

# Transformations

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## LESTER ('84) BELIEVES 'NOW IS THE TIME TO INVEST IN DARLINGTON'



**Luke Lester ('84)**

As Luke Lester ('84) reflects on the reasons he and his wife, Sandy, decided to send their daughter to Darlington, he fondly recalls the words of his father.

"Sometimes, when I thank my dad for offering me the

opportunities I had, he says, 'You don't owe me anything, but I expect my grandchildren to have the same opportunities – and more,'" Lester said with a smile. "We're making sure that his expectation is a reality."

The Lesters began considering Darlington for their daughter, Grace ('19), in 2006.

"When Sandy and I first started thinking about Darlington, I ultimately wanted the decision to be hers," Lester said. "As an alumnus, I was obviously supportive, but I really wanted her to be happy. After all, she would be the one making the daily commute from our home in Cartersville to Rome each day. But the school seems focused on outreach to communities like ours, and we were happy to learn that there are actually quite a few Cartersville families here at Darlington."

This was good news, because Luke knows what it's like to be the new kid from out of town. Growing up in Rockmart, he was in a similar situation during his own days at Darlington. "I didn't grow up in Rome, but commuted to Darlington from a nearby town, so I know what it's like to be new," he said. "We wanted to make sure Grace was comfortable and happy."

When his daughter first visited the school, Luke was anxious to see her reaction. "As we were touring the school, we saw the child of a friend of ours who was in pre-K at the time. He came right over, took Grace by the hand and immediately included her in the class activity," he said. "Three years later, I continue to be impressed with how warm and caring an environment Darlington is. I love that our kids can be kids here. They are focused on their education, but they have fun at the same time."

To further demonstrate their support, the Lester family made a \$25,000 commitment to Darlington's Second Century Campaign, and specifically designated it toward the construction of the new Middle School.

"Families like the Lesters have been essential to the success of our campaign," said Headmaster Tom Whitworth. "We have been truly blessed by the generosity of our school community, and it has been a humbling experience to see so many local folks give selflessly to help us raise Darlington's program to the next level."

Luke and Sandy's gift was one of many that helped the school claim an anonymous \$1 million challenge grant. This vital funding was available only after \$9 million had been contributed to the construction of this new facility from donors in and around northwest Georgia.

"It goes without saying that the harder times are economically, the more cautious people are with their investments," Lester said. "But what better investment is there than your child's education and future? I really believe that now is the time to invest in Darlington School, and we are proud to be able to do so."

## Q &amp; A WITH JOE MONTGOMERY



**Joe Montgomery**  
Chief Advancement Officer

**Q. Where are we with the Second Century Campaign today?**

**JM:** I am very pleased to report that the Second Century Campaign has achieved an important milestone, having exceeded the \$60 million mark this year. We are exactly halfway into the campaign, and we're closing in on 70 percent of our \$90 million goal. We are on schedule and actually a bit ahead of where we expected to be at this time.

**Q. Looking back over the past couple of years, what are some highlights from the campaign so far?**

**JM:** For me, it's been the times when our Darlington family has come together to celebrate our shared love of the school. From the campaign kickoff in March 2008 in Rome, on to Atlanta, Jacksonville (Fla.), Cartersville (Ga.), Charlotte (N.C.), New York City, Nashville (Tenn.), Birmingham (Ala.) and Dalton (Ga.), we have had terrific gatherings with hundreds of alumni, parents and friends. We've celebrated Darlington and the exciting goals of this historic campaign. Whenever you get Darlington people together, there's sure to be a lot of excitement, enthusiasm and fun.

**Q. Looking forward, what do we hope this campaign will accomplish?**

**JM:** When the campaign began, the question was, "What will this historic campaign mean for Darlington?" Now the question becomes, "What is the campaign doing for Darlington?" And the answer is, the campaign is already making a difference in the lives of students and faculty.

Our Middle School community is enjoying a brand-new, environmentally friendly building. Our male boarding students have new bathrooms, windows and lighting in their residence halls with the completion of Phase I of renovations to the houses. There are students attending Darlington for the very first time because of \$4 million in newly endowed

merit and need-based scholarships. Their lives will be transformed by this opportunity made possible by generous donors. This is truly what the campaign is all about.

**Q. Has the state of the economy had an impact on the campaign?**

**JM:** People have and will continue to give to causes they consider worthy and relevant. This has been especially true for Darlington. Despite the economy, Darlington alumni, parents and friends continue to give even in times of financial crisis. We know there will be unexpected challenges to confront in every campaign. We just have to listen well, be understanding and adapt.

**Q. What is the most important thing that you want our Darlington family to know about the campaign?**

**JM:** The theme for the campaign is *transforming lives*. This is the most ambitious fundraising effort in Darlington's history. What we are doing today will transform the future of this venerable institution and have an impact on the lives of students and faculty for years to come. We're doing this for the kids; they are the beneficiaries of the success of this campaign. We are showing them just how much we care about them.

**Q. Is there anything else you want to mention?**

**JM:** Absolutely. The key to our success has been the help and support of our many, many volunteers. We have strong and inspired leadership, beginning with our campaign co-chairmen, Jere Drummond ('57) and George Johnson ('54), who have assembled an outstanding team of volunteers to lead the charge. Because of their dedication and involvement, we can be optimistic about this campaign and Darlington's future. I want to thank everybody who has supported the campaign and who has worked on behalf of Darlington School to get us to this point.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL RIBBON CUTTING



Division Director Jim Van Es sips his morning coffee as he prepares for students to arrive on the first day.



The entire Middle School student body and faculty gather in the amphitheater for the Ribbon Cutting.



Middle School faculty members Eva Marie (Kelley) Burns ('79), Chris Holloway, Tommy Atha, Randy Smith and Joey Rice watch as history unfolds.



Al Hodge, CEO of the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce, greets Kevin Evans ('87) and Bill Watters ('75).



Lyons Heyman ('44), chairman of the Northwest Georgia-Area Campaign Cabinet, poses for a photo with campaign staff members Julie (Wilson) Lucas ('97) and Joe Montgomery.



Jim Van Es and Frank Stegall ('62), chairman of Darlington's Board of Trustees, cut the ribbon with help from Asia Battey ('15) and City of Rome Mayor Wright Bagby ('63).

### Second Century Campaign Cabinet

- Jere Drummond '57*  
Campaign Co-Chairman
- George Johnson '54*  
Campaign Co-Chairman
- Frank Stegall '62*  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
- John Irby '81*  
Past-Chairman of the Board of Trustees
- Roby Robinson '58*  
Board of Trustees Campaign Chairman
- Linda (Grizzard) Owens '79*  
Life Trustees Campaign Chairwoman
- Tom Whitworth*  
Headmaster

### Northwest Georgia-Area Cabinet

- Lyons J. Heyman '44*  
Chairman
- Robert L. Harbin '67*  
Vice Chairman
- Joan (Walther) Brock '74*
- Laura (Harbin) Davis '70T*
- William R. Enloe '90*
- Kevin C. Evans '87*
- Norman Fletcher*
- Suzy B. Gilbert*
- Gordon Lee Hight II '62*
- Emily T. Hjort*
- Robert Hortman '72*
- Clint Hubbard '81*
- Bill Jordan '54*
- William A. Kelly '71*
- Michael C. Lawrence*
- Robert H. Ledbetter Jr. '84*
- J. Luke Lester IV '84*
- Jeffrey J. Mauer '85*
- Timothy D. Morgan '87*
- Linda Grizzard Owens '79*
- Frank D. Stegall '62*
- Timothy Wallis '69*
- Edwin C. Watters '83*
- William N. Watters '75*
- W. Gardner Wright '47*
- Delos H. Yancey III '77*
- Delos H. Yancey Jr.*

### Atlanta-Area Cabinet

- William A. Mitchell '58*  
Chairman
- Roby Robinson Jr. '58*  
Vice Chairman
- Andrew W. Alias '02*
- Wade H. Brannon Jr. '79*
- Elizabeth W. Camp '70T*
- Clifton M. Culberson Jr. '69*
- Parks A. Dodd Jr. '61*
- Scott C. Dozier '73*
- J. Lewis Glenn '64*
- Henry J. Hine '74*
- Patricia L. Hubbard '86*
- James C. Humphries '63*
- John H. Irby '81*
- John Izard Jr. '77*
- Christopher P. Jeffs '84*
- E. George Johnson Jr. '66*
- Jack L. McGinnis '68*
- Thornton W. Morris Jr. '78*
- Frederick L. Neely '62*
- Clarence E. Smith III '62*
- Edward L. Trimble '86*
- Michael L. Van Cise '97*
- Wiley W. Virden Jr. '49*
- Mark K. Watson '76*
- John R. Webster Jr. '57*
- Larry C. Williams '67*
- Neal L. Williams '54*
- James R. Wilson '72*
- Alexander K. Wyatt Jr. '61*
- Harold W. Wyatt III '86*

## SECOND CENTURY CAMPAIGN

### Transforming Lives Through Teaching

	GOAL	GIFTS AND PLEDGES
The Learning Center	\$4,700,000	\$1,231,712
Faculty Support	\$10,000,000	\$1,244,703

### Transforming Lives Through Innovation

	GOAL	GIFTS AND PLEDGES
New Middle School	\$21,000,000	\$21,000,000
Technology and Equipment	\$800,000	\$478,832

### Transforming Lives Through Stewardship

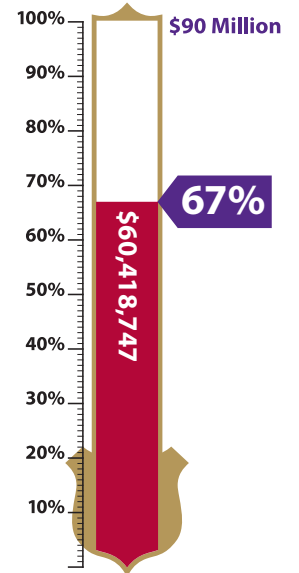
	GOAL	GIFTS AND PLEDGES
Improvements to Boys' Houses	\$3,000,000	\$1,217,700
Campus Buildings & Maintenance	\$1,000,000	\$140,000

### Transforming Lives Through Opportunity

	GOAL	GIFTS AND PLEDGES
Financial Aid Endowment	\$10,000,000	\$4,050,536

### Transforming Lives Through Giving

	GOAL	GIFTS AND PLEDGES
Annual Giving	\$7,500,000	\$6,688,207
Planned Gifts	\$28,000,000	\$21,570,752
Undesignated Capital		\$2,683,180



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