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JOSEPH P. BILSON

December 19, 2017

Dear Friend of Girard:

I am writing to tell you about two exciting developments currently underway that will have a major impact on the future of Girard College.

But first, I want to formally welcome our new Interim President, Ava Willis-Barksdale, who took over as President of Girard on December 1st. For nearly a decade, Ava has been a tremendously effective Girard leader, having served as the school's Vice President and as its Director of Human Resources since 2010. In that capacity, she has helped lead the comprehensive academic restructuring of Girard College, including the development of the new Girard High School, to position Girard's graduates for greater academic success in college and beyond. Ava is a seasoned education professional who has a great passion for the Girard mission, and we are delighted to have her serve as Interim President.

At the same time, I want to let you know that we have begun the search for a permanent President. Recently, the Board of Directors of City Trusts authorized the hiring of Witt/Kieffer, Inc., one of the nation's leading executive search firms, to identify candidates to serve as Girard's next President. We anticipate that this process will last into the Spring of 2018, and we expect to keep the Girard community fully informed as it moves forward.

I also am pleased to formally announce the launch of a new Strategic Planning process to guide the school's progress for the next decade and beyond. As Girard's finances have become more stable, it is important to chart a new course for the school's future that focuses on how best to improve the unique Girard educational/residential experience and the opportunities it creates for our students. We intend the Strategic Planning process to be as transparent and inclusive as possible, so that all members of the Girard Family can have the opportunity to participate in planning the future of Girard College.

To that end, the Board has retained the services of Concentrics Inc., of West Chester, Pa., a firm with extensive experience in educational leadership and strategic planning. Under the guidance of its founder and President, Andy Mozenter, the planning process will seek input from virtually every segment of the Girard community, including faculty, residential staff, students, parents, alumni, and partners and other experts from beyond the walls. We expect to reach out to all of these stakeholders in the coming months, and we expect to hold a series of public forums to provide input from all who want to help shape the plan. We also anticipate providing an opportunity for Girard's next President to participate in this process upon arrival on campus, and with that in mind we anticipate that a formal plan should be completed in time for the start of the 2018-2019 school year.

Our intention once again is to keep you fully informed about the planning process as we move forward, and I encourage you to join us as we plan what promises to be a very bright future for Girard College.

With best wishes for a Happy and Peaceful Holiday Season,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernard W. Smalley", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bernard W. Smalley, Chair
Girard College Committee
Vice President, Board of Directors of City Trusts