

# Loomis Chaffee

Dear Loomis Chaffee Alumni,

Loomis, Chaffee, and Loomis Chaffee have celebrated 105 springs as a school. Usually those springs have been uninterrupted, even with the seasonal flooding of the Meadows that takes place in March or April, except for the Floods of 1936 and 1984 that transformed The Island into a true island. The ten weeks of spring typically fly by with bluer and bluer skies, bright sunshine, increasing warmth, light into the evening hours, and end-of-year celebrations. During my 38 years on the faculty, the school has enjoyed at various times Spring Day, Seminar Day, Springfest, and twilight softball, as well as annual music concerts, senior recitals, student-directed one-act plays, student art exhibits, athletics contests, community service outreach like the Special Olympics, and the Prom. For most Chaffee alumnae, the spring concluded with graduation in the First Church of Windsor on Palisado Green; for most Loomis alumni, with that ceremony on the southern terrace of Founders Hall within the Grubbs Quadrangle and at an end of the elm-tree-lined Senior Path; and for all Loomis Chaffee graduates, with commencement between the Homestead and the Head's House overlooking the Farmington River. In every case, these milestones were beautiful, warm, and heartfelt farewells with graduates hugging their parents, grandparents, special faculty members, and their close friends within the class. That is the way each year is supposed to end.

The spring of 2020 will be different. The spring of 2020 will go down in history as the first and, I hope, only spring term that transformed Loomis Chaffee completely into an online school, a completely different island, practicing remote or distant teaching and learning. "Remote" is not a word that I associate with our school, nor is "distant." Almost without fail, alumni, faculty, staff, students, parents, and visitors feel the warmth, the closeness, and the strength of our community and know that it distinguishes Loomis Chaffee from many of our peers.

While I am certainly sad for the Class of 2020 as those seniors will miss their final term, I am still holding out hope that in late May they might graduate between the Homestead and the Head's House. Ultimately, regardless of the form their Commencement might take, I am looking forward to welcoming the members of the Class of 2020 to the ranks of Loomis Chaffee alumni, and I hope you will join me in wishing them well.

Even as I consider the effect of the pandemic on our current students, I cannot help but worry about the school's thousands of alumni spread across this country and around the world — from New England to the Midwest to the West Coast to Canada to Central and South America to Europe and Africa and to Asia — and hope that all of you are healthy, are washing your hands as frequently as appropriate, are remaining in your homes as much as possible, and are keeping your distance from others when necessity forces you out of your houses. Please reach out to your Loomis Chaffee friends, lean on each other (figuratively) and our school community, and let us know how you are doing.

Keep the faith and your distance. Ne Cede Malis.

Sincerely,

Nat Follansbee

*Associate Head for External Relations*