## as it occurs to me,

Why I Send My Son To Galloway

by Marthame Sanders '88



In his first week at school, my kindergartner got in an argument about Galloway's origins. One of his classmates said Mr. Galloway built the school. "No," Ramsay responded, "my grandpa built the school." I had to explain that, in a way, they were both right. Grandpa's construction company built the Early Learning building (where the argument took place), but it was Mr. Galloway who created and shaped the school indelibly. It led to a wonderful conversation about origins and vision,

about legacy and future, and about what it means to "build" a school. Is a school a place we carve out, or an idea we cultivate?

I have my own ideas about Galloway, many of them a product of my "lifer" status. We oldtimers love to invoke our history—at least, our version of it. And if we're honest, there are those times when we veer into hardship nostalgia. Call it the Chastain version of Bill Cosby's going to school "uphill, both ways." We had one building with chipped paint and noisy radiators; many of our classes were held in trailers that dotted the perimeter of the property; our athletic facilities had to be borrowed; and a mascot? We didn't need one: we were The Galloway School!

The truth was that we knew deep down that being a Galloway student was to be part of a movement, not an institution. We were different. We were outsiders. Our friends were baffled that we didn't know what grade we were in. College admissions offices needed translation guides to turn our transcripts into something approaching a GPA. And we liked it that way. We learned how not to fit in, and if we look back, we know that our outsider status has continued to serve us well.

I am a proud Galloway alumnus, proud of the school that shaped me, and proud of my enduring friendship with Mr. Galloway. When I started at age 4, I went by my middle name: Elliott—two I's and two t's—just like Mr. Galloway. When I married, he spoke in our wedding. When I entered Seminary, his influence was at work again. When we returned to Atlanta, we were fortunate to reconnect with him. And when he died in 2008, I was honored—and stunned—when his family asked me to officiate at his funeral. My roots run deep. How could we not continue the legacy with our children?

And so, as our eldest left Pre-K, we began the school application process. Our first impression of Galloway as prospective parents was how different the school looked. There are a multitude of pristine buildings, decked out with the latest technology. The trailers are gone, replaced by fancy extras like a gym and a theater. Since my senior year, Galloway has had a maScot. And, most obvious of all, Mr. Galloway is no longer walking the halls, cup of hot water in hand. The school looks more established. So our question was simple: has the institution replaced the movement?

Our primary concern was to find a school that was a good fit for our eldest. After the tour, I commented to Elizabeth, my wife, that Galloway passed the test. It was, I said, the right school for him. Her response was right on the mark: "It's the right school for any student." And a year in to the brave new world of Galloway parenting, I'm convinced she's right. The movement is still moving. Galloway is still different. And that difference is what makes it stand out from the crowd.

Instead of seeing the student as a purely academic vessel, Galloway nurtures the whole child, because wellness, not success, is the goal. Mr. Galloway taught me that. Critical thinking skills take precedent over information, because there will always be new data to integrate and challenge. Mr. Mathis taught me that. And a lifelong love of learning is cultivated, because curiosity must not end with graduation. Ms. Coffin taught me that. The times are different, and the methods might vary, but the values and the vision endure.

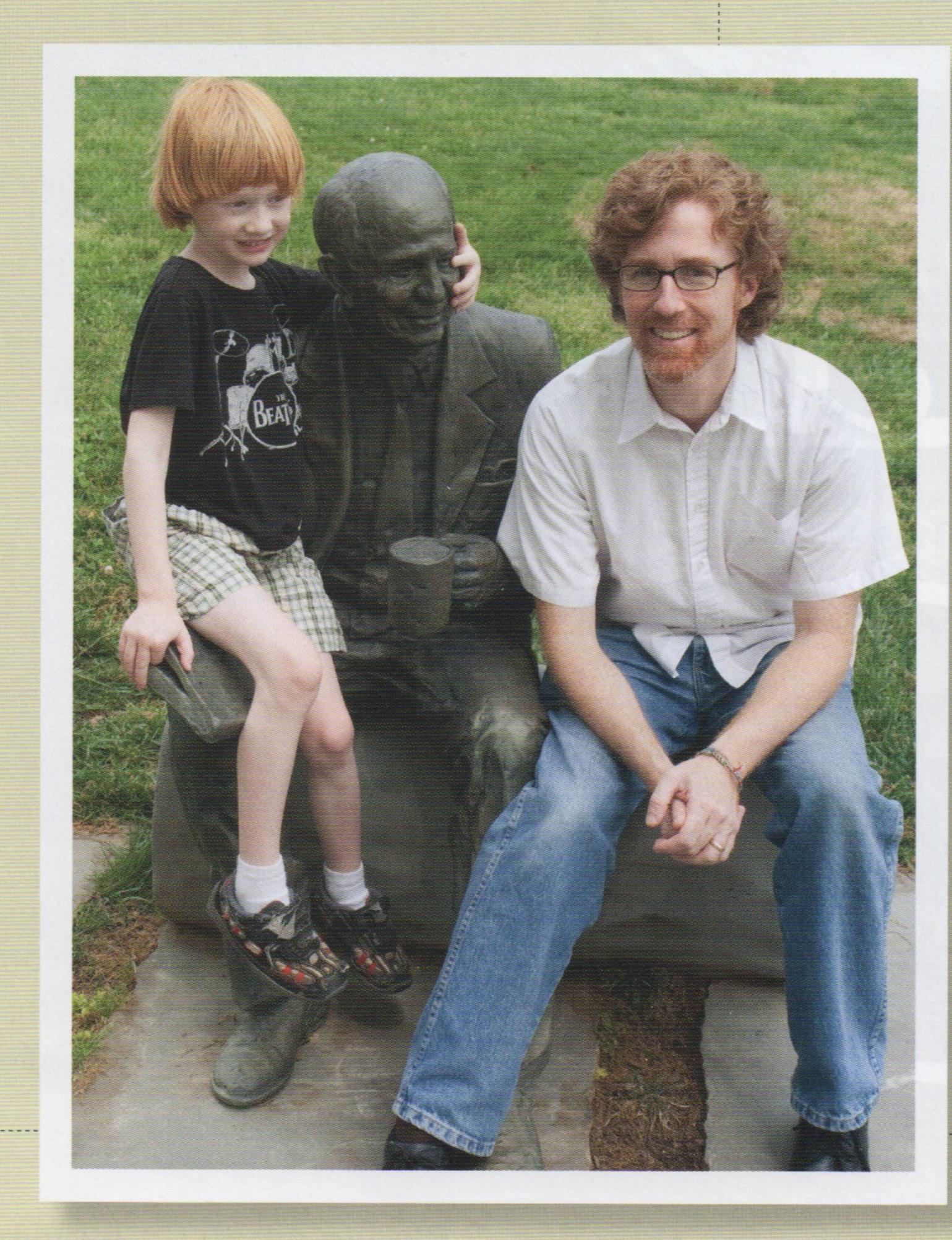
And that, I see, is the challenge before our community right now. We are only four years removed from the death of our visionary founder. The school can and must continue. But will we

successfully navigate this transition so that "The Galloway Way" moves from being Mr. Galloway's way to being the Galloway community's way? Can the progressive vision of one man starting a simple school in the 1960s be articulated and expanded into the 21st century by a whole new generation on the cutting edge of education? The historic vision of this community has served us well. As times change and things look different all around us, the values that have guided this place from day one will continue to provide the clarity we need and the direction we desire.

This summer, we will welcome Suzanna Jemsby as the new head of school. I am excited about what lies ahead. Suzanna's background, skills, openness, and intuition seem extraordinarily well suited for this "movement" I joined way back in 1974. And now, as a parent, I know what I want for my child. As he grows up and develops his own version of Galloway nostalgia, I want him to remember the whole community that continues to build this movement for the road ahead.

Giving Back

(left and right) Marthame spends time with his son, Ramsay, and the sculpture of Mr. Galloway at Elliott's Circle.



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