



# REGENTS ROAR

2020



THE WONDER  
OF IT ALL



EUROPE  
TRIP



EARLY  
EDUCATION



# OUR MISSION

The Mission of Regents School of Oxford, aspiring to be a leader in classical Christian education, is to disciple our students to love, serve, and glorify God in order to become godly men and women through a classically-driven, gospel-centered school committed to:

Rightly using the inherent tools of learning

Cultivating a challenging and joyful environment that encourages them to think logically and communicate their conclusions persuasively



INFUSING  
CHRISTIAN  
THEOLOGY  
IN ALL WE DO.





“  
**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR  
FAITHFUL  
PARTNERSHIP  
WITH  
REGENTS**  
”

## DEAR REGENTS COMMUNITY,

It is always exciting to see God at work amongst our students, staff, and community. I have had the privilege of serving Christ at Regents School of Oxford as the Head of School for two years now, and He has shown me time and again that His hand clearly rests upon His school. His provision of our needs has been evident from the beginning, and I am continually amazed by His blessings as we move forward as a school.

His blessing is most evident in the lives of those connected with Regents. Faith and commitment to Christ being lived out in the homes of our students and the classrooms of our teachers is of the utmost importance to me. Our children desperately need to not only hear the gospel, but they also need to witness the gospel alive and active in each of our lives. The fruits of our efforts are put on display when I witness students putting the needs of others above their own, serving in their local community, or spending their summer in a distant country, sharing Christ with others. It is clear that the purpose of our school is being lived out in the lives our students as they seek to love God, serve others, treasure knowledge, and transform culture. Thank you for partnering with us in order to make this happen.

His blessing is also evident in the continued renovation of our facilities. The reality of a school's need for simple, functional facilities is obvious. We are all thankful that God has seen fit to bless us mightily with regards to the school campus, and as you can see from the changes on campus, God has allowed us to continue moving forward. For this we are humbled and thankful. We are also encouraged to continue striving forward as good stewards of God's gracious provision.

Thank you for your faithful partnership with Regents. It is always humbling to be the recipient of God's continued grace and blessing as families choose to partner with us.

**In Christ,**  
**Jason W. Wood**  
Head of School





# EARLY EDUCATION

As a mother I have clearly seen how critical it is for a child to receive a strong preschool education. My daughter has thrived and tested well above grade level due to her experience at Regents. The amazing thing is they don't have to push the students academically to get these results. They love and hug all over them. You can really see the adoration in the teacher's eye when they talk to the children. That loving environment translates into a love of learning.

- Bess Currence





# A LOYAL HEART

By Sarah Prather

Regents School of Oxford has been open for twenty years now, and not many people can claim they have been there since the very beginning. One of the few people who can is Mrs. Margaret Gill. Mrs. Gill faithfully served Regents as a kindergarten teacher and has served in several other roles over the course of nineteen years. Mrs. Gill began teaching for Regents in 1999, and retired from teaching last year. She has always had a passion for teaching, and she knew early on that she wanted to teach the preschool age. “Originally my major was religious education. I either wanted to work at a church with the children’s ministry, or in an education facility. It was my hope that I could come somewhere where I could speak Christ’s name without being worried about it.”

Even from the beginning, Mrs Gill’s passion rested not only in the children, but also in our Lord. She has proven through her several years at Regents that she believed that Christ should be in every aspect of a child’s life. She said that the freedom that Regents offered when it came to being able to read and teach Bible stories in her classroom, and have her children memorize scripture was what she longed for. When asked whether she ever considered pursuing a different career path, she quickly said no. “I loved teaching the children. Watching their eyes light up the first time they sound out a word, or watching their Christmas play. It’s just what I wanted to do.”



While Mrs. Gill really loved to teach, she also really loved Regents. “Regents is a community. The teachers, the staff, we all have pretty much the same goal, and that is to point to Christ and to hold each other up. They were more than just my coworkers, they were my community. That’s not the case in all jobs.” Mrs. Gill really felt loved by all her coworkers, and even felt like she was making a difference. She said one of the neat things about teaching in one place for so long is seeing the children you taught in kindergarten graduate, and in some cases even come back to teach at Regents. Mrs Gill has truly left a mark on Regents.

I can safely say that Regents would not be the school it is today without her constant love and support throughout her many years of service. She has truly shown what it means to have a loyal and servant’s heart. As one of the children she taught in kindergarten, who is graduating this year, I have come to realize that what she used to say all the time is very true. “Everything you need to know, you learned in Kindergarten.”



# THE WONDER OF IT ALL

By Carolyn Spraberry, First grade Teacher

When I was a little girl, my teachers taught science from a textbook. We read our lessons, listened to lectures, and took notes. Then we were tested on what was presented each week. There were never any experiments or “hands on” activities in our classes, so it was much harder to understand science by just reading about it in the textbooks. So much of what we accept in science is based upon what somebody has recorded from observing, experimenting, or manipulating materials in this world. Therefore, it only makes sense that students need to conduct science experiments to truly make connections in science and to learn how to problem solve. I never wanted my two children, Sarah and Andrew, or my children at school to have the same classroom experience that I had as a child. I wanted science to be fun and engaging and, it was my desire to help them develop a love for learning. I wanted them to discover things for themselves and be in awe of the wonderful things that God created for us to enjoy.



There are so many valuable lessons that can be gained from participating in science experiments. We learn to answer questions, organize, make predictions, test our hypotheses, get results, and draw conclusions. We see that things don't always work the way we expect them to the first time we try them. Sometimes we have to change the variables to make them work and even then, we might not get our desired or expected results. That leads us into a discussion of valuable life lessons. The children can learn that things don't always turn out the way we plan. They can discover that when difficult or unexpected things happen, we have a God that loves us so much, and He will always be with us. If we will trust in Him, He will walk us through every circumstance that we encounter, even when we don't understand why things happen. We need to try to bring Him glory in everything we do.



In classical education, we cross the curriculum and integrate our subjects when we are teaching. As you can see, we learn more than just science when we conduct an experiment. I try to work in as many experiments into the curriculum as I possibly can. Whenever possible, I use experiments to teach Bible verses, truths, or illustrate stories that we are reading in class. For example, as I teach the children the plan of salvation, I use water, iodine, and bleach to illustrate sin and God's forgiveness. One of the verses we discuss is I John 1:9 which says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Another example of an experiment that I like to use is to let the children make water that glows in the dark by using the inside of highlighters. I use this to illustrate the verse in John 8:12 which says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The children get so excited when they get to participate in a science experiment. It truly brings me joy to hear their thoughts and see the curiosity and wonder in their eyes. We can't help but see God in science and in everything around us. We can only do science because we have been created in the image of God. God has created us in His image and part of that image is the ability to reason. God has created a rational world and given us the ability to reason. When we do science we are fulfilling what God told us to do in Genesis 1:28 "to subdue the earth, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

It is amazing to see the wisdom of God in how things work together. We know that God is the center of all things, and He created all that we have. Science is just another fun way to show the children that God is sovereign over all things!





# THE NEW KID

By Jill Bell

Jamya Fondren, tenth grade student at Regents, started a new chapter last fall when she became one of the many new kids in the Regents Upper School. Not sure of what to expect, Jamya left the school she had attended her whole life to enter a Classical, Christian school full of all new faces.

“It was different coming into Regents, but in a good way,” says Jamya. “It’s been fun getting to know new people and have new experiences. It wasn’t too scary coming in because of the size. I feel welcome here.”

When asked her favorite aspect of the school she says, “You get to ask more questions. We get to have open discussions, and that has been so great. There is so much more interaction in the classroom.”

The close proximity to the teachers has made an impact on Jamya. “The teachers here are very helpful,” she says. “They help you when you are struggling, and they really work to get you on the right track. They show love and kindness, and they are always encouraging me.”

When talking about how Regents will impact her future, Jamya says she’s most thankful for how Regents is teaching her to discuss, debate, and back up her beliefs, opinions, and arguments with evidence.

Stacey Barnes teaches Jamya math and says of her, “Jamya is a blessing to have in the classroom. She is a hard worker, and she never gives up. I’m sure the move to our school has been difficult in some ways, but she has never let that show. She works hard in sports and still does a great job with her academics. I am so glad to have her in my classroom each day.”

One of Jamya’s favorite aspects of the Upper School is the House System. The House System, in her opinion, is really a lot of fun and brings an energy to the school. The Houses provide free time to get to know people and help create a culture of true friendship and even leadership.

Athletics are important to Jamya and a big part of her high school experience. At Regents she plays both volleyball and basketball. “I get a lot more playing time at Regents and because of that I’ve learned so much more,” she says. “Also, Regents gives us a lot of strength and conditioning which has really helped me in my athletics. The coaches really do a great job of pushing us and getting our minds focused on bigger and better things we can accomplish,” says Jamya.

Coming into a Christian school was a big change. A culture of prayer and a curriculum that teaches the Bible alongside of history and literature has been an encouragement. “The Christian environment and caring teachers have helped me in my struggles in life to keep going no matter what I go through or face,” she says.



**When Jamya was asked what she’d like to say about her time at her new school she says, “I just love Regents.”**

I speak on behalf of our school when I say we love having you here, Jamya.



# EUROPE TRIP

By Dominique Michaud

Last April, I had the privilege of going on the Regents Europe trip. We traveled to Italy, toured Rome and Florence, and lastly sailed to Greece. I cannot begin to tell you what an impact this trip had on me as not only a student, but as a person. Being able to see and experience all the places I have studied for years at Regents brought the curriculum to life. The trip was not only very educational, but it bonded us as a class. My friends at Regents are so special to me, and being able to experience this together was very impactful on our friendships. We made memories we will cherish forever. The class of 2019 and 2020 will always be thankful for this spectacular trip.





# SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

By Daniel Stewart

Senior Daniel Stewart is finishing his fourth year at Regents. Daniel is a Regents Student Ambassador as well as a member of the Student Government. He and his family attend Christ Presbyterian Church where he is involved in the youth group. Daniel also works at Chick-fil-A.

## **What do you feel Regents has done best to prepare you for college?**

Regents has taught me how to read hard literature, books that I'll encounter again, think critically about that literature, and then express my own thoughts and beliefs about it in both speech and writing. We have to write a lot of papers, so having the ability to write well will most definitely benefit me in college. Also, all the presentations we have to give have given me confidence to public speak.

Regents has taught me to not only know what I believe but be able to back it up with evidence. You can't just make a statement in a classroom at Regents without someone asking you why you said that or why you think that, so I've been taught how to discuss, debate, and know what I believe and why I believe it.

## **What would you say is the best life skill Regents has given you?**

When we go to college and even when we exit college, we will be interacting with people of all ages and stages of life. Regents has given me the social skills and abilities to interact with people of all ages. We are created to be in community, so it's important to be able to get wisdom from older people but then also be able to give that wisdom to younger people. We will all be encountering all sorts of problems in life, so we will all need to be able to interact. I feel like being in an environment where I continually interact with my teachers and even my friends in younger grades, I have been given the skills to relate to anyone in life.

## **What is one aspect of Regents that you've grown to appreciate?**

Regents works us hard academically and challenges us spiritually, but the school also does a good job of teaching us to work hard with our hands. The school requires us to do chores around the school like put out lunch tables, chairs, clean up, etc. I think having these responsibilities outside the classroom teaches us good work ethic, responsibility, and how to better serve others and be part of a team.

## **When you look back on your time at Regents ten years from now, what do you think you will be most thankful for?**

My friends. I've made so many memories here and had a lot of fun. I've learned so much about how to be a good friend and be in community, so I'm most thankful for those friendships.

Another thing I will be thankful for is all the memories I made on our trip to Europe. We got to tour Italy and Greece, and we were able to see so many of things we had learned about come to life. It was an amazing experience that I will always be thankful Regents provided for me.

## **What are your plans for next year?**

I plan to go to Ole Miss and major in Computer Engineering.





# ALUM SPOTLIGHT

By Bette Roberts

My name is Bette Roberts, and I attended Regents for 9 years and graduated from Regents in 2015. I then attended Samford University in Birmingham, AL until I graduated in 2019 with a BA in Human Development and Family Sciences. I am currently living in Phnom Penh, Cambodia working with the social work system. We work with the local children, and my specific focus is in child development and trauma.

My younger years at Regents were a dream for me. We had a steady class of about 16 that stayed for many years together. Having a small class size gave us the freedom to go on overnight field trips, eat lunch outside, and get to know our teachers very well. Classrooms had open discussions, and we were encouraged to share our opinions. We had the best recesses, science experiments, and art classes.



Preparing a thesis and arguing it helped prepare me for college. Practicing public speaking often and in front of people you trust still benefits me today as I teach trainings. I feel comfortable in that environment when many others I know are intimidated by it. Regents also helped teach me how to think about my faith and argue critically.

My time at Regents was special because I am still friends with many of my classmates and have stayed in touch with many of my teachers, some of who support me while in Cambodia. I'm thankful for my time at Regents because it helped me turn my pessimistic and argumentative self in a positive direction, so that I can now defend my faith confidently and desire to have hard conversations without fear.



# IT'S OUR TIME

By Beth Paul

Regents celebrated it's 20-year anniversary this past fall. Our RSO founders had a vision. That vision was to develop a school that equips students to engage their world with purpose, reason, truth, and grace by approaching all subjects interactively and inter-connectedly based on the principle that God is Creator, and Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

We are now at 235 current students, 20 graduates, 45 faculty and staff and have a thriving culture where students are known and loved. Our students engage across academics, athletics and fine arts on their journey to becoming Godly men and women. We hope to instill in all we do a desire to glorify God by seeking an adventurous life of purpose and passion as they protect and serve others. We aren't perfect, but we have been blessed with many successes. We continue the pursuit of becoming a preferred choice in education for Christian parents in Oxford and Lafayette county and a leader in classical Christian education.

**Now it's our time to build on that original vision. In 2017, the RSO Board laid out a 5-year strategic plan that included 6 major initiatives.**

Now it's our time to build on that original vision. In 2017, the RSO Board laid out a 5-year strategic plan that included 6 major initiatives. A key item was to plan for new and improved facilities. Our Master Campus Planning team was tasked with contemplating facilities that would match the quality of our programs and serve us for the next 100 years. We desire a campus that includes sufficient parking, classroom, athletic and fine arts space for the estimated full capacity of 500 future students PreK-12th grade. With our land acquisition phase drawing to a close, we look forward to unveiling plans in 2020 for a multi-phase, multi-million dollar building initiative. That will be followed by a Capital Campaign to raise the necessary funds to begin construction.

I'm counting on each member of our Regents community to help us be faithful to the vision. How can you help? The Board and administration ask for your prayers in this planning phase. Consider how you can invest in this exciting endeavor and ask the Lord for provision of donors who want to come alongside us in the kingdom work of discipling future husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, business leaders, ministers or artists who proudly follow King Jesus and serve their communities in His name.



# THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

By Holly Prather, Alum who became Teacher

When I went to Colombia this past summer, I met a group of parents worried about the education of their children. While there were certainly schools available, most were secular, and those that bore the name of “Christian” heavily emphasized tradition over the living word of God. These parents wanted more. Rooted in a deep sense of community, they understood the importance of raising children in accordance with Biblical standards. Asked to come as a guest speaker for a conference their church was hosting on education, I was able to share with them the mission and vision that is Regents, and they wanted it, desperately. It struck me in that moment how grateful I was for the existence of Regents, a school dedicated to raising children biblically, challenging them academically, and infusing them with the joy of learning. What these parents wanted for their children, I had received here at Regents.

As I left Colombia and commenced teaching in the fall, I began to appreciate in a new light, especially as a teacher, the true value of an education received here. At Regents, we have what so many Christian families around the world greatly want. With the combined classical and christian pillars, Regents desires to create a community, a help for parents as they wrestle through raising their children in a thoroughly biblical manner. This is a precious commodity, deeply desired by those who have yet to experience the blessing of a classical, christian school.

As a student, I understood and appreciated what Regents was attempting to do as a school, but I could not begin to fathom how much I would draw on this education in the years after graduation. As continuous waves of differing ideology have rolled over me the past five years, I have learned to root myself in the truth of the Bible, taught by my parents, reinforced through Regents. In all, I know I will grow increasingly grateful over time for the education I received here at Regents, not only because I understand its value, but also because I know there are those who would give much for what I already have. My time in Colombia placed Regents in a new light; I am deeply thankful for the school’s investment in me. My education and time at Regents is a gift I will always value. Thank you.





# CROSS COUNTRY STATE CHAMPS

MSAIS Class A Boys  
Cross Country  
State Champs 2019







# SERVANT LEADERSHIP

By Matt Schroeder

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26-28). It is the mission of Regents for our students to love, serve, and glorify God and to go out and transform the world. Jesus gives us a perfect example of what it means to be a servant leader, someone who seeks to serve others over themselves. It is with His example that we are called to serve our school, community, and world.

The House system within Regents provides an avenue for our students to love and glorify our Lord through serving others. The fall semester allowed us to help those in need in our town, in our nation, and in our world while also building our school culture. Within our House competition, the students were involved in three different service projects. In early September, the students collected canned foods for Oxford Food Pantry. Over four hundred cans were collected and donated to serve those in need with these necessities. In our first

annual change war, where students collected loose change around their house, over \$800 was donated to Hurricane Dorian relief efforts in the United States. Around the Christmas season, students collected books for the Lafayette County Literacy Council and the Barksdale Institute targeting children from grades 1-8. The students collected and donated 175 books to help improve literacy both in Oxford and in Mississippi. Our next event will be another change war between Ignatius and Columba to benefit relief efforts for the Australian wildfires.

We are also excited to announce that we will be taking nine students and two teachers to Ecuador this summer from June 6 to June 14. Regents has partnered with Jungle Kids for Christ, an organization that ministers to children in Misahualli, Ecuador. During our trip, the students will create a camp environment for the community and help with building projects at Antioch Christian Academy.

It is our hope and prayer that through these projects both domestically and internationally that we love our neighbors well and serve the Lord faithfully.





# FINE ARTS

## WE OFFER

- ✓ Upper School Choir
- ✓ Lower and Upper School Drama
- ✓ Lower School Spring Production
- ✓ Shakespeare in a Week Production
- ✓ Middle School Ukulele
- ✓ Art lessons K-12
- ✓ Fine Arts Night
- ✓ Praise Band
- ✓ Master Music Academy Band
- ✓ Music History
- ✓ Art History







# REGENTS

ATHLETICS

## ATHLETICS WE OFFER

- ✓ Golf
- ✓ Tennis
- ✓ Lacrosse
- ✓ Basketball
- ✓ Swim
- ✓ Archery
- ✓ Cheerleading
- ✓ Cross country
- ✓ Volleyball



Learn More At: [RegentsSchoolofOxford.com](http://RegentsSchoolofOxford.com)



# TWENTY YEARS AND COUNTING

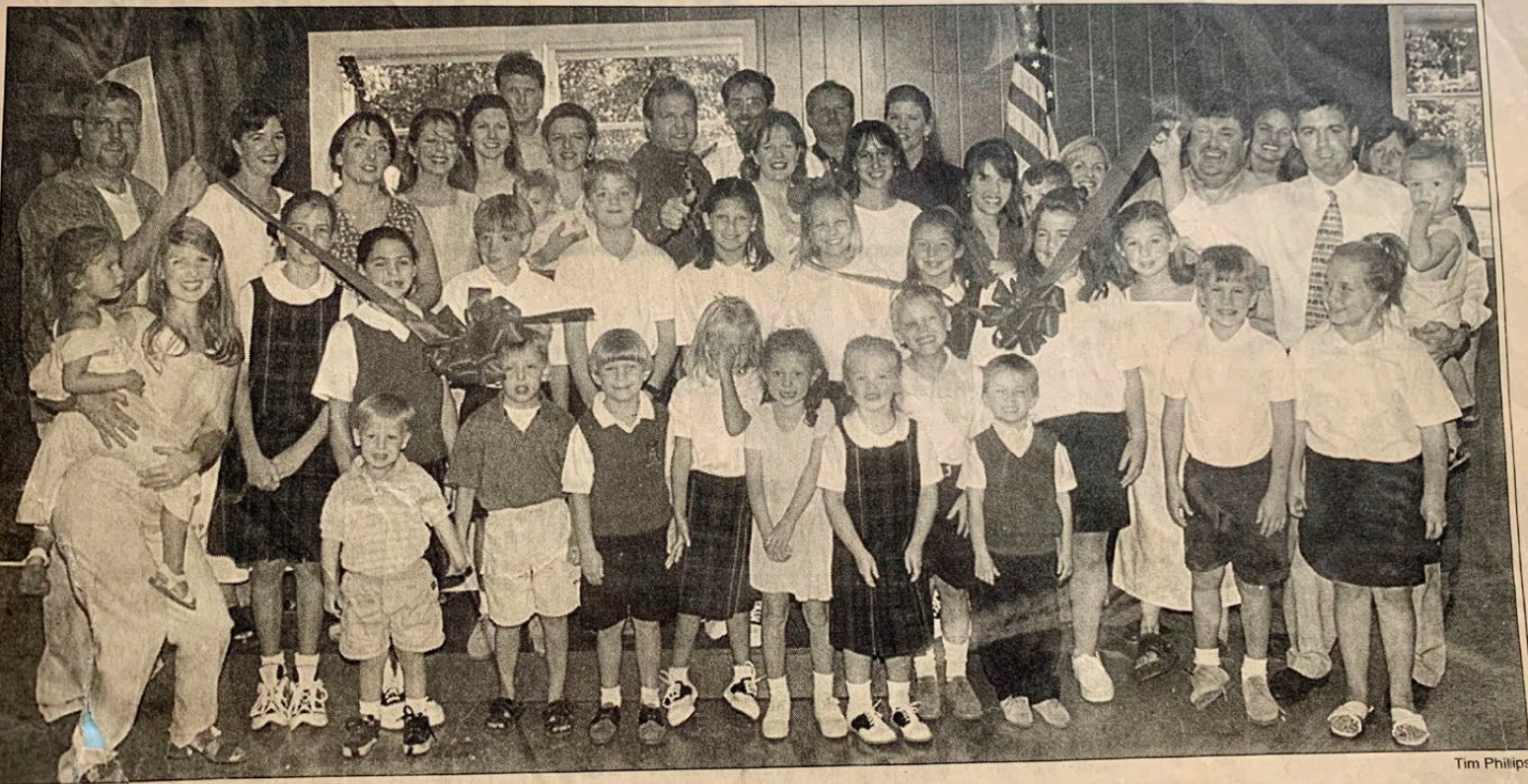
By Robin Bolton

Reflections of a  
Regents School  
Founder and  
Student Wannabe

Pushing my cart through the Oxford Walmart I pass the flimsy tower that houses the Back to School supply lists. With a flutter of anticipation I run up to the display to search for our pioneer start up. When I see the copies peeping out of the dispenser labeled REGENTS SCHOOL OF OXFORD, I'm embarrassed to be overcome by two emotions. I'm mindful that an onlooker would wonder why I'm tearing up. And secondly, I'm ashamed that this cardboard turn style somehow legitimizes to me that Regents is now a reputable institution of learning. My strong emotion settles into a smile. I'm triumphant as I consider the value of this free advertising; a grand savings for my imaginary marketing budget. I theatrically grab my two supply lists, acting as though I couldn't shop without them. I head off to purchase a nominal amount of supplies. Classicists are minimalist. A few years later I would find myself choking up again in the same superstore. A tiny child wearing our Land's End, signature plaid jumper would pass me with her mother. They see me, but brush right by without a second glance. Don't they know that I helped design that crest upon their son's adorable, red, chapel, sweater vest? I sober as I process a revelation. Our school, a fickle fledgling, has now taken flight. Like the emotion of dropping a child off for

THE OXFORD EAGLE **SECOND FRONT PAGE** MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2000

## Regent's School



Tim Phillips

The Regents School of Oxford recently held a ribbon cutting for the grand opening of its new Christian and Classical Education school in Oxford. The new school is located on College Hill Road in the former College Hill Academy buildings. Cutting the ribbon for the new school is Ted Smith, member of the

Board of Directors of the Regents School of Oxford. Other founding board members present were Robin and Ben Bolton, Karen and Jim Holland and Jenny Smith. For more information on enrolling in the Regents School, call 232-1945.



their first day of school, I'm conflicted between pride over Regent's independence, and jealousy, as I watch them skip into a new year, and not look back. I conceal a private pout. And there, standing in the produce department, this original school Founder eats her hubris.

Gathered in the Smith Family home in 1999, we held our first official meeting in the makeshift board room. That evening I had an epiphany of having "been here before." But it was not Deja vu. The Hollands, Smiths and Boltons met to collaborate and pray over the prospect of starting a new school; God having providentially networked the team. As a teenager in Memphis, I had been an accidental school starter when I was enrolled in a new high school that was still under construction and development. This unique experience deluded me into thinking that planting a small Christian school in Mississippi would be a far simpler task. I would soon be awakened to my naiveté. My husband Ben and I would later laugh that we thought we would start the school, and give it a year to "get the bugs worked out" before entrusting our own precious daughter unto said experiment. Academic sages report that it actually takes about twenty years for a new school to get established; a fact the Lord veiled from us. The six of us were fueled by hope and excitement. We were young, and energetic, creative and fearless; bound by a shared dream. Our diverse talents made it easy to align into our respective roles. Though never memorialized in the minutes of our Robert's Rules of Order, this is my aggrandized recollection of the hats we wore:

<b>Ted Smith</b>	Chief Executive Officer & Legal Counsel
<b>Jenny Smith</b>	Architect of Curriculum Scope and Sequence, Head Librarian
<b>Jim Holland</b>	Our Faithful Soldier, Equalizer
<b>Karen Holland</b>	Founder of the School of Arts, Curriculum Architect, Dreamer
<b>Ben Bolton</b>	Chief Financial Officer, Head of Infrastructure, Our Banker
<b>Robin Bolton</b>	Head of Marketing & PR, Event Planner, Cheer Captain

In truth, we just did whatever it took to get the job done, fulfilling prosaic board positions. We were grunt workers, painters, fundraisers and recruiters for the great cause. I perceived the other Founders to be graced with humility; often yielding their opinions. Jim Holland, a career Marine, was serving in one of our U.S. intelligence agencies and could not be photographed. Therefore, Jim is not even pictured with us in the Oxford Eagle news photo of our historic ribbon cutting. Jim represents the face of twenty years of unsung laborers at Regents.

We were a combination of Presbyterians and Charismatics; an odd couple at first glance, yet brilliant by God's design. Ben and I noted early on that Presbyterians are strongly graced for academia. Desiring to glorify the Lord with the entire mind, they just know how to start schools. Interestingly, it was not a Bolton who "named and claimed" the property and future school site on College Hill Road. That win is credited to the mighty prayers of Karen Holland as she would strategically circle the metal building on a prayer march she faithfully executed long before the Lord named the Founders. Historical documents of the first settlers include forefathers who planted a school before building the iconic College Hill Presbyterian Church. Alan Cochet remains a darling of Regents for his prophetic vision for the school and endless support by both he and his congregation.

Resurrecting my high school title of Most School Spirited 1985, I felt empowered by my personal philosophy that if one has a party theme, a three panel brochure and a pair of pom poms, anything might be accomplished. But before we could introduce our new school to the community, we needed a name! With a 'Build it and They Will Come' attitude, it was time to brand the school. The Founders gathered for an historic meeting, and remarkably, completed the work in one evening! God's anointing was upon us, guiding us to hear what we believed to be His heart for His school.

Secure in our new found identity, a three panel brochure was now in hand! All of our marketing materials were rustically printed off of a home computer during an era before social media. Before any campaign could be launched, we needed to proactively make a clear statement regarding our commitment to welcome all students, regardless of race. A shameful history of racial discrimination had left a blight on small private schools throughout the South. Therefore, our Board arranged to debut Regents to our city at the monthly meeting of the Association of Black Churches. It was there that we extended a heartfelt invitation to the African American community to join us. We earnestly stated at that meeting, "We will never be complete without you." Each year, Regents benefits as it grows in diversity; a blessing not taken lightly.



Many adventures preceded and followed the September 10th, 2000 ribbon cutting. Eighteen children and their parents, along with teachers Margaret Gill, Rachel Primos and Katherine Scott bravely began a journey that was not for the faint at heart. A dismal metal building with dilapidated outbuildings were spruced up with fresh paint and polished antiques desks. Crisp uniforms and doors painted to match plaid skirts made for a cheerful space. Wall murals and classical art warmed the concrete walls. Family's volunteered to ensure the school was safe and clean. But with no Headmaster nor office assistant our teachers would have to answer the phone during class! Donations ranging from toilet paper to books were as appreciated as the generous funds given by countless benefactors. Renovations continued yearly, reclaiming basketball courts and creating new spaces. We did not despise small beginnings.

Of course many, many mistakes were made. Imperfect people, like myself, often created setbacks that at times seemed unrecoverable. Every year we would assess our shortcomings and aim for course correction. Some of our blunders were serious, all of them were humbling, and others made for anecdotal material. One such story involved Ben and Ted along with newly recruited Jeff McManus who set out to install our brand new sign. I had pitched the idea of using our 1999 founding year opposed to the 2000 opening date. I reasoned that with the turn of the century it made us look instantly historic and established! The men selected an optimal location and lowered the auger to drill the hole. The details of who failed to "call before you dig" remains murky to this day. Sign in place it was a handsome marker for our new establishment! The sign would also be a calling card revealing who had just cut all of the phone lines for the residents of College Hill! Insult to injury, Bell South (now AT&T) would issue us a devilish bill of \$666.00 for the repairs! Thankfully, they forgave the debt after we prayerfully "called" upon the Lord. Shortly thereafter, Regents would establish a Parents in Prayer group, well before the War Room model was popularized. This Tuesday group, in concert with faculty, staff, Board, students, families, and friends would pray us out of many more holes. Those prayers are the reason Regents continues to grow in stature, and in wisdom, and in favor with man and God. Though our signage has been refurbished, two things remain the same since we began. We still pray. And we still have that telephone landline! #callbeforeyoudig

The classical method sets Regents apart from any school in our region. Ben and I are so thankful for the expertise of academicians who served as curriculum architects. Knowing our limitations in that specialized field, we volunteered elsewhere. Ben channeled his focus towards keeping our finances in the black by insisting fiscal conservatism with minimal to no debt.

This was the industry standard safe-guard for a start-up nonprofit. Contrariwise, my forte fell in advancing the "Extras," examples such as extracurricular activities, extra stops on field trips and extra ordinary pep rallies. I was greatly influenced by voices in the classical community who encouraged us to strive for the spirit of excellence. We were encouraged to weave great experiences into the curriculum. I later learned to not try to mimic school contemporaries in larger cities. We were to be a school that acknowledge and reflected the personality of our 38655 zip code. This was a fun challenge! We enlisted the Ole Miss Cheerleaders to tumble at our pep rally. We added Hollywood sparkle when my cousin Scott, a film director, built mechanical lions and exploded a confetti canon over the assembly. God bless the Headmasters who indulged my antics such as driving a siren blaring firetruck up into the gymnasium! It seemed the best prop to get the students "FIRED UP!" We were constantly dreaming up shenanigans, and with friends like Karol Turner, I always had an Ethel to my Lucy; a co-conspirator. Banker Ben would never know how much of our grocery budget would be spent on helium. When it came to Regents extras, I related to Alice in Wonderland who once said, "Why, sometimes I've believed six impossible things before breakfast." And impossible things just required a little ... extra!

Three Founding Families, three amazing teachers, and three trailblazing graduates would multiply over time, establishing Regents as an excellent school option. The school has grown into a significant employer, affording career opportunities for the region. Yearly, Regents launches world changers. And on occasion, they return to serve. Holly Prather, became the first Regents graduate to be named to a full time faculty position. She serves alongside her former classmate, and our daughter, Rorie Bolton Berry, who teaches one dozen first graders. Our youngest child, Ann Lindsey will graduate high school next year, rounding out a full circle for Boltons.

In the school office hangs the old Montgomery bell, original to the building, still ringing to keep everyone on schedule. Eventually, each graduate will hear the bell chime for one last time. Whether a student graces Regent's halls for a short term, or unto commencement ceremonies, our job remains the same. A true REGENT is to model God's love until His return. This Biblical mandate is reflected in our Mission Statement, which hangs in close proximity to that school bell. It signals us to "disciple our students to love, serve and to glorify God.." One of Mrs. Berry's "twelve disciples" offered a prayer that beautifully highlights this ideal. As we Founders give thanks for twenty years of Regents School of Oxford, I borrow Mimi's prayer. "Dear God, we are so proud of you. You did a good job!" Twenty years later, those are my sentiments exactly! And Mimi, tell your parents, I think He got the bugs all worked out!





## PARENT TESTIMONIAL

We have been a part of the Regents family for almost 10 years now. Our oldest son, Connor graduated from Regents last May. His words to someone once when asked why he liked Regents was “It feels like family, and I like the classical education.” When speaking at his graduation, he teared up when sharing memories of each teacher. That was because he knew that they truly cared for him.

We still have a sophomore and a third grader attending Regents. We know that not only are they learning how every subject connects to the Bible, but their hearts are being shepherded as well. School is where our children spend the majority of their day. We are grateful that what we are already teaching them at home is being reinforced to them at school.

All 3 of our sons are very relational and social. We never envisioned them going to a small school in high school. There have been times through out the years that we have taken months to evaluate and consistently pray whether Regents was the right place for our teens. So far Regents has been the place God has wanted them. We believe there are pros and cons to small and big, private and public. We also know that God makes all things good for those who love him. So the important thing is that we seek the Lord and his will in all things.

We always prayed when our sons were young for God to put other people besides us in their lives as they grew that would point them to Jesus. Regents has been the very place God answered our prayer and placed some of those people. They have had godly men and women at Regents school of Oxford encourage, teach & lead them daily.

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# WHY WE READ HARD BOOKS

By Micah Messersmith

I distinctly remember my first philosophy class in college. The professor was a large, imposing figure, much taller and more hefty than anyone else in the room. He looked like he had been an offensive lineman or powerlifter in a previous life. The towering man that stood before us that day was Dr. Kelly Jolley, Chair of the Philosophy Department. His name did not match his persona in the least. He was very serious, very...philosophical. He was intimidating and it worked. We all were intimidated. After going over the syllabus, he held up a large black book and stated simply, "We'll begin with CPR." My eyes widened and my heart pounded. As I faced this hulk of a man and his giant book, a weightiness came over the room, and I instantly knew my entire semester would be a fight for academic survival. "CPR" was, of course, Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. The analogy, "drinking from a firehose," would be entirely inadequate in this case. Nothing in my academic career had come close to preparing me for what I was about to experience.

Determined to do well in the class, I went straight to the library to take my first crack at reading Kant. I had always been a good reader and had, so I thought, a decent vocabulary, but this was a very different animal. With no background in Latin, I had no clue what a priori or a posteriori meant. I couldn't use the word "empirical" in a sentence. Everything was so "transcendental," whatever that meant. I began trying to look up the words in my pocket dictionary but had little success. It seemed like some of the words these philosopher guys were using were just made up! (Later I would learn that philosophers would, at times, take the liberty of creating vocabulary words in an effort to concretely manifest their very abstract musings.) Reading that book was laborious work, let alone trying to actually understand what the author was proposing. I felt inadequate and defeated, defeated by a book.

In the roughly twenty years since that encounter with Kant in the Auburn University Library I have read many "hard" books. Needless to say, it is a much different experience now. Those big and scary-sounding books don't quite intimidate me like they used to. I have read enough of them to realize that broken and imperfect people wrote them and in many



cases they were trying to answer the same questions about this world that we are still asking today. So much has changed since that day that now I actually find great pleasure in reading and re-reading portions of texts that are difficult. That's weird, right? Why read something difficult when you can just check out the SparkNotes (insert "Cliff Notes" there if you're over 35)? Reading hard books would not be worth the time and effort if the end goal was to simply say we have read them. After all, no one really cares or is impressed that you managed to trudge through Lucretius' On The Nature of Things.

At Regents, we read hard books. But we don't read hard books just to get "over the hump" of doing something difficult or to pat ourselves on the back. We read hard books because we want our students to accept the challenging task of working hard to discover what is true, good, and beautiful. And it is difficult work. We want our students to engage the great thinkers in human history in order that they, themselves, may take part in the "conversation."

The allure of popular culture has been and will continue to be strong, but it doesn't last. Our students are not going to find a meaningful pursuit of truth in popular culture. Popular culture is more of a mirror that reflects our problems than it is a portal through which we pursue truth. It's noisy chatter, not conversation. It's shallow twitter, not Ideas Have Consequences. It's easy.



Reading hard books is a practice that is difficult to inspire young adults to undertake. To help make sense of what I am about to ask of them, I present them with the following scenario; I begin by asking, "Have you ever walked up to two people that are engaged in a conversation and quickly realize you have no idea what they're talking about? That's a really awkward position to be in, isn't it? And you sometimes feel kind of dumb just standing there watching them talk, don't you?" Invariably, they all respond in the affirmative (because we have all been there!). I continue to explain, "There is a conversation going on in this world, and it's been taking place since the beginning of time. You have been given an opportunity to take part in the conversation, but it's hard work to get yourself up to speed on what's already been said. It's hard enough to sift through the noise of pop culture, but it is even harder to sift through what thoughtful men and women have said about what is true, good, and beautiful."

The fact is, God has created us all to participate in the conversation, but how can we engage the world unless we know what has already been said? How can we avoid just becoming "shallow twitter," repeating that which has not stood the test of time? We must engage those that have come before us and stand on their shoulders, but how can we do so unless we take the trouble to climb? How will our students learn the art of soaking up the deep riches of scripture if they aren't trained to read hard books?

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All these years later I now understand that Kant was not deliberately trying to seem enigmatic to countless generations of college kids, he was just trying his best to iron out what gives meaning to this world. And, although I would disagree with him on quite a few issues, I can't fault him for that. Isn't that what we are all doing?



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