

To: The Starkville Academy Patrons

From: 2020 Nominating Committee

Re: 2020 Nominees for Board of Directors

Dear Patrons:

Starkville Academy's By-Laws provide for the annual selection of two members to the Board of Directors for the school. The nominees for these two positions are selected, first, by a Nominating Committee, which is appointed by, but works entirely independent from, the existing Board, and, second, by any nominations from patrons who gather the required number of signatures to be placed on the ballot. Once selected, these two Board members each serve terms of four years.

We were honored to serve as this year's Nominating Committee. After careful discussion and consideration, we are happy to announce the committee's two nominees are Karyn Brown and Michael Waters.

This year we also need to fill an open seat on the board. This person will serve the remainder of a three-year term. The committee nominates Atwell Daves for that position.

Each of the candidates has provided a brief biography, which we have included on the following pages. As we think you will agree after reviewing their biographies, we believe that each of these nominees cares greatly for Starkville Academy and the welfare of our children, and we are confident that any two of them would represent our school in an honest and positive manner.

Thank you for taking the time to review these biographies and for your support of Starkville Academy.

Rachel Wall
Susan O'Neil
Jennifer Rush
Tabor Mullen
Carrie Beth Randall
Brian Lesley

Karyn Brown



It is with excitement that I am accepting the nomination to serve on the Starkville Academy Board of Directors. It is an honor to be considered during this critical season as Starkville Academy moves into a new century of educational choice. Michael, my husband, and I chose SA for our only son Diwas (now in 6th Grade) in 2013 because of the commitment of the teachers and staff to helping students be successful, and because of the family-like support that we receive from other families through prayer, encouragement, and compassion. Diwas was adopted from an orphanage in Nepal when he was 4 years old. He didn't learn to read, write, or speak English until coming to the U.S. in 2011. Since he needed a smaller environment and was catching up to his American peers, we knew SA was the best choice for our family.

Michael and I are originally from Illinois and moved to Starkville in 1993 for teaching positions at MSU. I am an instructor in the Department of Communication at MSU and also currently serve as the Director of Communication

for the MSU College of Arts & Sciences. Michael is a professor of meteorology in the MSU Department of Geosciences and serves as the State Climatologist for the state of Mississippi.

Starkville is now our home! I was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, and had the unique opportunity to be educated in both a large public school system K-5th, a small independent school 6th-8th, and a large public high school 9th-12th. Educational choice was very important to our family. My brother and I had different needs at different times of our educational journey and my parents were grateful we had choices in that pursuit.

I am a first generation college student and attended Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, and majored in political sciences and communication/broadcasting. While in college, I worked at KWQC-TV in Davenport, Iowa, as a reporter and producer. Additionally, I had the opportunity to work in the Media Relations Department at the Deere and Company World Headquarters in Moline, Illinois, my senior year. Upon graduation, I attended Western Illinois University to obtain my master's degree in public communication and broadcasting. As a graduate student I was able to work at a local public relations firm. After moving to Starkville and working at MSU for two years, Michael and I decided that academia was our calling and we moved to North Carolina in 1996 for Michael to obtain his Ph.D. in meteorology at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. During this time, I attended Duke University to obtain a graduate certificate in non-profit management and served as the executive director of North Carolina state office for Mother's Against Drunk Driving. After just two short years, we were blessed to receive a call from our MSU family that they wanted us to return. This year I started my 27th year of teaching, and I continue to love the classroom and mentoring students.

Within the Starkville community, I am very active as a church member. At the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Starkville, I previously served in the church choir, as the director of the altar guild, the Christian education committee, and a Sunday school teacher. On a state and national level, I work with groups/individuals exploring adoption opportunities and have assisted in government legislation to transform international adoption. I have also served as a board member for the Starkville Community Theatre. At MSU, I am active in faculty mentorship within the Center for Teaching and Learning and serve on numerous university committees.

At SA I have served as a homeroom mom, assisted on various committees, and in 2019 I began working on the SA 50th Anniversary Committee. I wanted to be a part of our school's reflection and voice moving forward. I believe it is time for us to tell our story, and I enjoyed being part of the process of developing a new branding campaign for SA. As a board member I look forward to working with the SA family and leadership as we strengthen relationships in our community, create a strong vision for Volunteer pride, help our students make an impact in their own lives and in our world, and make every day strides toward diversity. It is a great time to be a Volunteer and I am dedicated to seeing our school flourish and grow.

Michael Waters



I am honored to be nominated for a position on the Starkville Academy School Board. Below you will find some of my background and perspectives on education.

I grew up a short drive away from Starkville in Columbus, MS. I attended Heritage Academy for 13 years and graduated in 1998. After high school, I attended Millsaps College in Jackson, MS where I received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a double major in Computer Information Systems and Business Administration in 2002. Post college, I worked a couple of years for the Division of Medicaid as a Sr. Systems Administrator and then a couple of years for Saks Incorporated doing business analysis for their logistics division. In 2005, I decided to come back into our family business, Waters Truck and Tractor. Our business sells commercial trucks, buses, equipment, trailers, and a few other things. We also sell all the parts and services that go along with them. In addition,

we have had several maintenance contracts at the International Paper mill in Columbus, MS for about 30 years. We employ about 250 people in five cities around MS (Columbus, Meridian, Kosciusko, Natchez, and Hattiesburg). I am a co-owner and Vice President. In 2007, I graduated from the National Automobile Dealers Association's Dealer Academy, and in 2009, I completed the Executive Dealer Leadership Program from the UCLA Anderson School of Business, which is a focused MBA for our industry.

My better half is Emily Waters, which I am sure most of you probably know. She tries to stay very involved with SA, our church, and other community and social events! We have 3 kids, Ray (9), Lennox (6), and Fox (almost 3). Ray and Lennox both currently attend SA and love it! We certainly plan for Fox to join them before too long. We attend First United Methodist Church in Starkville. In my "free time", I enjoy playing tennis, running, biking, playing basketball, or just working out in general. I also enjoy reading and listening to music, although I find myself hardly getting to do this these days.

I believe that education is an essential part of one's life and development. There are many ways to teach and think, but I subscribe to the belief that one should not be taught what to think, rather they should be taught how to think. Being able to take facts and data, analyze them, and ultimately form one's own opinion based upon that information is a powerful tool for succeeding in life. My kids are still young, but, so far, I have witnessed the approaches their teachers at SA have taken with education and I have been very impressed. They are pushed, but still provided an opportunity to be a kid, which is another important aspect of development. The teachers and administrators at SA truly care about my children. Everything at SA is grounded in the Christian faith, which I am also very pleased about. There are so many challenges in today's society, and it is comforting knowing that where my children spend the majority of their week, they will be reinforced with Christian principles. If elected to serve on the board and when presented with a decision to make, I plan to take the information I am given from others' opinions, apply logic based upon my experiences and prior education, and make the best decision I can. Thanks for your consideration.

Atwell Daves



I would like to thank the nominating committee for considering me for membership on the Starkville Academy Board of Directors. My family and I moved to Starkville in the summer of 2007. I am married to Angela and our children, Matthew and Lauren, have attend SA since Pre-K. Matthew is now in 10th grade and Lauren is in 8th grade. Over the last 11 years, we have enjoyed the Christian environment and rigorous academic standards the academy has provided. SA has shown great progress forward during our time here, and I would be honored to be able to help continue to build on the progress.

I grew up in nearby Columbus, MS, attending New Hope from 1st through 12th grade. After high school, I attended Mississippi State University from 1992- 1997, receiving a BS in Chemical Engineering and also completing the

Cooperative Education program. After graduation, I moved away to Little Rock, AR and then to Tallahassee, FL. In 2007, after getting married to Angela and having our second child, we took an opportunity to move back to be near family. I accepted a Process Engineering position with what is now Nouryon (formerly AkzoNobel), where I am currently the Production Manager for the Sodium Chlorate operations. In my role at Nouryon, I serve on the executive committee of the Tennessee Valley Industrial Committee, a group that represents the direct served industrial customers of the TVA. In this capacity, I have become familiar with board of directors and committee parliamentary process that would help me effectively serve as a board member.

Although I work in Columbus, when choosing where to live, we choose Starkville due to it just feeling like a better fit for us. When Matthew reached the age to begin school, we considered both private and public school options. Having grown up in a small public school, quite frankly, I was in favor of public school. After looking into the options and in prayerful consideration, we decided that the best option for us was Starkville Academy. We have been extremely happy with our choice and feel blessed by the environment that Matthew and Lauren have been educated in, as well as the academic progress they have made. I have personally been pleased with the growing diversity of the student body and hope this trend continues into the future.

Working in an adjacent town 45 minutes away make involvement in the community a struggle at times. I have been a Boy Scouts leader since Cub Scouts and am currently an Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 45, chartered by First United Methodist Church. In the church I have served from 2016-2019 on the Staff Parish Relations committee, having rolled off in December. I was a coach for Matthew's little league baseball teams for 6 summers. I view the potential to serve on the Board of Directors as another way I can try to give back to the community.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope to be able to serve on the Starkville Academy Board of Directors and help continue the great progress that we have personally witnessed over the last 11 years of having students here.