

An Atmosphere of Intellectual Curiosity and Inclusion

By Tyler Faux '05

On June 27, 1986, Richard G. Faux Jr. and Dorothy Schefer Faux were married by Rabbi Eugene Lipsey and the Reverend Philip Clarke in New York City. My father, a Protestant from Boston, and my mother, a second-generation Jewish-American whose family fled the Russian pogroms, celebrated their interfaith union among fifty of their closest friends and family.

Like my parents' wedding, my childhood straddled each of their traditions. Growing up, our family celebrated Easter and Passover, Christmas and Hanukkah. We even combined those last two into the portmanteau "Chrismukkah" after a compelling episode of the hit 2000's TV show *The OC*. Today, my parents continue to delight in each other's faith. My mom is always the first to show up and the last to leave when my dad ushers at The Brick Church, and my dad is an enthusiastic attendee at Temple Emanu-El's services for holidays from the most popular to the more obscure (He loves Sukkot, the celebration of the fall harvest!).

When deciding where to send my brother and me to school, my parents shared with me that religious affiliation was not a consideration. Knowing our family was secure in its own traditions, they contemplated different questions: *would their sons be challenged to think rigorously and work collaboratively?*

Would we be exposed to a wide set of perspectives? Would we learn about the past so that we could apply it to the future? After exploration and reflection, the choice was clear: Rawson ('06) and I ('05) would follow in the footsteps of our brother Gordon ('94) and enroll at Saint David's.

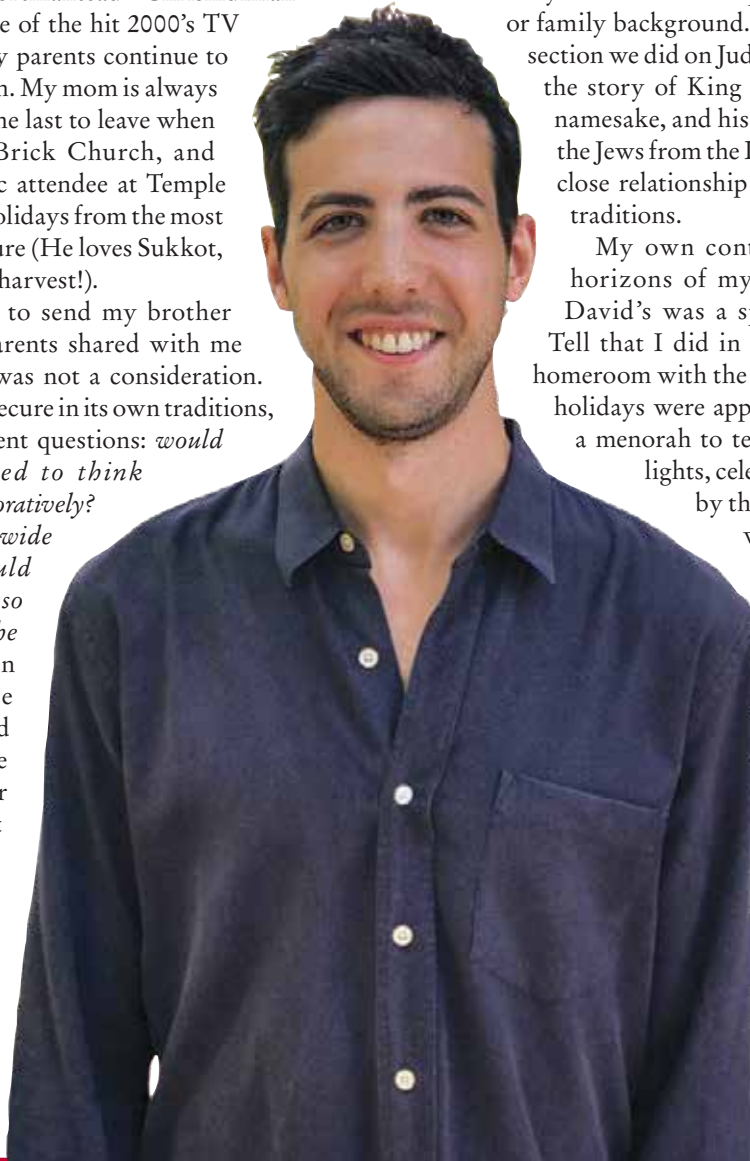
Reflecting on my 10 years at Saint David's (thank you, Pre-First — now Omega — for the opportunity), many of my fondest memories of our community are

connected to the Catholic spirituality that underpins — but doesn't define — our cherished traditions. Daily Chapel talks infused spontaneity and storytelling into our schedules, and imparted important and relatable examples for how to learn and grow outside the classroom. One of my favorite classes was religion, taught by the insightful and perceptive Ray Feerick and the legendary Mike Imbelli. Their focus on the history, traditions, connections, and commonalities among the many belief systems we studied created an energizing and comfortable environment, that assumed nothing and let everyone contribute equally, regardless of personal or family background. I remember in particular the section we did on Judaism where the class revisited the story of King David, our school's familiar namesake, and his battle against Goliath to save the Jews from the Philistines, to demonstrate the close relationship of the Jewish and Christian traditions.

My own contribution to expanding the horizons of my fellow classmates at Saint David's was a special edition of Show and Tell that I did in Mr. McLellan's Fifth Grade homeroom with the help of my mom in 2001. The holidays were approaching, and we brought in a menorah to tell the story of the festival of lights, celebrating a miracle experienced by the Maccabees, where one day's worth of oil lasted for eight.

Before our presentation, a classmate asked, "What is that candelabra?" (a very reasonable fifth-grade guess!); but by the end of our class I remember the warmth and curiosity with which our class embraced learning about someone else's tradition.

The school's atmosphere of broad intellectual curiosity and inclusion led me to explore the life of Saint Maximilian Kolbe for the Hoguet Essay — a Franciscan priest beatified



for saving the lives of thousands of Polish Jews during the Holocaust, and who ultimately died with many of them at Auschwitz in August 1941. My brother, Rawson, explored similar heroism by writing about Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish businessman working under the aegis of the Swedish government in Budapest, who created Swedish “protective passports,” responsible for saving thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazis’ extermination efforts.

The school’s legacy for inclusion and instinct for understanding continues to impact me two decades later. My connection to the Catholic faith has allowed me to develop a deep relationship with my partner Wenonah’s family, celebrating their Catholic traditions and faith. In 2018, we all traveled to Israel together to visit Wenonah’s brother, who was working at a monastery in Galilee with disabled Palestinian youth. Over the past year, I’ve sheltered from the pandemic with her family in Minnesota, and have had the opportunity to share a number of my own family traditions with her family—we recently celebrated their first Passover Seder with my parents over Zoom! Throughout these difficult moments, we’ve discussed shared doctrines and found solace in our collective hope during uncertain times.

As Gen-Z emerges as the most diverse generation in American history, I have focused my professional work on enabling that generation’s self-expression and identity-building through technology. In 2018, I founded Supergreat to democratize the beauty industry by empowering

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Tyler and his brother Rawson, with then-Headmaster Don Maiocco (R.I.P.) when they were Headmasters for the Day in 2004.

individuals to share the beauty and wellness products that work for them with their community through short-form videos and live interactive broadcasts. Part of our mission is to enable the voices of our increasingly diverse world to have a positive platform to share their opinions and identities within our global community.

Reflecting recently on the Saint David’s experience with the lifelong friends I made there, we agreed the experience was so much more than the sum of its parts. Yes, it was academically rigorous – classmates and I share similar stories of being much more challenged by Seventh and Eighth Grade curriculum than that of the high schools and universities that followed. And of course it was sartorial, as the many lessons in tie-dimpling from Dr. Maiocco and firm handshakes with Dr. O’Halloran ensured. But the features of Saint David’s that stick with me the most are the instinct to be ever-curious about the world we inhabit; to be inclusive and embrace cultural, religious, and intellectual diversity; and to follow our own personal journey.

As for my parents, it wasn’t just elementary school that they had good taste in selecting. Always trendsetters, their marriage actually sparked a lifelong business for Rabbi Lipsey and Reverend Clarke, who went on to perform numerous joyful, interfaith ceremonies together over the following decades. ■

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Tyler Faux ’05 is the co-founder and CEO of Supergreat, a video-first social commerce platform founded in NYC in 2018, for which he was recognized in Forbes’ “30 Under 30” for Consumer Technology in 2020. Previously, Tyler studied computer science at Harvard (’13) and attended Riverdale Country School (’09).