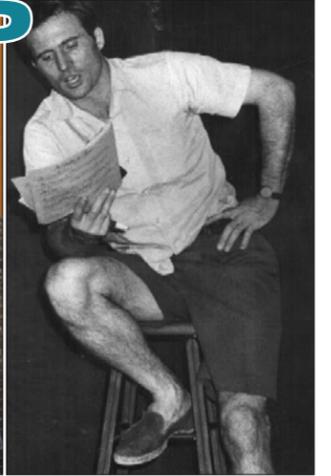
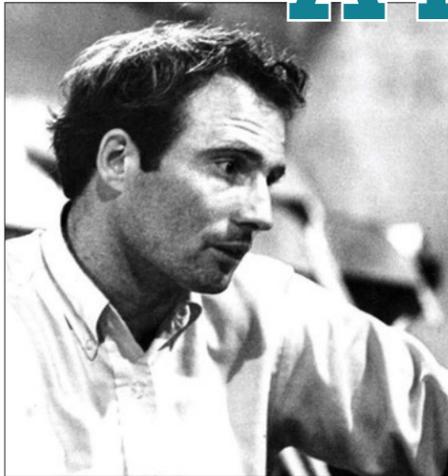


ANTHONY VINTCENT

More than 30 years after he left the school, former Fine Arts Chair Anthony Vintcent is being honored with the **Anthony A. Vintcent Fine Arts Endowment**. For a man who did so much at the school in a short time, this has been...

# A long time coming



**THE MAN WHO STARTED IT ALL** Anthony Vintcent's lasting legacy remains. While his summer stock-theatre group, the Harlequin Players, is no longer around, he has shaped the school in other ways. Vintcent united the band, ceramics, acting and other programs into one Fine Arts Department. He is seen at the 2012 Reunion of the Harlequin Players (above, middle). Vintcent is second from the left, with Ackerman Family Master Teaching Chair Alice Oltrogge on his left, and Founders' Master Teaching Chair Bill Kysor and Lower School Music Teacher Mary Ann Livengood, all of whom he worked with decades ago. He is seen directing plays (above left and above right).

**I**t was a May in the late 1960s, and the theater department was busy preparing for a brand new production. The lines were being memorized. The costumes were being sewn. And a circus tent was being erected next to the chapel.

The vision came from Tony Vintcent, St. Mark's very first Fine Arts Department chair, who, throughout his nearly ten years here, revolutionized the Fine Arts Department with big ideas and even bigger stunts.

"We wanted to do [the Archibald MacLeish play] *J.B.*, which is a play based on the book of *Job*, and it struck us that the logical place to do this would be in a circus tent," Vintcent said of one of his most memorable productions. "So we phoned up a company that does tents, and it arrived one day—this gigantic, brown, one-pole, round circus tent... And the wonder of it all is nobody ever came to me and said, 'Tony take it down.'"

Now, more than 40 years since he arrived here, a plan to honor Vintcent's achievements is in the works. The fundraising plan, spearheaded by Michael Merrill '72, is being prepared to create the Anthony A. Vintcent Fine Arts Endowment, a newly endowed teaching position to benefit the faculty of the Fine Arts Department. So far more than \$300,000 has been raised in donations, the majority com-

ing from Vintcent's former students.

"I reached out to people who I knew considered Mr. Vintcent a huge part of their lives," Merrill said. "People that I had been in the drama club with and had been in [Vintcent's summer theater program] Harlequin Players with. The goal is \$1 million to name a chair, and so we are over \$300,000 now and we want to raise the rest as quickly as we can."

The announcement was made at a reunion luncheon last October for Vintcent's Harlequin Players, exactly 40 years after their final performance. To Vintcent, the news came as a pleasant surprise.

"I was gobsmacked," he said. "I just did not know what to think. It was a huge, huge honor that the school was giving to me, and I was pretty speechless. I was very excited and very thrilled, and thrilled for the school as well, because it meant the Fine Arts program had come of age."

Merrill remembers the early days of the Fine Arts program, and how Vintcent built it into what it is today.

"He defined it," Merrill said. "He increased the size of the faculty, and he increased the types of things that were offered. He added strings and orchestra, film and photography. All of the sudden, there was this huge amount of energy of things going on in the fine arts."

Merrill also credits Vintcent's "sky's-the-limit" attitude as one of the main reasons for the department's success.

"He didn't see any limitations. He wanted to do a play that was impossible for children to do because it was too complex. He didn't see it that way. We just did it. We knew

Yet for all of his past accomplishments — circus tent and all — Vintcent believes his best achievements are still here today.

"The things I'm most proud of are still there," Vintcent said. "And that is people. I can't tell you how very proud I am of them, people like [Ackerman Family Master Teaching Chair in Lower School] Alice Oltrogge, [Founders' Master Teaching Chair] Bill Kysor, [Lower School Music Teacher] Mary Ann Livengood, and the late Jim Livengood. If I was a catalyst, then that's terrific. I may have lit the flame, but they've carried it forward. They've brightened it, they've made it work, their dedication and their compassion and their talent... They're wonderful people, and they're still here. 40 years. Just remarkable. That's what I'm most proud of."

When the Anthony A. Vintcent Fine Arts Endowment finally reaches its goal, Vintcent believes it will be a fantastic addition to the school, and that, when all is said and done, the endowment is recognizing far more than just him.

"I think they're recognizing something more," Vintcent said. "They're recognizing an energy. They're recognizing that fine arts are important in the school now. It's taken a long time. You know, good wine takes quite a while to mature."

They're recognizing something more. They're recognizing that **fine arts is important in the school now**. It's taken a long time. You know, **good wine takes quite a while to mature**.

ANTHONY VINTCENT

we were leading the way in a way we weren't supposed to be capable of doing, and yet we proved to ourselves and anyone watching that we could."

A LONG TIME COMING story by Cole Gerthoffer, reviews specialist, and Dylan Clark, arts editor | photos courtesy Office of Development and Alumni Relations

## ALUMNI WEEKEND SCHEDULE

### Friday

- **All day** Classes in various classrooms
- **10:30-11:00 a.m.** Alumni Chapel
- **11:50-12:35 p.m.** Lunch, open classes, and campus walkabout
- **1:30-2:15 p.m.** Alumni Panel Discussion
- **2:20-3:05 p.m.** Alumni Panel Discussion
- **6:00 p.m.** Spring Alumni Dinner

### Saturday

- **10:00-11:15 a.m.** Alumni Board Meeting
- **11:00-1:30 p.m.** St. Mark's Family Cookout, Campus Tours, Student Band Concert
- **12:30-2:00 p.m.** Planetarium Shows with Dr. Steve Balog or Captain Sunshine's Chemistry Show
- **Evening** Reunion Class Dinners



**TOGETHER AGAIN** During last year's Alumni Weekend, alums reconnected with Provost and Dean of Campus Scott Gonzalez (above left). Alums and their families enjoyed a picnic and talk while their kids play at the Family Cookout (above right).

## Distinguished Alumnus Kurt Eichenwald '79 to be recognized at Spring Alumni Dinner

By **Shourya Kumar**  
staff writer

### HE WAS NEVER AFRAID.

The anxiety was never an issue. But then again, neither was the epilepsy. For 12 years—from 1979 to 1991 — seizures haunted his body, but his mind and his future remained intact. "My mindset was, 'You've got one life; you can whine or you can keep moving on,'" Kurt Eichenwald '79 said.

Eichenwald will speak as the Distinguished Alumnus at this year's Spring Alum-

ni Dinner tonight.

Recognized for his accomplishments as a journalist and an author, Eichenwald has written four books that are *New York Times* bestsellers. His most recognized book, *The Informant*, detailing a lysine price-fixing conspiracy, has also been made into a comedy-crime motion picture, *The Informant!* directed by renowned director Stephen Soderbergh and starring actor Matt Damon.

Eichenwald has worked for several prominent publications including *Time*, *The New York Times* and *Vanity Fair*, exploring numerous subject matters.

"Everything is interesting," he said. "I've written about everything. There's always something interesting to tell. Nobody has a monopoly on knowledge. Always have an open mind. Check your ego."

Eichenwald also attributes his successes to his high school education.

"St. Mark's was the most formative experience of my life," he said. "The most important thing it taught me was how to think. More so than college. And more so than most job experiences."

People have always told me in my profession, 'Wow you're willing to pick something

up that you don't know anything about," he said. "And it's because that's what I was taught how to do. Mr. Jordan, the third-grade teacher, gave me the love of books, of reading."

Eichenwald sees new topics and ideas that he doesn't understand as an opportunity to expand his mind. In fact, his curiosity and desire to uncover new interests fuels his passion as a writer.

"You cannot be afraid to confront things you don't understand," he said. "Pick it apart until you understand it. Too often people want things black and white. The world just isn't like that. The world is mostly gray."