



"From the first moment I stepped onto the beautiful campus, I could feel the authentic and palpable warmth of the Chatham Hall community. I was drawn to the strong intellect and emotional intelligence of the girls, the passion and investment of the faculty and staff, the commitment and drive of the Trustees, and the loyalty and dedication of the alumnae."

SARA STEPHENSON,
CHATHAM HALL'S EIGHTEENTH RECTOR
AND HEAD OF SCHOOL



A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

DEAR CHATHAM HALL COMMUNITY,

On November 12, 2023, the Chatham Hall Board of Trustees enthusiastically and unanimously voted to approved Sara Stephenson as Chatham Hall's 18th Rector and head of school.



Sara Stephenson

In spending time with Sara, it became immediately apparent she is a strong advocate for girls' education, holds a deep knowledge of boarding schools, and has a clear understanding of how vision and strategy will work together to define the future of Chatham Hall. She is energetic, vibrant, engaging, creative, hardworking, and a problem solver. Those who met her immediately recognized the positive influence she will have on Chatham Hall: "She understands who we are and what we do—most importantly she understands why we do it. I am confident she has the leadership qualities to propel us forward to truly reach our potential."

As we spoke with current and former colleagues, they were effusive in their praise of Sara:

"Sara blankets a community with her presence, and there isn't any task that she won't do."

"Sara is bright, energetic, charismatic, and terrific. At our school, she was loved by students, parents, and faculty alike. She is an all-around school person who made lasting contributions to the school."

Sara's keen understanding of our mission, values, culture, and needs prove that she is truly committed and poised to lead our beloved School into the next decade.

The Board is thrilled to have such a passionate and capable partner as we continue our important work equipping curious thinkers to live lives of impact. She organically recognizes and appreciates the value of Chatham Hall girls across the decades and is ready to invest with us as we envision the future of the School.

We would like to thank members of the Chatham Hall community for actively participating in this selection process and providing invaluable feedback. We would also like to thank the members of the Rector Search Committee for their extraordinary service and dedication to Chatham Hall.

Until you get an opportunity to meet her, my hope is this announcement will convey the true anticipation and excitement of all who met her. I am confident the Chatham Hall community will give Sara, along with her husband Paul, sons Jonah (17) and Jasper (13), and dogs Molly and Stella, a warm purple and gold welcome!

Esto Perpetua,



ALISON B. CARTER-CADY '91

Board of Trustees Chair

SEARCH TIMELINE & PROCESS

The Rector Search Committee, which consisted of Trustees, faculty, alumnae, and parents, lead a comprehensive RFP process leading to the selection of The Education Group (TEG) to help conduct the search.

The Rector Search Committee collected feedback from community members—integral throughout the search process and eventual candidate selection—to determine what our constituents view as the top priorities for a Rector. The results informed a School & Position Profile to promote the School to potential candidates.

TEG spent several months developing a candidate pool—both recruited and those with independent interest. The applicant pool was very strong, and garnered interest from candidates across the country. Top choices were presented.

MAY 2023

Search Consultant Identified

JUNE

Community Feedback Collected

JULY–OCTOBER

Applications Received

This announcement concludes a nearly year-long comprehensive search process led by Rector Search Committee Co-Chairs Nina J. Botsford '72 and Adair Hendrickson Ravencraft '02, both graduates and current members of the Board of Trustees.

In Sara's own words, "I knew unequivocally that Chatham Hall is an extraordinary school, uniquely dedicated to preparing and empowering young women for a life of impact ... I am deeply honored to be the next Rector."

Sara comes to Chatham from Ashley Hall, a school for 660 girls in Charleston, SC where she is currently the director of strategic enrollment management and director of Upper School admission. During her more than five years at Ashley Hall, the school has significantly increased enrollment and advanced its educational mission.

Sara brings 27 years of experience as a teacher and administrator at several

outstanding schools. Prior to Ashley Hall, she was director of enrollment at the University School, a school for boys in Cleveland, OH, and previously served as Middle School head at Hathaway Brown, a school for girls in Shaker Heights, OH. She also served as assistant director of the Middle School at the Blake School in Minneapolis, MN and started her career as a teacher at the Greenhill School in Dallas, TX. Sara thus brings to Chatham Hall a wealth of experience in very strong and diverse schools.

A strong voice in independent schools, Sara has presented and shared her knowledge at national conferences throughout her tenure in education. Most recently, she led a workshop at the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Annual Conference about engaging parents in 2023, and co-wrote an article on the same topic for the Southern Association of Independent Schools. In 2024, she will return to the NAIS Annual Conference to present

"Mind the Gap: Making the connection between new families and long-term ambassadors and donors." In the 2022-2023 school year, Sara was named the NAIS Aspiring Head Fellow. She also served as an Association of Independent School Admission Professionals cohort leader in 2020-2021.

In the wider community, Sara is currently the vice president of the Greater Charleston Admission Professionals Society. She also previously served on the Sunbeam Board of the Vocational Guidance Services in Cleveland, OH, and attended the Racial Equity Institute in 2020.

Sara Stephenson stood out for her experience, enthusiasm, commitment, and personality. She holds the qualities and skills that the Board, the Rector Search Committee, and the Chatham Hall community feel are essential to successfully leading the School into its exciting future.

RECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

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Nina J. Botsford '72,
Board of Trustees

Adair Hendrickson
Ravencraft '02,
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Josh Doyon,
Dean of Students

Dr. Mary Edmonds,
English Department Chair
& Faculty

Venita Fields '71,
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Stacey Goodwin '83,
Former Board of Trustees
Chair

Melanie Kirk Holton '87,
Board of Trustees

Danielle Thomas Kimmel
'04, Alumnae Council
President

Kimberly Daniels Taws '02,
Board of Trustees

Parents Advisory
Committee (PAC)
Representatives

Consultants

Katherine Stuart,
Dennis Campbell, and
Margaret Moore of
The Education Group

The Rector Search Committee reviewed an impressive and diverse pool of candidates. Keeping in mind the future needs of Chatham Hall, the committee identified a long list of semi-finalists who were then interviewed. The list was narrowed to three and they were invited to meet the committee in person.

The top three candidates visited Chatham Hall for meetings across two days with students, faculty, staff, and the Rector Search Committee. Following the campus visits, the committee provided the Board of Trustees with a recommendation for the next Rector. The Board then unanimously appointed Sara Stephenson who will begin at Chatham Hall on July 1, 2024.

OCTOBER

Finalists Determined

NOVEMBER

Finalist Campus Visits & Rector Selection



“At the conclusion of my visit, I knew unequivocally that Chatham Hall is an extraordinary school, uniquely dedicated to preparing and empowering young women for a life of impact. After a few short hours on campus, my family and I never wanted to leave. I am deeply honored to be the next Rector, and I look forward to happily joining and wholeheartedly serving the Chatham Hall family.”

MORE ABOUT SARA STEPHENSON

Sara (pronounced Sahr-uh) Stephenson was born and raised in the United Kingdom and holds dual citizenship in both the U.K. and the U.S. She is a graduate of the University of Bristol where she was valedictorian of her class and holds a Master of Education from Cambridge University.

Sara and her husband, Paul, have been married for 23 years and have two sons: Jonah, who is a student at McCallie School, and Jasper, who is a student at Charleston Day School.

Paul, who currently works virtually for Peet’s Coffee, is an enthusiastic outdoorsman.

The Stephensons are looking forward to a long residence in Chatham and embracing the strong sense of community it offers. They were drawn to the unique nature that both the School and town communities emanate, building upon a belonging and connection anchored in rich history and traditions. The family is well-known for enthusiastically receiving students and friends

into their home, and hope to do the same in the Rectory.

Sara and Paul grew up in the Anglican tradition in England and are members of the Episcopal Church. They value Chatham Hall’s Episcopal identity and its commitment to faith-based traditions.

