

# Allendale Columbia

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## *School*

### **A thoughtful excerpt from AC '60 Alumni Gay Pepper: 'Allendale Columbia School: Ahead of the Curve'**

Supporting Allendale-Columbia is an important investment in growing healthy children who become independent and mature adults. As a member of the Class of 1960 at Columbia School, I know first-hand that a small school with shared values is a “sacred place” where good learning can take place. Most of my career has been working in independent day schools, so I know the value of the kind of engagement that takes place in the classroom. Here students can challenge convention thinking, debate new policies and enjoy the interplay of examining different ideas. In science labs, they can use trial and error experimentation to reach new conclusions. In the study of history and literature, they can cultivate critical thinking skills and learn new methodologies of analysis with the guidance of trained professionals. All of this happens without the intrusion and diversion of Smart Phones. In other words, AC creates a community of learners in a safe environment that is freed from social media that creates confusion, random interruptions, and isolation. Students are given time to be together, to connect with peers and teachers, and to have time alone to think. They also have new opportunities to reach out into the community to participate in service activities and explore career options. Allendale Columbia is a school that does all of this and much more. Just look at its Strategic Priorities which are both visionary and bold:

- #1 Expanding the Path, Personalized Learning Opportunities
- # 2 Beyond Academics, Educating the Whole Child
- # 3 Connections, At the Core

To make these priorities come alive in school life, take a look at recent program initiatives:

Globetrotting Learning Adventures, Equity in Action, Legislative Breakfast, Building Community Through Music, and STEM Through the Lens.

As an educator working in leading independent schools across the country for over five decades, I can speak with authority when I say Allendale Columbia is ahead of the curve when it comes to innovative change in a culture dominated by technology. At

its core, AC has created and preserved a learning environment that encourages creative thinking, analytical reasoning, and healthy dialogue in a setting that is both stimulating and supportive. Allendale Columbia is “real” and offers an education for leadership in the “real” world, a gift for students and parents alike.