

MUCH HAS CHANGED, BUT THE CANTERBURY SPIRIT —AND A FAMILY’S PASSION—REMAIN

“This is a really special place.”

That is how Board of Trustees member **Carol Lovell Carmody P ’18** often describes Canterbury School, and it is a sentiment shared by generations of Carmodys—from **Terence P ’22, ’25, ’28**, a lawyer who helped establish the School as a nonprofit institution, to **Nelle ’18**, Carol’s daughter who graduated more than a century later.

Carol’s love affair with Canterbury started with the man she fell in love with, husband **Christopher “Kit” Carmody ’57, P ’18**, who passed away in 2016. “From the moment Kit and I first met in 1987, it became clear

that certain things were extremely important in his life—and Canterbury School was one of them,” she recalled. “When we were courting, I cannot tell you how quickly Kit took me to New Milford and gave me the tour.”

It did not take long for Carol to share his passion for the School. “It hit me that Canterbury has been a real bond for the family over such a long time,” she said. “Although the Carmodys who studied at Canterbury in different generations had different experiences, the commonality is that they all had defining experiences, and the gratitude for their Canterbury education was lifelong.”

It has been a truly remarkable run for the Carmody family at Canterbury, starting with

Kit’s grandfather Terence, one of the School’s original Trustees who sent his son **Edward ’22** to the School. Another of Kit’s uncles, **Francis ’25, P ’56, ’62**, and Kit’s father **Guerin ’28, P ’57**, also went to Canterbury. Guerin became a Trustee, as did Francis, who served as Board President and enrolled his two sons, **Terence ’56** and **Paul ’62**. And, ultimately, Kit graduated in 1957 and went on to join the Board of Trustees in 1974.

Continuing the Carmody Tradition on the Hilltop

So it was only natural that, when it came time for Kit and Carol to consider high school alternatives for their daughter Nelle, Canterbury was a strong consideration, even though the family lived in Boston. They had



visited often when Nelle was growing up, and it always felt like family. “We spent a lot of time at Canterbury. When Nellie was a small child, we would bring her up there and commune with Kit and all his classmates,” Carol shared. “I remember being impressed with how tight Kit was with them. At one of Kit’s reunions, the guys embraced us and let us into their reunion picture. Nelle was like their little mascot. That was the flavor of the place.”

Nelle recalls the memory with a smile. “Yes, I was the Canterbury mascot for my dad’s reunion class growing up. I was very young, but I vividly remember all the trips to Connecticut,” she said. “When I was looking at boarding schools, I did all the campus tours in the New England area, starting from Massachusetts, New Hampshire—and the farthest one was Canterbury. It was always in our minds. I think I knew deep down that is where I was headed eventually.”

Mom concurred. “It was something about the culture of Canterbury,” Carol said. “We really felt a sense of warmth and community. It is hard to describe, but it’s real.” Carol also noted that she and Kit had a shared connection with the Head of School

at the time, **Thomas Sheehy III**. “Kit was quite close to Tom and Betsy Sheehy, and I had known the Sheehys through very dear childhood friends, so that bond grew.” That sense of community was important to Nelle. “Going in, it was really exciting. We knew the Sheehys, and I had been in touch with a few other people on campus,” she recalled. “It was a really comfortable ease into the Canterbury experience. I felt like, ‘This is where I belong.’ But I also knew there were more eyes on me, a lot of expectations. I just wanted to hold the Carmody name to a high standard and fulfill those expectations.”

Fulfill them she did, receiving her degree in 2018 in front of a large contingent of proud family members. It was a memorable day indeed for Carol and Nelle, even though they were unable to share it with Kit. “He did not get to see her graduation, but he was there in spirit,” Carol said. “Rachel (Head of School **Rachel Stone P ’23, ’24**) invited me to come up on stage, and I was actually able to hand Nelle her diploma. It is bringing tears to my eyes just talking about it! That was very special.”

The moment was equally emotional for Nelle. “It was an honor because Canterbury

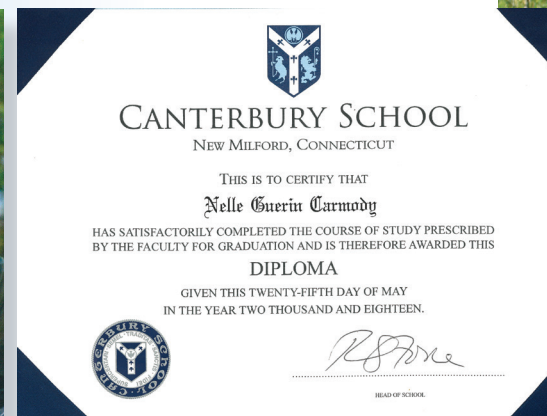
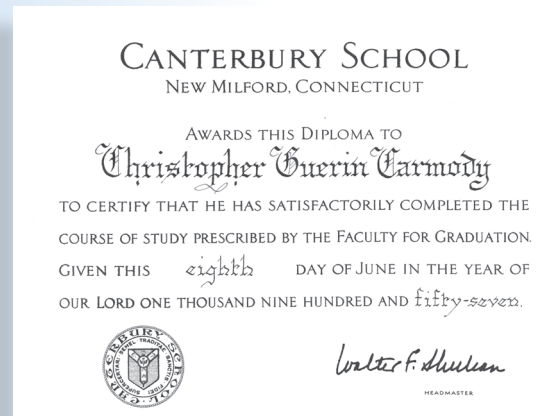
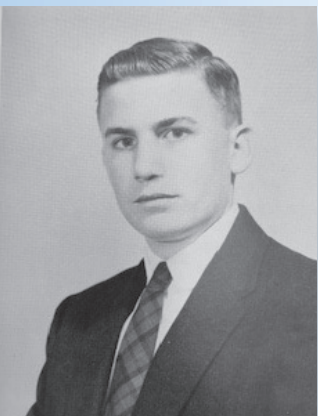
is such a big fixture in our family. On the graduation card there are little asterisks for all the members of your family who have attended before you, and seeing the stars next to my name and having my mom hand me the diploma—and just knowing that I got to fulfill the Carmody tradition at Canterbury—made that moment all the more special.”

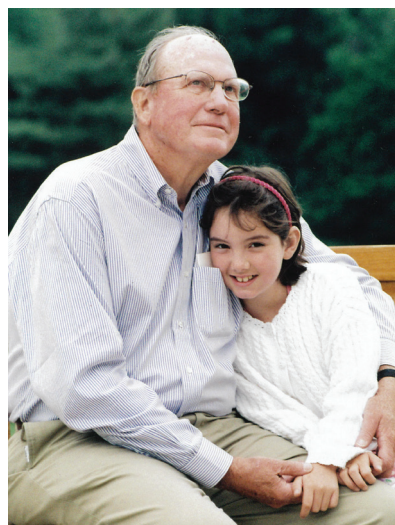
The Evolution of a Coeducational School

Over the years, the Carmodys have seen firsthand the transformation Canterbury has made from an all-male Catholic school to the dynamic, inclusive, coeducational community it is today. “The school Kit went to and graduated from in 1957 was clearly a school for Catholic boys,” Carol explained. “Canterbury is not that anymore. Coeducation was hugely significant. It started in the ’70s with a small group of intrepid women and has steadily grown ever since.”

And Carol is passionate about letting people know what today’s Canterbury really is, as often as possible. “I am a loud voice in stating that I get tired of hearing people say ‘Oh

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Canterbury, that is where my dad went. That’s where my grandfather went. Isn’t that a Catholic school for boys?’ This is so out of date. Canterbury today is squarely a coed school that provides a great education. The culture and commitment to faith and spirituality are incredibly unique. And what an environment to grow up in. It is the greatest!”

That faith and spirituality component is important to both mother and daughter. “It has been a long evolution of preserving the Catholic tradition but welcoming people of all faith traditions,” Carol said. “What the School is now is not what it was. Today’s Canterbury is a school in the Catholic tradition that is very committed to faith and spirituality and service, but for everyone, regardless of their faith background. Nelle was very involved in the Catholic piece of the school, but also in interfaith activities.”

Nelle confirms that spirituality was an important facet of her time as a Canterbury student. “I was attempting to take a step back from my faith during freshman year. But

you take theology classes, you have School Meeting, school prayer, church on Sunday—so I re-found my footing in the Catholic faith. My sophomore year I was confirmed. We had the Emmaus retreat, which made me focus more on my role at Canterbury and my faith. And senior year I was chosen to be a Sacristan and was on the first Interfaith Council. There is a greater emphasis on interfaith activities now at Canterbury.”

The Carmody-Canterbury Connection Endures

Both Carol and Nelle remain very much connected to Canterbury in a variety of ways. As a Global Public Health major at Denison University, Nelle credits Canterbury with preparing her for success in her undergraduate studies. “The biggest thing that helped my

transition from Canterbury to Denison was the use of the Donovan Center for Learning and not being afraid to seek support,” she explained. “I was very reluctant in my Canterbury days to seek academic support when I needed it, but when I did, it was a huge help. And it helped me prepare for Denison; I use the academic resource center on campus often.”

Her time on the hilltop also helped Nelle realize the value of maintaining strong relationships. “Canterbury allowed me to have more connections with my professors. When your dorm parents and coaches are also your teachers, you already have that one-on-one relationship. I realized the importance of that, and I now seek those relationships with my professors at Denison.”



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CAROL LOVELL CARMODY P ’18

Carol equally praised Canterbury’s special teacher-student bond. “The faculty makes a point to know every student—their successes, their failures, and everything in between. Each student is met where they are, and their growth starts there.”

That level of commitment is something Carol brings to her role as a member of the School’s Board of Trustees. Recently retired from working in higher education finance, she was ready to devote time to organizations she cares deeply about. “I was honored to be asked to serve on the Board, especially given the illustrious history of Carmody family members who preceded me,” she said. “I feel strongly that this is a special and unique place, and want to do anything I can to make sure Canterbury is around forever for future generations. Rachel is a talented leader, and so much has happened in the last five years. It is an exciting time to be engaged with the School.”

Kit’s devotion to Canterbury clearly lives on through Carol and Nelle, and it is something



they both treasure. “I loved coming back to campus with Kit because he was so passionate about it,” Carol said. “He had become quite ill, and the last time we visited was for the 100th anniversary in 2015. He was so thrilled to be a part of it. Now looking back, it just seemed so fitting to have been there for that.”

Nelle, too, has many fond memories of Kit. “Dad was retired when I was growing up, so we spent a lot of one-on-one time together farming, sailing, doing whatever we wanted.

We were two peas in a pod. And Canterbury was so important for both of us.”

Carol feels strongly that their continued involvement with the School is the best way to honor Kit’s memory and carry on the Carmody family legacy. “Throughout Kit’s life, Canterbury was a constant, one of the most important things to him,” she said. “I know he is looking down on us right now and is thrilled that this is happening.”