



December 3, 2009

Dear Heathwood Hall Community:

Turning the calendar page to December seems to grant us permission to fully embrace the spirit of the season. We are blessed by the dedication, talent and generosity of our community, and I want to make you aware of a few early gifts we have received.

Although 'tis the season for lights and cameras, the pole with these items that recently was installed near the front of campus is related to a different subject: safety. Safety most frequently tops the list of reasons why people choose independent schools, and we are now able to add another layer of security to our front-gate guards, Staff Sergeant Verlon Rhodes and our hourly "Campus Watch" patrols by staff. Former Heathwood Hall parents Carey and Suzy Shealy approached our school wishing to donate a **security system** – at no cost for the installation or equipment. This unsolicited gift includes four cameras (bringing our campus total to six). Our cameras near the front gate allow monitoring that stretches from Heathwood Hall Road to both directions as you enter campus, as well as zoom and 360-degree capabilities. The gift also includes a visual monitoring system and an alarm box to be located in the Athletic Center parking lot. At the push of a button, the alarm box will call immediate attention with lights and a siren to a person in distress. I did make the point to visit our Upper School students and remind them that these cameras have not been installed with the intent of acting as "big brother," nor are they there to check on the use of mobile phones while driving. Rather, they simply offer additional safety for our campus and community. We are humbled by the Shealy's gift, which will help further protect the children whose care is entrusted to us each day.

We continue to consider the feedback we receive regarding school-to-home communication, and you will soon be asked to participate in a survey that is

part of our ongoing Communication Audit. However, the call for changes to our web site (www.heathwood.org) was such that we immediately decided to proceed with revisions. As you visit our new home page, we hope you find it to be a gift -- with user-friendly, more immediate access to the school news and event information you desire. For prospective families visiting us for the first time online, we've added "Who We Are" content and easier access to admission information. Our web site is our virtual front door, and it is critical that we continually communicate in a way that is accurate, reflective of the Heathwood Hall brand and engaging. I'd like to thank Bill Cherry, John Caballero, Kara Sproles Mock and countless others on our staff who continue to invest their gifts in our web site. It is through these efforts that we are better able to direct funds into the classroom and steer away from the tens of thousands of dollars it costs most schools to create and maintain their web sites.

I close with a parting gift that is an invitation. **Lessons & Carols takes place in Averyt Hall at Trinity Cathedral this Sunday, December 6, at 4 p.m.** While I will be in attendance for the first time, I presume this to be one of our shining "Heathwood Hall moments" during our school year. It is tradition that the students selected to read the Holy Scripture at Lessons & Carols do so only once during their career, so it is a great honor. Carols will be performed by 4th and 5th grade choristers and our Upper School Chorus. The congregation will join in on hymns. Upper School students will serve as acolytes and ushers. As I attempt to paint a picture of the beauty and richness of this special service, I know that it is one that must be experienced to fully appreciate, and I hope to both see and hear you there.

Thank you for the gifts that each of you brings to Heathwood Hall.

Countless blessings to all,

Chuck