PGA President Catherine Carsley ’93 came to Princeton at the encouragement of two of her undergraduate professors at Fordham, who urged her to apply to Princeton to pursue her Ph.D. “As a first-generation undergraduate student, I am sure that I would not have even imagined continuing on for my Ph.D. without their mentorship.”

Some of Carsley’s favorite Princeton memories as a Ph.D. student in English include organizing the “The Graduate Colloquium in Medieval Studies”; being involved in the Grad Student Union; and enjoying fascinating conversations over dinners at Proctor Hall. “I also remember quite a bit of time spent in the D-bar or in the coffee room of the Old GC watching the philosophy students play unreasonably intense games of Hearts.”

After graduation, she found her calling to teach other first-generation and adult students when she became an assistant professor at the University of Maryland’s University College and later the head of the Liberal Studies program and Professor of English at Montgomery County Community College in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, where she currently teaches. “I think that it is important for
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today’s graduate students and alumni to see themselves as potential leaders in all sectors of higher education and not only as faculty members at research universities. If Princeton teaches us anything, it is that service is at the heart of our educational mission.”

Carsley embodies that mission. For more than a decade she has been volunteering at Princeton, first as an interviewer with the Alumni Schools Committee, and later with the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni, with which she became interested after attending the “Many Minds, Many Stripes” conference for graduate alumni in 2013. “I knew then that I wanted to return to this amazing community more often. Soon after the conference, I became very involved with the APGA.”

Since then, she has gone on to serve on the board of the APGA and is now its president after serving as vice president for two years. In this role, she works closely with the APGA board in its work to connect graduate alumni with Princeton and one another. She also encourages graduate alumni to become involved in the University as she did more than a decade ago.

“Volunteering has enriched my life,” she says. “Each time I get together with alumni, whether at a lecture, a Princeton Women’s Network event or a dinner, I take away interesting ideas while sharing my own experiences. I feel as if I gain much more than I give during any volunteer role.”

There are many ways to stay connected to Princeton through volunteer work. To learn more, contact the Office of Alumni Affairs at 609.258.1900 or www.alumni.princeton.edu.

APGA News

The James Madison Medal will be awarded to Carol Quillen ’91, president of Davidson College, during Alumni Day, which will be held on campus February 23, 2019. Quillen has served as the 18th president of Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina, since 2011.

The Madison Medal, established by the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni (APGA), is named for James Madison ’1771, the fourth president of the United States, and considered to be Princeton’s first graduate student. The award is presented each year to celebrate an alumna or alumnus of the Graduate School who has had a distinguished career, advanced the cause of graduate education or achieved an outstanding record of public service.

In addition to the presentations of the Madison Medal and Woodrow Wilson Award, four graduate students will be recognized with the Porter Ogden Jacobus Fellowship, the University’s top honor for graduate students. The fellowships support their final year of study at Princeton and are awarded to one Ph.D. student in each of the four divisions (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering) whose work has exhibited the highest scholarly excellence.

Save the date for Reunions, May 30 – June 2, 2019! The APGA will highlight engineering alumni with the theme “Gearing Up for a Good Time!” Registration opens in March of 2019.

“Gearing Up for a Good Time!”

Reunions 2019