

# Goucher

NEWSLETTER



## Faith Across Religions

*New Interfaith Center planned for campus*

BY CHRIS LANDERS

Construction of new Interfaith Center will begin later this year.

**N**ejaat Ibrahim '19 wasn't exceptionally religious before she came to Goucher, but being away from home, she says, her faith gave her an anchor in a changing world.

"I feel like I've become more religious, or, I guess, taken more pride in my religion, since I came to college," she says. "When you're here, you're kind of all over the place, because you are trying to figure out a lot of things about life and about yourself."

Ibrahim was born in Ethiopia, but has lived in Maryland since she was five. She didn't grow up with a Muslim community around her, but has been trying to create one at Goucher, starting a study and prayer group on campus. It's the kind of faith community that religious leaders at the college have been trying to encourage, and one they hope will find a home at a planned addition to the Haebler Memorial Chapel.

The expansion will create an interfaith center, combining the existing chapel with space for Goucher Hillel, as well as rooms dedicated to other

faiths, which students can use for prayer and study. Members of Goucher's religious communities also hope that a central space will create opportunities for students of different faiths to come together. Construction on the addition is expected to begin later this year.

"To me there are two different things we're trying to get accomplished with the interfaith center," says Goucher Chaplain Cynthia Terry. "Creating spaces for students, particularly from religious minorities, to have what they need to practice, both individually and in community. The other piece is the interaction. Trying to really create in one place those opportunities for engagement, for curiosity."

"We certainly have a depth of different Christians and Jews on this campus," says Rabbi Josh Snyder, the executive director of Goucher Hillel, "and we also now are realizing the needs of Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, and other students.

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“We live in a multi-faith world,” he says. “There are all kinds of faith identities that may play into who we are and who we come across in our lives. To have some understanding of those identities, and relationships with people who are in those faiths, is going to serve our students well as they go out into the world.”

The conventional wisdom has long been that students going away to college abandon the religious traditions of their youth. While it’s true that, according to studies by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA and others, the number of college students who check “none” in the religion box has been on the rise, there’s a growing interfaith movement focusing on religious diversity on college campuses. On Goucher’s campus, where students skew slightly more secular than the average, according to a survey conducted in 2015, they are more likely than the average to have grown up in a multi-faith household, and much more likely to have friends with different religious views.

Snyder says Goucher students do a lot of questioning, and that includes matters of faith. He cites recent school surveys that show “our students have a higher degree of self-authorship of their own identity and faith identity than the students at peer institutions, meaning students think through and expose themselves to different ideas and faiths before they really finally settle.”

He and Terry hope that bringing students of different faiths under the same roof will facilitate conversations across religious traditions, and even outside them.

“We’ve started sometimes to use the term ‘worldview’ to encompass agnostics, atheists, humanists, and other philosophical worldviews that often are left aside when we talk about faith,” he says. “And when you can expand to that, I think you find that everybody has some viewpoint, some lens through which they look at the world.”

“In today’s world,” Terry says, “religion continues to be important. And it is such a player politically, that colleges have a unique opportunity to help people get to know each other.”

For Ibrahim, growing up as a Muslim with mostly Christian friends, having discussions about her faith is familiar territory.

“I think when people feel comfortable enough to ask questions,” she says, “when someone does have that the courage to ask, rather than make assumptions, it’s a great moment.”

She tries to let her behavior serve as an example,

to fight the negative assumptions about Islam she sees around her.

“Religion can be a very touchy subject, and very personal,” she says. “But I think that being Muslim, and wearing the hijab, I mean, it’s basically written on my forehead. So I’ve learned to be comfortable with people knowing this personal part of me. That opens up a lot of interesting conversations.”

*For more information about the planned interfaith center, including the upcoming announcement of the naming and ground-breaking, please visit [www.goucher.edu/communitymatters](http://www.goucher.edu/communitymatters).*



Great Room



Prayer Room



Haebler Interior







PHOTO BY MICHAEL TERCEIRA

# A Bermudian Nutcracker

*Alumnae Bring Dancers Together*

BY MOLLY ENGLUND

^  
Emily Polasik, center, with  
dance students

Sometimes, being part of the Goucher community means working with one of your former students to rehearse a ballet across miles of ocean. It sounds complicated, but **Nadia Letnaunchyn '00, M.A.A.A. '08** and **Emily Polasik '13** know how to make it look easy.

Each December for the past 10 years, the Mid Atlantic Youth Ballet (MYB) has performed *The Nutcracker* at Kraushaar Auditorium. Letnaunchyn, the founder of MYB, traces its roots back to her graduate program. As part of a project, she created a nonprofit organization. Eventually it became MYB, which today teaches about 100 students, with another 30 or so who perform with the company.

In addition to running the company, Letnaunchyn also spent time teaching dance in Baltimore County public schools. That's how she met Polasik, who studied with Letnaunchyn in high school and later joined MYB until she left to study dance at a college in Virginia.

The summer after Polasik's first year of college, she decided she wanted to be in a more challenging dance program. On a lark, she applied to Goucher, her former teacher's alma mater. A few weeks later, she was on campus for early arrival. She majored in dance education, having long known she wanted to teach. When Polasik was young, her mom asked her what the point of a skill was if you didn't pass it on to someone. "That stuck with me," she says. "I don't get the same satisfaction from performing that I get from teaching and seeing my students perform."

While at Goucher, Polasik worked in the dance office. As one of her last tasks after graduation, she took down the old fliers layered on the bulletin board. An ad seeking dance teachers in Bermuda caught her eye. She had expected to stay in the area and find a teaching job, but if she could do the same thing in Bermuda, she thought, then why not?

Polasik flew to the island and began working at the Jacksons School for Performing Arts, teaching ballet, jazz, modern, and other styles to students aged five and up. She teaches 18-20 classes a week. "I love my job," she says. "I have great students, and dance is really well-received here." And the Goucher community is never too far away; recently, Polasik ran into the men's soccer team. She didn't know any of them, she says, but they "probably sat down by the harbor for almost an hour chatting."

As much as she enjoys island life (all 20 square miles of it), Polasik still likes to visit Goucher when she can. On one visit last year, she had an idea: What if she brought some students to Baltimore to perform with MYB in *The Nutcracker*? She spoke to Letnaunchyn, and they eagerly agreed on a trade—first the Bermudians would come to Baltimore, and next year, dancers from MYB will come to Bermuda.

For *The Nutcracker*, Letnaunchyn directed 140 dancers (the youngest was almost four years old), plus eight teenagers from Bermuda. However, the Bermudians couldn't come to Baltimore until the week of the performance, so Letnaunchyn sent videos of the choreography to Polasik, who taught it to her students. It made for a seamless integration once they came to Baltimore, even though the Bermudians weren't that familiar with the ballet. "Technology has really transformed what we're able to do," says Letnaunchyn. "10 or 15 years ago, this wasn't possible."

Once they got to Kraushaar last December, the challenge for the group was figuring out the spacing on stage. "They did a wonderful job," Letnaunchyn says. And Letnaunchyn's biggest challenge with the Bermudians? Making sure they felt welcome and part of the company. Luckily, they were and they did—and that's eight more people added to the Goucher community.

**“Technology  
has transformed  
what we’re  
able to do.”**

# Coach Kozak Ready For the Next Set

BY BRANDON HARRISON



*Kait Kozak (center) with women's volleyball team.*

**H**ead Coach Kait Kozak is heading into her second season at the helm of the Goucher College women's volleyball program.

Kozak entered her first year with the Gophers with an impressive track record of building winning teams. She comes to Goucher after five years as an assistant coach with the U.S. Naval Academy alongside head coach Larry Bock—the winningest coach in NCAA volleyball history.

“The team will be very different next year and so it is hard to pinpoint what our focus will be in 2017,” said Kozak. “I expect us to continue to focus on relationship building, growth, and resiliency—the building blocks of our program. The team will be young and that means they will need a lot of guidance and direction. Leadership from the upperclassmen will be important.”

During her first season, the Gophers posted a 1-5 record in conference play and 7-19 record overall. “The 2016 season was a huge success in my eyes despite our

circumstances and results,” she says. “The culture of the program was established, the players developed new skills, and the team improved collectively. Results are important, but they don't always measure progress, and that is something I have to remind myself and the team of daily.”

“Coach Kozak is transforming the lives of these women,” said Dr. José Antonio Bowen, Goucher College President. “They grew enormously as players and as women.”

While working with the Naval Academy program, Kozak was the first assistant and had a hand in all aspects of day-to-day operations, including recruiting, player development, strength and conditioning, marketing, alumni relations, and other administrative duties.

In five years at Navy, Kozak helped turn around the Midshipmen program from a six-win team in 2011 into a Patriot League Championship finalist in 2014. That year, Navy tallied an 11-5 record in conference play, posting their first winning season since 2008.

Kozak also showed the ability to get the most out of her players, helping guide individuals to five All-Patriot league honors. She coached a pair of All-Conference honorees in 2012, marking the first the school had seen since 2005.

“I value hard work and dedication. Athletes who are willing to learn, fail in the process, and continue forward despite challenges are really important to me and the growth of the program. Also, every team can benefit from athletes who are positive and opportunity oriented. There is nothing better than having a group of young women who view challenges as opportunities, and support one another through the process.”

Prior to her time with Navy, Kozak spent her first stint head coaching with Western New England University. In just her first season at the helm of the Golden Bears, Kozak improved the team's record by nine games, tallying a program-best regular season mark of 26-9 in 2009. She led the Golden Bears to the Commonwealth Coast Conference (CCC) Tournament Championship final that season, before leading Western New England to the Eastern College Athletic Conference DIII New England Regional Championships. In turn, Kozak was named the CCC Coach of the Year.

In two seasons with the Golden Bears, a total of nine athletes under Kozak's direction were named All-Conference selections, including 2009 Libero of the Year Marci Egbert.

A four-year letter winner and team captain, Kozak earned a bachelor of science degree from the University of Miami in sport administration in 2006, before going on to earn a masters of education in counseling psychology and student personnel administration from Springfield College in 2008. Following her time at Springfield, she worked at the University of Oregon where she served as the student-athlete coordinator, specializing in career development, community service management, and leadership development. While at Oregon, the NCAA honored the program with the National NCAA SAAC Award.



# Residence Hall Finds A New Home



Photo illustration by Rob Ferrell and Sarah Palmer

In one of the fastest building relocations to ever take place on a college campus, Goucher will move Froelicher Hall this summer.

“The innovative project highlights the college’s emphasis on environmental sustainability and historic preservation, while also underscoring fiscal responsibility,” said Dr. José Antonio Bowen, Goucher College President. “By reusing the building materials and preserving nearly seven decades of Froelicher memories for alumnae/i, the move will allow the next generation of Goucher students to continue in a shared experience.”

Goucher will relocate Froelicher Hall to a new campus location that will strategically create a residential community space between the new first-year village and Mary Fisher residence halls. Alcock, Gallagher, and Tuttle houses will each be moved over a three-week span, with one building moved each week 500’ across campus to its new foundation. Moving the buildings, which each weigh in excess of 1,000 tons and measure 37’ wide by 102’ long by 35’ tall, will be an engineering marvel.



BEFORE



AFTER

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

## ALUMNAE/I WEEKEND

APRIL 28-30, 2017

[www.goucher.edu/alumni](http://www.goucher.edu/alumni)



# Goucher Collects

## Showcasing Alumnae/i Art Collections

BY CHRIS LANDERS

**S**onja Sugerman breaks it gently to the two students in her Practicum in Museum Studies: “You have to do math if you’re going to be in art history. I’m sorry, but that’s the truth no one tells you.”

**Tori Gingrich '17** and **Ilana Piskin '19** are resolute. Laid out before them on the table, along with a calculator and smart phone, are charts and squares, paper and tape. Their challenge for today is geometrical in nature—how do they fit all the paintings, sculptures, and objects for the upcoming *Goucher Collects* show onto the walls of the Silber Gallery.

The broad strokes are there—the long walls of the rectangular room will go to New York and California artists, the short walls to New England and the Pacific Northwest. Sugerman takes the art history majors through the list, adding up the dimensions of paintings, some belonging to the college, others to alumnae/i who have agreed to loan them from their private collections.

This is the second year for the *Goucher Collects* show, which will run from April 6 to May 19. The first two shows were made possible by a gift from **Toni Perlman Young '67, P '98**. This year’s show, titled *Schools of Thought*, is the first to add a teaching component—Gingrich and Piskin have helped research the works and schools of art being shown, and are working on essays for the catalog. On Alumnae/i Weekend, they’ll be giving gallery talks, but right now, they’re getting a more hands-on education, stretching a tape measure across the walls and charting how much wall space to allow between paintings.

The works cover a broad range of artists and schools, from the photos of Ansel Adams to blown glass sculpture by Dale Chihuly. Sugerman says donors have been eager to participate, showing works that usually have a more limited audience in private homes. She’s keeping the donors a secret for now—though their names will collectively adorn a wall in the gallery, they won’t be linked to specific works of art.

The New York wall comes up short. Or rather, the art comes up long. Sugerman has to make some tough calls. She may remove the Garry Winogrand photo belonging to the college first—that can always be shown another time. Two Sol LeWitt paintings can be hung vertically to save a little space. The walls begin to take shape.

*Goucher Collects: Schools of Thought* will open April 6 in the Silber Gallery. To learn more about the exhibit, visit [www.goucher.edu/gouchercollects](http://www.goucher.edu/gouchercollects).





# The Art of Travel

## *AAGC 2017 Award for Excellence in Public Service-Winner Betty Overington Knupp '67*

BY MOLLY ENGLUND

**W**hen **Betty Overington Knupp '67** was reached by cell phone this past March, she was on a boat off the coast of Cumberland Island, Georgia, exploring the local wildlife. Could she call back?

Back on the mainland that afternoon, Knupp, winner of the AAGC 2017 Award for Excellence in Public Service, reflected on her career in arts education and how she has entwined it with a life of travel.

Knupp's love of art first formed in her dorm room at Goucher. Her first-year roommate had gone to France the previous summer and come back smitten with the French Impressionists. The two decorated their room with Monet posters. Then when Knupp, a political science major, finished college, she went on her own Goucher-sponsored trip to Europe. "I spent that whole summer after my graduation in 1967 visiting art museums and churches. I got really excited about art," she said.

After interning with the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, Knupp was hired there full time as a research analyst. (The internship was thanks to Goucher's Political Science Department, which had set up a formal internship program—an almost unheard of concept in the late 1960s.) She was later promoted to supervisor, and found the work in civil rights very rewarding.

But art would continue to tug at her attentions. She and her husband, John, had four sons, and Knupp decided to volunteer at their elementary school. She created the Picture People Program, which

brought parents into the classrooms to teach children about famous artists and their paintings. "I found that so much fun because you could see how children could be very excited about really exploring a painting in-depth," she said.

It was so much fun that she didn't want to stop after her kids left elementary school. She began teaching an art appreciation class at Ginger Cove, a retirement community in Annapolis, and then added another one at her church. Knupp also contacted Anne Arundel Community College and began teaching a class for senior adults through its continuing education program. The college gave her another class, then another, and pretty soon she was teaching seven classes a week, a career that spanned 25 years.

Knupp also planned trips for all her classes—to Paris and the Loire Valley when they studied French art, to Italy when covering Italian Renaissance and Baroque art, and to Holland for Dutch paintings.

"I got so if I wanted to go someplace, I would plan a trip there and teach a course," she said. Her husband jokes that her classes were so popular because of her fabulous trips. Knupp took care of everything, so seniors could have a carefree time visiting museums, churches, historic houses, and gardens around Europe and the U.S. She made over 20 trips to Europe alone.

An avid gardener, Knupp volunteers in the gardens of her church, a children's museum, and a senior center. She's also worked with the Anne Arundel Literacy Council, teaching an adult man with two



young sons how to read, and co-founded the South County Concert Association, bringing music to the Annapolis area. She has served on its board for 42 years.

She's retired from teaching now, with more time to spend reading, gardening, and with her large family. And she's still planning trips. On a recent one to Machu Picchu with her sister, Knupp prevented a fall by bracing against an Incan stone wall. She fractured her hand, but that wasn't going to slow her down. "At least it was my hand and not my foot," she said. "So I could keep going."

Betty Overington Knupp '67 will be presented with Goucher's AAGC 2017 Award for Excellence in Public Service on Saturday, April 29 (Alumnae/i Weekend) during the AAGC Annual Meeting and Presidential Update. This annual award is conferred on alumnae/i who demonstrate outstanding commitment and leadership in public service.



# New Mascot Debuts

Last month, the new look of the Goucher mascot debuted online and to hundreds of enthusiastic accepted students at Got Into Goucher Day. After nearly 30 years, the new mascot has been energized and updated to reflect the recent redesign of the Goucher Athletics logo and an official name was also chosen.

“We felt that selecting from a group of gender-neutral names was the right direction for Goucher Athletics and reflects the values of Goucher College,” said Geoff Miller, director of physical education and athletics at Goucher College. “After conducting an online poll, I’m excited to reveal that the new name for our mascot will be Rowdy.”

Rowdy will represent Goucher at athletic games, throughout the community, and at campus events (including Alumnae/i Weekend). Go Gophers!



To honor the recipients of the Marguerite Barland '60 Merit Award, the Jewell Robinson Dinner Committee commissioned a quilt in the African American storytelling quilt tradition. Each year, a square will be added, made partly of fabric donated by the award-winner. The quilt will be displayed in the Alumnae/i House. (Left to Right: Barland award-winners Jesse Holland M.F.A. '12, Faye Yvette McQueen '83, Percy Moore '95, Minnie Waters Shorter '73, Maxine Bigby Cunningham '70, and Goucher President José Antonio Bowen)