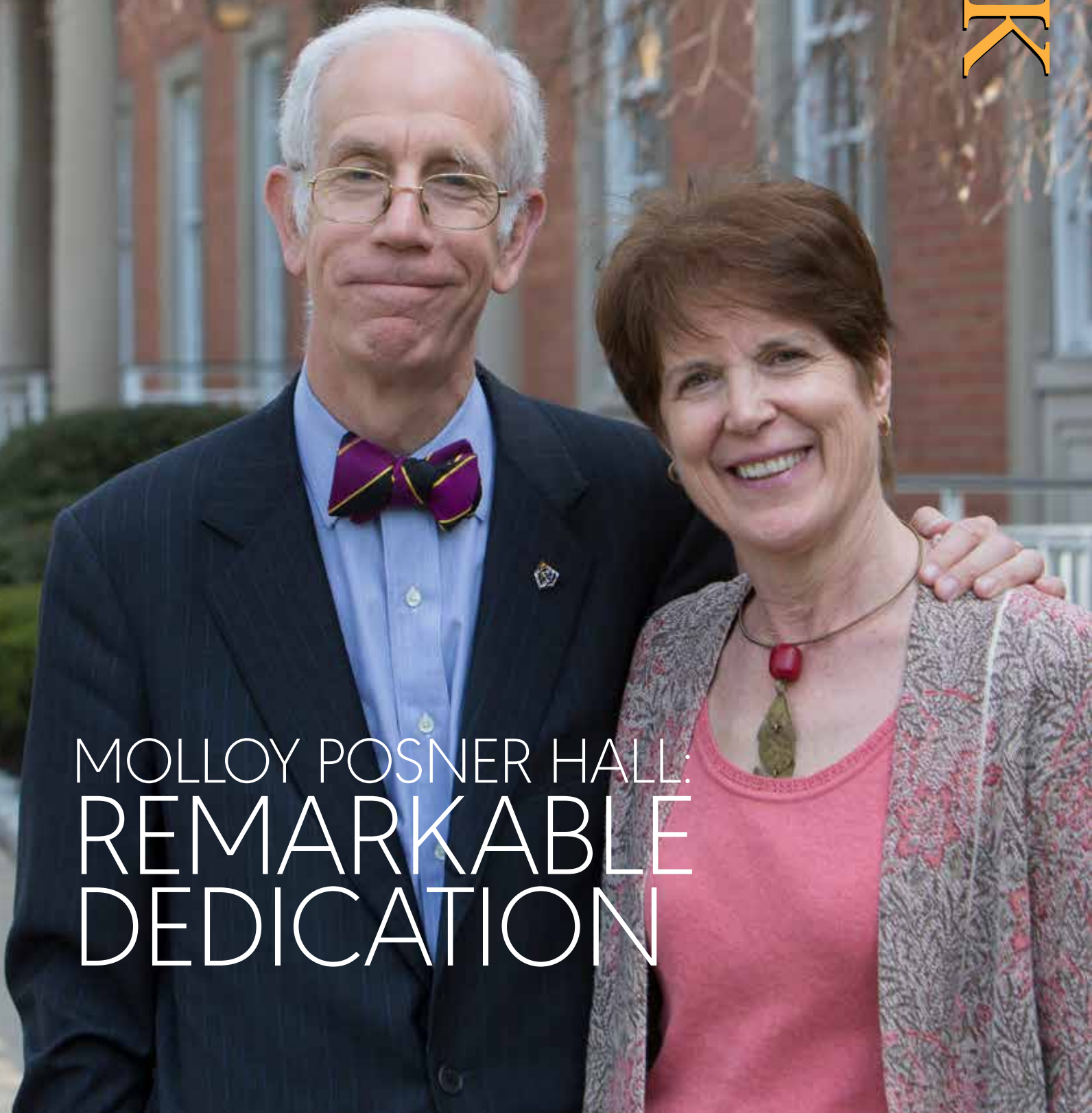


Thistle TALK



MOLLOY POSNER HALL:
REMARKABLE
DEDICATION



The impact of philanthropy

Although they took place nearly 16 years ago, I still remember vividly my interviews to be Head of Winchester Thurston School. The role of School Head is multi-faceted: there is academic leadership, oversight of student affairs, human resources, program development, finance and budgeting, physical plant, and community relations, to name just a few. So many different people asked me many questions, but the one question that I was convinced had doomed my candidacy pertained to my experience as a fundraiser, because I didn't have very much experience.

I can only speculate that the search committee saw me as having potential, because they still hired me. And soon I found myself gaining "on the job experience," raising money to support WT.

Looking back, I have to say fundraising became one of the more pleasurable aspects of the job. It has allowed me to have meaningful conversations with prospective contributors to the school, to hear personal stories from parents, trustees, alums, and foundation directors about the difference they want to make for WT and our students.

These conversations have been beautiful opportunities to hear the stories of their lives. I have learned so much about WT—about legendary teachers, about lifelong friendships, and about students who found a true calling, internalized an important ethos, struggled through challenges, or mastered a subject in ways that fundamentally shaped their career. Even better, these early dialogues often evolved into lasting friendships punctuated by ongoing conversations; the most satisfying have been the ones in which I've had the honor of sharing with these friends how their support has impacted our students and the school.

Thursday, April 13, 2017, will remain one of the most memorable moments of my career in philanthropy at WT. On that day, the Main Building on Winchester Thurston's City Campus was named Molloy Posner Hall. This joyful

dedication was an expression of gratitude to Anne Molloy and Henry Posner III for their extraordinary gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

The remarkable progress that WT has experienced in recent years has paralleled Henry and Anne's generosity and leadership. Henry became a member of the Board of Trustees in 1998 and has actively served for 19 years, including four years as Board Chair.

Their support has been extraordinary and transformational, and like that of many others, it is also grounded in their personal stories. When I arrived as Head in 2002, Anne and Henry were WT parents, and had been since 1993, when their daughter Hannah '06 entered kindergarten; Ida '08 entered in 1996, and Gus A'11 in 1998. When Henry was a student in high school he believed that some of the most interesting people he knew in Pittsburgh were Winchester Thurston students, and he wanted his children to attend the school that produced such interesting people. For her part, when Anne saw how adaptable WT is to the varying needs, personalities, and learning styles of each student, she knew it was the right choice for their family.

Anne and Henry serve as examples of the impact that philanthropy can have on a school. Today our students and faculty have better facilities for learning, and many students attend WT who would not have been able to afford to without financial aid support. Moreover, there are others who have stepped forward to give because of the example Henry and Anne have set. Their giving underscores the importance of relationships and community, two hallmarks of WT, and two highlights of my experience as a WT fundraiser.

This support not only sustains WT, it strengthens our community as a place of active engagement, of investment.

Anne and Henry are not alone in their philanthropy. Every year, parents, grandparents, alums, trustees, employees, and friends of WT come forward with gifts to the WT Fund. Many have contributed to important capital campaigns that have allowed us to enhance our facilities and build new facilities, and to grow our endowment so that we have permanent funds for faculty development, financial aid, City as Our CampusSM, and other important programs. This support not only sustains WT, it strengthens our community as a place of active engagement, of investment.

Let me take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to those of you who continue to support the mission of WT. Your relationship to WT is deeply meaningful and without you we would not be experiencing the kinds of unprecedented success that continues to drive us forward.

On Thursday, April 13, Winchester Thurston School celebrated the historic renaming of its Main Building as Molloy Posner Hall in honor of Anne Molloy and Henry Posner, whose extraordinary generosity, remarkable service, and genuine friendship place them among the largest donors and most selfless leaders in school history. A jubilant audience of past and present Board Chairs, trustees, faculty, students, and others joined Head of School Gary J. Niels to recognize the couple.

WT DEDICATES

“Trace the upward trajectory of WT, including enrollment, program development, facility enhancement, and endowment growth and you will find a curious chronological parallel to Henry’s role on the Board,” declared Niels in his remarks. “It’s not a coincidence.”



Moments after revealing the plaque that now adorns Molloy Posner Hall

The couple’s generosity has taken many forms, and goes well beyond philanthropy. Molloy was a stalwart parent volunteer while the couple’s three children were enrolled at WT. Posner, now an emeritus trustee, served as a term trustee for 13 years (1998-2011), the last four as

President, and has chaired multiple committees and task forces. Together—from an endowed scholarship fund, to purchasing property that expands the City Campus footprint, to a challenge gift that propelled the Celebrate WT capital campaign to exceed its \$20 million goal—Molloy and Posner have set a rare example for leadership and loyalty that began in 1993 when they enrolled Hannah ‘06, the eldest of their three children, followed by Ida ‘08 and Gus A’11.

“My parents are strong believers in the very core of WT’s culture,” says Gus Posner, who feels WT’s influence to this day. “Think also of the comfort and the rights of others’ has been one of my mottos since hearing it at WT. It is key to having an open mind and having great relationships with different types of people.”

“Two of the reasons that we chose WT for our children were the school’s flexibility and willingness to adapt and the school’s focus on the individual child,” shares Molloy. “Our children received an excellent education, not just in academics but in their total development.”

Like her brother, Ida Posner describes WT’s influence as permanent—and profound. “As I get older, I realize more and more the incredible impact



(L-R) Head of School Gary J. Niels and Board President Jennifer Gonzalez McComb ‘89, share the stage with honorees Henry Posner III and Anne Molloy.



Current fifth grade teacher Brian Swauger reconnects with his former student, Ida Posner ‘08.



Gus Posner A’11 and family friend Charlotte Broome reminisce over a photo from Gus’s Lower School years.

MOLLOY POSNER HALL



Anne Molloy reflects on the people within the building who made WT such a transformational place for her family.



Henry Posner III calls on students to fully embody the school's credo, "Think also of the comfort and the rights of others."

WT has had on me. It was such a privilege to go to a school where I could choose to study what I was most interested in, and to have the resources available to me to start to understand how what I was learning in the classroom could be applied to the outside world."

Both humbled and honored, Henry Posner is quick to clarify what sets WT apart. "It's not the building; it's the people. Remember, this was not WT's first building; the Pillared Portals still stand on Fifth Avenue and will soon be part of the CMU campus. It is hard to resist the temptation to interpret that as symbolic of WT's serving as a gateway to higher education."

Molloy and Posner's value for education is fundamental to their lives and is exemplified by their exceptional commitment not only to academic institutions, but to the impact on students within.

Their ties with Carnegie Mellon University are testament to this commitment, and their leadership extends beyond WT to include the community at large. "Anne and Henry's impact at CMU extends beyond their philanthropy; it's the subtle ways they work to advance our mission, by taking an active interest in the students who benefit from their support, and by constantly thinking of and facilitating the connections they can make for us," says Dr. Subra Suresh, CMU President. "You know, Anne and Henry are not CMU alumni, but they take enormous pride in our success — because they have played a major role in enabling that success."

It is a role that Molloy and Posner, committed to facilitating growth and progress, are proud to fulfill. "WT has traditionally occupied a unique position in the educational landscape, while at the same time demonstrating an ability to change with the times," says Posner. "If there is one thing that I hope we have influenced, it is a willingness to confront as well as embrace change."



Ida Posner '08 surrounded by the team of eighth grade students who, with Ida, compiled reflections of their experiences in Molloy Posner Hall. (Front Row, L-R): Julia Finke, Ellery Shapiro, Pearl Lee, Maxwell Cundieff; (Back Row, L-R): Sophia Khera, Katherine Recker-Mohn, Isla Abrams, Eddie Monaco, and Riley Harper. Not pictured: Talia Balk and Sofia Shapira.

We asked several members of the WT community to share their impressions of Anne Molloy and Henry Posner III. Following are just a few of the reflections.

“When Henry became a board member, I had even more interactions with him as an administrator having to report to the board. He was tough, and...I felt like he was a mentor, in some ways, for me. I listened to everything Henry said. He was honest, he was direct, and he was always helpful, even if I didn’t agree. But he gave me that permission to spar with him, almost; I always felt like I had that opportunity, and I grew from that.”

—Rebecca King, former teacher and Director of Admission

“There really are no truer friends to WT than Henry and Anne. In addition to their historic generosity as a couple, Henry has been one of the most active trustees throughout his 19-year tenure on the Board.”

—Gary J. Niels, Head of School



Board President Jennifer Gonzalez McComb '89 highlights the standard of selflessness and humility that Henry and Anne bring to all of their endeavors.

“You never know what Henry is going to say at any given time in a Board meeting. When his hand goes up and he is called on to speak, I take a deep breath and hold it because I never know where he is going to take our discussion next! He can be funny, controversial, outrageous, grounding, historic...and unpredictable in a predictable way. The underlying notion, though, as I listen to his comments or ponder his questions is that he always has the best interest of Winchester Thurston in his mind.”

—Jennifer Gonzalez McComb '89, Parent, Alumna, Board President



Current Trustees pictured with Henry Posner III (Front Row, L-R) Gary J. Niels, Simin Yazdgerdi Curtis, Henry, Manny Cahouet-Rotondi, Carole Oswald Markus '57, Martin Powell, Paul Rosenblatt, and Rosanne Isay Harrison '56; (Back Row, L-R): Jennifer Gonzalez McComb '89, Kerry Bron '84, Robert Glimcher, Kelly Hanna Riley '91, MaryJean Rusak, Cindy Akers Gerber, Philip Sweeney, and Sharon Semenza.

“Henry has remained very constant since I’ve known him. He’s thoughtful, he’s smart, he’s loyal, and he has always been interested in the same things. He’s very opinionated, but he is thoughtfully opinionated. Anne has a quiet strength about her. I think Henry usually is the more prominent of the two, but they are very equally matched. I think she just quietly and deliberately does a ton, and doesn’t really ballyhoo her own accomplishments. She is smart as a whip and can hold her own. She could have been a Winchester Thurston graduate. An honorary classmate.”

—Elizabeth 'Betsy' S. Hurtt '74, Alumna, Trustee

THE HEART AND HUB OF WT



1912: The Winchester School remodeled, 4721 Fifth Avenue



1959: Property at the corner of Morewood and Ellsworth Avenues, purchased to accommodate burgeoning enrollment



1962: Main Building under construction; designed by Pratt and Associates and built by Jendoco Construction



1963: Opening day of the Main Building, with an enrollment of 350 students



1984: Renovation of the bomb shelter into a new science wing



2006: Students carry library books from the Main Building to the new Upper School building honoring the tradition set when the school moved from 4721 Fifth Avenue



2013: Outdoor learning and play spaces transformed



2014: Glimcher Athletics Wing redesigned and updated



2015: Falk Auditorium renovated to a true performing arts space



2017: Second grade students process into the dedication ceremony to the Marching Song.

The dedication of Molloy Posner Hall is a joyous chapter in the history of a building that has served as the heart of WT's City Campus since the early 1960s, its very existence a testament to growth and change.

The history of Molloy Posner Hall mirrors the history of Winchester Thurston School: built upon a bedrock of determination and faith, framed by leadership and resilience, and fueled by vision, it continues to advance Miss Mitchell's legacy of providing a superior education to her students, and to honor her wisdom and foresight in promoting the necessary facilities in which to achieve it.