey Sullivan '26 competed at the Zone 4 Championships in the Individual Open Over Fences, while Kennedy Herring '28 rode in the Individual Limit Over Fences.



Cory Blackmore '28, Mady Croft '26, and Doyle Johnson '28

ESPORTS

RMC Esports had teams make ECAC playoff appearances across several titles in 2025-26, including Madden, Fortnite, Rocket League, Call of Duty, Marvel Rivals, and Valorant. The Valorant squad placed second nationally in both the fall and spring semesters.



George Watkins and family

'44 **George Watkins** celebrated his 102nd birthday with his daughter Bobbie Street, granddaughter Hilarie Koch, and great grandchildren Magnolia and Nevin Koch.

'50 **Bill Bowen** celebrated his 101st birthday this year. Bill graduated from Pembroke High School in 1942, then served 33 months in the Army Air Corps during World War II. After two years at RMC, he earned a degree in Industrial Physics at Virginia Tech and went on to a 33-year career with Hercules at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. Bill is a gardener, a do-it-yourselfer, and a grower of trees.



'58 **Fredy Steng** is enjoying retirement from Amcor after 65 years in the plastics industry.

'64 **Ed Lilly** has enjoyed extended travel to France: an immersion language school, the wedding of a granddaughter, a visit with an exchange student, travel to Paris with grandsons, and more recently, time in Paris.

'67 **Chuck Berry** enjoys writing the Outdoor column for the *Brookings Beacon* and *Brookings Register* and being a member of the Outdoor Industry Communication Council. He has also received the "prestigious" Friend of the Lake Award from Lake Campbell Improvement Association.



Berry

'69 **Tommy Nance** and his wife moved to Bradenton, Fla., near their daughter, son-in-law, and three teenage grandchildren. He regularly returns to Hanover to lead "Crossroad to Freedom" historic tours.

'70 Since retiring from full-time private practice as a clinical psychologist, **Jeffrey Fracher** has been practicing, teaching, and writing about Buddhism. His third book, *The Secular Path to Well-Being: Practical Dharma for Today* was published in April.

'71 Since retiring from Verizon 22 years ago, **Bernard J Herwig, Jr.** has visited 35 countries, volunteers at Gettysburg National Military Park,

gardens and landscapes his two-acre property on the Mason-Dixon Line, and enjoys visiting his six grandchildren ages 2 to 9.

'77 Dr. Nina Beaman, a Professor in the School of Nursing in the Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences at Mary Baldwin University, has been promoted to Faculty Lead for Graduate Nursing Curriculum & Academic Quality.



Beaman



Emerson

'81 Phil Emerson was recently elected as a Trustee of the Williamsburg Community Foundation. Emerson, Executive Director Emeritus of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, continues to serve as a Trustee of the George Washington Foundation, and remains active in the Kiwanis Club, his church, and volunteers in numerous capacities for RMC.

'82 Mark Walker attended the 2025 Homecoming Tailgate with **Jamie Pierce '83**, Kris May, Lynda Pierce, **Dean May '83**, Mary Jo Sheridan, **Mark Sheridan '83**, and Joy Walker. (pictured below)



Macey White is the founder of the Chesapeake Bay Croquet Club in Hartfield, Va., the largest croquet club in the world, and recently hosted the Croquet World Championship.



White

'85 Mike Anderson retired from Chesterfield County Public Schools after 40+ years as a teacher and head coach.



Acquaviva Bass

'95 After spending 35+ years in the great state of Virginia, **Jennifer Acquaviva Bass** is now back in Texas to be closer to her dad, son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter.

'98 Dean Browell joined the SOAR365 Board of Directors.



Howard and Adolf

'01 Amy Howard and Shelley Adolf '02, reunited to celebrate 25 years since graduation! During this Italian adventure, Shelley and Amy visited Rome, Florence, and Sorrento. Also, by chance, they connected with fellow alum, **Maria Ciarrocchi '03**.

In 2025, **Dr. Brianne Jackson** founded No Limits Martial Arts & Fitness, a non-profit martial arts and fitness studio that provides affordable and accessible martial arts to marginalized communities.



'02 Amanda Mitchell Simpson is the Deputy State Comptroller for Virginia, effective March 25, 2026.



Wighington

'04 Shannon Wighington married Andrew Deedrick in Charlotte, N.C., on November 1, 2025. In attendance were many former RMC Women's Basketball players and close friends from Macon.

'06 Laura Holmes Faison just celebrated her 20th anniversary with Goodwill of Central and Coastal Virginia. Having started as an intern in the Development department during J-Term 2006, Laura progressed in her role throughout the years and now serves as Chief Communications Officer for the large non-profit, which covers 44 cities and counties across central and coastal Virginia.

'09 Lauren Soles Templeman and husband, Aaron Templeman, welcomed their second son, Hudson Smith Templeman, on October 14, 2025. He and big brother Noah are already the best of friends!



'10 Tia Bryant Grizzle received her Deputy Commissioner of the Revenue certification from the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. She also completed five years working for Chesterfield County in the Commissioner of the

Revenue Office.

Ben Rowe has been appointed as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry for Governor Abigail Spanberger. Rowe previously served as Director of Member Engagement for Virginia Farm Bureau.



Rowe

'11 Melinda Perron was named Executive Director of CONTACT Rape Crisis Center, serving six counties in southwestern West Virginia. She lives in Huntington, W.V., with her husband and two children.



Perron

'13 Raymond J.S. Ruybe II was promoted to Director of Communications and Data Strategy for The McShin Foundation.



Ruybe

Kaitlyn Dmytryszyn Tharp and Ryan Tharp were married on October 12, 2025, at The Mill at Fine Creek in Powhatan, Va., surrounded by family and friends, including many fellow RMC alumni. It was especially meaningful



Tharp

to have three bridesmaids who were also RMC alumnae and Alpha Gamma Delta sisters: **Chelsea Mason '14**, **Amber Foley Ripka '12**, and **Stephanie Bello Buncher '14**.

'14 Graeme Biddle is a licensed therapist with Thriveworks Counseling, providing psychotherapy primarily to children and adolescents. He lives in Winston-Salem, N.C., with his husband Felipe, who is a Ph.D. engineering student at Wake Forest University.

Sean Smith received a Master of Science in Health Law, Policy, and Management with High Honors from Meharry Medical College's School of Global Health on May 16, 2026. Sean is part of the inaugural class of graduates from the country's first school of global health. His academic achievements included Dean's List recognition, the Kevin and Mitzi Bryant Distinguished Global Health Named Scholarship, and the Beyond Boundaries Emerging Leader Award.



Emily Hewitt and Jack Miller are thrilled to announce the arrival of their son, Thomas McCoy Miller, born on December 21, 2025. Thomas is the grandson of **Tim Hewitt '81**.



Lutsik

Shannon Mendonça Lutsik and her husband Anatoliy Lutsik had a baby boy, Anatoliy Anatolievich Lutsik II, on November 18, 2025.



'17 Julia Bowling Bell and her husband Malcolm welcomed their first child, Raelyn, on October 22, 2025.

Bell



Mullin

Tommy Mullin and Melissa Pucinelli Mullin's son Thomas is a future RMC athlete!



McHugh

'18 Daly McHugh and Andrew Venezia welcomed their first child, James Mitchell Venezia, on September 14, 2025. The baby's grandmother is **Angie Farley McHugh '86**.



'19 Lindsey Covil married the love of her life in 2024, building a home together with three cats and a dog named Honey, and currently works in media sales and marketing.



Garrett White married Carmelita Rosner at a ceremony in Fredericksburg, Va., on November 1, 2025. Alumni in attendance were **Marianna Wills, Julianne Harrington, Jesse Willard '13, Kurt Sporer '12, Rob Rhoton, and Ky Hoang**.

'15 Steven Funk and his wife, Samantha Funk, welcomed their second child, Penelope Rose Funk, on October 29, 2025.



Bvumbe and Swan

'16 Dr. Adwoa O. Bvumbe ran into **Dr. Rebecca Swan '86** at the Association of Pediatric Program Directors Conference in Denver, Colorado.



Chris Cox joined Woods Rogers as an associate in the Litigation & Dispute Resolution practice. Chris focuses on administrative, regulatory, environmental, and energy law. His work spans complex compliance matters and enforcement actions involving state and federal agencies.

Cox



Cooke

'23 Chloe Cooke earned her Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from Western Governors University in January 2026.

'20 Ashlynn Green Clifford's son Cody Clifford was born May 1, 2025 and just celebrated his first birthday!



Clifford

Hannah Doty Rochford graduated from Duke Divinity School with her Master of Divinity on May 9. She is excited to stick around in Durham while her husband finishes his Ph.D. in sociology before they head off on their next adventure!



Rochford



Chesser

'21 Dr. Hope Chesser graduated in May from the VCU School of Pharmacy with her Pharm.D. She will be completing her postgraduate residency training at the Salem Veterans Affairs Medical Center.



Kirk

'25 Taylor Kirk is working as a paraprofessional at Lee M. Waid Elementary School in Rocky Mount, Va., with students that she loves dearly. 🟡

'22 Lily Phipps began her medical school education at Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine in Maryland in July 2025.



Phipps

CLASS NOTES SUBMISSION

Do you have a new job, new professional success, or new degree? Have you married, had children, grandchildren? Have you retired? Have you recently reconnected with alumni friends? Share your news and submit photos of big life events or anything else that is noteworthy—we would love to hear from you! Submit your information to www.rmc.edu/ClassNotes, email alumni@rmc.edu, or call (866) 694-4574.

PASSAGES

The Alumni Office is available to assist if you are looking for additional information about any of our alumni and friends listed below (*made known to Randolph-Macon between January 5, 2026–April 28, 2026*).

Elizabeth McNeal Claybrook '49, Harrisonburg, Va., January 1, 2025.

Henry G. Simpson '52, Suffolk, Va., January 15, 2026, brother of **T. McNider "Mac" Simpson III '49*** and **Daniel Ellis Simpson '51***, cousin of **John "Jack" C. Simpson '52***, **Littleton "Lit" Waller Simpson '50***, **James Simpson Mathews '63***, **John Childs Simpson III '73**, **Littleton "Skip" Waller Simpson, Jr. '75** and **James Simpson Mathews, Jr. '96**.

Austin F. Bishop '62, Chester, Va., February 2, 2026.

Gerald C. Radford '62, Virginia Beach, Va., March 9, 2026.

Kenneth Moore Webb '62, Machipongo, Va., May 16, 2025.

James B. Maxwell '63, Lititz, Pa., January 4, 2026.

Louis W. Sikkelee '65, Midlothian, Va., April 24, 2026.

George M. Angle, Jr. '67, Winston Salem, N.C., March 5, 2026, father of **George "Trey" Maise Angle III '89**.

Douglas "Skip" S. Haseltine '67, Tallahassee, Fla., October 24, 2025.

Clifford Douglas Green III '70, Culpeper, Va., December 2, 2025.

Dennis Christian Green '73, Sterling, Va., December 24, 2025.

Walter L. Petersen III '73, West Jefferson, N.C., January 14, 2026.

Toni Smith Oakes '76, Hickory, N.C., March 17, 2025.

Scott Turner Crow '77, Manassas, Va., January 13, 2026.

Charles "Chip" William Heaps, Jr. '79, Chestertown, Md., February 14, 2026.

Stanley Bernard Jones, Jr. '83, Richmond, Va., December 13, 2025, son of **S. Bernard Jones, Sr. '57** and family of **Meredith K. Adams '24**.

Kevin Scott Jones '84, Arnold, Md., December 4, 2024.

Mary Adams Armstrong '85, Fairfax Station, Va., March 29, 2026, mother of **Bernell Clifton Armstrong III '83** and mother-in-law of **Donna Janis Armstrong '86**.

Leah Clem Nocé '89, Alexandria, Va., December 26, 2025, wife of **Jeffrey Scott Nocé '90***, and sister-in-law of **Peter "Jay" Joseph Nocé, Jr. '85**.

William Charles Drumheller '90, Milford, Del., March 17, 2026.

Thomas H. Williams '93, Stonington, Conn., January 25, 2026.

William Dougherty Walters '05, Naples, Fla., February 7, 2026, brother of **Lindsey Lowman Reisinger '04**.

Friends and Family

Kay Keller Bentz, Peachtree Corners, Ga., June 27, 2025, wife of **Robert Eugene Bentz '68***.

Jeffrey Conley, Ashland, Va., January 8, 2026, former employee of the College.

Roger Perry Jefferson, Chatham, Va., May 2, 2025, father of **Rodney A. Jefferson '94**. ●

*deceased



James Henry passed away on April 19, 2026. Henry served the College with distinction as an employee for 45 years (1950-1995), first as a custodian, then as the longtime supervisor of the campus print shop. In recognition of his impact, which transcended his job duties, RMC dedicated a conference room, the former site of the print shop, in Henry's honor in 2017. ●

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE COLLEGE SEAL

During his inauguration, President Michael Hill was presented with RMC's Presidential Medallion, which, in addition to the names of the 15 preceding Presidents, prominently features the College Seal. The seal includes an image of the original RMC building in Boydton and the motto "Sigillum Collegi Randolph Maconensis in Virginia," translated to Seal of Randolph-Macon College in Virginia. The October 1830 Minutes of the Board of Trustees records that a three-person committee was formed to "sketch the devise for the common seal of R.M. College" and was "also required to provide said seal." The earliest wax imprint of this seal in the College Archives is on the 1835 John C. Blackwell diploma. While this seal has degraded significantly, portions of the College name and the building can be seen.

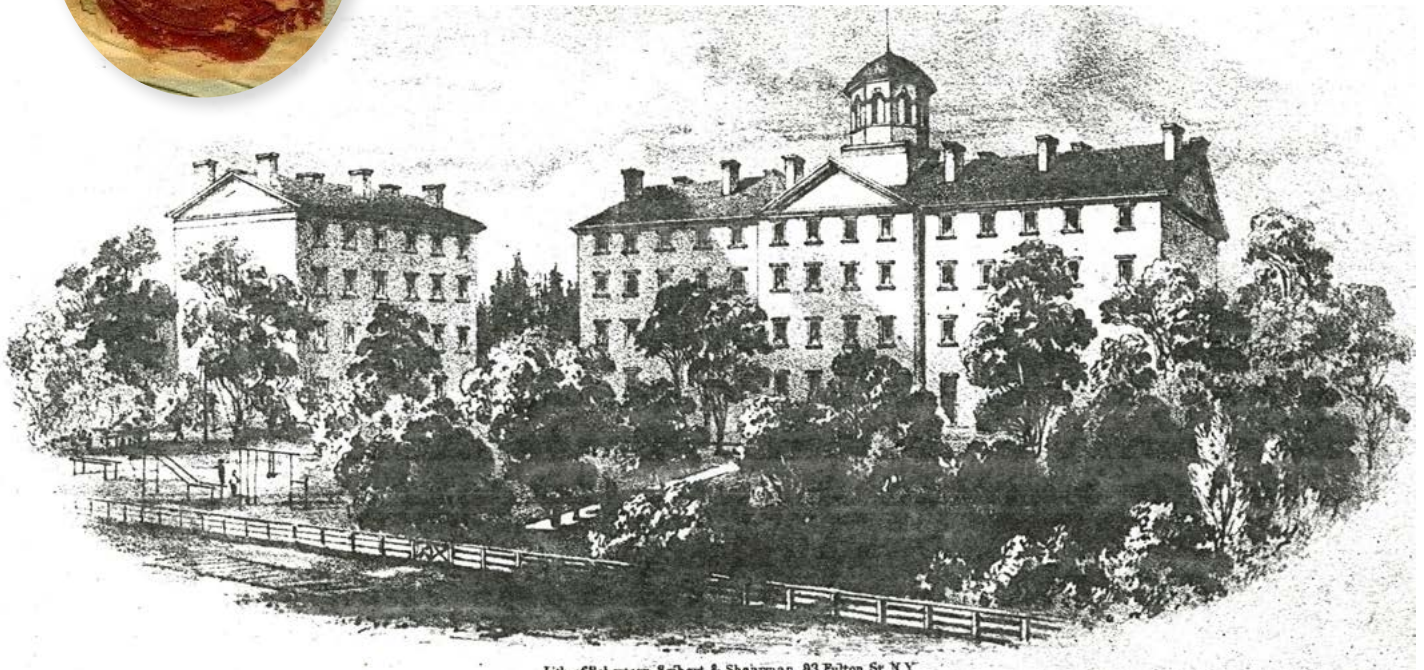
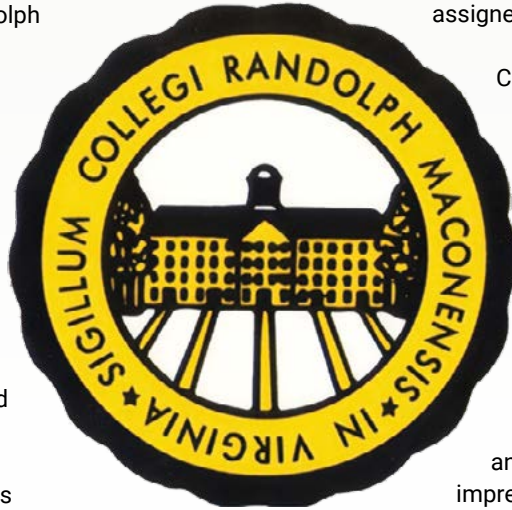
In that same meeting, the Trustees

approved the building plans for the original brick building, the Main Building, depicted on the seal. The structure was completed in 1832, although one wing was unfinished when the College opened for classes

in October. It was four stories tall and consisted of a central section, known as the Centre building, that included the chapel, classrooms, a chemistry laboratory, the library, and the literary society halls. Two wings housed the student dormitories, and early catalogs list the students assigned to each room.

Hampden-Sydney College enlarged Cushing Hall while the RMC building was under construction, and the RMC Trustees approved an additional \$1725 in 1832 to lengthen the dormitory wings. Although the reason for the increase in size was not documented in the minutes, oral tradition has always held that it was to beat H-SC in size.

Upon completion, RMC's Main Building was the largest between Petersburg, Va., and Raleigh, N.C., and early travelers commented on its impressive size and beauty. After RMC left Boydton in 1868, the building changed hands several times until 1878, when it was purchased for use as an African American school, the Boydton Academic and Bible Institute, which closed in 1935. The building remained vacant, and the remains are now owned by the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation, which has stabilized the remaining walls, and is documenting and interpreting the history of the property. ●



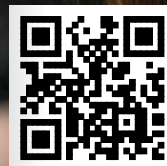
Lith. of Robertson, Seibert & Shearman, 83 Fulton St. N.Y.



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A background photograph of a graduation ceremony. A young woman in the foreground is wearing a black graduation cap and gown, smiling and looking to her right. Other graduates are visible in the background, some out of focus.

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