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LEGACY LEDGER

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER OF LEGACY NAFC



*A Message From NAFC Education Foundation
Executive Director, Tyler Bliss*

NAFCS have a long history of excellence in the arts, particularly in the music and theatre departments at NAHS and FCHS. These nationally recognized programs have a rich history of dedicated educators and talented students who have brought to life hundreds of productions over the years. As a past NAHS thespian, it's my honor to shine a light on two outstanding graduates who have made their careers among the stars!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Leonard Bernstein wrote the music for the 1944 film “On The Town”. You might not know that the lyrics, made famous by Frank Sinatra - - were written by Betty Comden and Adolph Green - - but you DO know how they go...

“If I can make it there, I’ll make it anywhere. It’s up to you, Georgetown, Georgetown...”

Wait! What? Georgetown? Well yes... though in all fairness - - both of our featured alumni this month HAVE “made it” in New York, New York, just like the song says. You can see Cameron Hobbs (NAHS ’08) on Broadway right now. He’s there, eight times a week, on West 42nd Street, as an ensemble cast member in “Aladdin”.

So what’s this about Georgetown? Most of the time, it’s where you will find Brad Ritchie, FCHS ’02, an orchestrator/arranger for screen and stage. He’s earned the right to carry out his craft where he wants. How? Well, he’s done it by working on film, television, and video game projects with studio orchestras from New York to LA and “across the pond” as well. He’s also enjoyed working on projects for the concert hall with major orchestras across the world. In the process, he created his own company, right here in Floyd County.

Each of these talented young alumni has a fascinating story to tell.

Contributed by Rex Bickers, FCHS ’70

BRAD RITCHIE, FCHS ’02

“I got the music bug early” he says. His father and his uncles played guitar, so that was a starting point, at around age 9, followed by violin, choir, and musical theater at Floyd Central. Brad attended the University of Louisville and earned his undergraduate degree as a music major. It prepared him well for graduate studies at USC in Los Angeles. He was one of only 20 (out of 400) applicants selected into their “Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television” program.

He had an ace up his sleeve that probably helped him. It involved a “side hustle” with a friend (a schoolmate from Floyd Central) in the media



program at Ball State. Their mutual interests led to a film submitted to the 2006 Student Academy Awards (winning the gold medal), with music composed and orchestrated entirely by Brad Ritchie (and performed by the U of L Symphony Orchestra). It went on to earn him an individual Emmy in 2007.

As his goals began to take shape, Brad wanted to write music for the movies. The twist that came to him was this: he saw that he won a lot of respect for “putting out fires” when a film already had music - - but the orchestration needed a much different tempo, or the musical director wanted instruments never originally included in the score or various other kinds of problems. He knew how to solve those by re-writing to meet the need.

What he wanted most was the ability to return to Southern Indiana to live. One crucial step was getting hired by U of L working for the School of Music, running concerts, setting up and recording archival orchestra productions. That experience led him to form a company, Main Office Productions, run from his own home. He formed and strengthened connections, working for a large number of orchestras in small cities and large, for universities (including the IU Jacobs School) and meeting similar needs further afield. His company has built a thriving clientele.

I asked Brad how this is all working out, compared to trying to live in Hollywood.

He replied: “It’s going well. I still travel, mostly to LA, but the pattern of long distance work is continuing as the pandemic restrictions are lifting. I’m at home over 300 days a year, while my work circles the globe digitally. My wife Roseanna and I love Georgetown. There’s no other place where we would rather raise our two kids.



CAMERON HOBBS, NAHS '08

Cameron is not the first Bulldog to “make it” on Broadway. That distinction is believed to belong to Hall of Famer Kahler Flock, NAHS '43, known equally well as the late husband of Bette Weber Flock (class of '49 and also a Hall of Famer). Both were inducted together in 2010.

But for all his talents, Kahler made his mark primarily as an opera singer. He did not appear in a Broadway musical ever again. Cameron is now on his third Broadway credit, twice as a member of touring casts, and now on the stage of the New Amsterdam Theatre since December 2021.

Cameron's list of "stage credits" began at Mount Tabor Elementary, then Hazelwood, before his successes in the theater program at New Albany. He earned serious kudos, playing Troy Bolton in the NAHS performance of "High School Musical". He is a graduate of Otterbein University (Ohio), where he majored in musical theater, with a minor in dance. Cameron knows well the basic truth of "the harder I worked, the luckier I got". He performed on Disney Cruise Lines for two years before earning a swing position with the touring company of "Something Rotten" in 2017. His "on again / off-again" involvement with "Aladdin" included the national touring company 2018 to 2020, then abruptly punctuated by Covid-19 shutdowns - - and happily back in the Broadway cast for the past eight months.

I asked Cameron about the big picture of his life on Broadway - - currently.

He told me that it combines "the happiest he's ever been", sprinkled substantially with ongoing anxiety over Covid precautions. He looks forward to life with less seclusion and less testing - - and more of the silver linings that surround him right now: the life he shares with boyfriend Stephen Anthony and their dog Auggie, along with connections he maintains to Kentuckiana (involvement with Down Syndrome Louisville and occasional teaching opportunities at Floyd Central, at NAHS and at the Weber School of Dance).

But he very much wanted to switch the subject to talk about all the people who have helped him along the way, especially David Longest, first and foremost. He said "David believed in me from a young age, and even helped guide me to study at Otterbein. He was among the first people I called when I booked "Aladdin". I would not be where I am today without him. I will thank him forever.

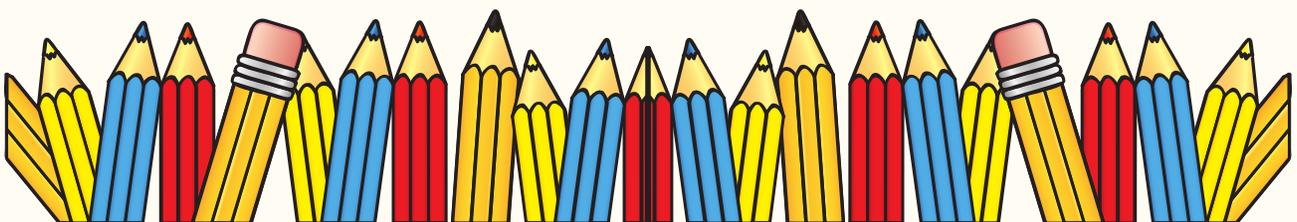


Cameron poses with the men of "Disney's Aladdin" now on Broadway

\$50,000 in Classroom Supplies Awarded through Great Classroom Projects in August



We are thrilled to announce our first rounds of Great Classroom Project grants for the school year were approved in August! Nearly 100 projects were funded in NAFCS classrooms all across the district for a total of nearly \$50,000. This program has provided over \$1,000,000 in classroom resources since 2011. Congratulations to our outstanding educators and thank you to our donors for providing for our students!



Welcome, New Board Members!



Please help us welcome our two newest members to the NAFC Education Foundation Board of Directors, Carl Williams and Molly Rubesh! We thank you for your service to our students, teachers, and schools!

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The New Albany Floyd County Education Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that works in conjunction with NAFC Schools to provide privately funded supplemental resources and programs to students, teachers, and schools. NAFC Alumni Nation is an alumni program of the NAFC Education Foundation. Legacy NAFC is the official support group of NAFC Schools, NAFC Alumni Nation, and the NAFC Education Foundation.



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