



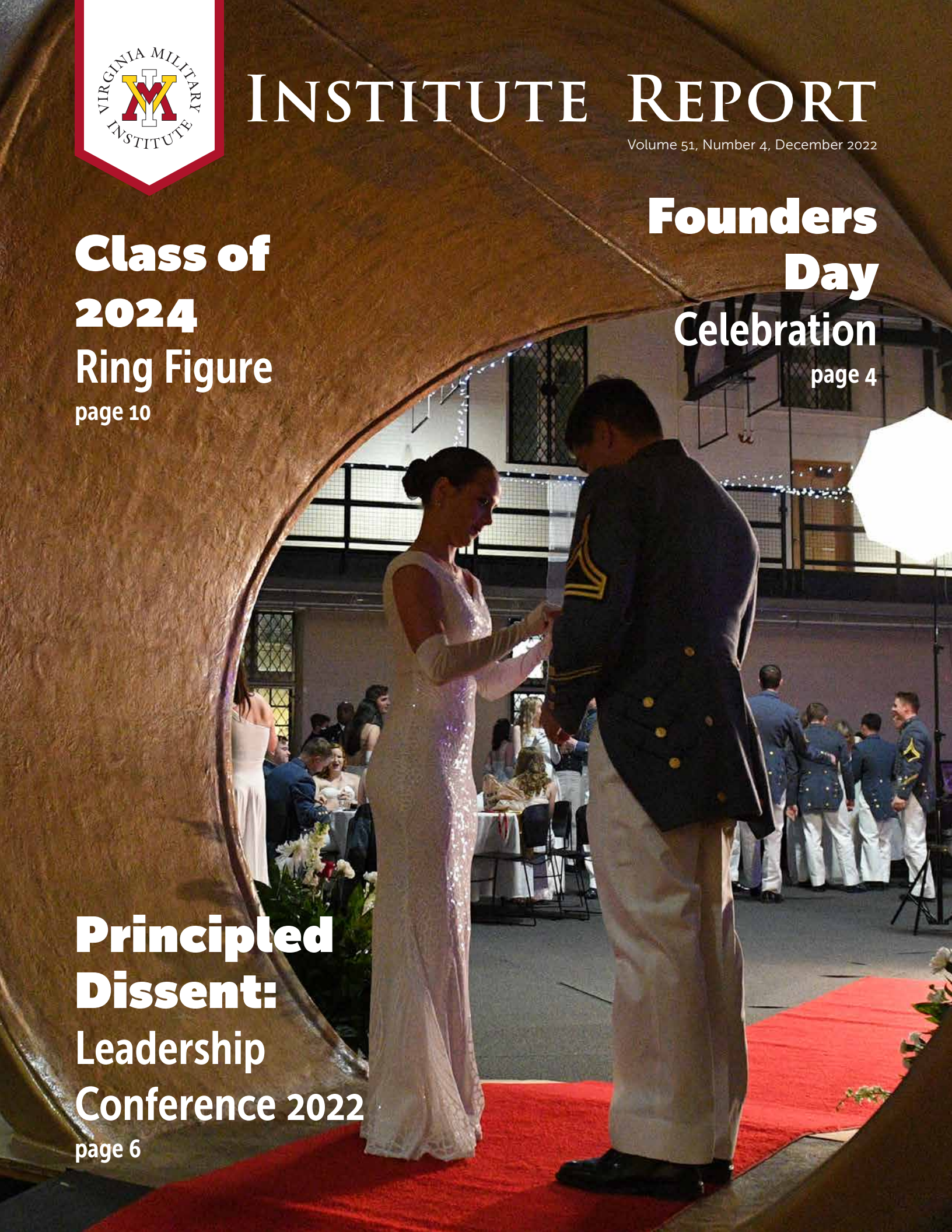
INSTITUTE REPORT

Volume 51, Number 4, December 2022

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Rat Olympics

Rat Olympics kicked off Founders Day for the Class of 2023 plus 3 on Nov. 11 in the Corps Physical Training Facility. The competition is the culmination of a ten-week physical education program and includes rock climbing, relay races, and tug-of-war. At a dinner the following week, Company B received the Stockwell Cup, named for the late Col. Bill Stockwell, which is awarded to the company that works the hardest and displays the best attitude through Rat Challenge. Company B also won the Rat Olympics competition, which is rare for a company to win both.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



INSTITUTE REPORT

Volume 51, Number 4, December 2022

The Institute Report, VMI's monthly newsletter, publishes eight issues during each academic year. Inquiries, suggestions, news items, and address changes should be directed to Editor, Institute Report, VMI Communications and Marketing, Lexington, VA 24450-0304; 540-464-7207; or VMIReport@vmi.edu.

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On the cover: John Taxiarchou '24 walks through the ring in Cocke Hall at the Ring Figure ball on Nov. 18, and his date puts his ring on his finger for the first time.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.


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VMI Celebrates Founders Day, Honors Former Superintendent

By Marianne Hause

On a gray and rainy Veterans Day, VMI celebrated the 183rd anniversary of its founding and bestowed its highest honor upon Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62, VMI's 14th superintendent.

Members of the Corps of Cadets, along with faculty, staff, and special guests, joined together in Cameron Hall to honor Peay as recipient of the New Market Medal. Peay is only the 16th recipient of the award since its introduction in 1962.

The Board of Visitors voted unanimously to honor Peay at its September meeting. In addition, a video presentation of Peay's time at VMI was shown, and his official portrait was unveiled.

Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent, set the tone for the annual celebration of Founders Day. "This is a day to remember our beginnings and to look toward our future. VMI continues to remain current while honoring principles of our founding, training cadets to live a life of service and integrity that focuses on honor as a way



Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 addresses the audience during the Founders Day celebration in Cameron Hall Nov. 11.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 speaks to Cameron Cavanaugh '23, class president, and Blake Smith '23, regimental commander, after the Founders Day celebration in Cameron Hall Nov. 11.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 gives a thumbs-up after his portrait is unveiled during the Founders Day celebration in Cameron Hall Nov. 11.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

of life. Today, in addition to remembering our founding, we are here to recognize an outstanding leader, General J. H. Binford Peay III," said Wins.

Sen. Thomas K. Norment Jr. '68, a member of Virginia General Assembly, also spoke. He noted that VMI has grown into a nationally-recognized institution of higher education citing numerous superior rankings. He called Peay a visionary who could also implement his vision, and his vision has been "incredibly successful."

The president of the Class of 1962, Dr. John Duke Anthony III, said of his brother-in-law, "Peay is renowned for his emphasis on planning, preparation, pursuit, persistence, and perseverance. All those words begin with P, no pun intended," he quipped. When the audience laughter subsided, Anthony turned serious and addressed the cadets, "Why are you here? Why do you exist? When you awoke this morning, what went through your mind? What will you be? What have you been? What are you to become? What is it you would die for? You have a purpose with a service to others."

At the conclusion of Anthony's speech, Peay's portrait was unveiled by Peay; Thomas R. Watjen '76, president of the VMI Board of Visitors; Blake Smith '23, regimental commander; and Cameron Cavanaugh '23, class president. The work, an incredible likeness of Peay, received a standing ovation. It will be on permanent display in the Turman Room in Preston Library. The Class of 1962 funded the commission of the painting.

Watjen stated that when Peay was superintendent, he kept the focus on things that mattered, and produced leaders of the future. "He kept a

Continued on next page

VMI Institute Report



Dr. John Duke Anthony III '62 gives his remarks during the Founders Day celebration in Cameron Hall Nov. 11.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Board of Visitors President Thomas Watjen '76 presents Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 with the New Market Medal in Cameron Hall Nov. 11.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

relentless focus on three pillars: academics, athletics, and military life.” Watjen recognized Peay’s wife, Pamela, noting that she is an “unsung hero” and that she and her husband were a team. Watjen read a letter from Gov. Glenn Youngkin congratulating Peay and sending his best wishes, “Please know the gratitude I have for your unparalleled service to our nation, for the commonwealth, and to the Institute.”

The last speaker was Peay, who with emotion and humility, thanked the Board of Visitors for entrusting him with the position of superintendent, the staff who worked tirelessly for him, and the faculty who provided academic excellence. He offered many personal mentions of gratitude to individuals who brought energy, direction, and knowledge to the Institute over the years. He noted several changes that have happened over the decades, saying that some changes are just “a different way of doing things.” His admiration of the Corps of Cadets remains strong. “I never tire of being in the company of VMI cadets and swell with pride of what you and the Virginia Military Institute represent.” ❁



Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III '62 speaks to Kyle Keith, the artist who painted his portrait, in Cameron Hall Nov. 11.—VMI photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Recipients of the New Market Medal

- 1962**—Lt. Gen. Charles E. Kilbourne, VMI Class of 1894
- 1964**—Gen. George C. Marshall, VMI Class of 1901
- 1965**—U.S. Senator Harry Flood Byrd
- 1971**—Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., VMI Class of 1917
- 1974**—Virginia Governor Colgate W. Darden Jr.
- 1978**—Virginia Governor Mills E. Godwin Jr.
- 1980**—State Senator Elmon T. Gray, VMI Class of 1946
- 1984**—The Honorable John D. deButts, VMI Class of 1936

- 1994**—Robert H. Patterson, Esq., VMI Class of 1949C
- 2000**—Sol W. Rawls Jr., VMI Class of 1940
- 2005**—U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd Jr., VMI Class of 1935
- 2006**—Former Secretary of the Army John o. Marsh Jr.
- 2012**—Frank G. Louthan Jr., VMI Class of 1941
- 2014**—Bruce C. Gottwald, VMI Class of 1954
- 2018**—Gen. John P. Jumper, VMI Class of 1966
- 2022**—Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III, VMI Class of 1962

Conference Speakers Focus on Principled Dissent

By Marianne Hause

The 13th Annual VMI Leadership and Ethics Conference, “Principled Dissent: Navigating Moral Challenges,” was held Monday, Oct. 31, and Tuesday, Nov. 1, in Marshall Hall. The conference focused on both the personal aspects of developing and exercising moral courage and the organizational environment set by leaders to encourage respectful, honest, and candid conversation.

More than 160 participants, including students from many colleges, universities, and military academies from across the nation including Virginia Tech, Christopher Newport University, Washington College, the Citadel, the Coast Guard Academy, Texas A&M University, Norwich University, the Air Force Academy, East Tennessee State University, as well as many VMI cadets, gathered to hear inspirational speakers, participate in collaborative activities, and to network. Central to the conference’s programming were small group discussions and speakers focusing on critical thinking, problem solving, making ethical decisions, and becoming an effective leader with convictions.

Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins ’85, superintendent, welcomed attendees on Monday morning and challenged them to learn how to lift their voices to the world’s challenges while exploring the dimensions of effective leadership, often placing courage over comfort. “There is a fine line between constructive and destructive dissent. Over the next two days, you will learn new skills on how to speak up and be critical when the situation is appropriate. You will learn about yourselves, and how you as leaders, can effectively influence a team and encourage a



Erika Cheung describes her time at Theranos during the Leadership and Ethics Conference in Gillis Theater Oct. 31.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

culture of honesty and integrity,” Wins said.

The first guest speaker was Ira Chaleff, an executive coach in the greater Washington D.C. area, and author of the book, “The Courageous Follower: Standing Up To and For Our Leaders,” which is used widely in leadership studies and development programs and has been translated into multiple languages. His

later book, “Intelligent Disobedience: Doing Right When What You’re Told To Do Is Wrong” was named the best new leadership book of 2015 by the University of San Diego School of Leadership and Education Sciences.

Chaleff, having recently recovered from an illness, spoke remotely to his audience. The title of his talk was, “A Critical Leadership and Followership Skill.” He defined leadership as “a relationship of mutual influence between leaders and followers,” and noted that in every organized activity there is a leader and at least one follower. Sometimes one leads, and sometimes one follows. He stated that followers are equally as important as leaders when all share the same values and are in service to a common purpose. To follow courageously, one should stand up to and for the leaders, though sometimes a leader should be challenged or questioned.

Chaleff discussed the idea of “intelligent disobedience,” which is resistance to an order if the leader lacks legitimate authority or the order will produce

harm. He gave an example of a guide dog for the blind being taught to disobey commands when they pose a danger. The dog’s visually impaired master has legitimate authority, but may give the



Peter Bonilla makes remarks in Marshall Hall Oct. 31 during the Leadership and Ethics Conference.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Continued on next page

command to lead him across the street. At that point the dog intelligently disobeys. Why? Because what the master doesn't realize is that a quiet car is quickly approaching and if the dog obeys, he will put himself and his master in grave danger. He noted that this type of disobedience differs from civil disobedience, where the system is perceived to be unjust, with violations of laws and rules are committed usually to bring public harm.

Chaleff discussed authority structures, which are externally assigned roles, for example a job description or responsibility flow chart, that clarify who can set policy or issue orders for others. Such structures promote orderly group activity and efficiency. Problems arise within these internalized rules of behavior toward authority when they vary. Sources of internalized rules are often established at a young age and can come from family, schools, youth programs, religion, culture, indoctrination, and organizational norms. The varying internalized rules can inhibit the flow of information and ideas. He noted that there are varying degrees of obedience. Some people obey authority, even to the detriment of themselves and others, while others limit their obedience when it conflicts with a higher authority, for example what they were taught by their parents, or what their religion or conscience forbids.

Chaleff advised using an effective voice when dissenting. An assertive voice is assured, confident, firm, and forthright. A mitigating voice is diplomatic, hedging, and weak. A mitigating voice may be appropriate in some circumstances, but the closer to risk or danger a situation comes, the speaker must change his voice to one that is assertive. Chaleff gave a real-life example of a co-pilot who was concerned with the pilot's landing approach, but only used a mitigating voice and deferred to the pilot's experience and authority. Even to the point immediately before the airplane crashed, the co-pilot continued to use a weak voice to the demise of everyone on board.

In closing, Chaleff recommended that when one is contemplating intelligent disobedience, to first observe the risk, pause the action, resist obeying or conforming, use an effective voice, counter pull if needed, find better alternatives, then return lead as appropriate, since taking away leadership from the authority is not the goal, but advising and correcting toward the common purpose is the goal.

Later in the morning, Erika Cheung, who began her career as a medical researcher in the biotechnology industry spoke. She is famously known for being a key whistle-blower reporting the medical-diagnostic company Theranos to health regulators. Theranos



Rachael Denhollander, author of "What is a Girl Worth?," joins Title IX Coordinator Susan LeMert for a luncheon with cadets during the Leadership and Ethics Conference Nov. 1.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

was started in 2003 and was thought to be the latest new company in Silicon Valley whose value would skyrocket like that of Instagram and many other revolutionary technology companies. The company claimed to simplify blood testing with one simple finger stick, rather than the traditional blood draw of multiple test tubes from the vein of an arm. They claimed to have a machine that could provide test results within an hour. The founder, Elizabeth

Holmes, was thought to be the Steve Jobs of the health care industry. Holmes was successful in raising \$700 million to start the company and was able to put together a high-profile board of directors including Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, and Gen. James Mattis.

Cheung was hired at 22 years old, fresh out of college. She was drawn to Theranos because of its claim to make health care more affordable, especially to people without health insurance. But Cheung immediately noticed that things were wrong at the company. Having only worked about a month, Cheung described an incident she called the "Thanksgiving Nightmare" in which she tried to run a quality control test on the machine, but kept getting conflicting results. When she reported the problem, she was told that she was inexperienced to properly run the test.

She soon discovered that the blood tests were not being run in the new machine, but in the traditional FDA-approved machines secreted in the basement of the building. When the FDA regulators sent trial blood samples to test the integrity of the new Theranos machine, the samples were tested both in the new machine and the traditional machines, but the test results of the traditional machines were what was sent back to the FDA regulators. Cheung observed this fabrication and chose to resign rather than join in the lie. She later wrote a letter to the regulators which started the investigation. Criminal charges were filed against Holmes and Sunny Balwani who served as COO of the company. They were both found guilty, and sentencing was pending at the time of the conference.

Cheung is now executive director of Ethics in Entrepreneurship, a nonprofit organization with the mission to embed ethical questioning, culture, and systems in start-up ecosystems worldwide.

The first day of the conference ended with dinner speaker Peter Bonilla, vice president of programs at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), a nonprofit civil liberties group whose aim of protecting free speech rights on college campuses

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in the United States. He spoke about freedom of speech on college campuses and the need for students to be exposed to a variety of viewpoints. "It is important for them to hear and understand points of view with which they may disagree in order to prepare them to operate effectively in new environments in which they need to find a common purpose with people from diverse backgrounds. Colleges need to find new ways to allow people to dissent without shutting down controversial speakers," he said.

Prior to joining FIRE, Peter was literary manager of Philadelphia's InterAct Theatre Company, one of the country's top theaters for the development and production of new politically and socially-themed plays. He is a past recipient of a fellowship in playwriting from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and his first play was developed (with stage and film actor David Strathairn) at Philadelphia's PlayPenn New Play Development Conference and premiered to critical acclaim in Arizona in September 2011.

On the second day of the conference, Gen. Robert B. Neller, a retired four-star general who served as the 37th commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, appeared as the H.B. Johnson Jr., Class of 1926, Distinguished Lecture Series speaker in Cameron Hall where the entire Corps of Cadets, along with the conference participants were in attendance. Upon starting his speech, Neller stepped down from the stage and addressed the audience from the floor.

He told his listeners that there is no secret to being an effective leader. "It is hard, but there is a path, and you already know what it is. You will grow and change," he said. He asked the audience to think of a person who had inspired them at some point in their life and think of their traits; competent, respectful, unselfish, compassionate, patient, and to take on those same traits.

Neller reminded his audience that effort matters and told a story of a Marine recruit he trained early in his career. This recruit was overweight, had lost 100 pounds in 120 days of training, but failed to perform even one pull-up. The recruit was in danger of being sent home, but had a positive attitude and put forth such a strong effort, that the entire platoon was cheering him as he completed his first pull-up. The recruit refused to quit until he achieved his goal. Neller

noted that during his career he was exposed to smart and talented people who didn't work hard, but he much preferred hard workers who weren't as talented.

He discussed the sacrifice, discipline, and hard work that those in attendance had put forth in achieving where they are, in their respective institutes of higher learning. "Your example is the most powerful tool you have to inspire those around you. Your character has been developed by your parents, teachers, and mentors. Don't ruin your character by making bad choices. Don't compromise, and protect what you've earned," he warned.

Neller advised his audience to get "buy-in" by your personal example, how you speak and conduct yourself. To illustrate, he told a story of a time he and his company were at the end of an arduous multi-day training exercise. They were all tired and hungry. He promised that if the chow truck arrived, he would have the enlisted men eat first, then the officers, and Neller himself would eat last, and if there was no food left for him, so be it. The chow truck arrived, and an officer climbed up to start to unload it. The officer saw cake in the truck, and when he thought no one was watching, he ate a piece. An enlisted man observed him eat it and reported the violation

to Neller, who in turn disciplined the officer. "Don't eat the cake" is a metaphor Neller uses for setting a personal example.

Neller closed by reminding his audience that when they are in a leadership position, if they want to hear what others have to say, ask them, and be sincere. "Don't ask for an opinion if you don't want to hear it," he said.

Prior to serving as U.S.M.C. commandant, Neller served as the commander, Marine Forces Command from July 2014 to September 2015 and commander, Marine Forces

Central Command from September 2012 to June 2014. A native of East Lansing, Michigan, Neller graduated from the University of Virginia and was commissioned in 1975. He served as an infantry officer at all levels, including command of Marine Security Force Company Panama during Operation Just Cause and Operation Promote Liberty; 3rd Light Armored Infantry Battalion during Operation Restore Hope; 6th Marine Regiment; and 3rd Marine Division. Neller also served as deputy commanding general, I



Retired Gen. Robert B. Neller addresses the Corps of Cadets in Cameron Hall on Nov. 1.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Continued on next page

Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) during Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2005–2007; assistant division commander for 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions; and president of Marine Corps University. His Joint assignments include service in the Policy Division of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Casteau, Belgium, and as director of operations (J-3) of the Joint Staff in Washington, D.C. Neller is a graduate of the Armor Officer Advanced Course, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, NATO Defense College, and the Armed Forces Staff College. He holds a master's degree in human resource management from Pepperdine University.

On Tuesday afternoon, Rachael Denhollander appeared as the Caroline Dawn Wortham '12 Leadership Speaker. Wortham was a VMI graduate who passed away in 2015 at the age of 26 after being hit by a car while riding her bicycle in Hanover County, Virginia. Her father, Dr. Edwin Wortham V, has provided an endowment to fund the series in her memory and was in attendance to hear Denhollander speak.

Denhollander became known internationally in 2016 as the first woman to pursue criminal charges and speak publicly against U.S.A. Gymnastics' team doctor Larry Nassar, one of the most prolific sexual abusers in recorded

history. Denhollander first encountered Nassar when she was a 15-year-old gymnast, and went to him for back and wrist pain. At the time, he was a pre-eminent sports medicine physician, and she felt fortunate to be able to consult him. But immediately she thought that things weren't quite right. She was confused. Eventually though, he did something she clearly recognized as assault. She and her parents, who were supportive of her, faced a battle against a community that revered and respected the physician, and saw the young gymnast as a troublemaker trying to get attention or money.

For nearly 16 years, Denhollander watched and waited and collected medical files. Eventually she read and was impressed by an article in the Indianapolis Star about coach abuse that was rampant in the sport of gymnastics. She and her parents talked with the newspaper and their story was printed. It immediately made international headlines. The family knew they would face adverse consequences, but decided to do what was right. "I knew speaking out would not necessarily mean a positive outcome, but I had to be faithful to my values. The definition of success is being faithful to what you are given. Ideas have consequences, but bad ideas have

victims, and I didn't want anyone to pay the price of my decision if I remained silent," said Denhollander.

As a result of her activism over 300 women—including numerous Olympic medalists—came forward as survivors of Nassar's abuse, eventually leading to his life imprisonment. Her courageous tenacity and ongoing advocacy helped trigger a complete upheaval at both U.S.A. Gymnastics and Michigan State University, where former executives and high-ranking officials face numerous criminal charges for their complicity in covering up Nassar's abuse and lying about what they knew.

Denhollander reminded the audience not to argue just to win, and that we become who we are one small choice at a time. She

credits those who stood beside her along her journey, explaining Nassar's prison sentence as "a collective effort of quiet decisions."

Each speaker recognized the efforts of the Center for Leadership and Ethics staff for bringing a highly engaging event together with such unique perspectives contributing to the theme.

In addition to book signings, break-out sessions, and engaging ice breakers, the conference also included a poster competition for

cash prizes. Teams of two could enter their posters prior to the conference, with the idea that each poster take a deeper dive into aspects of the conference theme, "Principled Dissent: Navigating Moral Challenges" within current events. Five teams moved to the final judging round to present their poster to a panel of judges. First place and a \$1,000 cash prize went to Irene Thornton and Naomi Hamaker of Christopher Newport University. Second place and \$500 went to VMI cadets Jacob Johnston '24 and Mark Shelton '24. Winning \$250 in third place were Amanda Wilfong and Zoe Page of Christopher Newport University.

Col. Dave Gray, director of VMI's Center for Leadership and Ethics, was pleased and proud of this year's conference and his team's efforts, saying, "Each speaker and each interactive activity we designed into this conference brought depth and a variety of perspectives on how to be a courageous follower who uses dissent when necessary and also how leaders can set an environment that invites candor. The feedback we received from the conference participants



Christopher Newport University students Naomi Hamaker and Irene Thornton accept a check from Col. David Gray for winning the Leadership and Ethics Conference poster competition.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

Class of 2024 Celebrates Ring Figure

By Marianne Hause

Prior to heading home for Thanksgiving furlough, the Class of 2024 celebrated Ring Figure, a highly anticipated milestone, on Nov. 17 and 18.

The traditional presentation of the combat rings in Cocke Hall and class supper in Crozet Hall were held Thursday, Nov. 17. The Douglas Carter France III '71 Memorial Award for “excellent character, selflessness, graciousness, and enthusiasm” was presented by Warren J. “Buddy” Bryan '71 to Owen Ahrens '24, a biology major from Lynchburg, Virginia. Ahrens was thrilled by the recognition. “It was truly one of the most humbling feelings, sitting there hearing qualities like excellence of character, selflessness, graciousness, and enthusiasm attached to my name. I felt so undeserving. When I came to VMI, it was always my main focus to remain true to the qualities my parents instilled in me, and by receiving this award, it is truly a reflection on the success of my parents,” he said.

Retired Col. James B. Hickey '82 addressed the class during the supper. He graduated from VMI as a Distinguished Military Graduate and was commissioned into the Army in 1982. His military career is extensive and notable, serving all over the world. On June 13, 2003, he took command of 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division (mechanized) and led the brigade through a year of combat operations in Saladin Province in Iraq.

The brigade and special operations troops were credited with the capture of Saddam Hussein on Dec. 13, 2003. For this and combat effectiveness, the “Raider Brigade” was recognized by the secretary of the Army with the Valorous Unit Award. Decorated for gallantry, valor and merit, Hickey’s decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star for Valor, the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Four Stars, and the Valorous Unit Award. Hickey encouraged the class to enjoy the weekend, to laugh and joke. “Ring Figure is a pinnacle moment in a cadet’s career, an acknowledgment of your dedicated performance and your potential increased responsibility. Because of your hard work and perseverance, you’ve developed an all-important endurance,” he said. He went on to share,

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Jarrett Herndon '24 escorts his date, Olivia Paradis, to the Ring Figure Ball held in Cocke Hall Nov. 18.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Warner Collier '24, his father, Brian Collier '89, and his grandfather, Richard Collier '57 pose with their rings next to the cannonball painted as a ring on Nov. 18.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Philip Frey '24 receives his ring from Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 during the Ring Figure Presentation in Cameron Hall Nov. 18.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Cadet rings are lined up on the Cameron Hall stage just before they were handed out Nov. 18.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Evan Anderson '24 dances with his date Trinity Bookout during the Ring Figure Ball Nov. 18.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Henry White '24, Caleb Mueller '24, Caleb Ventura '24, and Colby Slade '24 show off their rings during the Ring Figure Ball Nov. 18.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Alexis Rocker '24 shows her ring just after receiving it in Cameron Hall Nov. 18.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Bryson Minear '24, Ring Figure Committee president, addresses his class during the presentation ceremony in Cameron Hall.—VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Emotional Football Season Finale

With the Silver Shako on the line and the University of Virginia football program on their mind, the Keydet football team put up a valiant effort against the Citadel Bulldogs on Nov. 19 in the Military Classic of the South. The team showed off new gray uniforms with "One VMI" on the back of each jersey, promoting unity within the Corps. The uniforms were highlighted on ESPN's show "Gear Up," on Saturday morning. It was also senior day, recognizing 29 members of the team.

Both teams put up a fight through the game, with VMI leading 22-14 going into the fourth quarter, but the Bulldogs came out on top with a 26-22 win, taking the Silver Shako trophy back to Charleston, South Carolina.

Prior to the game, there was a moment of silence for the UVA football players lost in an act of violence earlier in the week. The team also had helmet decals worn by multiple college football teams across the commonwealth in support of the UVA community.—VMI Photos by Kelly Nye.



Chemists Present Research in Puerto Rico

By Marianne Hause

A contingency of two cadets and one professor recently traveled to the American Chemical Society Southeastern Regional Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The ACS is the world's largest scientific association with a membership of more than 154,000 chemists, chemical engineers, and others in related professions, including all faculty members in the chemistry department at VMI. The region encompasses Virginia, Kentucky, and all points south of those states and east of the Mississippi River, including Puerto Rico. The theme of the meeting was "Chemistry Transcending Boundaries for a Sustainable Future." More than 1,500 people attended the event.

Lt. Col. Daniel Harrison '05, associate professor in chemistry, and Jeffrey Jay Stober '24, a chemistry major, presented results from research they have been conducting, exploring new ways to make carbon dioxide useful by turning it into fuel and other beneficial materials. They have designed and built new cobalt compounds that one day may contribute to room-temperature industrial process development requiring less energy than current technologies. Results from their research will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.

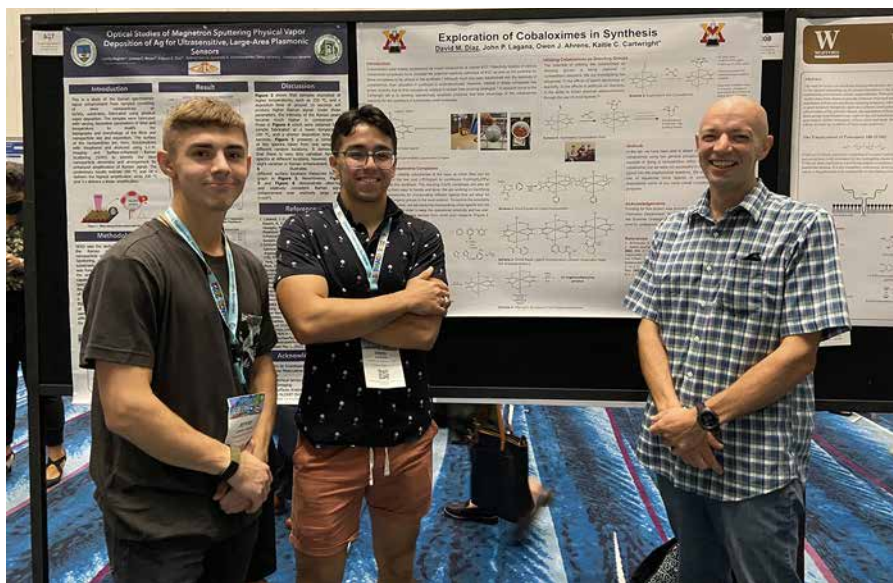
A large part of the conference involved students using original posters to describe and discuss research projects they have been conducting. Nearly 150 posters were on display including that of chemistry major, David Diaz '23. Diaz' poster was titled,

"Exploration of Cobaloximes in Synthesis," and summarized the work he has been conducting with Maj. Kaitlyn Cartwright, assistant professor of chemistry, John Lagana '23, and Owen Ahrens '24. "I loved being able to experience all the wonders of Puerto Rico and expand my knowledge of chemistry at the same time. Being able to present my research in such a setting is a once in a lifetime opportunity," said Diaz.

Harrison was pleased with the event. "It was everything you want out of a conference. Our cadets were able to share information with their peers, glean information from others, and build a network. At VMI, our lab has cutting-edge research equipment, some of which is not commonly found at primary undergraduate institutions. We can do everything we need to in our labs, but being able to share ideas at conferences enhances our research, and perhaps changes the direction it takes," he stated.

While in Puerto Rico, the group took advantage of their spare time and took a kayak tour in a bioluminescent bay in Fajardo. The glowing water is caused by dinoflagellates (algae) that put off a faint blue light when disturbed. "That was one of the top five experiences of my life. We actually observe the chemical reaction responsible for the glowing of dinoflagellates in the lab, and it was amazing to see them in nature," said Harrison.

Funding for the trip was made possible by support from VMI Center for Undergraduate Research, and the Jackson-Hope faculty travel funds. ❁



Jeffrey Jay Stober '24, David Diaz '23, and Lt. Col. Daniel Harrison '05 pose at the American Chemical Society Southeastern Regional Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico.—Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Daniel Harrison.

Leadership Conference *continued from page 9*

about both the design and execution of the conference has been very positive. We hope that they will continue to discuss and reflect on this theme for quite some time to come."

Fatoumata Diallo '23, one of the cadet facilitators for the conference, enjoyed the guest speakers and networking with her peers and alumni. "It was a rich and engaging conference that taught attendees how to engage in morally challenging discussions and to practice various dissent techniques using an assertive voice," she said.

Harrison Williams '25 thought the conference was a great event. "It's not every day that you can talk to the former commandant of the Marine Corps. I learned valuable advice from him that will serve me and others well. I thought this was a great experience overall and I plan on attending this conference every year," he said.

Next year's Leadership Conference will be held on Oct. 30–31, 2023, with an announcement of the theme and title coming in the spring. To stay informed, visit the conference website and join the mailing list at conferences.vmi.edu/leadership. ❁

POST BRIEFS

Professors on With Good Reason

Col. Spencer Bakich, professor of international studies and the director of the national security minor, and Maj. Michael LaRocca, assistant professor of psychology, have been featured on the public radio program With Good Reason during the fall semester. On the show titled "Who Runs the World?," Bakich discussed U.S. and China tensions, focusing on the current state of tension in the Taiwan Strait, as well as some of the historical

factors causing stress in U.S.-China relations. LaRocca was on the show titled "Seeding Innovation," and discussed transformational leaders who have inspired and driven change, referencing his own experiences from his time as an executive officer in the Army. Audio files of full programs and companion news features are on the With Good Reason website, www.withgoodreasonradio.org.

Cadet Talk Show Airing in D.C.

Brian Jackson '24, a member of the wrestling team and majoring in English with a concentration in literary studies, philosophy, and rhetoric and writing, hosts a talk show titled "In the Life of a Personal Trainer" that broadcasts once a month on WDCA Fox 5 Plus, a television station in Washington D.C. Jackson was offered the opportunity to host his own show after he appeared as a guest on a similar show hosted by his mother,

retired U.S. Army Maj. Zoevera Jackson. Jackson's show features leaders in the community who use their gifts and talents to help others reach their personal and professional goals. Jackson's academic advisor, Lt. Col. Steven Knepper is excited to see him get a strong start in broadcast journalism as an undergraduate. 📺



A Storyteller's Holiday

The VMI Community Theatre brought feel-good holiday stories to the stage Dec. 2-4 in "A Storyteller's Holiday" in Gillis Theater. The show was presented in "storyteller mode," asking audience members to use their imaginations as they did as children when someone read them a story. The show featured stories and music in celebration of Christmas and the winter season, including "Christmas at VMI," which was written by Eric Figueroa '03 and shared by three current cadets.

The cast included Luke Cockerham '26, Matthew Frazier '23, Colin Nicassio '26, Nicole Samella '26, and Victoria Wright '24. Community performers included Melanie Botulinski, Finn Ellwood, Andrew Hartless, Marianne Hause, Don Kludy, Jan Lowry, Jack Page, Shay Peters, Melou Piegari, Tim Price, and Maria McLellan Quillin. The play was directed by long-time VMI Theatre director, Joellen Bland, assisted by Linda Gorman, and technical director, Steven Utt.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



“The qualities of an effective leader are responsibility, trust, loyalty, judgment, decisiveness, persistence, and encouragement.” He concluded by motivating the cadets to set high standards and congratulating them for maintaining VMI as an example of military excellence.

Sgt. 1st Class Alexander R. Morrow, military science instructor at VMI, was presented a signet dinner ring by Bryson Minear '24,

Ring Figure Committee president. “Morrow has impacted so many of the cadets through his positive spirit and caring personality. He is truly an amazing person, and the class adores him. The class nominated him to be our Honorary Brother Rat for the evening,” said Minear. In his acceptance speech, Morrow encouraged the cadets to be humble and that their success in life will be driven by being themselves and by thinking for themselves.

A family brunch in Crozet Hall was followed by the formal ring presentation ceremony where 2nd Class cadets receiving their individualized rings in Cameron Hall Friday, Nov. 18. Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, superintendent, opened the ceremony by thanking the families for their support. He told the cadets that Ring Figure is one of the more memorable events of their cadetship. It is a great milestone, and that he is honored to be able to present them with their rings. He reminded them that the history of the ring is almost as old as VMI itself, although the rings have changed over the years. “Early in VMI’s history, the rings were simple, usually with just a one word inscription, ‘Mizpah’ (God be with you until we meet again.)” Wins went on to describe how the modern rings are much more detailed and considerably bigger than the original VMI rings. In fact, they are larger than most other college rings in the country.



Col. Kevin M. Trujillo '98 addresses the audience in Cameron Hall during the Ring Figure presentation Nov. 18. —VMI Photo by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.

ticed, so wear it with honor, pride, and sense of duty.” He closed with, “Congratulations and beat Citadel!” The cadets’ response was spirited, enthusiastic, and thunderous. They not only had Ring Figure on their mind, but also the Military Classic of the South football game against the Citadel Bulldogs the following day.

Remarks were provided by Col. Kevin M. Trujillo '98, who was 1st Class president in 1997 when VMI welcomed the first female cadets. He holds a master of science degree in defense analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School and completed a National Security Fellowship at the Harvard Kennedy School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He attended the U.S. Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School in Quantico, Virginia, and emphasized that the attacks on 9/11 changed the entire course and focus of his career. He commanded and deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2013, he was assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command as a strategist in the commander’s action group. In 2014, he deployed to Afghanistan with the Special Operations Joint Task Force and served as a future operations planner. In 2015, he was selected to serve in the Joint Special Operations Command as a strategic planner. In 2016, he was deployed as the commander of special operations task

force-Afghanistan. In 2020, he served as the 7th SGG (A) deputy commanding officer prior to assuming command. He lives in Florida with his wife and two children. Trujillo told the class that he was humbled to be back at VMI, and recognized them for choosing to attend the Institute, for making the commitment to challenge and better themselves whether or not they commission into the military. “All of you choosing VMI is a rarity. You are definitely the minority among your peers, and that is precisely why we need you, why our country needs you,” he stated. Quoting from the movie, “Wonder,” he told the cadets, “‘You can’t blend in, when you are born to stand out.’ Like the young boy in the movie, you didn’t come to VMI to blend in, or sit passively waiting for things to happen around you. No, you came here to make things happen,” he said. Trujillo continued to talk about the theme of “through shared suffering.” He stated that through shared suffering comes purpose, through shared suffering comes perspective, and through shared suffering provides opportunity for leadership. He referenced the book, “Man’s Search for Meaning,” a book by Viktor Frankl chronicling his experiences as a prisoner in the Auschwitz concentration camp. In the book the author explains three ways to find meaning in life: through work, through love, and through suffering. Trujillo stated that the book helped him get through a dark time in his life. He described to the cadets the traits of good leaders, “They inspire, they listen with empathy and compassion, they are humble and honest. But leadership is lonely, especially when you lead with character, because good leaders have to make very tough calls.” He concluded by saying, “This weekend is a momentous occasion. It marks your achievements, it gives you hope, and it’s one of the many rites of passages here at the Institute. It serves to strengthen bonds. Embrace this moment, enjoy the weekend, take care of each other. Rah Va Mil!”

Wins presented cadets with their rings, and cadets and their families then relocated to Memorial Hall for a ring blessing, led by Benjamin May '24. At the blessing, two cadets shared how they believe the ring

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Christmas Parade

Regimental Executive Officer Joseph Egbo '23 leads the Rat Mass down Lexington's Main Street to spread holiday cheer in the annual Lexington parade the evening of Dec. 2. The next day, the Regimental Band participated in the Dominion Energy Christmas Parade in Richmond, Virginia.—VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.



Ethics and Debate Team Heads to Nationals

By Marianne Hause

The Ethics and Debate Team recently competed at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Competition hosted by the University of North Georgia in Gainesville, Georgia. The one-day, multi-institutional collegiate competition was held in partnership with the Association of Practical and Professional Ethics (APPE). There are four main rounds, a semi-final round, and a final round within the competition to determine the top teams that will advance to the national competition sponsored by APPE.

VMI's team was sponsored by the Center for Leadership and Ethics, and coached by Dr. Duncan Richter, the Charles S. Luck III '55 Institute Professor in the Department of English, Rhetoric, and Humanistic Studies. According to Richter, the competition involved 18 teams from 17 different colleges and universities including the University of Chicago, the University of North Carolina, Clemson University, Virginia Tech, and the University of Mississippi. "The teams had to study 15 ethically controversial cases in advance of the competition. When they got to the competition, they found out which cases and specific questions they would have to discuss," said Richter. "Teams were scored on their ability to identify the morally relevant aspects of the issue, to defend their particular answer in a clear and rational way, and to consider alternative points of view. To win you need a combination of preparation, knowledge of ethical theory, organization, and clarity of presentation. It's not easy. The cadets involved did a great job and should really be proud of themselves," Richter continued.



The VMI Ethics and Debate Team takes a moment for a photo at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Competition in Gainesville, Georgia.—Photo courtesy of Dr. Duncan Richter.

Members of the team include economic and business majors Harris Burton '23 (cadet-in-charge of the Ethics and Debate Team), and Spencer Greaney '23, international studies majors James Ellison '23, Riley Shultz '24, and Gabriele Woodward '24, and history major Riley Malone '25.

For the first time ever, VMI's team finished in the top four, narrowly losing to the University of Mississippi in the semi-final. By winning 4th place, the team qualified for the 27th Annual Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl to be held March 4–5 in Portland, Oregon. ✪

New Basketball Court in Use

The Keydet basketball team kicked off the 2022–23 season on a new court, which was completed over the summer. The team's first home game was on Nov. 10 with a victory over Penn State New Kensington. The basketball playing surface, Costen Court, was named for Ralph Costen '70 and was originally dedicated during the 2007–08 season. The floor was redone in 2012 under the direction of Costen Floors, Inc. The new floor features a sketch of barracks and the commonwealth of Virginia shaded behind the VMI spider. A time-lapse video of the reflooring process can be viewed using the QR code below.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.



Psych Class Visits Correctional Center

By Marianne Hause

Lt. Col. Sara Whipple, associate professor of psychology, wanted to provide a way for the students in her Developmental Psychology course to connect the knowledge they have learned in class to a real world environment, so she took them on a field trip to Augusta Correctional Center, a close custody prison for adult male offenders in Craigsville, Virginia.



VMI's Developmental Psychology class visits Augusta Correctional Center in Craigsville, Virginia.—Photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Sara Whipple.

“The Developmental Psychology course studies human growth and what influences development, such as genetics, family, friends, and the larger environment. The goal of visiting the correctional center was to see what happens to a person when life events are not supported or corrected in a positive way,” explained Whipple.

This semester her class consists of 20 cadets, mostly psychology majors, 15 of whom could attend the field trip. Prior to the trip, she assigned them the task of preparing questions they wanted to ask the offenders, and at least one of the questions had to be about developmental psychology. Additional preparations before visiting the prison included everyone getting tested for COVID-19, adhering to a dress code (the cadets did not wear their uniforms to protect their anonymity) and understanding visitor protocol. Once the group arrived at the prison, they went through screening similar to airport security.

The group toured a Shared Allied Management (SAM) unit which houses offenders who are either mentally ill, medically infirmed, or vulnerable to bullying because of learning challenges, age, size, or personality. The class saw a cell, the recreational yard, the cafeteria, and met with the staff psychologist. “The most memorable portion of the tour was meeting with three offenders, whom the class was able to interview. One was convicted of murder, one of rape, and one had robbed a bank. When asked about their childhoods, one shared that he had a difficult relationship

with his mother. Another grew up in foster care. They were quite self-reflective. It surprised the cadets to learn that some offenders were educated and well spoken,” stated Whipple.

According to class member Andrew Allgood '23, the trip to the prison was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. “Being able to sit face-to-face with people whose lives have turned out vastly different than anybody in our class was eye opening,” said Allgood.

Grant Swinehart '24 agreed that it was a great learning opportunity for the cadets. “It was revealing to see how different factors in life may affect the development of a person into and throughout adulthood,” he said.

The trip was the fifth time Whipple has taken a class to the facility. Some offenders she met years earlier have reflected and are trying to improve their lives. One even got paroled. Whipple hopes to continue the trips for future classes. ✪

VMI Service Awards

A group of employees received the VMI Achievement Award on Nov. 2 for meritorious service as members of the COVID Taskforce. This group from numerous departments led the efforts to ensure the safety of cadets, faculty, staff, and visitors, and the continuation of operations in the most effective ways possible. Tasks were complex, and all decisions were made with thorough consideration and discussion, as nearly every aspect of the day-to-day cadet life required adjustment. Plans were created and executed in an extremely challenging environment for unprecedented circumstances. The lessons learned will be foundational for future emergency response, and the Institute remains most grateful for the dedication, resolution, and thoughtfulness demonstrated. Additionally, longevity awards were presented to employees celebrating 5, 10, 20, and even 30 years of employment at VMI.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.





Trick or Treat in Barracks

Despite a rainy Halloween evening, children of VMI faculty and staff were welcomed to a "Tim Burton's Nightmare Before Christmas" theme in barracks for this year's trick-or-treat event. Even Moe got in on the costume fun. —VMI Photos by H. Lockwood McLaughlin.





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Ring Figure *continued from page 15*

should interact with their faith, followed by special music. Lt. Col. John Casper '04, associate chaplain, then shared his thoughts with the class that “the prize is worth the price,” a slogan he had read on VMI admissions literature when he was a high school student considering VMI. It encouraged him to matriculate and to get through the Rat Line. “That slogan helped me get through a lot at VMI. I remember finally getting my ring 20 years ago almost to the day, right here in this building. My date had

backed out just less than a week earlier, I was overwhelmed with academics, and I had a boxing match that very morning. Then, I looked down at my ring. Inside was inscribed, ‘the prize is worth the price,’” he reflected. He encouraged the

class that the idea that the prize of the end goal is worth the price you need to pay to get there, whether it is the purchase price of a ring, or enduring struggles at VMI, or challenges in knowing God. Life is full of hardships, but with hardships comes

blessings. He concluded by saying, “Your ring is temporary. Your soul is eternal. Fight the good fight of faith, run the race of life with endurance. Grow your faith. Get to know God better. The prize, like your ring, is worth the price.”

The evening wrapped up with the Ring Figure ball held in Cocke Hall with the traditional white gowns and gloves, the processions through sabers and the giant ring, and dancing. ❧



Cadets and their dates wait in line for a photo inside the ring in Cocke Hall Nov. 18.—VMI Photo by Kelly Nye.